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African-American Trailblazers: The Sociopolitical Factors of Success

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African-American Trailblazers: The Sociopolitical Factors of Success

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Honors Thesis – Spring 2011

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four years of guidance has been the most notable reason I am completing this thesis

today. Thank you for everything.

A NOTE ON USAGE OF RACE DESCRIPTIONS

Throughout the history of the United States various terms have been used to describe people of African heritage. Merely decades ago, the offensive use of "Negro" and "colored" was widely accepted, even in academic circles. There is still debate concerning the use of "African-American" compared to "black." While "African-American" remains politically correct, opposition has come from Caribbean-born blacks who feel the term excludes them.

Different disciplines varying preferences further complicate the issue. Despite, or perhaps because of, the interdisciplinary nature of this project, the two terms (African-American and black) will be used interchangeably. As Kevin K. Gaines (1996) noted, "It is far easier to agree on incorrect designations for group identity than on a single 'correct' one" (p. xxii). Utilizing multiple terms allows scholars the flexibility to designate the most appropriate term given any situation (1996, p. xxii).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Race and ethnicity in America is oft studied, yet many caveats remain unexplored. The current reality is a result of a confluence of factors that span many academic disciplines. Therefore, it is imperative to holistically examine any question in this area by acknowledging the imperative historical, sociological, and political factors (Thurow, Abdalla, Younglove-Webb, & Gray, 1999).

Research Question

This research studies modern African-American political leaders from this perspective, as each area of study compliments and is intertwined with the others. The historical overview of the experiences of African-Americans in the United States political system contextualizes the types of socialization and political milieu that have allowed advancements in the number of appointed and elected positions held by blacks in government, critical to the representation of a democratic system.

Purpose of the Research

Following the Civil Rights Movement, blacks began to be elected to state legislative seats and have become increasingly represented. Soon thereafter, they would begin to be appointed and elected to executive and judicial posts. Primarily, this research is concerned with identifying the factors that pushed certain individuals to successfully challenge the status quo while others simply stood by. Gathering information from a variety of sources, it is shown that social networks are imperative as many trailblazers have remarkably similar backgrounds and have employed some of the same strategies when overcoming obstacles to obtaining seats in office.

The Methodological Approach

Archival, biographical, and demographic data is utilized to examine the

backgrounds and campaigns of African-Americans first elected or appointed to state

level positions in the State of Florida, including those that have served in the United

States Congress. Due to significant societal differences and the time lapse between

African-American representation, Reconstruction-era politicians such as Josiah

Walls and Jonathan C. Gibbs are excluded from this analysis.

Significance of the Research

This is one of the first studies that take an in-depth look at these trailblazers,

allowing a project of this type to serve as an invaluable reference resource. By

identifying strategies that have previously been successful in electing blacks to

office, future candidates will benefit by employing many of the same tactics. A

unique caveat encountered when studying political issues in Florida, especially

those regarding race and ethnicity, is that it is the largest state that most closely

mirrors the nation's demographics. Therefore it is likely that these findings will be

useful outside the borders of this state, and a similarly holistic approach to research

on race and ethnicity may be useful elsewhere.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consistent with the holistic approach, a number of books and peer-reviewed

journal articles were utilized from the disciplines of history, sociology, political

science, and even psychology. A political history of African-Americans since slavery

was abolished is offered to contextualize the other factors. Then is an overview of

the literature on the social and organizational forces that influenced these

trailblazers. This includes sections on socialization (racial, political, and gender), historically black colleges and universities (HBCU's), the black church, traditionally African-American fraternities and sororities, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Finally, there is a section on political factors such as party competition, demographic information, and coalition building.

LITERATURE REVIEW: HISTORICAL FACTORS

Since emancipation, the history of African-Americans can be grouped into six periods. These eras include the Reconstruction-era, the "nadir" of black American history, the Great Migration, "turning the picture of Lincoln to the wall," the second reconstruction, and the modern times since the Civil Rights era. Each of these periods contributes to the current political behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes of blacks in the United States.

Reconstruction-Era (1865-1877)

While it is a common misconception that during the Civil War President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves when he issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, its immediate impact was limited. In reality, slavery was abolished with the adoption of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution nearly three years later on December 8, 1865.   In 1868, the 14th Amendment gave freed slaves citizenship and two years later, in 1870, the 15th Amendment gave black men the right to vote (women could not vote until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920) (Richards, 1991). These events ushered in the Reconstruction era, which saw blacks make significant gains in many aspects of

society, only to have these advancements stripped away following the Compromise of 1877 (Woodward, 1951).

The Reconstruction period is typically defined as the years following the end of the Civil War in 1865, which put the southern states under federal control, until 1877 when that support was withdrawn. During this time, "black southerners made substantial political gains" and biracial state governments that excluded former Confederate leaders enacted progressive reform in areas such as the justice system and education (Feagin, 2001, pp. 57-58). In Florida, "nearly forty African-Americans served in the legislature" and in 1875, a civil rights bill mandated that "no citizen of this state, by reason of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, be excepted or excluded from full and equal enjoyment of any accommodation, advantage, facility, or privilege furnished by innkeepers, etc" (Florida Memory: State Library & Archives of Florida, n.d., para. 4-7). This period of advancement ended with the Compromise of 1877 when, in an informal and unwritten deal, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes was awarded the Presidency over Democrat Samuel J. Tilden in exchange for the removal of remaining federal troops in the former Confederate States of Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida (Woodward, 1951). Another African-American would not be elected to the Florida Legislature until 1968.

The "Nadir" of Black American History (1877-1910)

The Compromise of 1877 began a time that has been called the "nadir" of black American history, as white supremacy ran rampant (Logan, 1999, p. xi). Historian Stetson Kennedy (1995) describes the fallout from the Compromise of 1877 by explaining that black southerners were "sold back down the river into

virtual enslavement, and all three of the new constitutional amendments – so far as blacks were concerned – were rendered dead letters for a century to come"(pp. 3-4). Newly-acquired rights were taken through legal maneuvers that put black southerners in a perpetual police state. These laws created and enforced the "Jim Crow" segregation that led to inferior facilities and politically disenfranchised African-Americans through measures such as poll taxes and literacy tests (Kennedy, 1990). These measures were often paired with grandfather clauses that excluded whites from the same prerequisites to vote. These constraints were maintained by violence and intimidation and lynchings were common. This period ended with The Great Migration.

The Great Migration (1910-1930)

The Great Migration, as it is now called, was the movement of 2 million blacks from the South to the West, Midwest, and Northeast (Hahn, 2003). These migrants relocated for a multitude of reasons including flight from white terrorism and greater economic opportunity, fueled by the expansion of industry for World War I in the north. Additionally, more restrictive immigration policies, a large flood in Mississippi in 1927, and bug infestations of southern cotton fields helped convince many blacks to move north (Tolnay, 2003, pp. 214-215).

"Turning the Picture of Lincoln to the Wall" (1930-1945)

The Great Depression, and subsequently World War II, began what could be called the biggest shift in African-American politics in modern history, and one that established a trend that continues to this day. During Reconstruction and the decades that followed, black voters were extremely allegiant to Republican leaders.

After all, the "Party of Lincoln" was responsible for their emancipation, the Freedmen's Bureau, and the adoption of the "Reconstruction Amendments" (Richards, 1991). In contrast, it was the Southern Democrats that enacted Jim Crow laws, restricted their rights, and remained sympathetic to, if not actively involved with, white supremacists (Woodward, 1955).

However, as blacks began migrating north, Democrats in those areas began to court black voters to retain their seats as the Republican platform was becoming more conservative in an effort to become a national party (Fauntroy, 2007). In 1932, Robert Lee Vann, editor of an influential black newspaper called *The Pittsburgh Courier*, spearheaded this process by publishing an editorial endorsing Democratic presidential candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt while urging blacks to "turn the picture of Lincoln to the wall" (Public Broadcasting Station, para. 4). When blacks began voting for Democrats in the 1930's and 1940's, there is some evidence that it was initially seen as a temporary alliance borne out of economic hardship (Weiss, 1983). Under Roosevelt's administration not a single piece of civil rights legislation, out of the 150 introduced, became law. But during his third term, he was coerced into signing an executive order that banned discrimination in government jobs by a protest organized by Phillip A. Randolph (Tate, 1994, p. 51). In the next few presidential election cycles, the black vote remained relatively split. For instance, in 1956, Republican presidential nominee Dwight D. Eisenhower received 40% of the black vote and, in 1960, Richard Nixon received one-third (Huckfeldt and Kohfeld, 1989, p. 11). It was in 1964, when the Kennedy-Johnson ticket made civil rights an issue, that several pieces of anti-discrimination legislation

were finally passed (Tate, 1994, pp. 52-53). Since that point, the Democratic Party

has enjoyed at least 80%, and more recently well over 90%, of the black vote.

The Second Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Era (1945-1969)

the years following World War II are a period that some scholars, such as

Manning Marable (1992), have labeled the "Second Reconstruction." In the first

Reconstruction, newly freed African-Americans made significant gains while the

south was under federal control. During the second, blacks emerged from Jim Crow

with a combination of organized direct action protest and a relatively supportive

federal government. A series of groups were instrumental in these achievements

including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

(Hughes, 1962; Kellog, 1967; Emmons, 1998; Jonas, 2005; Verney & Sartain, 2009),

the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) (Powell, 1968; Meier & Rudwick, 1973), and

the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) (Fairclough, 1987; Peake,

1987; Garrow, 1988; Ward & Badger, 1996).

After years of winning cases and setting precedents, the NAACP legal team

convinced the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down public school segregation in 1954

in its *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The following year, Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr. would organize the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, a watershed protest in the

Civil Rights Movement (Phibbs, 2009). In the 1960's, as the situation in the South

continued to deteriorate, firebombing and violence against peaceful protestors were

witnessed by the nation and world thanks to television.   In 1964, the most

comprehensive Civil Rights Act was passed, followed the next year by the Voting

Rights Act of 1965 as the federal government continued to pressure the southern states.

During this decade, John F. Kennedy appointed Thurgood Marshall to become the first African-American U.S. Supreme Court Justice. However, W.E.B. DuBois expatriated to Ghana, and both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. were assassinated, creating a leadership vacuum. This gap was briefly filled by organizations like the Black Panther National Party for Self Defense, as well as the continuation of other more moderate groups, but these evaporated soon afterward (Heath, 1976; Jones, 1998; Rhodes, 2007). Since that time, the most prominent black leaders have been Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, and Lois Farrakhan.

Integration to Barrack Obama (1970-2010)

Recently, the most notable shifts in the standing of African-Americans in society have resulted not from political movements, but from interactions with whites. After integration, more whites and blacks are going to school, working, marrying, and enjoying leisure activities together. This exposure and assimilation into mainstream society has led to a decrease in overt racism, although some scholars have argued that it persists in covert and institutionalized forms (Feagin, 2001). However, during this time of increased familiarity, blacks were able to win over 7,000 electoral contests throughout the nation by 1990. African-Americans were appointed to various high-ranking executive and judicial positions at both the federal and state level (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p. 197). Along with the change in social conditions, Robert C. Smith (1992) observed that with these new legal protections, protest politics began to decline and institutionalized behavior became

the dominant form of black political activity. This movement culminated in the election of Democrat Barrack Obama, a biracial man, to the presidency in 2008 (Mendell, 07; Dupuis & Boeckelman, 2009; Painter, 2009; White, 2009). Relative to other recent presidential elections, he won in a landslide, receiving 365 of the 538 possible electoral votes and 53% of the popular vote to defeat Republican John McCain (Cable News Network, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW: SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS

The sociological factors encompass the unique socialization of African-Americans into society and the political system and the various groups that have influenced this socialization. This includes, racial socialization, gender socialization, political socialization, religious socialization, historically black colleges and universities (HBCU's), traditionally African-American fraternities and sororities, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Socialization

Socialization is a term that refers to the process of inheriting norms, customs, and ideologies. John A. Clausen (1968) describes socialization as "the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained" (p. 5). This process is influenced by a variety of agents but social institutions are particularly impactful. Examples of these institutions include family, religion, education, economic and legal systems, the media, and organizations (such as political parties). The socialization of African-Americans has been extremely distinctive compared to whites and other ethnic or racial groups. These unique collective experiences have resulted in political behaviors and attitudes that continue today. Since the term "socialization" was

conceived, researchers have identified many other subtypes that further conceptualize it, such as racial socialization, gender socialization, and political socialization.

Racial Socialization

Racial socialization refers to "the developmental processes by which children acquire the behaviors, perceptions, values, and attitudes of an ethnic group, and come to see themselves and others as members of the group" (Rotheram-Borus & Phinney, 1987).   An African-American-specific definition that has been used is the process by which parents raise children to have positive self-concepts in an environment that is racist and sometimes hostile (Stevenson, 1995; Thomas & Speight, 1999) Researchers have identified four distinct dimensions that commonly appear in literature on the subject. These topics include cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006). When socializing children, African-Americans have been found to emphasize "preparation for bias" more than Dominican or Puerto Rican parents (Hughes, 2003). Accordingly, a key technique used in socialization is race-coaching, which teaches children to problem solve around racism (Ferguson, 1999; Socha, Sanchez-Hucles, Bromley, & Kelly, 1995). Each racial group is specifically socialized according to its culture, history, and current standing in society.

Gender Socialization

An important function of socialization is "the learning of culturally defined gender roles" (Henslin, 1999, p. 76). Social institutions reinforce these roles in

"subtle and not so subtle ways" (Henslin, 1999, p. 76). However, the socialization of

black women is unique in a multitude of ways. Black women must negotiate historic

and current portrayals, from the nurturing Mammy, to the hostile Sapphire, to

Jezebel, who uses her sexuality for material gain and to manipulate men (West,

1995). Despite this, black women are traditionally a source of strength in the

African-American community, and young black girls witness this as their mothers

and grandmothers often hold the family together, while balancing work

simultaneously (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996). Research suggests that

mothers try to continue this tradition by promoting self-determination and self-

pride to their daughters (Thomas & King, 2007).

Political Socialization

Through socialization, children develop ideas about the institutions that

govern them. As they engage in cultural socialization, African-Americans are sure to

realize that for much of the history of their people, the political system has been a

destructive force in their community. Abramson (1977) found that black

schoolchildren felt less politically powerful and were less trusting of elected officials

than their white peers (p. 2). However, Greenberg (1970) concluded that black

children in middle school are likely to hold a more positive attitude toward the

federal government and view it as a protector against the actions of local

governments and police departments (p. 185).

Political socialization, by definition, refers to the way society transmits its

political culture from generation to generation" and can serve to maintain tradition

or enact social change (Langton, 1969, p. 4). Morris and Cabe found that, in

comparison to whites, blacks are less knowledgeable, less efficacious, and less trusting of the political system (1972). Those findings have been supported in subsequent studies (Walton, p. 45, 1985). Additionally, blacks have been socialized into both the "orderly and disorderly" sides of the political process (Morris, Hatchett, & Brown, 1989). That is to say African-Americans see tactics both inside and outside the mainstream as equally legitimate. Picketing, boycotting, and marches are just as effective as voting, campaigning, or donating money.

Another racial difference in political socialization is that "in the black community, in sharp contrast to the white, the church plays the dominant role in the socialization process. The family, the school, and peer groups, in that order, are the next significant agents" (Walton, 1985, p. 48). Additionally, the political history of African-Americans informs and affects today's black political actions and attitudes (Walton & Smith, 2003, p. 48).

The Black Church and Religious Socialization

The church has played an integral role in the political history of the African-American community and continues to be a bastion for black political and social interaction. Intense scholarly debates have ensued for over a century over the ideal and current roles of the black church in political activism. As the pioneer of the sociological study on the topic, W.E.B. DuBois identified three characteristics of African-American religion: the music, the preacher, and the frenzy (DuBois, 1903, p. 190). He continued to describe the preacher as "the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a 'boss,'

an intriguer, an idealist - all these he is, and ever, too, the centre of a group of men"
(DuBois, 1903, p. 190).

In *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), DuBois clearly states that the black church
is attended as a social event first, and for religion second. He concluded that the
church "introduces the stranger to the community, it serves as a lyceum, library, and
lecture bureau—it is the central organ of the organized life of the American Negro"
(DuBois, 1899, p. 470). Nonreligious himself, he viewed the totality of Christianity's
impact on the black community as mixed. While acknowledging that strength and
pride can come from the social network of the church, he argued that religion has
helped maintain the status quo in regards to race and class since the days of slavery
(DuBois, 1903, pp. 195-206). Reverend Charles Adams declared "instead of cursing
the white man, [blacks] shout at the Lord. Instead of kicking whitey, [blacks] kick
over the pew" (1992). Of course, this was a controversial conclusion that has been
vehemently opposed and defended.

Despite his criticisms, DuBois would agree with Gunnar Myrdal (1944) in his
assessment that the black church has offered opportunities that were unavailable to
blacks from other channels due to discrimination (p. 936). Echoing these ideas, but
harsher in their evaluation, Mays and Nicholson (1969) conclude that "if the Negro
had experienced a wide range of freedom in the social and economic spheres, there
would have been ... fewer Negro churches (p. 11). Nonetheless, the black church
became the main arena of African-American political and social activity and "most
forms of musical, artistic, and dramatic expression, as well as colleges, banks,

insurance companies, low-income housing, and political leadership find their genesis in the black church" (Calhoun-Brown, 2002, p. 15).

Involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. The zenith of the church's political involvement came during the Civil Rights Era in the 1950's and 60's. They supplied leaders, resources, and an organizational backbone for the movement to thrive. Even before the 1965 Voting Rights Act they actively registered voters (McAdam, 1982) while serving as the "organizational backbone" of civil rights groups (Morris, 1984, p. 4). E. Franklin Frazier (1964) saw it as "inevitable that the preachers that had played such an important role in the organized social life of Negroes should become political leaders" (p. 40). "In analyzing the decrease in political power of the church in the past several decades, researchers have focused not on the churches willingness to act, but instead their capacity. The three basic determinants of capacity have shown to be "a conducive political environment, resources with which to exploit opportunities, and a theology aimed at alleviating social ills" (Calhoun-Brown, 2002, p. 17). The church has seen a decrease in each of these factors but has found other ways to contribute to the political prosperity of African-Americans.

Evolving role. Despite new circumstances, the black church has been able to uplift the African-American community in other ways. There remains a strong urge to improve conditions outside the walls of the church. Rev. Cecil Chip Murray of the First A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles proclaims that "the days of coming to church for personal salvation alone are over," while Rev. Harris Travis of the Zion Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia declares that "the black church has two missions: a

social mission and a spiritual mission" (Billingsley, 1999, pp. 87 & 171).

Accordingly, throughout the nation, the black church has offered economic

development, community support, and housing (Billingsley, 1999, p. 206). The

churches are also beginning to focus on newly emerging problems in the community

such as issues with black youth and the unfortunate prevalence of HIV and AIDS

(Billingsley, 1999, p. 102-118).

  While not nearly as active in protest politics as in the past, today's black

churches are still able to offer certain politicians the ears of their congregation. In

this sense, the church stays involved by providing micro and macro resources.

Micro resources include motivation, group consciousness, and culture, while macro

resources encompass indigenous leadership, communication networks, mass

membership, social interaction, money, and meeting places (Harris, 1999, p. 28). It

has also been suggested that there is a link between internal religiosity, political

efficacy and political participation (Harris, 1999, p. 83). Candidates will often

appear as guest speakers at Sunday services in order to find volunteers, fundraise,

and "get out the vote" (Harris, 1999, pp. 12-26). A 1991 survey of Chicago churches

found that 21% of black churchgoers reported that their pastor discusses politics

"nearly all the time" or frequently" compared to only 9% of whites and that 65% of

blacks reported being encouraged to vote compared to only 30% of whites.

Additionally, while only 12% of whites said that their church hosted candidate visits

"frequently" or "sometimes," 57% of blacks meet candidates at their place of

worship (Harris, 1999, p. 116). Harris (1999), among other more recent scholars,

rejected DuBois'(1903) and Mays and Nicholson's (1969) criticisms of the black

church, instead concluding that "Afro-Christianity stimulates black political activism" (p. 177).

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCU's)

Collectively, African-Americans have had a long-held belief in the power of education to liberate them from the bondage of servitude and other forms of discrimination (Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008; Perry, 2003). For much of the United States' history, HBCU's have been the sole means of obtaining a post-secondary education for African-Americans. The first HBCU was Cheney University of Pennsylvania, established in 1837. However, most were founded after the Civil War. These institutions' role in black society cannot be understated. W.E.B. DuBois proclaimed in 1935, that "had it not been for the Negro schools and colleges, the Negro would, to all intents and purposes, have been driven back to slavery" (p. 667).

Successes. Approximately 80% of HBCU students are from economically--disadvantaged backgrounds and the first of their family to attend college (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, p. 41). Despite this, HBCU's have an impressive record of producing impactful leaders in several sectors. In major U.S. corporations, 45% of African-Americans with the title of vice president or higher were educated at a HBCU (Clarke, 1998). In the past thirty years, graduates of HBCU's include "United Nations ambassadors, surgeon generals, an astronaut, a U.S. Supreme Court justice, U.S. Court of Appeals justices, state supreme court justices, secretaries of U.S. cabinet departments, U.S. ambassadors, a governor, numerous mayors, and the first black woman member of the American College of Physicians, just to name a few" (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, p. 40). Furthermore, three out of four African-American females

receiving a doctorate in science between 1975 and 1992 have some degree from a

HBCU (Leggon & Pearson, 1997). Additionally, Jill Constantine (1995) found that

"students who attended HBCU's in the 1970's later enjoyed substantially higher

value added to wages than black students who attended historically white or

racially mixed four-year institutions" (p. 541). HBCU's are more successful in

developing leaders in both the black and white world than historically white

universities, despite having fewer resources and a larger number of students from

non-traditional collegiate backgrounds.

Social Responsibility. The success of HBCU graduates is attributable to an

education that exceeds the boundaries of traditionally white institutions. The

overall condition of African-Americans in the United States has prompted HBCU's to

feel a responsibility to produce leaders, instead of just doctors, lawyers, and

engineers. Howard Professor Ralph Bunche (1936) noted that "the educational

process for Negroes ... cannot be divorced from the dominant political, social and

economic forces active in the society. The education of Negroes is inextricably tied

with the group status of Negroes, with their economic condition, their political

position, and their cultural relations with other groups "(p 351). Alternatively

stated, "unlike white colleges, black colleges can hardly foster a love of, and a

passion for, the status quo." (Cook, 1978, p. 54).

Tilden Lemelle (2002) argues that the success of HBCU's must be judged on

the basis of performing these socializing and politicizing functions (p. 194). Jackson

and Nunn (2003) identify four ways that young black adults at HBCU's achieve

social and political relevance in their higher education. These include "1. Hearing

the best black minds in the world regularly. 2. Knowing the real history of black people. 3. Valuing the importance of voting… and comprehending the political process. [And] 4. Identifying with the black community and their relation and obligation to it for the uplifting of all blacks" (p. 24). The latter two points reference W.E.B. DuBois' (1903b) concept of the "talented tenth." DuBois believed that by developing African-American leaders through liberal-arts education, those select individuals would be able to lift the entire black population. He argues this point with the reminder, "from the very first, it has been the educated and intelligent negro people that have led and elevated the masses. (p. 519). By emphasizing social responsibility and leadership development, HBCU's continue to embody the spirit of collective uplift.

Black Fraternities and Sororities

Some researchers have suggested that involvement in Greek life is detrimental to the academic development of students (Horowitz, 1987; Maisel, 1988). However, Erwin and Marcus-Mendoza (1988) disagree, claiming that Greek involvement fosters cognitive and leadership development. Accordingly, Hughes and Winston (1987) found that "pledges" value leadership more in interpersonal interactions. These studies focused on mostly white fraternities. There is limited research focusing on traditionally black Greek organizations, however, Kimbrough (1995) was able to conclude that black fraternities, specifically, are proficient at developing leaders. These organizations were developed to "stress education, philanthropy, self-improvement, and excellence" (Ross, 2000, p. xii). Additionally, developing kinship networks, within a minority group, in these types of

organizations has been shown to be vital to future political and social success (Ross, 2000; Kimbrough, 2003).   Traditionally black fraternities and sororities have organized mentoring lines to produce leaders, social networks, and an interest in community activism.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

From its inception, but more so since its peak during the Civil Rights era, many scholars have been critical of the NAACP. They have described its structure, programs, and strategies as out-of-touch with the modern complexities of race (Clark, 1966, p.623) and claimed that it is on the "verge of irrelevance" (Clark, 1985; c.f. Bunche, 1939; DuBois, 1940; Lomax, 1963; Cruse, 1987; Barker & Jones, 1994, pp. 201-205; Lusane & Steele, 1994).

Historically, the NAACP has avoided direct action protests and demonstrations in favor of the more traditional political approaches such as anti-defamation work, litigation, and lobbying. However, Robert C. Smith (2002) identifies four factors that have reduced the effectiveness of this approach: (1) a changed opinion about racial issues for whites, (2) the covert nature of contemporary racism, (3)increased Republican political and judicial control, and (4) severe resource constraints (p. 29). As well-funded lobbyist groups and political action committees become more prevalent, the NAACP is faces more difficulties due to its broad, multiple issue agenda combined with relatively low funding (Pinderhughes, 1980). Smith (2002) suggests that the organization focus less on lobbying Congress and instead focus on empowering the strong local chapters to

participate in community and grassroots activism if the "nation's oldest civil rights group" would like to become an effective tool for fighting discrimination once again.

LITERATURE REVIEW: POLITICAL FACTORS

The political situation in a state or district is extremely important to the success of a trailblazer. The design of a district, support from political parties, and the building of coalitions are all imperative to winning an election or being appointed to a seat.

Party Competition

There is evidence to suggest that both Republicans and Democrats take proactive approaches to recruiting minority candidates.   This explains the prevalence of minority appointments to vacant seats in comparison to those that were elected by a large, diverse constituency.   However, the Democrats are able to make this effort more subtly because of their established position with black voters and compatible platform. Paul Fryer (1999) contends that they purposely ignore African-American issues for overall political gain (pp. 27-48), perhaps taking the black voting bloc for granted.

On the other hand, the Republicans have had very limited success making inroads with black voters, and its efforts to change that can be placed in the four categories of: policy initiatives on African-American issues, party activities that benefit blacks, and outreach by both local conservative minority groups and national ones (Fauntroy, 2008, pp. 61-62). In a chapter entitled "Public Policies Speak Louder than Words," Fauntroy (2008) details the actions of the G.O.P. that directly contradict these efforts. Beginning with the Reagan administration, he

identifies ten positions the party has taken against issues important to African-Americans such as affirmative action, civil rights, and even a holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (pp. 95-126). The Republican Party is well aware of the fact that the nation's demographics are quickly shifting in key battleground states and they need to entice more minorities moving forward (Fauntroy, 2008).

Demographics

Although the black population tends to stay relatively consistent at about twelve percent in the United States and around sixteen percent in Florida (U.S. Census Bureau), the ethnic details of this voting bloc are evolving. The most recent demographic shift within the black community has been the growth of the Caribbean-born black population, especially Haitians in South Florida. In 2000, with the help of the newly found political clout of the Haitian community, Phillip Brutus (D) was elected to the Florida House of Representatives. In 2010, he hoped to again rely on this politically active (and growing community) to capture the congressional seat being vacated by Congressman Kendrick Meek (D) in his bid to become Florida's first African-American U.S. Senator. The attempts of both Brutus and Meek were unsuccessful.

Additionally, there has been a similar, albeit more dramatic rise in the Hispanic population in the past decades. These Hispanic immigrants are ethnically diverse also, as Woods (2008) found that 40 percent of Florida's 1.1 million Hispanic voters are Cuban, while 44 percent hail from the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and other Latin American countries. In order to succeed with these emerging demographic trends, coalition building is imperative.

Coalition Building

Often, the minority voting age population is not large enough to elect a minority candidate, even if the group votes as a bloc. This is the case in statewide races and for legislative or congressional seats that are not majority-minority districts. In such circumstances, successful minority candidates need to build broad coalitions with white and Hispanic voters. For minority Democrats, the most common coalition is with liberal whites; for Republican minorities, it is with conservative Anglos. Recently, coalitions of black and like-minded Hispanics have increased. However, despite many politicians from both sides attempting to bridge the gap, and opposite of what many whites believe, there is an unspoken conflict between African-Americans and Latinos. This often results from competition for jobs and political power (Vaca, 2004).

With blacks comprising such a small percentage of the voting population, these coalitions are imperative to electoral success in most races. However, the growing size and clout of groups have made it highly beneficial from a political perspective to appoint minorities to judicial posts at the highest levels, such as to Florida's Supreme Court which uses the merit retention method[1] to select justices. Additionally, African-Americans have been successful in minority-majority districts that have been gerrymandered to produce racially diverse governing bodies.

Redistricting and Minority-Majority Districts

The predominant theory is that the size of a minority group in a constituency is critical to minority candidate electoral success (Engstrom & McDonald, 1981). As

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[1] Under the merit retention system, the governor initially appoints the justice. The voters later vote whether to retain the appointee for a full term.

Florida's population has grown, minority shares of the population have increased accordingly, especially in the state's heavily urbanized areas. This has made it easier to carve out state legislative districts with sizable minority electorates. A body of literature suggests that the creation of these districts either via redistricting or by court order enhances the chances a minority will be elected (Adams, 2000; McClain and Tauber, 2010). Initially, the federal courts' interpretation of the Voting Rights Act was that majority-minority districts had to be drawn wherever possible to enhance minorities' chances of being elected. But the U.S. Supreme Court changed its interpretation of the Act in the *Shaw v. Reno* ruling, which prohibits the use of race or ethnicity as the primary basis for drawing district lines. There is clear evidence that redistricting at the state and local levels has increased minority representation in Florida (MacManus, 1991, 2002; Hill, 1995)[2].

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in this research. This data triangulation is an emerging trend in research design. In many studies such as this one, "the complexity of research problems calls for answers beyond simple numbers in a quantitative sense or words in a qualitative sense. A combination of both forms of data can provide the most complete analysis of problems" (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 13). The combination of methods allows the identification of patterns from a quantitative standpoint, while retaining the rich

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[2] For detailed discussions of the redistricting efforts, consult: Bullock, 2010; Bullock and Gaddie, 2006; Lublin and Voss, 2001; MacManus, 1991, 2002; MacManus and Morehouse, 1995.

details only found qualitatively. Accordingly, biographical, archival, and demographic research were utilized.

Biographical Research (Qualitative)

First, as much biographical information as possible was collected in order to identify each trailblazer and gather background information. This includes their education, profession, personal life, background, and current position. This information was compared among trailblazers and used to identify patterns and trends about the type of person willing to attempt to make history while others just stood on the sideline.

Archival Research (Qualitative)

To see an accurate portrayal of the development of these politicians' careers, microfilm and electronic newspaper archives were extensively utilized. This historical approach was particularly useful in order to view the discourse and the way politicians were perceived at the time. With issues involving race and politics there is often the temptation to offer a revised history and using this method protects against those distortions. Articles were used to obtain supplemental biographical information and track the tactics these trailblazers used to win their campaign.

Demographic Data (Quantitative)

With the goal of tracking the changing demographics of Florida and correlating them with political trends, the U.S. Census Bureau was consulted for population data throughout history.

Analysis

When analyzing this vast amount of data, first the biographies of these trailblazers were researched and compared. Patterns in categories like education, upbringing, and organizational activity were identified. This information was then used to contextualize the content analysis of archival documents from newspapers and other periodicals. The findings from this analysis offered insight to the political journeys of these figures, and the situations that allowed them to be successful. Demographic data was then obtained in order to help explain some of the political events and tactics found in the archival portion of the research. Utilizing three distinct methods offered a more complete picture of the lives and careers of these trailblazers.

FINDINGS: WHO ARE THE TRAILBLAZERS?

Real political clout for Florida's African Americans did not begin to develop until the 1960s, when the civil rights movement sparked federal court orders and congressional passage of a series of Voting Rights Acts. Federal court-ordered reapportionment (one person, one vote) for both houses of the Florida Legislature greatly enhanced the political clout of urban areas where the largest concentrations of blacks resided. Equally effective were the adoption of single-member legislative districts in 1982 and federal court-ordered redistricting rules in 1992, which mandated the drawing of majority-minority districts. (For excellent accounts of early African-American elected officials and struggles for equality, see Brown, 1998; Carleton, 1958; Colburn and Landers, 1995; Collins, 1989; Smith, 1989; Jones and McCarthy, 1993; Klingman, 1976).

Executive Offices

Bids by African Americans to win statewide elective gubernatorial and Cabinet posts had failed throughout history until 2010, when Jennifer Carroll was elected Lieutenant Governor on Governor Rick Scott's ticket. However, the state has had two appointed black secretaries of state. The first was Jonathan Gibbs (R) (1868) who was Florida's first African-American Cabinet member. The second was Jesse J. McCrary (D), appointed in 1978 by Governor Reuben Askew. Doug Jamerson (D) lost his 1996 electoral bid to remain as Commissioner of Education, following appointment to the vacant seat by Governor Lawton Chiles in 1994. Daryl L. Jones, a state senator from South Florida, finished third in the 2002 Democratic gubernatorial primary. In 2006, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jim Davis selected Jones as his running mate. Had the Davis-Jones ticket won, Jones would have been the state's first African American to be elected statewide to a non-judicial post, instead that honor became the aforementioned Jennifer Carroll's in 2010.[3]

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Jesse J. McCrary, Jr. (D)

First African-American to be on the Florida Cabinet since Reconstruction, appointed as Secretary of State by Gov. Reubin Askew (D), 1978

Personal: Born in 1937, died in 2007 of lung cancer
Education: AB in political science and JD from Florida A&M University
Work Experience: Civil rights activist, Florida's first assistant Attorney General, private practice attorney
Issues: Democrat – civil rights and African-American issues
Quote: *"Described by those who knew him as a giving intellectual, McCrary decided early on not to let the limitations of racial segregation and discrimination define his path"* (Greene, November 1, 2007).
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[3] All photos have been retrieved from the Florida Memory Project from the State Library and Archives of Florida.

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Douglas L. "Tim" Jamerson (D)

First African American Education Commissioner, appointed to the Cabinet position in 1993 by Gov. Chiles (D) He subsequently lost his reelection bid.

Personal: Born in 1947, married with one son, died of cancer in 2001
Education: One of the first three African-American students at Immaculate Conception Catholic High School in St. Petersburg; AA from the Pinellas Police Academy and St. Petersburg Junior College; Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of South Florida
Work Experience: U.S. Air Force Security Policeman; First African-American campus police officer in Pinellas County; Guidance counselor at St. Petersburg High School; State Representative in District 55 for 11 years; Chair of the Education Committee.
Issues: Education reform and his Blueprint 2000 plan,
Quote: "*I believe that by virtue of the fact that I happen to be African-American, it will send a good message and I could serve as a role model.*" The reporter who wrote the story in which the quote appeared pointed out that Jamerson's ascension to the Cabinet post would show the value of education as the "great equalizer" (Moss, December 11, 1993).
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Jennifer Carroll (R)

First African-American Republican elected to the Florida House since Reconstruction, 2003

First African-American to serve as Lieutenant Governor of Florida. Selected by Gov. Scott (R), 2010

Personal: Born 1959 in Trinidad, married with three children
Education: BA in political science from the University of New Mexico
Work Experience: Worked through the ranks of the U.S. Navy, two unsuccessful runs for U.S. Congress against Corrine Brown; head of state veterans division
Issues: Family values, veteran's issues, education reform

Quote: *"The voters are looking down the road with regard to their future and their children's future and who can best represent them. They are not looking at color. It's 'how can we better ourselves as a community. It's very encouraging" (Shoettler, April 22, 2003).*

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Florida State Legislature

The first African American to be elected to the state legislature in the post-Reconstruction era was Joe Lang Kershaw (D), elected in 1968. He was followed in 1970 by the first black female legislator, Gwen Cherry, a Miami attorney and FAMU graduate. Carrie Meek became the first black female state senator in 1982 and later the state's first black U.S. Congresswoman (1992). Dr. Arnett Girardeau was the first African-American male elected to the Florida Senate (1982). The first black to serve as Speaker pro tempore during the 1987 and 1988 sessions was Rep. James C. Burke (D), Miami. Sen. Les Miller (D), Tampa, was the first black minority party leader, selected in 2004.

By 2010, black representation in the Florida state legislature had become roughly proportional to the black percentage of the state's population. All black state senators and representatives have been Democrats, with the exception of Jennifer Carroll, a Republican from Jacksonville, elected in 2003 in a special election to fill a vacancy.

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Joe Lang Kershaw (D)

First African-American elected to the Florida House since Reconstruction, 1968

Personal: Born 1911, married with one son, died in 1999 of heart failure.
Education: Bachelors Degree from Florida A&M University; while a part-time janitor at the Capitol, he stood on the speaker's podium and pretended he was addressing the House of Representatives
Work Experience: High school civics teacher
Issues: Civil rights, fishing affordability,
Quote: *"If they won't let me study law, at least I'm going to see if I can make some laws"* (Rabin, November 10, 1999).
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Gwen Sawyer Cherry (D)

First African-American woman elected to the Florida House, 1970

Personal: Born in 1923, died in a car accident in 1979.
Education: Bachelors degree and JD from Florida A&M, Masters degree in public relations from New York University, first African American to attend the University of Miami School of Law.
Work Experience: High school math teacher, law professor at Florida A&M, the first black female to practice law in Dade county
Issues: Women's and civil rights, introduced the Equal Rights Amendment to the Florida House, prison reform
Quote: *"[Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry is] a champion for the rights of all people and a voice of reason and concern." – Former Florida Governor Bob Graham (Gwen Sawyer Cherry Black Women's Lawyer Association).*
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Dr. Arnett E. Girardeau (D)

First African-American elected to the Florida Senate since Reconstruction, 1982

Personal: Married with 2 children
Education: BA and DDS from Howard University
Work Experience: Dentist, Jacksonville Housing Authority, Florida House of Representatives
Issues: Worker's rights, prison reform, women's rights, black political representation
Quote: "*Blacks have always voted for white candidates. But, given a choice, blacks are going to support candidates that are competent and have a chance to win*" *(Herald Staff, October 1, 1982).*
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Phillip Brutus (D)

First Haitian elected to the Florida House of Representatives, 2000

Personal: Haitian-American; Born in 1957, divorced with four children
Education: BS from the University of Massachusetts, JD from Suffolk University Law School
Work Experience: Attorney, lost race for Dade County judgeship, lost race for Florida House in 1998
Issues: Haiti, affordable housing, education
Quote: "*I was always passionate about issues concerning racial equality, education, and living situations for foreigners and Haitians in America*" *(Seid, 2006).*
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United States Congress

Josiah Walls (R) was elected to Congress from Florida in 1867 during

Reconstruction. He served until 1876 and was the first African-American from his

state to serve in that body for over a century. In 1992, Florida elected Carrie Meek

(D), Alcee Hastings (D), and Corrine Brown (D) to Congress. Hastings and Brown

are still serving, while Meek retired in 2003 and her son, Kendrick Meek (D), took

her seat. When he ran for an open U.S. Senate seat in 2010, Fredrica Wilson (D) won

the election. Additionally, in 2010, Allen West, became the first Republican African

American elected to Congress from Florida since Josiah Walls.

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Carrie Meek (D)

First African-American woman elected to the Florida Senate since Reconstruction, 1982

First African-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress from Florida, 1992

Personal: Born in 1926, divorced with three children
Education: Bachelors degree from Florida A&M, MS from the University of Michigan
Work Experience: Teacher at Bethune Cookman College and Florida A&M University, special assistant to the vice president of Miami-Dade Community College, Elected as a state representative in 1979
Issues: Education, Haitian issues, affordable housing, advocate for senior citizens
Quote: *When it's really broken down, it doesn't bring me any acclamation to be the first. There should have been someone long before me, and there should have been more than Carrie. I'm sorry we have to make such a claim over the 'first.'..."I do have some rage and bitterness in me. In all candor, I do...And it comes to the surface when I see discrimination against anyone. It doesn't have to be against black people. Anyone" (Due, January 5, 1993).*
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Corrine Brown (D)

First African-American woman to be elected to U.S. Congress from Florida, 1992

Personal: Born in 1946, divorced with one daughter
Education: BS from Florida A&M, Masters and education specialist degree from University of Florida, Honorary Doctor of Law Degree from Edward Waters College

Work Experience: Served in the Florida House of Representatives for ten years, faculty at several colleges
Issues: Minority, African, and Haitian issues, Federal money for her district
Quote: *"I would not even be here if it was not for [Florida] A&M, I needed that nurturing" (Kallestad, October 5, 1992).*
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Alcee L. Hastings (D)

First African-American elected to U.S. Congress from
Florida since Reconstruction, 1992

Personal: Born in 1936, divorced, three children
Education: BA from Fisk University; Attended Howard
School of Law; JD from Florida A&M University
Work Experience: Attorney, lost in primary for U.S. Senate
in 1970, first African-American federal judge from Florida, later impeached,
lost in primary for the Public Service Commission.
Issues: Minority issues, education, immigration, healthcare, environment.
Quote: *"I was born in Overtown, I never thought I would live to see the day when we could put forth a candidate who could not be broken. That is why the system fears him so much. You couldn't send a person more representative of the plight of the black person in this country" – Lawyer H.T. Smith, Hastings supporter and community activist (Filkens, 1992).*
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Allen B. West (R)

First Republican African-American elected to U.S.
Congress from Florida since Reconstruction, 2010

Personal: Born in 1961. Married with two daughters
Education: BS from the University of Tennessee, MA
from Kansas State University in political science. MMAS
from U.S. Military Command and General Staff Officer's
College in political theory and military history.
Work Experience: 22 years in U.S. Army. Retired as Lieutenant Colonel.
Teacher, school principal.
Issues: Military, Israel, the National Debt, Taxes.
Quote: *"A person like myself, born and raised in the inner city of Atlanta,*

Georgia, to lower-middle-class parents. But I had the opportunity to get an education, to go and earn a commission in the United States Army, to serve for 22 years, to lead men and women in combat" (Fox News Network, 2009).
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Judicial Branch: Florida Supreme Court

Most statewide offices won by African Americans have been judicial retention elections. (In retention elections, voters simply vote to keep or turn out a justice or judge.) Florida's Supreme Court justices and Appellate Court judges are first appointed by the governor, then voted on by the electorate. Four blacks have served on the Florida Supreme Court. Joseph Hatchett, appointed by Governor Reubin Askew (D) in 1975, was Florida's first African-American Supreme Court justice. Additionally, when the voters retained him in 1976, he became the first African-American elected to statewide office in Florida. Leander Shaw, appointed by Gov. Bob Graham (D) in 1983, was the second appointed black Florida Supreme Court judge and the first to serve as Chief Justice. . Peggy Quince was the first African-American woman Supreme Court Justice and first black female to be elected to statewide office in Florida when the voters retained her. Governors Lawton Chiles and Jeb Bush (R) selected her in 1998 in a rare joint appointment.[4] Justice James E.C. Perry was appointed in 2009 by Gov. Charlie Crist (R).[5]The total number of black judges in the state's county, circuit, appeals, and Supreme Court increased from 46 in 1998 to 68 in 2006 (Jenkins and Tisch, 2007).

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[4] The appointment was made near the end of the Chiles' term, after Jeb Bush had already been elected to succeed Chiles.

[5] Later that year, Crist would decide to run for an open U.S. Senate seat as an Independent.

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Joseph W. Hatchett (D)

First African American male appointed to the Florida Supreme Court, 1975, by Gov. Reubin Askew (D)

First African American elected to statewide office in Florida and the South (retention election, 1976)

Personal: Born in 1932, 2 children
Education: AB from Florida A&M University; JD from Howard University
Work Experience: Officer in the U.S. Army, private practice attorney, assistant U.S. Attorney
Issues: Urban renewal, diversity, racism, youth issues
Quote: "*Growing up in a segregated society, the law, Judge Hatchett believed, would change America*" (Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 2007).
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Leander J. Shaw, Jr. (D)

First black Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, 2006; appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Governor Bob Graham (D), 1983.

Personal: African-American; Born in 1930, divorced and has 5 children **Education:** BA from West Virginia State College; JD from Howard University
Work Experience: Served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, professor at Florida A&M University law school, private practice attorney, Florida 1st District Court of Appeals judge
Issues: anti-electric chair, human rights, inequality
Quote*: "Every judge strives for justice. To be a good judge is a full-time job."* *(Colon, 2007).*
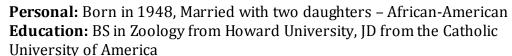

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Peggy A. Quince

First black woman appointed to the Florida Supreme Court, 1998; jointly selected by Gov. Lawton Chiles (D) and Gov.-elect Jeb Bush (R) in 1998—four days before Gov. Chiles' unexpected death.

First black woman elected to statewide office in Florida (retention election, 2000)

First black woman Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, 2008

Personal: Born in 1948, Married with two daughters – African-American
Education: BS in Zoology from Howard University, JD from the Catholic University of America
Work Experience: Attorney, Assistant Attorney General, first black woman to be appointed to a District Court of Appeals
Issues: Expert in death penalty cases, voting rights
Quote: *"Professionalism and diversity in the practice of law go hand-in-hand 'and you cannot really, truly be a professional if you are in the business of exclusion'" (Florida Bar News, February 1, 2000).*
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FINDINGS: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Table 1.1: Florida's Demographics Mirror the United States: Racial Composition, by Percentage

Race/Ethnicity	Florida	United States
White	75.0	72.4
Black or African-American	16.0	12.8
American Indian and Alaskan	0.4	0.9
Asian	2.4	4.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1	0.2
Some Other Race	3.6	6.2
Two or More Races	2.5	2.9
Hispanic or Latino	22.5	16.3

Source: U.S. Census 2010.

Table 1.2: African-American/Black population of Florida over Time, by Percentage

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2012
Percent	8.6	11.2	17.5	17.3	18.7	17.0	17.0	17.5

Source: U.S. Census 1950-2010

Table 1.3: The Total Population of Florida over Time.

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Population	2,771,000	4,952,000	6,791,000	9,746,000	12,938,000	15,982,378	19,251,691	23,406,525	28,685,769

Source: U.S. Census 1950-2010

Table 1.4: The Growth Rate of Florida over Time, by Percentage

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Growth Rate	46.1	78.7	37.1	43.5	32.7	23.5	20.5	21.6	22.6

Source: U.S. Census 1950-2010

FINDINGS: TRAILBLAZER COMMONALITIES

Table 2.1: Trailblazer Backgrounds

Trailblazer	Position	Year	Gender	Party	HBCU	Greek
	Executive					
Jesse McCrary	Secretary of State	1978	Male	Democrat	Yes	No
Doug Jamerson	Education Commissioner	1993	Male	Democrat	No	No
Jennifer Carroll	Lieutenant Governor	2010	Female	Republican	No	No
	Legislative					
Joe Lang Kershaw	FL House	1968	Male	Democrat	Yes	No
Gwen Sawyer Cherry	FL House	1970	Female	Democrat	Yes	Yes
Arnett Girardeau	FL Senate	1982	Male	Democrat	Yes	No
Phillip Brutus	FL House	2000	Male	Democrat	Yes	No
Carrie Meek	U.S. Congress	1992	Female	Democrat	Yes	Yes
Alcee Hastings	U.S. Congress	1992	Male	Democrat	Yes	Yes
Corrine Brown	U.S. Congress	1992	Female	Democrat	Yes	Yes
Allen West	U.S. Congress	2010	Male	Republican	No	No
	Judicial					
Joseph Hatchett	FL Supreme Court	1975	Male	Democrat	Yes	Yes
Leander Shaw	FL Chief Justice	1983	Male	Democrat	Yes	Yes
Peggy Quince	FL Chief Justice	1998	Female	Democrat	Yes	No
Total:			**9 M/ 5 W**	**12 D/ 2 R**	**11**	**6**
Percent:			**64%/36%**	**86%/14%**	**79%**	**43%**

Table 2.2: Trailblazer Professions

Trailblazer	Position	Year	Gender	Party	Teacher	Lawyer	Military
	Executive						
Jesse McCrary	Secretary of State	1978	Male	Democrat	No	Yes	Yes
Doug Jamerson	Education Commissioner	1993	Male	Democrat	No	No	No
Jennifer Carroll	Lieutenant Governor	2010	Female	Republican	No	No	Yes
	Legislative						
Joe Lang Kershaw	FL House	1968	Male	Democrat	Yes	No	No
Gwen Sawyer Cherry	FL House	1970	Female	Democrat	Yes	Yes	No
Arnett Girardeau	FL Senate	1982	Male	Democrat	No	No	No
Phillip Brutus	FL House	2000	Male	Democrat	No	Yes	No
Carrie Meek	U.S. Congress	1992	Female	Democrat	Yes	No	No
Alcee Hastings	U.S. Congress	1992	Male	Democrat	No	Yes	No
Corrine Brown	U.S. Congress	1992	Female	Democrat	Yes	No	No
Allen West	U.S. Congress	2010	Male	Republican	Yes	No	Yes
	Judicial						
Joseph Hatchett	FL Supreme Court	1975	Male	Democrat	No	Yes	Yes
Leander Shaw	FL Chief Justice	1983	Male	Democrat	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peggy Quince	FL Chief Justice	1998	Female	Democrat	No	Yes	No
Total:			9 M/ 5 W	12 D/ 2 R	6	7	5
Percent:			64%/36%	86%/14%	43%	50%	36%

Table 2.3: Trailblazer Political Factors

Trailblazer	Position	Year	Gender	Party	Race	Minority-Majority
	Executive					
Jesse McCrary	Secretary of State	1978	Male	Democrat	Appointed	No
Doug Jamerson	Education Commissioner	1993	Male	Democrat	Appointed	No
Jennifer Carroll	Lieutenant Governor	2010	Female	Republican	Appointed	No
	Legislative					
Joe Lang Kershaw	FL House	1968	Male	Democrat	Elected	Yes
Gwen Sawyer Cherry	FL House	1970	Female	Democrat	Elected	Yes
Arnett Girardeau	FL Senate	1982	Male	Democrat	Elected	Yes
Phillip Brutus	FL House	2000	Male	Democrat	Elected	Yes
Carrie Meek	U.S. Congress	1992	Female	Democrat	Elected	Yes
Alcee Hastings	U.S. Congress	1992	Male	Democrat	Elected	Yes
Corrine Brown	U.S. Congress	1992	Female	Democrat	Elected	Yes
Allen West	U.S. Congress	2010	Male	Republican	Elected	No
	Judicial					
Joseph Hatchett	FL Supreme Court	1975	Male	Democrat	Appointed	No
Leander Shaw	FL Chief Justice	1983	Male	Democrat	Appointed	No
Peggy Quince	FL Chief Justice	1998	Female	Democrat	Appointed	No
Total:			**9 M/ 5 W**	**12 D/ 2 R**	**8 A/6 E**	**6**
Percent:			**64%/36%**	**86%/14%**	**57%/43%**	**43%**

FINDINGS: HISTORICAL COMMONALITIES

The history of African-Americans continues to have an impact on their collective political attitudes and behaviors. Several of these trailblazers grew up during Jim Crow segregation. This, and other forms of discrimination, left a lasting impression on many of these leaders.

Poverty, Segregation, and Discrimination

Many of these politicians weathered severe racism in their lives. Doug Jamerson grew up in the poor and black "Gas Plant" area of St. Petersburg. Corrine Brown was raised in an impoverished black area of Jacksonville. Carrie Meek is the granddaughter of a slave and a daughter of a sharecropper and grew up in the poor "Black Bottom" neighborhood in segregated Tallahassee. This is merely a sampling of the types of conditions that many of these leaders had to face.

Meek addressed lasting sentiments by stating, "When I look and see what I endured, there's no wonder I have some scars, even though I don't see them. When things happened, my rage can come up quickly and that rage, I'm sure, is buried within me from all those years, all those years of living under the worst kind of segregation" ("Carrie Meek," 1996, p. 18). She further elaborates her history of discrimination and how it continues to affect her by stating, "I do have some rage and bitterness in me. In all candor, I do…And it comes to the surface when I see discrimination against anyone. It doesn't have to be against black people. Anyone" (Due, January 5, 1993). Rather than integrate the University of Florida, the state instead paid the tuition and transportation costs for Meek to attend the University of Michigan ("Carrie Meek," 1996, p. 19). Like Meek, many of those who witnessed

discrimination seek to stomp it out whenever encountered. This determination for equality is an instrumental trait for African-Americans, considering an attempt to make history, to posses.

FINDINGS: SOCIOLOGICAL COMMONALITIES

One of the most powerful indicators of trailblazer success is revealed as sociological and organizational patterns. Membership in several types of organizations offers networking and resources for a potential political run. Examples of the types of groups found to be particularly influential include black fraternities and sororities, the black church, and the NAACP. Additionally, many trailblazers' educational and professional backgrounds are extremely similar, with education, law, and military careers being heavily represented.

The Role of HBCU's and Black Greek Letter Organizations

The most consistent commonality among trailblazers, especially Democratic ones, is matriculation at a HBCU. Of the 14 candidates examined, 11 out of the 12 Democratic[6] figures went to an HBCU. Of those 11, 8 went to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) in Tallahassee. Leander Shaw did not attend the university, but taught at the FAMU law school before being appointed to the Florida Supreme Court.

FAMU was founded on October 3, 1887 as the State Normal College for Colored Students. Four years later, with the Second Morrill Act, FAMU became a land grant university and remains the only public HBCU in Florida. The school is

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[6] Although officially "non-partisan," the three judicial trailblazers, Leander Shaw, Joseph Hatchett, and Peggy Quince, are classified as Democrats based on who appointed them.

prestigious and has a proven track record of academic success. It has been able to become increasingly selective in its admissions process. As of 2001, FAMU had more black National Merit scholars than any other University in the nation, and the same total number as Harvard University of any race (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, p. 60). Additionally, according to the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant colleges, FAMU is a leading university in the number of doctoral degrees awarded annually.

The most prestigious HBCU in the nation, Howard, located in Washington D.C., educated several of these trailblazers. Five attended Howard University, including all four of the figures that were appointed to judgeships[7]. Additionally, Dr. Arnett Girardeau received his D.D.S. from Howard. Interestingly, the other major HBCU in the state of Florida, Bethune Cookman University was largely unrepresented. This could be due to its status as a small, private university and location in Daytona Beach, a less populated city than other Florida urban areas.

Particularly at FAMU, but in other HBCU's as well, these figures received a first-class education that stressed the importance of social and political action, while simultaneously developing extensive black networks. Former FAMU President Fredrick Humprhies gushed about the role his institution has played in developing politicians by stating "it stands as a testimony to the faith people have had in this institution to produce leaders in our society" (Kallestad, Oct. 5, 1992). He continued, reflecting on his own experiences at the school during the Civil Rights Movement, "When I was growing up, it was a time of great thought, great

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[7] This includes Joseph Hatchett, Leander Shaw, Peggy Quince, and impeached Federal Judge Alcee Hastings.

questioning. This university was on the forefront of raising very pertinent questions and giving leadership to…the greatest things going on in the state" (Kallestad, Oct. 5, 1992). He remembers "people looking at the political process … and asking questions about political representation," concluding that the political achievements of FAMU graduates "stands as a testimony to the faith people have had in this institution to produce leaders in our society" (Kallestad, Oct. 5, 1992).

Corrine Brown confirms the large role that FAMU played in her development. It was there that she and Carrie Meek met Gwen Sawyer Cherry, the first black woman elected to state legislature in Florida, and received her mentoring. Cherry introduced them to sorority life and politics. Combined with the events of the time, this began lit a fire for politics in the women. Brown recalls that "the board of regents took two or three programs… from FAMU. That told me we needed to be politically involved" (Kallestad, Oct. 5, 1992). Congresswoman Brown evaluates her time at FAMU very favorably, going as far as to proclaim that "I would not even be here if it wasn't for A&M. I needed that nurturing" (Kallestad, Oct. 5, 1992). Additionally, just two days after Cherry's untimely passing in 1979 in a car wreck, Meek received a call from Florida House Representative Joe Lang Kershaw urging her to run for the vacant seat. This plea, combined with the requests of her friends living in public housing developments, finally convinced Meek to throw her hat in the ring (Holly, September 10, 1992). Throughout the careers of Meek and Brown, they would carry the path-breaker torch handed to them by Cherry.

The Black Church

Like the vast majority of politicians in this nation, each of the figures analyzed identified as Christian. However, many reported their denomination as African Methodist Episcopal (AME) or Baptist, sects with particularly strong black followings. While the church was not directly involved in any of these candidates' campaigns, they were utilized in more modern ways. Consistent with the literature (Billingsley, 1999; Harris, 1999), candidates such as Corrine Brown registered new voters and mobilized existing ones on Sundays from a pulpit. Perhaps due to her membership in the Republican Party, which places a premium on faith, Sunday-school teacher Jennifer Carroll was the only trailblazer who emphasized her religion in the campaign (Taylor, Oct. 15, 1999). Despite that, each drew resources and built bases from local black churches during their campaigns.

The NAACP

Without the traditional white avenues to develop leadership, some black politicians learned organizational skills from civil rights groups, such as the NAACP. While nearly every trailblazer is a member, some were much more active than others. Most notably, Jennifer Carroll began her involvement in politics by serving as Treasurer of a local chapter, and Phillip Brutus , while serving on the General Counsel. The NAACP performs many of the same roles as the church for these candidates. Prior to a political run, figures are able to gain leadership experience, and later utilize the organization as a way to reach voters and network with the community, especially those African-Americans well connected in the local political scene.

Black Women

Confirming previous research findings, female African-American politicians proportionally better represented than white women. 5 of the 14 trailblazers studied were women, including 2 out of the 3 first United States Congress members. Additionally, 50% of African-American Floridians to serve in the House of Representatives to 2011 have been women. This is a national trend, as in the 106th Congress, 12 of the 38 (37.5%) black members are female compared to only 12% of the entire body (Tate, 2003, p.40). The lone black to win a non merit-retention statewide election in Florida is Jennifer Carroll, a female.

There have been many theories offered for women's underrepresentation including some as to why African-Americans are more resistant to these forces (Tate, 1997). The simple answer is that few women run and fewer women win, but the causes of this may be both social and structural.

The socialization theory was advanced by Darcy, Welch, and Clark (1996), explore the possibility that "the traditional role assigned to women makes it difficult for them to enter public office. The role of homemaker and mother, as traditionally defined is isolated from and perhaps mutually exclusive of many societal roles, including intensive political activity" (p. 106). Black women may be excluded from this because of historical and social differences from whites. When white women were protesting to work, African-American mothers held two or three jobs.

Scholars rejecting that view in favor of more structural explanations, note that political leaders come from the elite class that is lacking women. However, most black politicians come from modest backgrounds, evening the playing field, especially in minority-majority districts. A third explanation is straightforward

gender bias, (Kahn, 1996) with black women possibly being better equipped to handle it after enduring discrimination early and often throughout their life. Interestingly, research has shown that black women tend to have higher levels of political ambition than white women (Darcy & Hadley, 1988). Most likely it is a combination of these factors that have produced more success for black females than white ones.

Further differentiating politically active African-American women from their white counterparts is the fact that "a large number of black women legislators serve as single mothers" (Tate, 2003, p. 47), a trend that matches our results as both Corrine Brown and Carrie Meek were able to manage the pressures of a political career with the responsibilities of a single parent (Gill, 1997). Again, this may relate to the strong female tradition of managing many responsibilities that is found in the African-American community (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996).

Professional Experience

The vast majority of African-American trailblazers that were studied come from the traditionally revered fields of education and law. These two institutions have been historically viewed as the best vehicles for the collective advancement of blacks in an oppressive American society. Accordingly, "growing up in a segregated society, the law, Judge [Joseph] Hatchett believed, would change America" (Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 2007). Additionally, former Florida Education Commissioner Doug (Tim) Jamerson had a strong conviction that education could serve as the "great equalizer" in this nation (Moss, December 11, 1993).

The first African-American to be elected to the Florida Legislature since the Reconstruction Era, Joe Lang Kershaw, a high school civics teacher, once told his son (who went onto become a lawyer himself) that "if they won't let me study law, at least I'm going to see if I can make some laws" (Rabin, November 10, 1999). The intersection of interest in law and education is not unique to Kershaw. Many trailblazers, such as Gwen Sawyer Cherry and Leander Shaw held positions as professors at the FAMU Law School. The only Democratic trailblazer that has not been an educator or attorney is Arnett Girardeau, who was a dentist prior to seeking office.

The two Republican conservatives that were examined, Jennifer Carroll and Allen West, have an alternate background. The Republican Party typically enjoys high levels of military support, so it is not surprising that these candidates both come from an Armed Forces background. And while three Democratic trailblazers served in the military also[8], their stints were short compared to the twenty-plus year careers of the Republican trailblazers.

Jennifer Carroll was born in Trinidad and immigrated to New York at the age of eight. Shortly after graduating from high school, she enlisted in the Navy in 1979 and quickly rose through the ranks and received glowing performance reviews. In 1999 she retired from the Navy with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. She became involved in politics shortly thereafter.

Allen West, the other Republican trailblazer, was born to a father that was a career military man, as was his brother. He is the third of four consecutive

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[8] Jesse McCrary, Joseph Hatchett, and Leander Shaw.

generations of his family to serve in the military. Accordingly, West entered his high

school's JROTC program and enlisted in the Army in 1983. By 2002, he was the

commander of the 2d Battalion 20th Field Artillery, 4th Infantry Division. Then in

2004, he came under scrutiny for using a gun to coerce an Iraqi police officer. While

he was relieved of his post with full benefits, he became a conservative hero. A letter

of support signed by 95 members of Congress was sent to the Secretary of the Army,

in his support (Sontag, 2004, May 27). This national recognition helped transition

him from the military to political office. He is now a favorite of the emerging Tea

Party movement and often speaks at their rallies. This support has even moved him

to consider a Presidential run in 2012.

FINDINGS: POLITICAL COMMONALITIES

Equally important to the backgrounds of these trailblazers is how they were

able to successfully navigate through the political world. Despite significant

roadblocks in their path such as discrimination, certain circumstances have proven

to increase

Appointments vs. Elections

Due, in part, to the existing party competition for the votes of minority

groups, it is far more common for African-Americans to be appointed to seats

serving large districts, than being competitively elected to them. Jesse McCrary and

Doug Jamerson have been appointed to statewide executive positions, but could not

keep the seat when pitted against white challengers in electoral contests. This also

explains the comparatively large percentage of recent Florida Supreme Court

appointees that are black. Currently, 2 out of the 7 sitting justices, or 28.6 percent

are African-American.   Weak Governors often see benefits from minority appointments, especially if facing re-election. This prevalence of black Florida Supreme Court justices, however, could also be influenced by the relatively large amount of successful black lawyers. The most notable success for a black candidate running in a statewide election has been Jennifer Carroll, who in 2010, was elected as Lieutenant Governor running on the same ticket as Governor Rick Scott. However, black Republicans such as Carroll fare much better than Democrats in courting the white vote that dominates statewide races.

Districts

Consistent with Tate's (2003) findings, blacks running for Congress are almost exclusively elected in "minority-majority" districts.   These districts were designed to achieve more equal representation in legislative bodies. While strides are being made, there remains an unwillingness of conservative and moderate whites to vote for liberal black politicians. Similarly, these gerrymandered districts are Democrat dominated, and have never elected a Republican. Jennifer Carroll tried twice to unseat Corrine Brown in a minority-majority district, without any success. However, supporting the notion that conservative blacks fare better with white voters, she won her race for the state house in a district in which whites outnumbered blacks 8 to 1 (Shoettler, 2003, April 23). Additionally, Alan West's 22nd Florida district is 82.3 percent white and only 3.8 percent black (U.S. Census Bureau). These conservative blacks may be seen as less threatening and tend to have more traditional backgrounds. The type of district, especially for black Democrats is the most important factor for electoral success.

Redistricting

Redistricting in both 1982 and 1992 played a major role in increasing the number of African-Americans in state and congressional offices. Every black path-breaker elected in Florida since 1982 (with the exception of Republican Jennifer Carroll) has won in a "minority access" district, drawn specifically to enhance the opportunities of minorities to elect a candidate of their choice under federal Voting Rights Act requirements.

Carrie Meek's election to the Florida Senate and then to the U.S. House of Representatives is an excellent example of how the redistricting process has been used by African-Americans to advantage black candidates. While still a House member, Meek worked closely with former state Senate President Dempsey Barron (D) to create a black majority Senate district that she won in 1982 (United Press International, 1982). Ten years later, she was a key figure in constructing the state's congressional redistricting plan that created a black district from which she was elected to Congress (1992). While in the Florida Legislature, Meek was referred to by some as "the most powerful black politician in Florida" and identified by a former speaker of the house as "one of the fix or six people who could turn votes" (Ellis & Hawks, 1987, p. 80).

The congressional redistricting plan that was put in place in 1992 created three safe black districts from which Meek (D), Corrine Brown (D), and Alcee Hastings (D) were elected—the first blacks sent to Congress from Florida since Reconstruction. Nearly twenty years later, the only change has been that Carrie Meek's son Kendrick "inherited" her seat upon her retirement in 2002. Not only

have these trailblazers held on to their seats, none has even faced a serious

challengers.

Injustice and Discrimination

A deep belief that he had been wronged by the white establishment after

being impeached and removed from a federal district judgeship in 1988 drew

former federal judge Alcee Hastings into the political fray a third time in 1992[9]. The

perception that a member of the African-American community has been attacked or

treated unfairly by the government, media, or white-dominated political

establishment has been shown to energize black voters and activists. This occurred

when Hastings ran for Congress in 1992, three years after being removed from the

bench[10]. Hastings attributed his impeachment and removal to his frequent criticism

of the Reagan Administration for being racist. He articulated this sentiment on the

campaign trail, remarking to voters in the majority black congressional district he

was seeking to represent in Washington, that the government had conspired to "get

this [n-----] because he's outspoken," and citing the judiciary's long history of

"institutional racism" (Grimm, September 13, 1992). Black voters reacted positively

to this message as reflected in the words of H.T. Smith, a lawyer and community

activist: "I was born in Overtown, I never thought I would live to see the day when

we could put forth a candidate who could not be broken. That is why the system

fears him so much. You couldn't send a person more representative of the plight of

the black person in this country" (Filkens, October 10, 1992). Ultimately, Hastings'

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[9] Hastings had previously run and lost races for the U.S. Senate in 1970 and for the Public Service
Commission in 1974 before President Carter appointed him as a federal district judge in 1979.
[10] His removal was eventually voided by a federal judge.

fiery rhetoric led to an above-average black turnout, which helped him prevail in his runoff race against fellow Democrat Lois Frankel, a white female (Bousquet, September 24, 1992).

The Racialization of Primary Races in Minority-Majority Districts

In their bids to become the first African American members of Congress from Florida since reconstruction, both Corrine Brown and Alcee Hastings faced liberal, white primary challengers, Andy Johnson and Lois Frankel, respectively. Both were drawn to run in the district because of the near certainty that a Democrat would win these majority-minority districts (Tate, 2003). Both white candidates had been longtime allies to the black community, but the notion of a white politician winning a district created "for them" provoked a strong reaction from Brown and Hastings.

The 1992 Democratic primary race compelled Paul Anderson of *The Miami Herald* to proclaim that "it's fitting that the ugliest congressional campaign in Florida is taking place in the ugliest of the state's 23 new U.S. House districts" (August 23, 1992). He was referring to District 3, which in order give blacks a chance at representation spanned from Jacksonville to Orlando to Ocala, spanning 14 counties. 55 percent of the district's registered voters were black and three-fourths were registered Democrats (Anderson, August 23, 1992). The race had two other candidates in addition to Brown and Johnson; Dr. Arnett Girardeau and school guidance counselor Glennie Mills. As the only white person running, Johnson claimed that he was "the blackest candidate in the race" (Anderson, August 23, 1992). In response, Girardeau called him an "opportunist" and accused him of "patronizing" black voters (Anderson, August 23, 1992). After recruiting Rev. Jesse

Jackson and Carrie Meek to help her campaign, Brown eventually won the nomination a runoff with Johnson. She went on to handily defeat Republican Don Weidner in the heavily liberal district.

The 1992 Democratic primary in District 23 between Alcee Hastings and liberal white, Lois Frankel was similarly racially charged. The district had a similar demographic composition to Corrine Brown's District 3, as it was 52 percent black and 68 percent Democrat (Nickens, July 11, 1992). While Frankel contended that her being dissuaded to run in the minority district "is like Alcee Hastings is saying 'go away' because of the color of my skin," Hastings charged her with being an "opportunist who placed her political ambition in the way of minority representation" (Pugh, September 20, 1992). Just like Johnson, however more nuanced in her approach, Frankel then claimed that she had "attended more black forums than any of the others" (Pugh, September 20, 1992). Just days later, speaking of Frankel, Hasting proclaimed that "the bitch is a racist" (Herald Staff, September 24, 1992) and called her a "carpetbagger" (Pugh, September 26, 1992). On Election Day, Frankel received 9 of 10 votes from predominantly white precincts, with Hastings doing equally well in black ones on his way to victory (Pugh, October 11, 1992). Despite past alliances, whites running in predominately black districts are commonly attacked and painted as opportunists attempting to take advantage of the black community. These tactics are shown to be successful and may even increase black voter turnout.

CONCLUSIONS

The black social institutions that have been developed throughout this nation's history in response to discrimination have latently led to the creation of expansive black networks. These afro-centric networks and kinships from HBCU's, civil rights groups, and black Greek organizations have proven to be particularly useful to winning elections in minority-majority districts. And although discrimination was meant to suppress the political ambitions of African-Americans, it has created expansive social institutions, like the black church, that have effectively replicated, and in some instances surpassed white institutions. Additionally, the long history of discrimination against African-Americans has served to make many passionate about social justice. Socially and organizationally, blacks have adapted to decreased opportunity in the white world by creating their own pipelines for leadership development.

Politically, the district and milieu have to be very specifically tuned, at this point, to allow an African-American candidate to win, especially for liberal blacks. Great similarities have been observed concerning the nature of "minority access" districts, racial gerrymandering, appointments and elections, and the types of campaigns that certain districts provoke. By studying patterns of African-Americans of each political party and these findings should help inform future generations of the ways that blacks can gain and exert power in politics.

Future Trends

Although it is impossible to say definitively, using this research, predictions can be made about whether these patterns will continue to hold up. It is likely that African-Americans will continue to raise their standing in society and with that

more options will become available. This may threaten black specific institutions, like HBCU's and the black church, that were primarily developed as an alternative to closed opportunities in the white society. Therefore, they may lose influence on the black community. There is now less discrimination for blacks to be raised through, and that may result in a more passive approach to political involvement. Another possibility is that as blacks continue to advance and become more economically similar to whites; their methods of political participation will evolve to reflect that change.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the future, researchers should focus on identifying trends in their state and determining whether they match the conclusions of this study. While the demographics of Florida are unique, it is expected that other researchers, especially in the South, find similar patterns. Using a triangulation of data has been extremely beneficial, and it is recommended that future researchers continue to use qualitative and quantitative analysis. This research design allows researchers to identify broad patterns while still not omitting individual details. Research on this topic is imperative for a multitude of reasons and should be performed in states across the nation.

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