

# What Happened to Hope and Change?

*How Fascination with the “Tea Party”  
Obscures the Significance of the 2008 Electorate*

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## Executive Summary

A critical part of the story of the 2008 election was the emergence of a changing American electorate. While the raw numbers of ballots cast in that election were not as high as some predicted, analysis of *who* voted shows that young voters, low-income voters, and Americans of color turned out at unprecedented—and perhaps decisive—rates. More than in any election in recent memory, the voice we heard that night was the voice of an exciting new electorate, one that better represented the diversity of the American people.

Less than two years later, however, this rising American electorate has been largely forgotten, their issues ignored, and their voices drowned out by “Tea Party” rhetoric. As we approach the 2010 mid-term elections, we are bombarded with a message of anger and outrage with government, endlessly repeated and reinforced by the mainstream media. (A typical CBS News poll, for example, suggests that Americans are “pessimistic” and “dissatisfied” with Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup>; a *New York Times* analysis states that Republicans will “continue to benefit from a widespread belief among voters that government has gotten too expansive.”<sup>2</sup>)

If we are to believe this dominant narrative, Americans as a whole are fed up with “big government,” and 2010 will be a rage-driven year of reckoning. Yet a *New York Times* poll found that the 18 percent of Americans who self-identify as “Tea Party” supporters “tend to be Republican, white, male, married and older than 45.” They are likely to describe themselves as “very conservative,” and are on average wealthier and better educated than the general public.<sup>3</sup> They represent a shrinking segment of the population.

So what of the rest of the electorate, which turned out in such impressive numbers in 2008? Where have they gone, who is listening to them, and what is known about what *they* want from government? Are they in fact angry, and, if they are, is it for the same reasons as the Tea Partiers? Does this emerging American electorate call for a government that does less, or one that perhaps does more?

In September 2010, Project Vote will release a poll that attempts to help answer some of these questions and shed light on what the new majority of voters want from the government they elected two years ago. The analysis that follows provides background information about the significance of the changing 2008 electorate, and suggests that the conversation about what Americans want from government is much more complex and nuanced than is being reported.

## Key points explained in this report include:

- While we continue to have an electorate that skews older, whiter, and wealthier than the U.S. citizenry as a whole, **the 2008 electorate saw a significant—and perhaps decisive—shift in participation among key demographic groups.**
- **Young people and minorities**—and particularly young Americans of color—**voted at record rates in 2008.** Two million more African-Americans, and 2.3 million more voters under the age of 30, voted in 2008 than in 2004.
- Among first time voters, **those from the lowest income bracket** (from households making less than \$15,000 per year) **voted at a rate nearly double that of 2004.** No other income group experienced such a large surge in participation.
- While little attention has been placed on what this rising American electorate believes, there are indications that **this group may not share the anger at “big government” that has been widely attributed in the media.**
- **Several recent polls have suggested that the “Tea Party” anger about “big government” is not indicative of the views of the electorate as a whole.** A March 2010 poll by the Pew Research Center, for example, found that 56 percent of respondents believed the government does not do enough to help the average American.
- Studies have shown that **when lower-income citizens vote, social welfare policies are more generous and government policies more equitable.**

# What Happened to Hope and Change?

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 largely has been missed in discussions of that historic election. It is a story that may have a significant impact on the outcome of elections in 2010 and beyond. Media fascination with the “Tea Party” notwithstanding, this surging American electorate is still out there, and still a potentially powerful force in American democracy.

The anti-government message of the Tea Party movement 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, the repeal of the new national health care program, 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 historic 2008 election of the nation’s first African American president. Nine years of war and a savage recession that has wiped out trillions of dollars of value in the savings and assets of ordinary Americans have taken their toll. Americans are indeed angry. But what is the origin and nature of this anger? What do we know about diverse views on the economy and the role of government among those groups – racial minorities, youth, and the poor – whose turnout rates expanded in 2008? 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 electorate, 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.

Project Vote is currently undertaking a survey of the 2008 electorate 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. This memo reviews who voted in 2008 and discusses the context for polling what some call the “rising American electorate” of racial and ethnic minorities, lower income Americans, and youth, a sizable segment of electorate with their own distinctive interests, needs, and demands. By all accounts, these groups collectively are a force every bit as large as the Tea Party movement, and sure to grow larger.<sup>4</sup> 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.

## Who Voted in 2008?

We argue here that the 2008 election is significant not only because an African American was elected president, but because change in the composition of the electorate was decisive. Political scientists have long noted the “misshapen” dimensions of a national electorate that is persistently whiter, better educated, and wealthier than the citizenry at-large. Walter Dean Burnham traced the origins of class bias to the late nineteenth century and the collapse of party competition that accompanied the introduction of electoral rules that made it harder for blacks,

the poorly educated, and the working class to vote.<sup>5</sup> In the contemporary period, Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, in what has become a maxim in the academic literature, found that education was the single most important predictor of “who votes,” the title of their book on the subject.<sup>6</sup> The correlation of higher education levels with higher rates of voting has been confirmed by scholars over and over again.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the class skew in the electorate persists.<sup>8</sup>

The 2008 election was notable because disadvantaged groups and youth reversed these patterns and increased their voting participation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, the 2008 electorate was the most racially and ethnically diverse in U.S. history.<sup>9</sup> Non-white groups increased their share of the electorate over 2004 rates by nearly three percentage points, from 19.3 percent to 22.0 percent. Significantly, the turnout rate for African Americans exceeded that of whites (78.1 percent for blacks compared to 74.7 percent for whites), with African American women casting ballots at the highest rate of all voter groups.<sup>10</sup> 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 53.4 percent in 2004, to 58.0 percent in 2008. Among the least educated and lowest income groups, turnout rates increased for those with only a high school diploma or less from 57.2 percent in 2004 to 59.2 percent in 2008, and from 51.8 to 55.6 percent for those with annual family income of \$15,000 a year or less. Significantly, among income groups, the largest increase occurred among the poorest (see table 1).<sup>11</sup>

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 11.2 percent increase in the total number of youth voters, with African Americans increasing their share of the youth voter cohort from 14.4 percent to 16.3 percent, and Latinos growing from 8.7 percent to 10.7 percent of youth voters in 2008 (white youth decreased as a share of all youth voters, from 72.4 percent in 2004 to 68.0 percent in 2008, see table 2).

When we look at that portion of the electorate 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 electorate voting for the first time was virtually unchanged between 2004 and 2008 (11.1 percent in 2004 and 11.5 percent in 2008), the percentage of minority and low-income groups voting for the first time surged. In 2004, 16.9 percent of all black voters told survey researchers they were voting for the first time; in 2008, that number was 19.2 percent. Even more impressive, among Latinos, some 21.9 percent voted for the first time in 2004, while 27.7 percent said they were voting for the first time in 2008 (see table 3).

But the most significant change in the “first time” voter group occurred along class lines. 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 the rate at which they participated in an election for the first time, from 18.0 percent in 2004, to 34.4 percent in 2008. The least educated group, those with a high school diploma or less, increased their first time participation rates from 17.8 percent in 2004 to 21.8 percent in 2008, with most of the gains made among those lacking a high school diploma. Again, no other income or education groups experienced these rates of change in the patterns of the electoral participation (see table 3). Changes in the composition of the first time voter group are 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 government inaction to enforce shared responsibility and to address community problems? Do they believe more in market or government solutions?

We know very little 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, three-pointed hats, knickers and the brash display of weaponry, 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 who 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, reinforcing political barriers faced by the disadvantaged.<sup>12</sup>

Amidst the polling reports of anger toward the size and spending patterns of the federal government, however, there are some 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

Poll after poll finds that Americans are deeply concerned about the federal deficit, government spending, and taxes, but they express conflicting opinions about efforts to address the current economic crisis. A year ago, 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, only 33 percent said the proposals called for the right amount of spending, while 55 percent said they called for too much. 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.<sup>15</sup> By September 2009, this majority had declined to 37 percent.<sup>16</sup>

These and other studies have informed our work. However, many 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 pollsters estimate are “likely” to vote in 2010. Moreover, we know of no post-election public affairs survey of the 2008 electorate. Project Vote’s study will break ground in this respect. Our survey is based on a nationally representative sample of 2008 voters drawn from state voting records, with oversamples of African Americans, low-income voters, voters under the age of 30, and voters assisted in registering or updating their registration records by Project Vote and ACORN in the 2008 election cycle.

# Why Electoral Inequality Matters

Inequality in the electorate has negative consequences for electoral representative democracy. First, it violates democratic norms in which all citizens as voters, regardless of educational background, wealth or station in life, are equal; each has only one vote. In an ideal system, legislators should respond to the will of the people as expressed through their choices at the ballot box. When voters sing with a strong upper-class accent,<sup>17</sup> democratic norms suffer.

Second, a growing body of academic literature on legislative responsiveness documents important policy consequences of under-representation for inequality.<sup>18</sup> Numerous studies show that when lower class citizens vote, social welfare policies are more generous and government policies more equitable.<sup>19</sup> Other studies find important differences between voters and non-voters across a range of public policy issues<sup>20</sup> (though there is a persisting debate about the attitudes of non-voters, the study of which is quite sensitive to research designs).

Combining these two findings we see a third consequence of electoral inequality. Refracted through elections and electoral outcomes, economic and social inequality begets more economic and social inequality by means of a feedback mechanism. The success of the two centuries long struggle to lower barriers to the vote in the U.S. is one of the great chapters in the unfolding story of democratic advancement across the globe.<sup>21</sup> And yet, formal, constitutionally-protected political equality has not translated into a robust practice of democratic representation. We continue to have an electoral system that privileges those with resources of one kind or another, whether in educational advantage, wealth and financial power, time, networks, or funds to contribute to campaigns and candidates. Economic and social inequalities produce class bias in the U.S. electorate, exacerbated by electoral rules that do not fully correct for the inequities. This, in turn, produces more economic inequality through the constriction of the policy agenda that results.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

Study after study has found that better educated, wealthier people with higher occupational status participate more in politics, and especially electoral politics, than those with fewer resources. There is a pronounced class skew in who turns out to vote. Race, ethnicity, and age matter, too. This is why the other story about the 2008 election about how poor people, younger voters, blacks and Latinos, increased their rates of participation, is so important. The massive voter registration drives to register these traditionally under-represented groups paid off in helping to bring hundreds of thousands of voters, mobilized by the message of change and inclusion, to the polls.

Many Americans are angry about the direction of the country, the economy, corporate irresponsibility, deficit spending, and the expansionist policies pursued by the current administration. But from the start of the new administration in Washington, the media has chosen to focus on the Tea Party backlash. We need to know more about the opinions of all Americans, and especially those who surged into the electorate in 2008. That is why Project Vote is undertaking a careful survey research project, to probe the opinions and attitudes of those who voted for change in 2008.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Brian Montipoli, "Poll Finds Americans Pessimistic, Dissatisfied with Washington." CBS News, May 25, 2010, available at [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544\\_162-20005953-503544.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20005953-503544.html).
- <sup>2</sup> Jeff Zeleny and Carl Hulse, "Republicans See Big Chance, but Are Worried, Too." *New York Times*, May 23, 2010, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/us/politics/24repubs.html?scp=1&sq=republicans see big chance&st=cse>.
- <sup>3</sup> Kate Zernike and Megan Thee-Brenan, "Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated." *New York Times*, April 4, 2010, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/15/us/politics/15poll.html>.
- <sup>4</sup> Media surveys suggest some 18 to 35 percent of all Americans claim an affinity to the Tea Party movement. See Zernike and Thee-Brenan, "Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated;"; "CNN/Opinion Research Poll," *cdn.turner*. Opinion Research Corporation, Released February 17, 2010, available at <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 at <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.
- <sup>5</sup> Walter Dean Burnham, "The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe," *American Political Science Review* 59 (March 1965), 7-28.
- <sup>6</sup> Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).
- <sup>7</sup> Rachel Milstein Sondheimer and Donald P. Green, "Using Experiments to Estimate the Effects of Education on Voter Turnout," *American Political Science Review* 54 (2010), 174-189; see also, Aina Gallego, "Understanding Unequal Turnout: Education and Voting in Comparative Perspective," *Electoral Studies* 29 (2010), 239-248.
- <sup>8</sup> Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Inequality and American Democracy: What We Know and What We Need to Learn* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005).
- <sup>9</sup> 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 at <http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/dissecting-2008-electorate.pdf>.
- <sup>10</sup> The turnout rate for eligible black women was 82.6 percent, followed by 76.8 percent for white women; the turnout rate for white and black men was identical at 72.5 percent. See also, Lopez and Taylor, "Dissecting the 2008 Electorate," 2009.
- <sup>11</sup> 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. Non-response and refusals are excluded from the calculations.
- <sup>12</sup> 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); 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).
- <sup>13</sup> 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 at <http://people-press.org/report/606/trust-in-government>.
- <sup>14</sup> Pew, "Distrust, Discontent, Anger and Partisan Rancor," 28.
- <sup>15</sup> Frank Newport, "Americans OK With Short-Term Government Growth," Gallup, April 15, 2009, available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/117523/Americans-Short-Term-Government-Growth.aspx>.
- <sup>16</sup> "Government," Gallup, September 11-13, 2009, available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/27286/Government.aspx>.
- <sup>17</sup> The paraphrase is from E.E. Schattschneider, who wrote in *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960, 35): "The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent."
- <sup>18</sup> For an early review of the evidence, see Arend Lijphart's American Political Science Presidential Address, "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma," *American Political Science Review* 91 (1997), 1-14; see also, John D. Griffin and Brian Newman, "Are Voters Better Represented?" *Journal of Politics* 67 (2005), 1206-1227.
- <sup>19</sup> See Kim Quail Hill, Jan E. Leighley, and Angela Hinton-Andersson, "Lower-Class Mobilization and Policy Linkage in the U.S. States," *American Journal of Political Science* 39:1 (1995), 75-86; Alexander Hicks and Duane H. Swank, "Politics, Institutions, and Welfare Spending in Industrialized Democracies, 1960-1982," *American Political Science Review* 86:3 (1992), 658-674; and Vincent A. Mahler, "Electoral Turnout and Income Redistribution by the State: A Cross-National Analysis of the Developed Democracies," *European Journal of Political Research* 47:2 (2008), 161-183.
- <sup>20</sup> Martin Gilens, "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69:5 (2005), 778-796.
- <sup>21</sup> Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
- <sup>22</sup> Frederick Solt, "Does Economic Inequality Depress Electoral Participation? Testing the Schattschneider Hypothesis," *Political Behavior* 32 (2010), 285-301; James K. Galbraith and J. Travis Hale, "State Income Inequality and Presidential Election Turnout and Outcomes," *Social Science Quarterly* 89:4 (2008), 887-901; James M. Avery and Mark Pelfrey, "Voter Registration Requirements, Voter Turnout, and Welfare Eligibility Policy: Class Bias Matters," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 5:1 (2005), 47-67.

Table I  
*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
<b>Race</b>								
White	73.0	74.7	8.6	8.9	16.3	15.3	2.0	1.6
Black	69.0	78.1	10.0	5.9	16.5	13.8	4.0	2.2
Latino	53.4	58.0	12.1	11.1	30.1	27.8	4.3	3.1
Asian	53.0	58.4	9.0	9.7	33.3	29.1	4.7	2.9
Other	59.4	64.1	12.3	11.1	26.1	22.4	2.3	2.3
<b>Education</b>								
High School or Less	57.2	59.2	12.1	11.3	27.3	26.9	3.5	2.7
Some College/2-Yr. Degree	75.2	76.9	8.7	8.2	13.9	13.1	2.3	1.8
College Graduate	85.2	87.6	5.1	4.8	8.4	6.8	1.3	.8
Postgraduate	91.6	92.0	3.3	3.4	4.4	4.0	.6	.6
<b>Annual Family Income</b>								
Under \$15,000	51.8	55.6	14.5	13.0	30.3	29.3	3.4	2.1
\$15,000-\$29,999	61.3	63.1	10.8	11.3	25.3	23.7	2.6	2.0
\$30,000-\$49,999	68.2	68.9	9.8	9.3	19.5	19.8	2.5	1.9
\$50,000-\$74,999	75.3	76.3	8.4	7.8	14.7	14.5	1.6	1.4
\$75,000-\$99,999	80.8	81.1	6.0	6.2	12.0	11.3	1.2	1.4
\$100,000-\$149,999	85.0	83.7	4.9	6.1	9.0	9.2	1.1	1.0
\$150,000 or More	86.5	88.9	5.0	4.8	7.1	6.7	1.3	.5
<b>Age</b>								
18-29 Years	54.2	59.0	12.2	11.6	28.6	25.8	4.9	3.6
30-39 Years	67.0	70.2	9.8	8.9	20.5	19.0	2.7	1.9
40-49 Years	73.3	74.7	8.2	7.6	16.4	15.9	2.1	1.9
50-64 Years	78.7	80.0	6.8	6.4	13.0	12.6	1.5	1.0
65 Years or Older	77.5	72.8	9.0	8.4	12.1	16.9	1.4	1.9

Note: Data are weighted. Respondents may have answered "don't know" to either the registration or the voting question, or both. The surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error.

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
<b>Race</b>		
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
<b>Education</b>		
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
<b>Annual Family Income</b>		
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. The surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error.

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
<b>Race</b>		
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
<b>Education</b>		
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
<b>Annual Family Income</b>		
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
<b>Age</b>		
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
<b>Race</b>		
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
<b>Education</b>		
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
<b>Annual Family Income</b>		
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
<b>Age</b>		
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.

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