THE ELECTION OF BARACK OBAMA

How He Won

Baodong Liu

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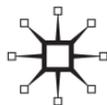
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Contents

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Illustrations

Tables

Preface

When Barack Obama gave his name-making keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, few people could predict his stunning victory only four years later in the historic presidential election. Indeed, Obama's election as the first African American president was so "sudden" to the nation and even "shocking" to many experienced political observers that how he was elected continues to invite public fascination and intellectual scrutiny. Some argued that voters voted based on emotions rather than rationality. Therefore, Obama won because of his soaring rhetoric instead of his substance. Some even suggested that Obama won because of voters' psychological need to redeem the nation from its history of racial inequality. Some simply believed that the Obama success can only be explained by pure luck because of the unpopularity of President George W. Bush and the nation's economic crisis. Some were puzzled by, and they deeply questioned, the way the Democratic primaries were conducted. Perhaps the most memorable accusation against the Obama candidacy was made by Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman on a major party's presidential ticket. Ferraro commented to a Los Angeles newspaper on March 7, 2008: "If he [Barack Obama] was a woman—of any color—he would not be in this position. He happens to be very lucky to be who he is. And the country is caught up in the concept."[1]

Conceivably, Obama ran his well-organized and technologically innovative campaign based on an inspiring message of hope that intentionally appealed to Americans' emotions and their deep-seated creed of "created equal." This book, however, will show how Obama's 2008 racial coalition was more than just voter emotion. I demonstrate that voters were rational, basing their choices on their perceived group interests. Their voting decisions still reflected their best voting strategy in their racial contexts given the choices available. To indicate that voters, in the words of V. O. Key Jr., "are not fools," however, by no means downplays the vision and effectiveness of Obama's own campaign strategy to win in the first place.[2] Arguably, Obama won the White House by defeating two of the most powerful political figures in recent decades and their massive campaign organizations—Hillary Clinton in the primaries and John McCain in the

general election. This book shows how and why his campaign strategy, both sequential and spatial, worked.

To go beyond voters' emotion, I followed Rodney Hero's call that "more scholarly attention needs to focus on the 'big picture' of state politics, and states need to be seen as central to the 'big picture' of U.S. politics."[3] I examine the "big picture" by returning to how two major parties compete against each other by building *winning* coalitions in the coalition space, and how voters make rational judgments to protect their own interests by joining coalitions. This book, in particular, is about how *minimum* winning coalitions can be built with race as the center of contention. Expanding William Riker's original work on political coalitions to the multiracial politics in the new era, I explain why a *multiracial* coalition based on voter rationality is central to Obama's groundbreaking victory in 2008.[4]

To trace the effect of time, I use both macro and micro approaches. At the macro level, I link Obama's winning coalition to the history of the two-party system in the United States and the profound impact of racial demographic changes since 1965. At the micro level, this book pays attention to the details of the hard-fought primaries in terms of the sequence of the election. Contrary to the popular momentum theory, which emphasizes the early victories in Iowa and New Hampshire and media manipulation of uninformed voters, my analysis shows how Obama's politics of hope actually worked. More importantly, this book demonstrates that "place" or "state context" matters. In other words, this book is about not only time but also space. It is a book that stresses the importance of political geography.

To show states' central role in this political geography, I especially draw inspirations from several contextual theorists who provided competing theories on black density, racial diversity, political culture, and social capital.[5] In doing so, this book explains why Obama's "red state" strategy helped him win the highest office. Obama's success reveals how these scholars' works captured the complexity and vitality of American democracy, and why none of these works can explain the "big picture" individually.

By examining the racial groups' voting choices over time and across space, the purpose of this book, thus, is twofold: first, to document the Obama multiracial coalition from both the historic and spatial perspectives; and second, to explain voters' rationality throughout the election.

To accomplish these goals, I heavily rely on not only the exit poll data regarding specific voter groups' voting preferences in 2008 but also longitudinal national surveys, such as the National Election Study (NES), General Social Surveys (GSS), Gallup polls, U.S. Census data, and Real-ClearPolitics survey average scores of the Electoral College votes prior

to the November 4 general election. The book also takes advantage of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and other techniques to visualize the election outcome and vote choice data. Wherever it is possible, the book avoids detailed mathematic and statistical modeling in order to provide easy access for not only professional researchers across disciplines but also general interest readers. Though mathematic and statistical models can be found in Chapter 2, where the minimum winning coalition line and the rate of change are computed, and in Chapter 6 where a racial tension index, based on a principal component analysis, is developed, readers who wish to focus on the theoretical and empirical work of the book can simply skip these short sections of mathematic and statistical presentations.

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Acknowledgments

Emotion and Rationality

An Introduction

> What kinds of appeals enable a candidate to win the favor of the great god,
> The People? What circumstances move voters to shift their preferences in
> this direction or that? What clever propaganda tactic or slogan led to this
> result? What mannerism or oratory or style of rhetoric produced another
> outcome?
>
> —V. O. Key Jr., *The Responsible Electorate:*
> *Rationality in Presidential Voting*

WITNESSING BARACK OBAMA'S HISTORIC WIN TO BE THE NATION'S first African American president, Reverend Jesse Jackson, who ran twice for president in 1984 and 1988, became noticeably emotional on November 4, 2008. Tears streamed down Jackson's face after Barack Obama started his victory speech at Chicago's Grant Park with a profound statement about the power of American democracy: "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time; who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer."[1]

Few could predict the magnitude of the emotions that the Obama candidacy would bring to the nation and the world when Obama announced his candidacy for president on February 10, 2007, in Springfield, Illinois. Barack Obama drew record-number crowds almost everywhere he went. To name just two—there were 75,000 in Portland, Oregon, before he was nominated and more than 100,000 in Denver, Colorado, a week before the general election. A television audience of 42.4 million people watched Obama and McCain accept their parties' nominations. Fundraising and spending also showed the significance of this historical election. McCain and Obama amassed $1 billion combined over the course of their candidacies. In particular, Obama raised $645 million from 3.2 million donors while McCain, though significantly disadvantaged, also

collected more than $372 million in contributions and received $84 million in public funds.[2]

"The candidates are more interesting. The media is bigger. The technology is better. Participation has increased dramatically," said Bob Kerrey, a former Democratic senator from Nebraska who once considered running for the presidency himself. "This is the first global campaign that the United States has had. People will always remember this as an extremely important election."[3]

The enthusiastic endorsement of *The Economist*, perhaps, best represented Barack Obama's oversea influence. "*The Economist* does not have a vote, but if it did, it would cast it for Mr. Obama. We do so wholeheartedly."[4] For many Americans, Obama vividly displayed his foreign appeal on the national television when more than 200,000 people attended an Obama speech in Berlin in July 2008.

Running on the message of hope, Obama showed a great command of public attention and emotions. The media, perhaps for their own ratings and popularity, also focused on the emotional aspect of voting, rather than the structural changes that took place in the electorate. On December 10, 2007, less than a month before the first 2008 primary in Iowa, *Time* magazine published Shelby Steele's highly publicized article in which he stressed Obama's unique appeal: "Barack Obama is a plausible presidential candidate today because he is a natural born bargainer. Obama—like Oprah—is an opportunity for whites to think well of themselves, to give themselves one of the most self-flattering feelings a modern white can have: that they are not racist. He is the first to apply the bargainer's charms to presidential politics."[5]

As a biracial person himself, Steele, the author of many best-selling books including *White Guilt*, believed that he found the reason for white enthusiasm toward the Obama candidacy. That enthusiasm, for Steele, grounded itself on the psychological need of the nation to give minorities, especially African Americans, a chance to heal its past racial wounds, rather than on rational judgment of Obama's true qualifications.

Less than three months after the publication of Steele's *Time* article and his *A Bound Man*,[6] the nation saw Obama on the verge of becoming the first black nominee for president from a major political party. David Wright of *ABC News* described the mood of the nation in his report from Houston, Texas, on February 19, 2008: "People's hope has been raised so high: Young people hoping that Obama can redeem politics from sheer partisanship; Blacks hoping that they can finally achieve Martin Luther King's Dream; White people hoping that he can redeem America from the sin of slavery and segregation."[7]

For sure, Obama's primary opponent, Hillary Clinton, quickly recognized the emotion at Obama's rallies. She launched focused attacks on Obama, demanding that the nation take note of Obama's lack of experience. Furthermore, after Obama won the Iowa caucuses, "Clinton charged that Obama was raising 'false hopes' with his soaring rhetoric that emphasized ends over means."[8] Clinton's call for rationality and fair judgment based on sound experiences and public records, however, failed to register with enough voters in the primaries.

In the summer of 2008, the Republican campaign, fully aware of the emotional factor in the Obama nomination, argued forcefully against the danger of being too emotional and thus irrational. McCain's nationally televised commercials ridiculed Obama's bold claim that "We are who we have been waiting for."[9] Jerome Corsi, the main author of the previous best seller *Unfit for Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak out against John Kerry*, which was regarded by many as a major reason for Kerry's failure to win the 2004 presidential election, published his new instant best seller, *The Obama Nation: Leftist Politics and the Cult of Personality*, on August 13 of 2008.[10] For Corsi, "in contrast to Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama has not been vetted, not even by Democrats." Thus, Corsi's new 364-page book was designed to show Obama's "extensive connections with Islam and with radical racial politics, and continuing connection with Kenya" and his "emergence in Chicago politics through the Saul Alinsky School of radical community organizing."[11]

Before the general election on November 4, 2008, David Freddoso, a reporter from National Review Online, the Evans-Novak Political Report, and *Human Events*, published *The Case against Barack Obama* in which he provided a detailed scrutiny of Obama's policymaking history.[12] Freddoso insisted that "Barack Obama has demonstrated great skill in fundraising and in delivering speeches that have been carefully written, parsed, and tested in advance to achieve maximum emotional impact. But even if the money helps, the goodwill of good oratory cannot last forever."[13] Summarizing the differences between Obama and Reagan, Freddoso suggested that "Reagan had a clear philosophy that everyone understood," while Obama's campaign had "adopted a conscious strategy of sticking to rhetoric over issues and winning an election based on personality." For Obama, Freddoso predicted "the disappointment will come as soon as his amorphous political rhetoric crystallizes into something of substance."[14]

That disappointment, of course, did not come. Obama won the election with 53 percent of the votes. No minority candidate had ever achieved the level of electoral success as did Obama. Jesse Jackson's run for president twenty years ago came closest, but he won only seven primaries

and four caucuses in the Democratic nomination contest. Moreover, Obama proved that he was able to build a multiracial coalition to regain the White House, the highest prize, for his party. In comparison, Obama did better than both Al Gore and John Kerry, the two previous Democratic nominees for president. Obama gained more vote shares in almost all states with the only exception of seven Deep South and border states: Arkansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Alabama. Obama won seven more states than did Al Gore in 2000. Colorado, Nevada, Indiana, Ohio, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida became Democratic, which surprised even seasoned political observers. Compared to 2004, Kerry did better in only five Southern states, but Obama won eight more states than Kerry did.

The exit poll showed that whites cast 74 percent of the total votes in the 2008 general election. More than 38 million of these white votes were cast for Obama, which constituted 61 percent of Obama's total votes. This impressive level of white support seemed to support Shelby Steele's "white guilt" thesis, which argued that Obama played the race card so successfully that white voters wanted to feel good about themselves by voting for black "bargainers."

Interestingly, Steele himself predicted that despite his appeal to white guilt, Obama would eventually fail to win the White House. Steele passionately argued in *A Bound Man* that "Barack Obama emerged into a political culture that needed him more as an icon than as a man. He has gone far because the need is great. But this easy appeal has also been his downfall. It is a seduction away from character and conviction."[15] Steele published his book shortly before the 2008 Democratic primaries. After its publication, Steele appeared in national media such as CNN's Lou Dobbs's show to actively promote his notion of white guilt, and to remind white voters of the danger of voting based on emotion rather than rationality.

White Guilt and the Affirmative Action Program

Shelby Steele's white guilt thesis invites a deeper question about whether Obama's historic win was due to his "special racial advantage." Many studies have empirically shown that open racism as an ideology has largely lost its moral appeal to whites.[16] Whites are also willing to acknowledge that minorities were long suppressed in the nation's political history, which played a role in today's socioeconomic inequality between racial groups.[17] But has this willingness in addressing the history of inequality and condemning racism been translated to a political "goodwill" to provide more "special" opportunities for minorities to "catch up" with the white majority?

The white guilt thesis implies that Obama's historic win in 2008 was based on the willingness of whites to give minorities a special chance. Thus, the focus of this white guilt thesis is not about whether Obama was qualified for the job. It is about whether whites were willing to give him a chance. Political scientists James Ceaser, Andrew Busch, and John Pitney argued that "race provided an enormous reservoir of goodwill and a source of moral authority for Obama with large parts of the educated white professional classes. To look to an African American as a leader (and for this group, a multiracial person was just as important) was a way of participating in historical progress."[18] More importantly, Ceaser et al. suggested that "it was such feelings [or goodwill], so strong among large segments of the Democratic professional class, that helped ignite Obama's campaign in the Democratic contests and that led many to abandon Hillary Clinton."[19]

In making such a strong argument about Obama's advantage as an African American and a multiracial person over his white opponent, Ceaser et al. never provided any empirical data from the 2008 election to prove the translation of so-called white guilt into real Obama votes. A more serious question for the white guilt thesis (or for those who believe that Obama was "chosen" because of the goodwill of white voters) is: how strong can this goodwill be when it comes to the issue of white voters' own interests? Are white voters willing to elect a minority person even when they "perceive" a threat from this minority candidate to the overall white interests? Does Obama represent such a threat? Or did the 2008 election indeed represent a true era of "postracial politics"?

Contrary to the white guilt thesis, it is also possible that the Obama campaign in 2008 actually heightened many whites' feeling of minorities taking advantage of the political system. Instead of a sense of white guilt, this white resentment against "minority favoritism" or "unfair advantage" might have led to white backlash against Obama, and the Democratic Party, who might otherwise have won even bigger electoral margin in 2008. This way of interpreting the election outcome seems logical, especially considering the "extreme" unpopularity of President George W. Bush, the rapid decline of the Republican Party's electoral fortune, as well as the economic meltdown before the election; yet John McCain still managed to win 46 percent of the total votes. For about a month, McCain even led Obama in national polls in the summer of 2008 (see Chapter 7 for more details). In an American Political Science Association symposium titled *The Economy, Obama, and the 2008 Election*, seven political scientists concluded that the deteriorating economy in the fall of 2008 helped elect Barack Obama. However, the symposium editor,

Michael Lewis-Beck, also warned readers: "Of course, there are limits to the economic explanation for the Obama triumph . . . a neglected factor that could have blunted the economic effect, strong as it appears to be, is racism."[20]

For sure, the nation's long history of racial inequality "demands" whites to consider their own interests.[21] If the feeling of white guilt is a natural consequence of such a history, as Steele and others insisted, would whites vote for a minority person even against their own interests? Is there a feeling of "zero-sum" game in that the minorities' gain would lead to whites' loss in the political system? Does the election of Obama represent that ultimate gain for the minorities at the expenses of the majority whites?

To answer these questions, this book relies on empirical data. In this chapter, I use the public opinion surveys as a preliminary analysis to find important clues about whites' reaction to government-sponsored "racially sensitive" programs (the actual 2008 election data, of course, will be analyzed in the rest of the book). In this regard, to be sure, the data available so far have all pointed to the overwhelming disapproval of supermajority of whites toward racially based public policies. The affirmative action program, for example, has never been popular among the white population.[22] Figure 1.1 shows the continuing rejection of whites toward the affirmative action program based on the National Election Study (NES) data. Though white Republicans were more likely to take the anti–affirmative action position, white Democrats also strongly disapproved of the policy. The finding suggests that race-related public policies aiming to help minorities are likely to be perceived by most whites, regardless of their party affiliations, as injustices against white interests.

Certainly, the 2008 presidential election was not about the affirmative action policy. A vote for Obama was not an equivalent of voting for affirmative action. However, if the white guilt theory holds true (i.e., whites indeed voted for Obama because of their "reservoir of goodwill" as Ceaser et al. argued), then it is hard to imagine such a strong and consistent rejection of the supermajority white voters against the affirmative action program in the past. In a way, affirmative action also demands the same goodwill from whites, and the implementation of affirmative action is based on the notion that the nation can heal its racial wounds of the past and build a future of "created equal" by giving minorities a special opportunity. In his controversial commencement address given at Howard University on June 4, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson offered perhaps the "most-cited" rationale for affirmative action:

> You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "you
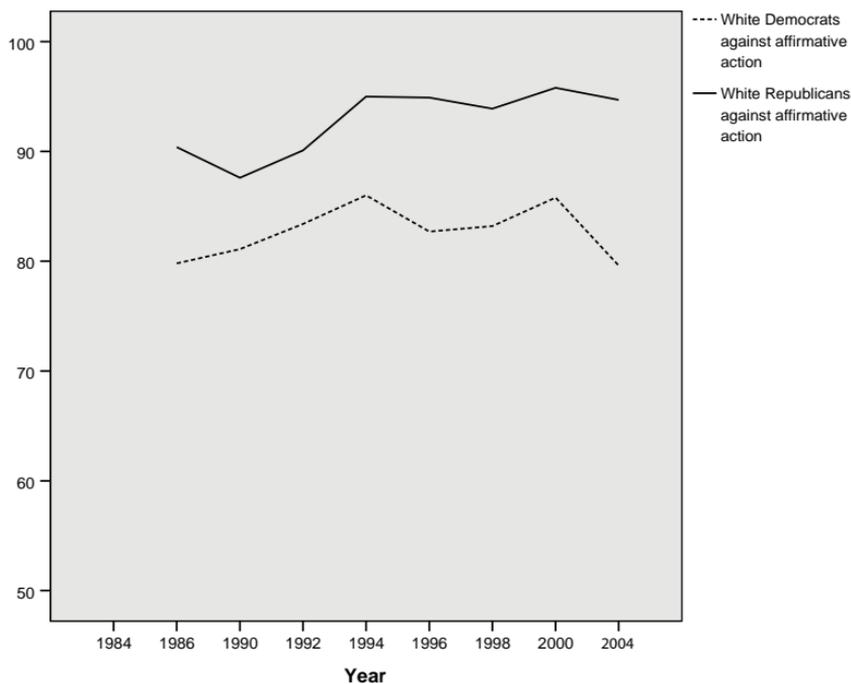
Figure 1.1 White attitude toward affirmative action, NES 1986–2004

are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates. This is the next and the more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity . . . not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result.[23]

As it turned out, President Johnson's idea of "equality as a fact," has never been popular among most whites, whose understanding of equality has never been "equality as a result." Most whites, as Paul Frymer indicated, have especially opposed policies from which "blacks are benefiting 'unfairly.'"[24] Why do some people have to sacrifice their own interests for the interests of others? The affirmative action program, in the minds of many, violates the basic principle of equality itself that the country stands for. As I will show in this book, politics in general and election in particular, have often been perceived as a "zero-sum" game by voters.

For sure, just because of the nation's past history of racial inequality does not automatically lead to the white willingness to elect a black person to occupy the presidency, the most powerful office in the modern democratic world. Several black candidates including Rev. Jesse Jackson had run and

failed for the presidency before Obama. One may argue that Barack Obama was more qualified to be the president than was Rev. Jesse Jackson. But if so, then the white guilt theory is inaccurate because it assumes that Obama won due to his emotional appeal and the "moral authority" of racial progress, rather than his true qualifications. Regardless, it is important to keep in mind that most white voters did not vote for Obama in the 2008 general election. Equally important, most white voters did not vote for Obama in the 2008 Democratic primaries either. How, then, did Obama win the historic race? This book presents both a theory of racial coalition and an empirical study of party competition that takes into account both white racial interests and perceived minority threat to such interests.

Before we carefully scrutinize the historic 2008 election, it is worth noting that Figure 1.1 is based on public opinion data about the affirmative action program. Arguably, voting is fundamentally different from public opinions. A voter, for example, may still vote for a candidate even if he or she has a negative opinion on the candidate. In this case, voting may be strategic or it may simply be a situation of "no better alternative available." At any rate, the unprecedented success of the Obama candidacy begs a question on the decision-making process of American voters in 2008. Why do voters support a particular candidate such as Barack Obama, especially when the race of the candidate is a repeated topic in the media coverage of the election? If the white guilt thesis does not hold true, how do we explain the emotion of countless voters, white and black, on display throughout the 2008 campaign? We first seek for possible answers from the existing theories of racial coalitions.

The Election of Barack Obama and Racial Relations

Barack Obama's run for presidency raised an unavoidable question to all voters on November 4, 2008: "Is the country ready for a black president?" Understandably, race often is a "forbidden," or at least uneasy, topic for the American public. But as many scholarly works have shown, race has always defined American political development.[25] To understand whether the election of Obama was related to race, it is important to examine three competing views on racial relations and American politics.

The first, the multicultural approach, resembled the so-called post-racial politics highlighted in the 2008 news coverage of Obama candidacy. According to this view, the growth of minority populations and the record-level minority elected officials have shown that "being white" is not a prerequisite any more to gain electoral power.[26] White voters' influence will decline. Minorities, black and Latino voters in particular, will become the electoral battleground. Bruce Cain suggests that multiculturalism has

replaced the biracial politics of the civil-rights era.[27] Obama himself publicly showed a passion for multiculturalism. He famously said at the 2004 Democratic National Convention that "There is not a Black America and a White America and Latino America and Asian America—there's the United States of America."

Some whites present a different view. According to this second view on race relations, the country is being gradually taken over by minorities and immigrants. There is a "racial war" and the federal government is increasingly "antiwhite."[28] During the 2008 presidential campaign, Stanley Kurtz published an article in *National Review*, detailing the "danger" of electing Obama. Kurtz said, "Biographical treatments of Obama tend to stress the tenuous nature of his black identity—his upbringing by whites, his elite education, his home in Chicago's highly integrated Hyde Park, personal tensions with black legislators, and questions about whether Obama is "black enough" to represent African Americans. These concerns over Obama's racial identity are overblown. On race-related issues Obama has stood shoulder to shoulder with Chicago's African American politicians for years."

Kurtz went on to say that "understanding Obama's thinking on race . . . is a prerequisite to grasping his views on spending and taxation. . . . When it comes to issues like affirmative action and set-asides, Obama is anything but the postracial politician he's sometimes made out to be."[29]

The third view on race relations stresses the American majoritarianism. This view sees minorities continuing to be secondary in U.S. politics because of white voters' majority or plurality status in the nation or states. The current political system is still defined by a racial hierarchy and the white domination in the electoral arena.[30] While racial minorities may dominate certain policies in particular locales, they do not play any major role in national politics compared to the whites who enjoy "veto" power on many policy proposals. Frymer specifically asserted that "racial cleavage, in conjunction with majority-based electoral law, has created a set of incentives for party leaders to capture black interests and, in the process, make their concerns largely invisible in electoral competition."[31]

Further, the American "melting pot," according to one assimilation theory of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs), historically works against minoritybased politics. In the early nineteenth century, the group defined as WASPs dominated politics at the national and local levels.[32] Waves of Irish, Italian, Polish, and other Eastern European immigrants threatened the WASPs demographically. Instead of maintaining the nineteenth and early twentieth century conflict between WASPs and the European minorities, WASPs gradually became politically less relevant.

By the mid-twentieth century the concept of white almost incorporated all European Americans.[33]

The problem is that this assimilation process has disproportionally left marginalized groups, especially blacks and Latinos, out (see Chapter 3 for a further discussion of minority interests). Black leaders are aware of this and they emphasize the importance of electing black politicians for egalitarian causes. The literature of black political incorporation, in particular, suggests that to protect minority interests, a protest-centered politics used in the civil rights movement must be replaced by an electoral politics that not only elects blacks to powerful offices but also facilitates the empowerment of blacks in policymaking. The only feasible venue for this empowerment is the electoral arena.[34]

Viable black candidates often compete with white opponents in attracting white voters' support to win elections while maintaining a high level support from minority voters, especially African Americans. Thus, the willingness of whites to vote for black candidates draws considerable attention from students of racial politics.[35]

Many studies have shown that Americans often cast their votes along racial lines.[36] However, white voters do on occasion vote for a black candidate.[37] White crossover voting was instrumental, for example, in many black victories in the mayoral elections in major cities during the last four decades.[38] White support for black candidates may be "short lived" or "candidate specific."[39] To account for the variation in white electorate support for black candidates, scholars of racial politics have employed candidate-centered explanations and voter-centered explanations.

RACIAL COALITION UNDER BLACK LEADERSHIP

Candidate-centered explanations of white voting concern personal characteristics of candidates and their campaign-related activities. This explanation assumes that election outcomes largely depend on the performance of candidates who have the ability to influence voters. Some scholars suggest that white voters evaluate black candidates based on their "quality," rather than on race. As with white candidates, black office-seekers need to have personal and professional qualifications to appeal to white voters.[40] Incumbency is one such factor. Incumbents generally have more resources to influence election outcomes.[41] This candidate-strength model, however, did not play into Obama's favor in 2008 because he was still an unknown politician at the national stage when he decided to run. In contrast, his major opponents, Senators Hillary Clinton and John McCain, though not incumbents either, both had deep political experience and name recognition.

To win as many white votes as possible, scholars of racial coalitions also suggested that a "deracialization" strategy (i.e., avoiding discussions on race) is necessary in many local elections.[42] Especially when facing strong white opponents, a pragmatic campaign strategy for black candidates would be to move voters' attention away from race-related issues.[43] Deracialization strategies are considered to have been the key to such electoral victories as that of the first black elected governor of Virginia, L. Douglas Wilder; the first African American woman elected to the U.S. Senate, Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois; the first black mayor in New York City, David Dinkins; and the mayor of New Orleans, Ray Nagin at the time of Hurricane Katrina. Candidates' decisions to run deracialized campaigns, however, may be "interrupted" unexpectedly by their opponents and the mass media.[44] Keith Reeves suggests that the "political mobilization of race as a fear appeal" by white candidates arouses white voters' hostile racial sentiments, which then reduce white crossover voting. According to Reeves's analyses of the 1989 New York and Seattle mayoral races, "the media tend to be handmaidens to such campaign strategies and tactics."[45]

Voter-centered explanations, unlike the candidate-centered approach, stress *white voters*' decision-making process in biracial elections. One finding presented by previous behavioral studies is that socioeconomic status may influence the willingness of whites to vote for blacks. Lower-class whites, it has been argued, are more likely to be hostile to blacks and to form an antiblack voting bloc.[46] This may be because "the white working class is in more direct competition with blacks for jobs and admissions to schools, and in bad economic times, the working class is hurt more by unemployment and inflation."[47]

The degree of white support for black electoral progress may reflect a process of psychological adaptation. The notion that Obama's celebrity-like status is due to white guilt can be broadly categorized as a theory of white psychology.[48] However, there is almost no systematic and empirical study of who, among white voters, are indeed more likely to feel the "guilt" when they vote in a biracial election. In fact, Obama faced arguably the greatest crisis of his campaign because of his connection with Rev. Jeremiah Wright, his longtime pastor who was repeatedly displayed on national media for his strong accusation of white guilt in African American suffering and lack of repentance. As a result, Obama gave his historical "A More Perfect Union" speech in Philadelphia on March 18, 2008, in which he called for racial reconciliation rather than racial blaming. A month later Obama denounced his pastor altogether to show that he did not agree with Wright's publicized antiwhite rhetoric.

Empirically, an early psychological model of white attitude and behavior toward blacks was offered by Peter Eisinger in his book *The Politics of Displacement.* Eisinger's study focused on white psychological and *strategic* changes rather than the emotional need for "redemption" from the "racial sin" of American history in Detroit and Atlanta in the 1970s.[49] He found that in Detroit and Atlanta, many whites were "satisfied" with and had been "cooperative" with the black leadership in the local elections.[50] Eisinger called these psychological and strategic changes in Detroit and Atlanta a "culture of accommodation."[51] To further show this accommodation and strategic adjustment, Baodong Liu and James Vanderleeuw, in their thorough study of the electoral politics in New Orleans from 1965 to 2006, constructed a theory of an inverted U-shaped relationship between racial polarization and the increase of black density in the electorate. Their main argument is that whites voted for black candidates based on their group interests and strategic adjustment to racial context, rather than emotional need to feel better about themselves. Although several black mayors were elected in New Orleans largely because of white support—as the racial composition of the city was changed due to Hurricane Katrina, which displaced disproportionally many black residents (thus increased the chance to elect white candidates)—white support for black candidates in competitive elections declined in the city.[52]

The psychological and attitude change of whites toward blacks has drawn attention from students of political psychology. Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza, for example, found that "large numbers of whites can be dislodged from the positions they have taken on many issues of race by calling their attention to countervailing considerations." They concluded that racism "no longer dominates the reactions of white Americans."[53] Sniderman and Piazza's arguments receive little empirical support from actual election data, however. Mary Herring and John Forbes, for example, argued that "[if] the salience of race has dwindled to a general increase in racial tolerance . . . then we should see a growing willingness to vote for other-race candidates as evidenced by rising rates of racial crossover voting."[54] Instead of becoming more racially tolerant, the whites in Detroit, according to Herring and Forbes's empirical investigation, had become less willing to support black candidates between 1961 and 1989.[55] Furthermore, the question of white racial (in)tolerance also has been studied by another school of racial politics—the school of symbolic racism—that provides a completely different perspective. For this school, the "abstract, moralistic resentments" of symbolic racism are rooted in the belief that "blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline."[56]

This symbolic racism thesis, though forcefully argued, does not offer a satisfying explanation for the impressive white support Obama received in 2008. Since voting takes places in privacy, it arguably allows the manifestation of deepest racism through the ballots.

RACIAL COALITIONS AT THE CITY LEVEL

Due to the limited electoral success of minorities beyond the city or state levels before 2008, few, if any, academic works examine a successful multiracial coalition led by a minority candidate in a national election. Perhaps the most influential study of racial coalition at the city level is the political incorporation and minority empowerment theory. Rufus Browning, Dale Marshall, and David Tabb argued that minorities cannot rely solely on protest-like politics to protect their interests. Rather, they need to be incorporated into politics through elected positions.[57] The level of political incorporation relates to the strength of minorities in the city council, which can be tested by the number of minority city council members, minority participation in the dominant "coalition," and minority control of the mayor's office. The success of political incorporation for African Americans depends on two important factors: black electoral mobilization and the size of white support groups.

The major limitation of political incorporation theory is its lack of generalizability. The original study of Browning et al. was based on only ten cities in northern California where there was little variance in terms of governmental structures—all ten cities were reformed local governments. Furthermore, is political empowerment of minorities through political incorporation sustainable? The biracial electoral coalitions in major cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago have proven to be either difficult to be built or difficult to maintain. Borrowing from the original study of Browning et al. on political incorporation, Raphael Sonenshein posited three preconditions for a successful biracial coalition: a shared liberal ideology across racial groups; a shared mutual interest in terms of policy goals; and finally, an effective black leadership at the elite level. Sonenshein found that liberal whites were the core supporters of Thomas Bradley in the 1973 Los Angeles mayoral election.[58] An effective and stable biracial electoral coalition is possible because of the mutual benefits received by the coalition partners. Bradley's multiracial coalition, however, was more personal than institutional as it ended soon after he left the mayor's office of Los Angeles. More recently, scholars have questioned the future of black empowerment in light of the reemergence of conservative white mayors after the short period of minority electoral success in major cities.[59]

Outline of the Book

The extant literature on racial coalition has enriched our understanding of the role of race in electoral process, but none of the theories reviewed above offer a satisfying account for Obama's unprecedented success. On the contrary, most previous studies of racial coalitions suggest an African American candidacy leading to an unsuccessful campaign especially at the national level. After all, no one had succeeded in winning the presidential office as a minority person before Obama.

To be sure, the high level of the emotion the 2008 presidential election generated had to do with the nation's history of race. Debates implicitly or explicitly focused on race in 2008. Yet Obama handled the crises (e.g., the news coverage of Rev. Jeremiah Wright's antiwhite preaching) with a coherent campaign strategy. Indeed, the rise of Obama surprised many, even prominent black leaders such as Congressman John Lewis and highly respected General Colin Powell. Gwen Ifill, a famous African American journalist and the popular moderator and managing editor of *Washington Week* of PBS, moderated the Vice President debate in 2008. In her recent book *The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama*, Ifill wrote, "I've spent thirty years in journalism since then chronicling stories like that—places where truth and consequences collide, rub up against each other, and shift history's course. None of that prepared me for 2008 and the astonishing rise of Barack Obama."[60]

To explain the "surprising" 2008 victory of Obama to become the nation's first African American president, this book proposes the theory of a minimum winning coalition. The winning electoral coalitions in the presidential elections have been shaped by the nation's history of racial relations and party strategies. This book argues that voters calculated their decisions based on group interests. Winning generates high emotions and heartfelt celebration *for the voters who are the members of a minimum winning coalition*. This book explains how Obama created such a winning racial coalition.

Chapter 2 discusses the concept of the minimum winning coalition and its impact on candidate strategies as well as voter emotions. The chapter computes the critical minimum winning coalition line in a coalition space. It further links the theory of the minimum winning coalition to the historical campaign of Barack Obama. More importantly, the chapter sets up the theory of rational voters based on racial group interests, and it derives testable hypotheses to be empirically examined in the rest of the book.

Chapter 3 traces the historical background of the 2008 election, including the development of racial relations and party coalitions in the 2006 midterm election. The chapter analyzes the rationale of Obama's campaign

plan based on the message of hope and change. Chapter 4 focuses on the primary contests between January and June of 2008. It reviews the literature on sequential voting concerning the Democratic primaries. Chapter 5 introduces the criticisms made by previous studies on the possible biases of sequential election, and it summarizes the momentum theory of the "unfair" 2008 Democratic primaries. The chapter shows empirically how Obama won the primaries and why the accusations against sequential voting bias did not explain the reasons for Obama's success.

Chapter 6 shows how different racial groups (whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians) reacted to Obama's campaign. Using a contextual analysis, it shows the success of Obama's "red-state" strategy in the primaries. The chapter develops a racial intension index based on previous contextual theories of black density, racial diversity, social capital, and political culture. Racial tension had the most significant impact on white voters' perception of black threat. Chapter 7 continues the discussion of spatial pattern of Obama's racial coalition in the general election, concluding that to understand the historical election of Obama as the first African American president, one has to examine voting based on specific state contexts. Chapter 8 concludes the book with a discussion of Obama racial coalition that shows both enduring effect of race, but also the remarkable changes that American democracy is capable of making.

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A Minimum Winning Coalition

The 2008 Presidential Election from a Historical Perspective

Political majorities are always coalitions.
  —John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira, *The Emerging Democratic Majority*

Before a political party can gain control of the government, it must, through numerous appeals, form a coalition of voters from as many sectors of the population as possible
  —Hanes Walton Jr., *Black Republicans: The Politics of the Black and Tans*

Ever since his high school years, Barack Obama has always been able to find a special joy in playing basketball. Even during the heated 2008 campaign, Obama tried to find opportunities to play. He willingly exhibited his basketball skill to the public. CNN asked the legendary basketball superstar, Earvin "Magic" Johnson, to comment on what would be the best position for Obama to play on the basketball court.

"The point guard, no question about it! He is a leader and a general," said Johnson.[1]

Indeed, playing "publicized hoops" during a heated campaign undoubtedly was a win-win strategy for Obama, as basketball game is a national sport loved by whites and minorities, men and women, young and old alike. Basketball is interesting to watch, and it can be very intense especially if spectators develop an attachment to a team. In a sense, the 2008 presidential election was a "basketball game–like" event in front of voters. A major player was certainly Barack Obama himself. The ever-increasing enthusiasm of Obama voters in 2008 clearly showed their belief that they were on the verge of winning and making history. To go

beyond the voter emotion, this book proposes a theoretic and empirical model of racial coalition that links candidates, political parties, and voters in the context of racial and demographic change. Throughout the book I will discusses racial coalitions across both "time and space." This chapter will examine Obama's racial coalition from the historical perspective. It not only compares Obama's racial coalition with previous Democratic coalitions to show political parties' strategy to win elections through racial coalition building but also introduces a rationality thesis centered on voters' perceived racial interests.

The Theory of the Minimum Winning Coalition

On November 4, 2008, Obama faced a daunting challenge to his hope of becoming the first African American president of the nation: Whites as a whole cast 74 percent of the total votes in the 2008 presidential election. Majority-white voters—55 percent to be precise according to the exit poll—voted for John McCain. This challenge made Obama's eventual win especially intriguing. How did he win the election without the majority support from white voters? To understand Obama's success, it is necessary to introduce the concept of a *minimum winning coalition*.

Figure 2.1 depicts a two-dimensional look at a hypothetical coalition space. There are two candidates in the coalition space. I use a one-on-one race in this figure to represent most U.S. presidential elections that normally feature two candidates from the two major political parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party (i.e., minor party and independent candidates have no chance of winning). The first candidate in the figure, C1, is located in a place where he received a high level of white support (the horizontal axis), yet limited amount of support from minority voters (the vertical axis). The second candidate, on contrary, has high minority support, yet his white support is relatively low. In reality, a candidate may be located anywhere in the whole coalition space defined by Figure 2.1. But the relative positions of the two candidates should be a function of each other. This is because *if one candidate receives majority support from whites, the opponent can only receive minority support from whites*. The most important question for the two candidates in a one-on-one race such as Figure 2.1, certainly, is which coalition location will produce a winner (thus, the other location will produce a loser)? Should the candidates rely on mostly white voters or the minority voters to win their elections? To answer these questions, it is necessary to introduce the concept of a minimum winning coalition line.
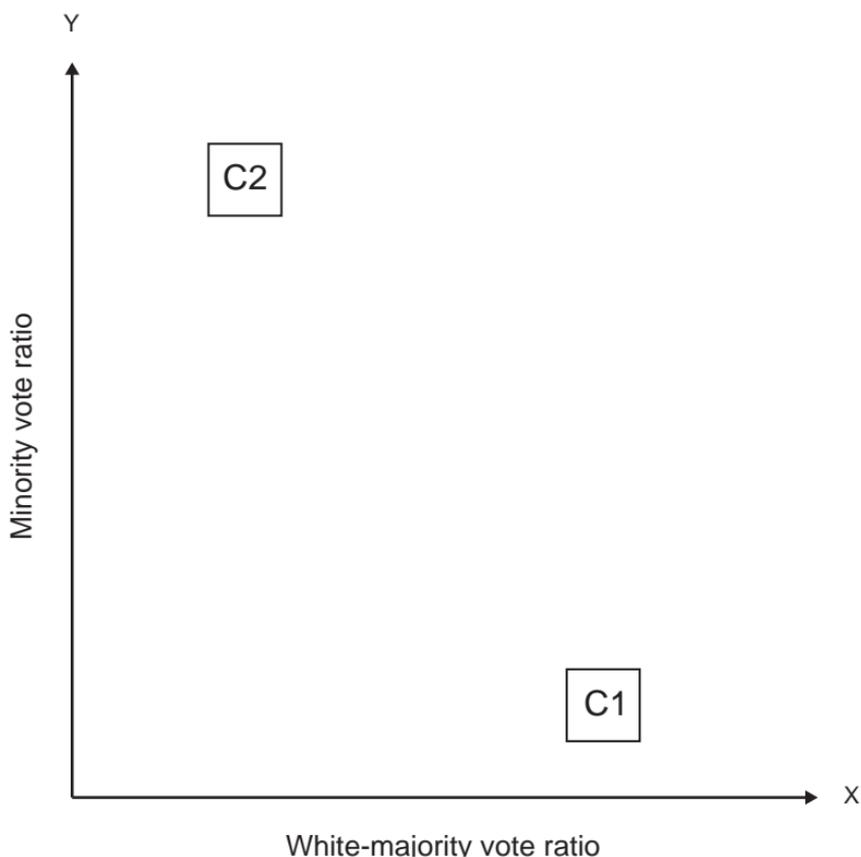
Figure 2.1   Candidate locations and coalition space

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MINIMUM WINNING COALITION

As early as 1962, William Riker published his classic study of political coalitions. He argued that politicians have the incentive to keep the size of their winning coalition to the minimum due to the nature of zero-sum game. "When a coalition includes everybody, the winners gain nothing simply because there are no losers,"[2] said Riker. Riker called this incentive of keeping the coalition at the minimum "the size principle."[3] He explicitly assumes that "American politics on a national scale, where the stakes are the control of the decisions by the national government, is popularly perceived as a zero-sum situation . . . at least in times of Presidential elections with their indivisible victory and other bifurcating features."[4]

Empirically, the U.S. presidential elections did normally produce minimum winning coalitions, rather than the "overwhelming majorities," or the opposite end of the minimum winning coalition.[5] Figure 2.2 shows
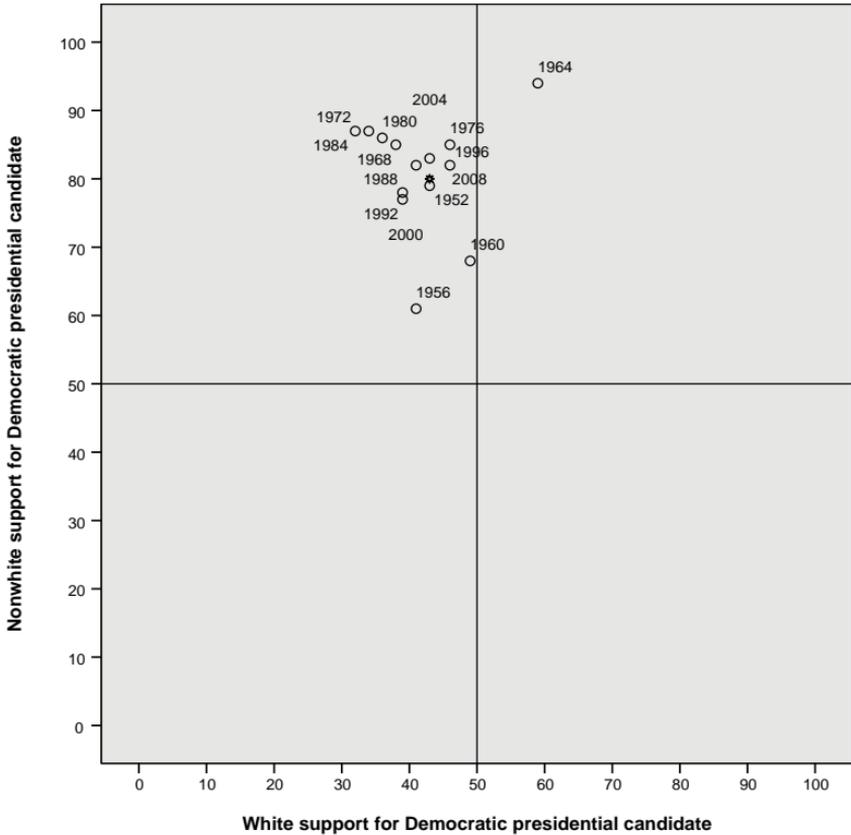
Figure 2.2   Racial coalitions of the Democratic Party in presidential elections, 1952–2008

a longitudinal pattern of the racial coalitions that the Democratic candidates built during the last four decades based on the Gallup survey results.

Figure 2.2 reveals that most of the Democratic coalitions were clustered together with their candidates receiving less than 50 percent of the white votes and more than 60 percent of the nonwhite votes. The only exception to this pattern was the 1964 election when Lyndon B. Johnson assembled an "overwhelming majority." Note that Obama's racial coalition location in 2008, based on the exit poll data, was also included in Figure 2.2 as the dark star. The Obama coalition was, in fact, a very typical or "average" Democratic coalition, as it is almost exactly located at the center of all Democratic coalitions between 1952 and 2008. Most of the Democratic coalitions to the left of the Obama coalition failed to win the presidential elections, with the only exception of 1992 when Bill Clinton ran in a race where the independent candidate Ross Perot gained

18.9 percent of the popular votes (thus not a typical election year for the two major parties).

Riker's minimum winning coalition thesis opposed Anthony Down's maximum coalition and median voter theory. For Downs, winning is the basic goal of political parties.[6] Thus candidates always have the incentives to build a coalition as large as possible. The best way to build such a maximum coalition is to support campaign platforms that reflect the median voters' policy position(s).[7] For Riker, however, winning is certainly vital to coalition building process, but governing is also important because it is governing where political parties finally exercise their political power to reward their electoral coalition members. The smaller number of winners leads to a higher yield of power and prestige.

Despite their fundamental differences, it is beneficial to combine the insights from both Riker and Downs. Governing is indeed important, but political parties need to win in the first place (see, for example, David Mayhew's argument on both winning and name recognition as the two interconnected goals of congressmen).[8] Furthermore, to win, parties do not have to build an overwhelming majority coalition; the minimum winning coalition is the only precondition to govern. Politicians may eventually build a dominant coalition to govern more effectively, but establishing a minimum winning coalition is job number one.

Riker's minimum winning coalition thesis forces researchers to focus on the sizes of electoral coalitions. Clearly, the minimum wining coalition notion is very useful when election outcomes are close, rather than "landslide." It offers a plausible explanation for why the two American major parties are competitive over time. Can a minimum winning coalition be built mainly based on how parties position themselves on racial issues? Unfortunately, as Tasha S. Philpot in her most recent vigorous analysis of the Republican Party coalition indicated, "With the exception of [V. O.] Key, most seminal works on political parties in the U.S. context ignore or minimize the role of race in the formation of the political system."[9]

Riker's notion of a minimum winning coalition is especially valuable for studies of racial coalitions, though Riker himself never built any empirical model around race. One major empirical work recently that takes advantage of the notion of minimum coalition is a thorough study of southern Republicans by Earl Black and Merle Black, who frequently address the "threshold" that Republican candidates need to win in the South. According to Black and Black, "With black voters permanently alienated, Republican candidates in the South have needed a massive landslide among white voters—approximately 60 percent is a useful rule of thumb—to prevail in contests involving two candidates."[10]

Black and Black's study of southern GOP thus used the idea of minimum support from whites in their analysis of Republican strategies, but they did not develop a mathematic model to trace the changing electorate and its impact. To improve the measurement of a minimum winning coalition, I propose to examine the coalition's inner structure based on vote ratios.

To begin, the best way to understand a minimum winning coalition is to assume a contest between C1 and C2 as depicted in Figure 2.1, which is mostly the case in U.S. elections. (Though minor party candidates do occasionally draw noticeable support from voters of major parties, and thus winning does not require 50 percent of the votes, these situations are not typical in America.) The way to win the election in this situation is to receive a minimum "50 percent of the total votes plus one more vote." The task empirically is to find the measure of the 50 percent line in the coalition space. Readers who wish to focus on the theory, rather than the mathematic component of minimum winning coalition theory, may skip the next section.

Calculating the Minimum Winning Coalition Line and the Rate of Change

Suppose that white voters are the majority of the electorate, and a candidate is competing with his opponent to receive the majority of the total votes cast to win the election.

$$W_p = \textit{the majority white share of the electorate}$$

$$M_p = 1 - W_p = \textit{minority share of the electorate}$$

$$V = \textit{total number of votes cast}$$

$$W_r = \textit{\% of white votes are cast for the candidate of interest}$$

$$M_r = \textit{\% of minority votes are cast for the candidate of interest}$$

We can then compute the following three equations of vote distributions for the candidate of interest:

$$W_v = VW_pW_r = \textit{the number of white votes received by the candidate} \tag{1}$$

$$M_v = VM_pM_r = \textit{the number of minority votes received by the candidate} \tag{2}$$

$$C_v = W_v + M_v = \textit{the votes cast for the candidate} \tag{3}$$

$$\textit{If the candidate receives half the total votes, } C_v = 0.5V \tag{4}$$

$$\text{then } W_p W_r + M_p M_r = 0.5 \tag{5}$$

$$W_p W_r + (1 - W_p)M_r = 0.5 \tag{6}$$

Equation 6 calculates the minimum winning coalition line, that is, the line to get 50 percent of the votes. Any coalition location to the right of this minimum winning coalition line will lead to winning the election.

Figure 2.3 shows such a minimum winning coalition line graphically, when W_p (the majority share of the electorate) is as large as fifteen out of sixteen.

If a candidate receives no vote from minority voters, that is,

$$M_{r1} = 0 \tag{7}$$

Based on Equation 6, we can compute his white vote share on the minimum winning coalition line (i.e., point A on Figure 2.3),
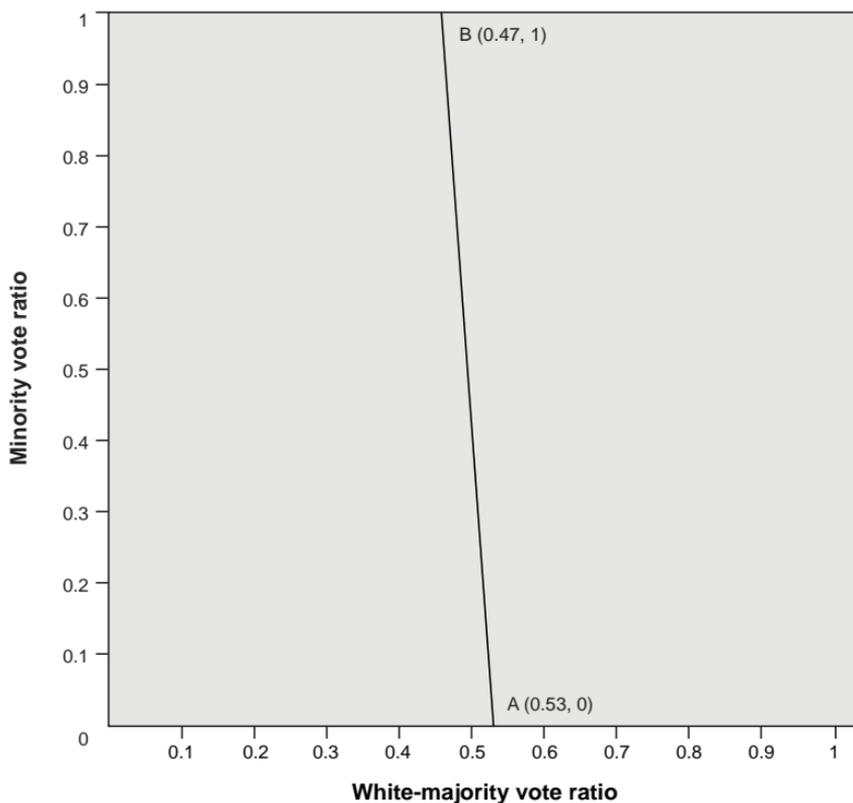
Figure 2.3   Minimum winning coalition line when the minority is one-sixteenth of the electorate

$$W_{r1} = \frac{.5}{W_p} \qquad (8)$$

If the second candidate receives all minority votes, that is

$$M_{r2} = 1 \qquad (9)$$

Based on Equation 6, the white-vote share for this candidate on the minimum winning coalition line is

$$W_{r2} = \frac{W_p - .5}{W_p} \qquad (10)$$

Equations 7 and 8 reveal the special position where the minimum winning coalition line intersects with the bottom horizontal axis (i.e., point A of Figure 2.3), while Equations 9 and 10 show the special position where the line intersects with the upper horizontal axis (i.e., point B of Figure 2.3). Note that Equations 7 through 10 have only one parameter (i.e., W_p). Thus, we can calculate this equation line whenever we know W_p, which is the share of white voters in the electorate.

Furthermore, the larger the value of W_p, the smaller the value of W_{r1} and the larger the value of W_{r2}. Note that the relationship is not linear with respect to how W_{r1} varies as a function of W_p. As W_p increases from 0.5 to 1.0, the drop in the value of W_{r1} was steep at first and then gradually flats out. To prove this, we need to find the rate of change. In other words, we differentiate W_{r1} with respect to W_p:

$$\frac{d}{dW_p}\left(\frac{0.5}{W_p}\right) = -\frac{0.5}{W_p^2} \qquad (11)$$

To see the rate of change, Equation 11 shows that if white electorate is increased, then the value of minimum white support dropped more dramatically at the beginning. In reality, of course, the United States has seen the decrease of white share in the electorate; thus, it is more important to remember that *as whites become a smaller proportion of the electorate, the rate of change in minimum white support increases, if a candidate wants to build a white-only coalition (the Republican coalition) to win.*

We see the opposite pattern for a candidate who wants to win by building a multiracial coalition (e.g., the Democratic coalition). As whites become a smaller proportion of the electorate, the rate of change in minimum white support decreases, if a candidate wants to build a multiracial coalition to win. To prove this, we differentiate W_{r2} with respect to W_p,

$$\frac{d}{dW_p}\left(1 - \frac{0.5}{W_p}\right) = \frac{0.5}{W_p^2} \tag{12}$$

Finally, the slope of the minimum winning coalition line is

$$\text{slope} = -\frac{W_p}{1 - W_p} \tag{13}$$

and its derivative is

$$\frac{d}{dW_p}\left(-\frac{W_p}{1-W_p}\right) = -\frac{1}{1-W_p} - \frac{W_p}{(1-W_p)^2} = -\frac{1}{(1-W_p)^2} \tag{14}$$

In sum, it is important to note the following features regarding the minimum winning line:

1. The sum of W_{r1} and W_{r2} is always 1; thus, $W_{r2} = 1 - W_{r1}$.
2. The only variable needed to draw the minimum winning coalition line is W_p.
3. The minimum winning coalition line connects A and B. Point A indicates the minimum white vote ratio when a uniracial all white coalition is built and no minority cast vote for the candidate, and Point B shows the minimum white vote ratio when a multiracial coalition is built and all minority votes are cast for the candidate.
4. If W_p decreases, then the slope of the minimum winning coalition decreases; W_{r1} increases and W_{r2} decreases.

Using the equations developed above, we can calculate, for example, the following:

1. In 2000 presidential election, whites cast 81 percent of the votes according to the exit poll, thus W_{r1} = 61.73 percent, and W_{r2} = 38.27 percent.
2. In 2004 presidential election, whites cast 77 percent of the votes, thus W_{r1} = 64.94 percent, and W_{r2} = 35.06 percent.
3. In 2008 presidential election, whites cast 74 percent of the votes, thus W_{r1} = 67.57 percent, and W_{r2} = 32.43 percent.

THE IMPACT OF RACIAL CHANGE ON THE MINIMUM
WINNING COALITION LINE: A DYNAMIC MODEL

The above section provided a mathematic model to trace the rotation of the minimum winning coalition line due to the racial change in the electorate. In reality, of course, no party can feasibly establish a racial coalition *exactly* located on the minimum winning coalition line. However, parties need to build a racial coalition at least larger than the minimum winning coalition defined in the model to win a competitive election. Based on the above spatial model, the power of the minimum winning coalition line can simply be understood as first, competitive coalitions need to be built in the proximity of the minimum winning coalition line; and second, winning coalitions need to be built to the right side of the minimum winning coalition line.

Recall that Figure 2.3 shows the minimum winning coalition line based on a racial context where the minority voters are one-sixteenth of the electorate. Point A lies at a location of 50 percent votes cast. The candidate receives at least 53 percent of the white majority votes, and in this case the winner does not need any vote from the minority voters. Point B is a coalition location where the candidate receives all minority votes and 47 percent of the white-majority votes. In this case, the candidate also receives 50 percent of the total votes cast. Candidates, of course, do not have to locate themselves exactly at points A and B to receive 50 percent of the votes. They can in fact be located anywhere along the line AB to receive exactly 50 percent of the votes.

The space to the right of the line AB is the winners' zone, satisfying the rule of minimum "50 percent votes plus one vote." The space to the left of the line is the losers' zone. For this reason, the line AB is called the minimum winning coalition line. For candidates, the goal in an election is to reach the minimum winning coalition line from the losers' zone.

Note that Figure 2.3 depicts a context where minority voters are about 6 percent of the electorate, which was approximately the case before the immigration reform in 1965. In this context, the two likely coalitions located close to points A and B both have substantial white support. In fact, the coalition locations of A and B can be said basically as two white coalitions. The minority voter share inside the coalition B should be very small, and they have no leverage in the policy choices made by coalition B. This minimum influence of minority voters, however, does not suggest that the minority issues are not important. In fact, the formation of the U.S. two-party system was inevitably related to how white voters in the two coalitions wanted to settle the issue of slavery. Race defined issues, yet minorities themselves had no say in government policymaking—a case

of "white-majority tyranny." In her influential book, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, historian Doris Goodwin described the defining issue in the partisan development in the Lincoln era in this way:

> The spiritual cords of union—the great religious denominations—had already been fractured along sectional lines. The national political parties, the political cords of union, would be next, splintered in the struggle between those who wished to extend slavery and those who resisted its expansion. Early in the decade the national Whig Party, hopelessly divided on slavery, would begin to diminish and then disappear as a national force. The national Democratic Party, beset by defections from Free Soil Democrats, would steadily lose ground, fragmenting beyond repair by the end of the [1850s] decade.[11]

Figure 2.4 shows the minimum winning coalition line when the electorate changed to 75 percent white and 25 percent nonwhite, which was roughly the case in the presidential elections of the recent decade. Note
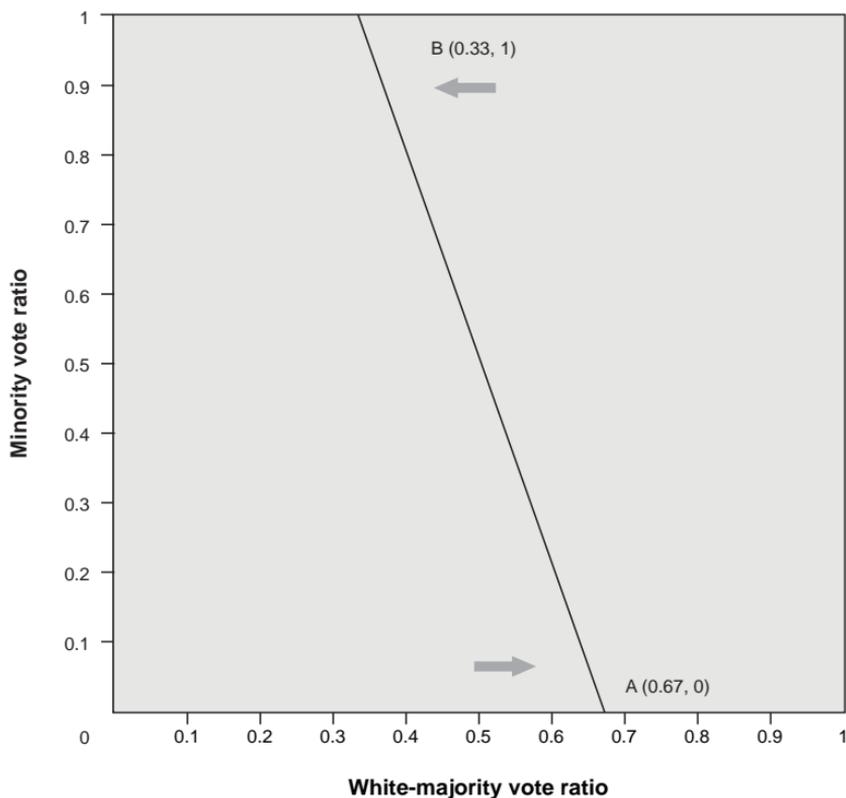
Figure 2.4 Minimum winning coalition line when the minority is 25 percent of the electorate

that the slope of the minimum winning coalition line changed, and so did the original points A and B of Figure 2.4. The coalition based on the white strategy will win if the candidate receives 67 percent of the white votes. The multiracial coalition based on unanimous minority support needs to receive at least 33 percent of the white votes to win the election. This rotation of the minimum winning coalition line clearly puts the pressure on the white coalition (point A, or the Republican coalition) to further increase its white vote ratio to win. In contrast, the multiracial coalition (point B, or the Democratic coalition) has gained the benefit of increasing minority ratio in the electorate.

To further show the profound impact of racial change in the electorate, Figure 2.5 contains the two minimum winning coalition lines based on the changing electorate from zero percent of voters as minorities to more than 25 percent. There are only two candidates in Figure 2.5, C1 and C2, who stay in the same coalition locations in the two consecutive elections. C2, a loser in the first election, becomes a winner in the second (i.e., he
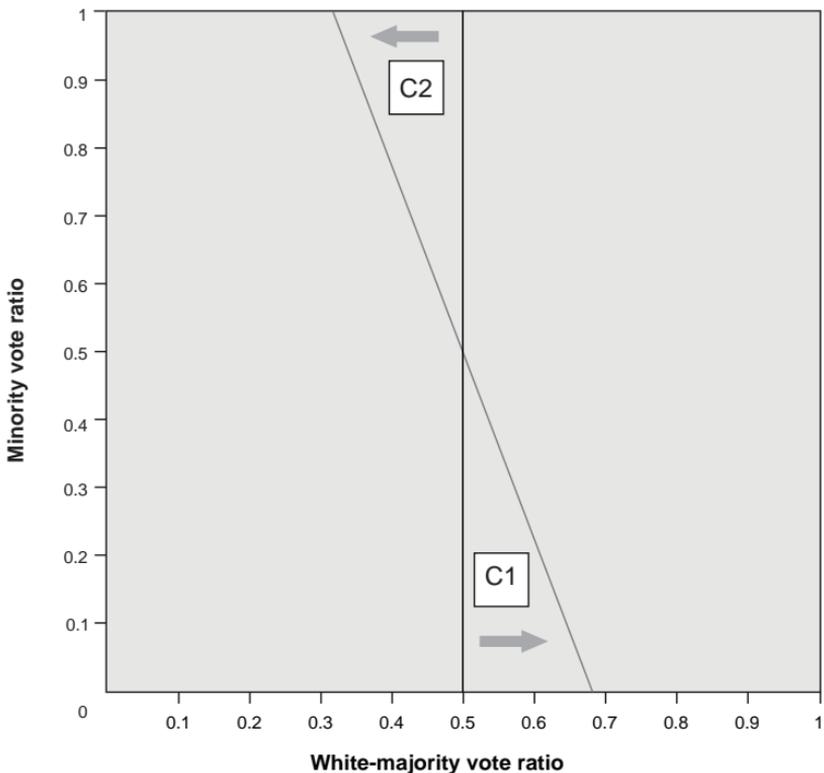
Figure 2.5   Changing minimum winning coalition lines due to the minority growth in the electorate

or she is on the right side of the minimum winning coalition line after the racial change in the electorate). This change of election outcome is solely due to the change of racial composition of the electorate that leads to the counterclockwise rotation of the minimum winning coalition line.

Thus, the above mathematic modeling of racial coalitions leads to the following conclusion: *The changing racial composition of the electorate is a driving force for changing election outcomes in the United States. The decline in the white share of electorate rotates the minimum winning coalition line counterclockwise, which is in favor of the Democratic Party that relies on winning elections through multiracial coalitions.*

The minimum winning coalition model presented above also suggests that changing the electorate favored Obama more than any of previous Democratic candidates. We can prove this through the following empirical test.

Based on Equation 10, we can compute the minimum white support the Democratic candidates needed to win (W_{r2}). I use the National Election Study (NES) data between 1948 and 2004 to determine the change in the white shares of the electorates in the last six decades (i.e., the change in W_p). The dashed line in Figure 2.6 represents the minimum white support
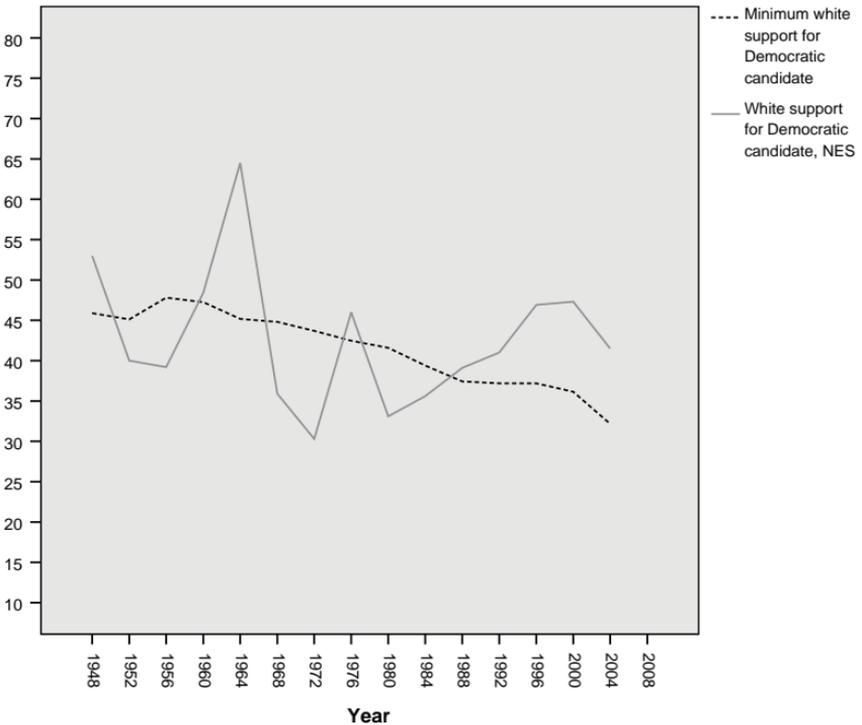
Figure 2.6   Increasing Democratic advantage in presidential elections

the Democratic candidates must receive to have a chance to win. In other words, any white support below the dashed line would result in a defeat for the Democratic candidates that similarly occurred in 1968, 1972, 1980, and 1984. It is important to note that the minimum white support line shows a continuous declining trend, which certainly is in favor of the Democratic candidates as the pressure on them to receive white support is reduced over time. It is for this reason that Obama, running as a Democratic candidate with the lowest minimum white support needed for victory, was in the best position to win than any previous Democratic candidates.

The Minimum Winning Coalition and Party Competition

The above section demonstrates that a key to parties' competitiveness facing the changing electorate is the rotation of the minimum winning coalition line in the coalition space. The reason for the rotation of the minimum winning coalition line may be simply due to some nonpolitical reasons. The decline in the birth rate of white-majority population along with the increase in minority-population birth rate, for example, can be the reason the minimum winning coalition line changes in favor of the Democratic Party and minority voters. The changing racial composition of the electorate may also be a function of immigration caused by globalization and economic competitions that forces nations to restructure their populations.

The change in the racial composition of electorate, it should be pointed out, can also be political. Political parties may intentionally make strategic plans to change the electorate so that they can be in an advantageous location in the coalition space. According to Riker, for example, the first major defeat of a previously majority party (the Federalists) in 1816 was because of the strategy of Jeffersonian Republicans to enlarge the electorate by admitting new trans-Appalachian states.[12] Sometimes, when a political party grows to the extent where it represents an "overwhelming majority" or "grand coalition," there is a strong incentive for the party leaders to "minimize" it. This is because "every coalition has internal conflicts over the division of spoils."[13]

The political reasons for the changing electorate can also be related to short-term factors, sometimes even within one election cycle. For example, a successful Get Out The Vote (GOTV) program can change the electorate in favor of the party that increases the turnout of its loyal voters. To win congressional, state, and local elections, racial gerrymandering may also be used by political parties to change the composition of electorate.

To understand the two major parties' strategies to win, it is important to pay special attention to the presidential elections that marked the beginning of a historical pattern. Again we go back to Figure 2.6. It is

clear that the Democratic Party has developed a fairly large racial gap in their coalitions since the 1964 presidential election. Whites never offered more than 50 percent support for the Democratic Party after 1964 (again, Obama's racial coalition was a typical Democratic coalition, which is close to the minimum winning coalition line rather than an overwhelming majority coalition). What happened after 1964? It is important to see the role of President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration in the contemporary racial coalition formation.[14]

As a party leader, Lyndon B. Johnson pushed landmark laws that turned out to be the reason for the long-term advantage of the Democratic Party. First, Johnson helped enact the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and more importantly, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which enfranchised African Americans effectively through federal government's institutional resources and enforcement under the Justice Department.[15] These legislative policy changes led to a profound impact on the minimum winning coalition line because it raised the black share in the electorate, thus rotating the minimum winning coalition line. In so doing, Johnson also made the Democratic Party to be strategically located at the multiracial position in the coalition space.

Second, in the Johnson administration, the 1965 McCarran Act was also signed into law, which ended the previous racist quota system that systematically favored white Europeans.[16] The Johnson administration thus not only institutionalized the increase of black share in the electorate through the civil-rights and voting-rights federal laws but also opened the gate of the United States to new immigrants from Asia and Latin America. The minimum winning coalition line further rotates counter-clockwise, and the Democratic Party's pressure to receive white voter support to win federal elections is reduced.

Johnson's long-term strategy led to some immediate negative consequences for the party. He famously said to Bill Moyers in 1965, "I think we just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come."[17] Indeed, the Democratic Party has never won the majority of white voter support ever since Johnson's 1964 landslide election. In his detailed account of the modern conservatism and its southern origin, political scientist Joseph Lowndes indicated that "the success of modern conservatism depended on the mobilization—and nationalization—of many different southern political elements."[18]

While it is important to see the critical role played by white southerners in the nation's presidential elections, this chapter suggests that we need to analyze two parties' strategies to win simultaneously. For sure, the Republican Party also strategically reacted to Johnson's policy changes.[19]

In the coalition space, the GOP naturally moved closer to the location that would primarily rely on white support as the key strategic coalition plan to reach the minimum winning coalition line. The 1964 Barry Goldwater coalition with the governing philosophy of conservatism and small government would be further adopted by the GOP in the following decades. Richard Nixon's Southern strategy would eventually make Johnson's prediction of the southern rebellion against the Democratic Party come true. Ronald Reagan built a coalition of whites that stressed not only minimum government intervention but also evangelic social values and, most importantly, the racial interests of the white electorate. Based on her highly systematic study of the Republican Party strategy on racial coalitions, Tasha S. Philpot indicated the following: "Perpetuated by Reagan and later by George H. Bush, the modern-day southern strategy extended past the Mason-Dixon Line to appeal to Northern voters burdened by having to support "welfare queens" and "street criminals" with their hard-earned tax dollars. . . . This [Republican] strategy sought to exploit racial divisions among working- and middle-class Whites who had previously been loyal to the Democratic Party. Among these groups of Whites, racial interests displaced economic interests."[20]

Through his empirical analysis, Michael K. Fauntroy also notes that "the Republican Party, in order to reinforce racial conservatives' attraction to the party, willingly engages in negative racial imagery toward African Americans, preying on and validating racial and economic fears that conservatives have regarding African Americans. Such behavior incurs the ire of African Americans, thereby undermining any Republican outreach [to Blacks] effort."[21]

The Republican strategy was instrumental for the GOP control of the White House for twenty years in the last three decades. However, Johnson's plan to increase the minority share of the electorate also paid a political dividend for the Democrats in the long run because it put the pressure on the GOP to maximize its white appeal at the time when whites proportionally become less dominant in the national electorate.

Figure 2.7 shows the increasing challenge that GOP presidential candidates have faced. The white support for GOP candidates has not been more than enough to win. The dashed line represented the minimum white support level based on mathematic model developed above (W_{r1}), and the solid line showed that recent GOP candidates have not been able to surpass that line. In other words, the GOP candidates after Reagan all needed at least some nonwhite support to win presidential election. George W. Bush received about 44 percent of the Latino votes in 2004.[22]
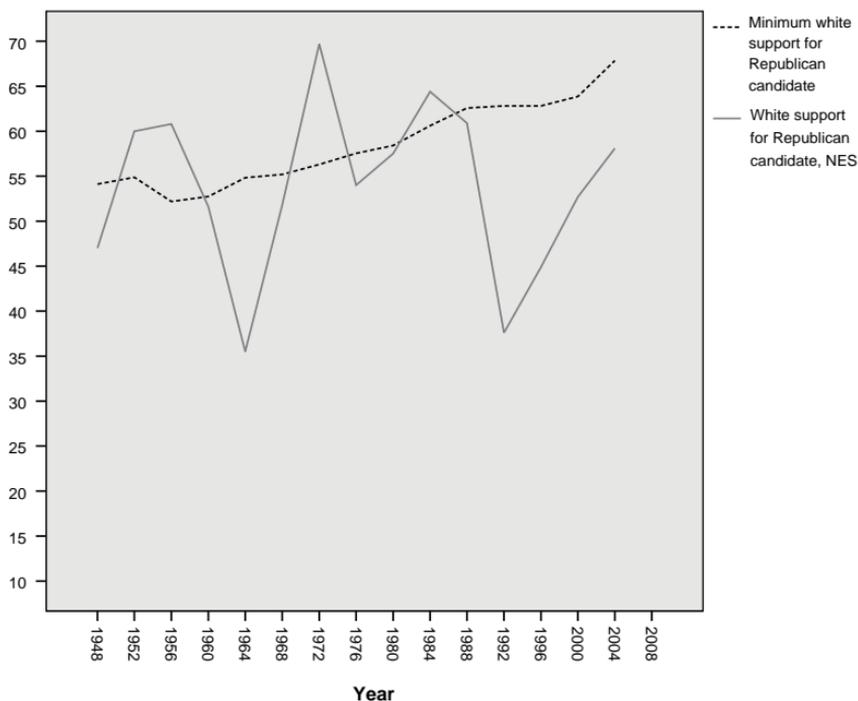
Figure 2.7   Republican Party and the lacking white support in the presidential elections

Such a "high" level of Latino support, however, was unusual, rather than typical for a Republican candidate (see Chapter 3).

Overall, the long-term change of the electorate and the counterclock-wise rotation of the minimum winning coalition line since 1965 have clearly benefited the Democratic Party. However, this advantage does not guarantee a Democratic win in the presidential elections, and the Democratic candidates still need to surpass the minimum white support level defined by the minimum winning coalition line (W_{r2}). Any perception that the Democratic Party supports "minority interests" only, such as the championing of the affirmative action program, will alienate white voters and lead to a national defeat (see Chapter 3 for a discussion on how the Democratic candidates cope with this perception). Furthermore, the cost of building a minimum winning coalition for the Democratic Party is that it must find a candidate that can unite the minorities and at the same time maintain white-voter support above the minimum level. As William Mayer convincingly argued, because of the diversity inside the Democratic coalition, the party has a greater difficulty in maintaining unity.[23]

On the other hand, the Republican Party is a more racially homo-geneous party. Thus the cost of unity is arguably not as high as the one

facing the Democratic Party. However, the changing electorate forces the Republican Party to find campaign themes that can avoid the erosion in white support. In 2004, the party mobilized loyal white evangelical conservatives through prolife state initiatives and referendums. In 2008, this advantage was significantly weakened as the nation entered into a deep economic recession, and the GOP faced a skilled campaigner in Barack Obama. As Philpot astutely pointed out in her recent study of Republican images among voters, "Success in the area of improving party image can easily be undone."[24]

THE MINIMUM WINNING COALITION AND THE RATIONAL VOTER

As shown in the above sections, when political parties and their candidates (nominees) position themselves in the coalition space to compete against each other, their goal is to reach the minimum winning coalition line. A key strategy for the two major parties to reach the minimum winning coalition line is to position themselves in the coalition space so that voters can perceive the clear differences in terms of their racial policies. Of course, parties' racial strategies to reach the minimum winning coalition line will not work if voters do not see race as a major issue in elections. If voters do not see any racial interests at stake in competitive elections, then parties' attempt to build racial coalitions based on their differences on racial policies will eventually fail. As Joseph Lowndes suggested, "Racial identifications have become linked to political grievances and aspirations when political actors—in widely varying circumstances—have successfully developed credible language through which to make these links." For Lowndes, "In the case of modern conservatism, race has been an open and coded signifier for popular mobilizations against redistribution, regulation, labor protections, and a myriad of other aspects of neoliberal opposition to 'big government.'"[25]

In short, the success of the minimum winning coalition thesis developed in this chapter must also be based on a strong assumption of voters' rationality centered on their perceived racial interests. To be more specific, I argue that *voters are rational in deciding which coalition to join. Their decision is a result of their perceived racial interests, in relation to the campaign promises made by the candidates/parties. They will join a candidate's coalition if they perceive that their racial interests are better protected by this candidate's coalition than the alternative coalition(s), given the electoral context they are in.*

Because the counterclockwise rotation of the minimum winning coalition line is in favor of the Democratic candidates, voters realize that the

increasing probability for a minority candidate to build a multiracial coalition to win. This increased probability of winning for multiracial coalitions, to be sure, does not lead to a declining role of race in elections. On the contrary, race becomes more pronounced in voters' decision-making process. One directly "observable" indication of the significance of race is the polarization of working-class white and black voters' party identifications. While blacks are almost uniformly Democratic, working-class whites have become increasingly Republican. As Larry Bartels aptly put it, "Any satisfactory account of the American political economy must therefore explain how and why Republicans have had so much success in the American electoral arena despite their startling negative impact on the economic fortunes of [white] middle-class and poor people."[26] "It is a mistake to separate out race and class as fully distinct elements," claimed Joseph Lowndes.[27] This is because "race was increasingly articulated in a language of economic conservatism both regionally and nationally, just as conservative appeals were continually made by reference to racial identity."[28]

The minimum winning coalition theory suggests that racial interest is a major decision-making cue in competitive elections. Because of their different racial interests, voters often vote along racial lines, as found in the majority of the voting literature of the last four decades (see Chapter 1). To be sure, specific elections may also feature different pools of candidates, and voters' perceptions of racial interests may be conditional upon the candidates' campaign messages and the contexts these voters live in. Given the characteristics related to specific elections, it is also important to note that voters' "perceived" self-interest often reflects how they perceive their relative group positions in the American political system (see a more in-depth analysis in Chapter 3). Furthermore, the rationality thesis of this book posits that voters of all races evaluate the candidates' chances of winning and they will vote against the candidate(s) who they perceive as a threat to their racial interest.

Based on the above reasoning of a rationality thesis, I provide the following propositions concerning different racial groups to be further discussed and empirically tested in the rest of the book:

1. When the racial composition of an electorate changes to favor minorities (i.e. the decrease in W_p), minority candidates will be more likely to run for electoral offices by building a winning multiracial coalition (see Chapter 3 for a further elaboration of this proposition).[29]
2. The minority voters who share the racial identity of the electable candidate are more likely to vote for the candidate than are the minority voters of difference race because of the "perceived" linked

fate and/or shared racial interests.[30] Black voters are more likely to support Obama than are Latino and Asian votes (see Chapters 5–7 for the empirical tests).

3. Minority voters are rational in making their voting decision to maximize their own racial group interests. They will vote for the candidate that will maximize their group interests and also have a *realistic* chance to build a minimum winning coalition (see Chapters 5–7 for the empirical tests).

4. White-majority voters who perceive a threat of minorities to white interests will vote against the minority candidate (Chapters 6 and 7).[31]

5. White voters' perception of racial threat of minority candidates reflects the racial tension of the places that these white voters live in. The higher the level of racial tension, the lower the level of white support for an electable minority candidate (Chapters 6 and 7).

6. The level of racial tension can be determined by both the demographic presence of the minorities,[32] and the value system of the place where the white voters live (see Chapters 6 and 7 for further elaboration of measures of racial contexts and their impacts on white voters' perception of racial tension).[33]

Conclusions: The Rational Political Actors and Their Emotions

Increasingly political parties made their strategic plans to appeal to voters based on voters' "perceived" racial interests to win elections. Philpot argues that "political parties have helped to drive a wedge between African Americans and southern Whites, the U.S. electorate's two largest voting blocs. By playing the race card, parties have signaled to voters which party is racially conservative and which is racially liberal."[34] In this chapter, I further provided a theory and a mathematic model centered on the premise that political parties try to defeat their opponents by building minimum winning coalitions with race as the center of strategic plans. Instead of achieving a "grand coalition" or overwhelming majority, I showed that Barack Obama built a typical Democratic coalition that relied on the party's long-term multiracial strategy. It is indeed a winning coalition and yet it is not too far from the minimum winning coalition line.

One powerful and enduring way for political parties to remain competitive in elections is to change the composition of electorate itself. The rapid change of the U.S. electorate is not only a result of nonpolitical factors such as globalization and differing birth rates across racial groups but also a product of two major political parties' strategic plans to build their long-term minimum winning coalitions. This chapter has built a

model to quantitatively measure the minimum winning coalition along or across racial lines. The mathematic model allows researchers to capture the dynamic change of the racial composition of the electorate and its impact on the minimum winning coalition line.

Based on the election outcomes from the last four decades I showed that the rapid racial change in the U.S. electorate in the last four decades has had a profound impact on the two-party system and the party strategies in national elections. To understand this impact, one needs to pay attention to the central role of the minimum winning coalition. The growth of minority electorate in the United States rotates the minimum winning coalition line counterclockwise, which forces political parties, candidates, and voters to respond strategically. The overall racial change has benefited the Democratic Party that faces less pressure to win white votes to gain the White House.

The Republican Party, on the other hand, has made strategic plans to attract mainly white voters to win. As shown in Figure 2.7, however, the white support for the Republican candidates recently has been below the minimum white threshold to win as a "uniracial" party. To remain competitive, the GOP needs to find a campaign theme that can either attract more white votes, or increase its minority voter share. Such a task was certainly not easy for John McCain in 2008. From a historical perspective, Obama's win as the first African American president was a direct result of building a strategic minimum winning coalition in the context of changing U.S. electorate. Obama's win was indeed a fruit of Johnson's vision in 1964 to build the Democratic Party as a multiracial coalition. But to build a winning coalition, this book posits that Obama needed to develop a campaign strategy that appeals to voters' rationality (racial interests). Based on the rationality thesis, this chapter developed testable propositions concerning both white-majority and minority voters to be examined in the rest of this book.

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Racial Change and the Politics of Hope

> It was like a bad dream. I wandered down Broadway, imaging myself standing at the edge of the Lincoln Memorial and looking out over an empty pavilion, debris scattering in the wind. The movement had died years ago, shattered into a thousand fragments. Every path to change was well trodden, every strategy exhausted.
>
> —Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*

> My concern is, rather, with the operative theory of democracy, with how the theory relates to, and passes into, practice.
>
> —Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*

"I was never the likeliest candidate for this office," Barack Obama reminded his enthusiastic supporters at Lincoln Park, Chicago, in his victory speech. Yet the jubilant crowd showed how high the Obama electoral coalition had climbed within a short period. It defeated arguably the most formidable political organizations led by Hillary Clinton in the primaries and John McCain in the general election in 2008. To explain how Obama built the first ever black-led minimum winning coalition at the national level, this chapter examines the pre-election context in which Obama started his "politics of hope." This chapter focuses on the relative positions of whites and minority racial groups in political coalitions and their major group interests. Built on the rationality thesis developed in the last chapter, this chapter will explain why Obama's message of hope served as a rational foundation for his minimum winning racial coalition.

The 2006 Midterm Election and Its Implications

Shortly after the 2006 midterm election, Barack Obama publicly announced his run for the U.S. presidency. Democrats had just regained

the control of both U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives for the first time since 1994.[1] But there was no indication that the country was embracing new policy ideas, or fresh leadership, from the Democratic Party. During the 2006 midterm campaign, foreign and military policies were among the most important, and the war in Iraq was the deciding factor for many voters. Domestically, Democrats launched a focused attack on Republican corruption scandals. Republicans, on the other hand, campaigned on social issues such as gay marriage and gay rights, abortion, and the role of religion in the hope that voters would respond again to these issues. The Republicans also focused on a record-breaking stock market and low unemployment. The Democrats, in contrast, attempted to move voters' attention to fairness issues such as minimum wage and health care while countering Republican posturing on abortion with their own posturing on stem-cell research.

I argued in Chapter 2 that candidates build and maintain minimum winning coalitions to win elections. The formation of coalitions, of course, is related to how competing parties take on divisive issues. Issues importantly draw voters—at least in the short run—to a party. Or they keep voters, at the very least, from voting for the opposition. The 2006 midterm congressional election outcomes showed that the Democratic Party built the more successful election coalitions by using issues. After the election, Democrats had to translate their control over Congress to the White House. Among many issues, the immigration debate potentially increased voters for the Democrats in the long run, but would the new Latino faces damage the old coalition the Democrats had worked so hard to build in the past? Would there be a coalition between black and Latino voters?

There were two main reasons for Democrats to be "cautious" after the 2006 midterm election. First, many voters were simply "angry" in 2006 and voted as a protest rather than because they switched from one party to another. In short, these voters did not pick the Democratic Party because they found a great alternative to the Republicans. They just could not stay with the Republicans at that time.

Second, dividing issues such as the war in Iraq and social values would continue to be "unsolvable" and "partisan" "hot button" issues. For example, voters still wondered what exactly should be done in Iraq. The 2006 midterm election did not provide an answer. The key issues of immigration, undocumented workers, and illegal residents, while making voters angry, seemed to be "too tough" for either party to handle.[2] In Wisconsin's eighth district, for example, Democratic candidate Steven Kagen and Republican John Gard exchanged harsh words over immigration reform.

Latino organizations, in the mean time, attacked Republican gubernatorial candidate Mark Green for implying illegal immigrants were a burden on taxpayers.

The Decision to Run

For Obama, his success in winning the White House must be based on a thorough understanding of the changing racial demographics. In his 2006 number one *New York Times* best seller *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, Obama wrote about the demographic changes in this way: "Already Texas, California, New Mexico, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia are majority minority. Twelve other states have populations that are more than a third Latino, black and/or Asian. Latino Americans now number forty-two million and are the fastest-growing demographic group, accounting for almost half of the nation's population growth between 2004 and 2005; the Asian American population, though far smaller, has experienced a similar surge and is expected to increase by more than 200 percent over the next forty-five years."[3]

This understanding of racial changes, of course, laid the foundation for Obama's "realistic" strategy to build a minimum multiracial winning coalition. He would certainly need strong support from African American voters in 2008. This would not be easy, as Obama was still an unfamiliar U.S. Senator from Illinois to many African Americans; he had not earned their trust that he would need for a chance to win. This is an important point to keep in mind, which will be further discussed in following chapters. Voters are more likely to vote for candidates of their race because of the racial interests, but they are also strategic in that they do not want to waste their votes on the candidates who have no chance to win, even if this candidate shares with them the same racial identity.

More challenging for Obama before the 2008 election was how to gain support from other minority groups, especially the Latino votes, to be competitive in key battle ground states such as New Mexico and Nevada. Abundant literature has shown that Latinos and Asians exhibited, sometimes, drastic differences in their voting behaviors and partisan support, compared to African Americans and whites.[4]

On February 10, 2007, three months after the 2006 midterm election, Barack Obama made his official announcement in Springfield, Illinois, to run for the U.S. presidency. On that cold day, Obama passionately declared, "In the face of war, you believe there can be peace. In the face of despair, you believe there can be hope. In the face of a politics that's shut you out, that's told you to settle, that's divided us for too long, you

believe we can be one people, reaching for what's possible, building that more perfect union."[5]

Obama often returned to his message of hope and his deep belief in the American promise during his campaign. His more immediate concern was how to build a minimum winning coalition. In this chapter, we further examine the racial landscape of the American electorate.

Racial Changes in the United States

The U.S. population, overall, has become increasingly diversified since the Immigration Act of 1965.[6] Looking further, there was segregation within this diversification. Immigrant minorities tended to move to urban centers, while the waves of "white flight" from urban centers to suburbs continued.[7] The assimilation and acculturation process for Asian and Latino immigrant communities can be long and difficult. Based on a recent study of Asian and Latino urban centers, most new immigrants see both political parties as the political institutions that do not care for their interests.[8] The overall domestic migration pattern may in fact benefit Republicans, as the Republican Sun Belt states of the South and West (e.g., Texas, Arizona) are growing while the Democratic urban centers of the Northeast and Midwest have seen white out-migration coupled with noncitizen immigration.[9]

But there is good news for the Democrats as well. Chapter 2 already showed the long-term benefits of the racial change to build Democratic multiracial coalitions. Most minorities are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party despite the Grand Old Party's (GOP) effort (sometimes symbolically) to appeal to the minorities.[10] During the Bush administration, the Republican Party "lost" the opportunity to enlarge its base in the minority communities. President Bush's response to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath especially angered the black electorate.[11] In his post-Katrina September 15, 2005, address at the French Quarter, New Orleans, Bush stated, "The federal government will be fully engaged in the mission, but [Mississippi] Governor [Haley] Barbour, [Louisiana] Governor [Kathleen] Blanco, [New Orleans] Mayor [Ray] Nagin and other state and local leaders will have the primary role in planning for their own future."[12] Immigration reform also failed repeatedly under Bush's watch, which further alienated the Latino voters. As the nation entered into a heated debate on border security and illegal immigration, massive demonstrations were organized during Bush's second term by Latino activists to show solidarity and to demand legal protections on immigrants, who were mostly Latinos.

Despite the Republicans' inability to attract new support from minorities to build a stable minimum winning coalition, figuring out how to build and maintain a *multiracial* coalition, especially at the presidential level, was not easy for the Democrats. This chapter takes a deep look at various limitations on the Democratic Party. Before we do so, it is important to examine the population structure of the nation. According to the census data, the African American population surpassed 40 million in 2006 and represented about 13 percent of the total U.S. population. The Asian American population, at more than 14 million, had grown because the 1965 Immigrations Act ended a long history of discrimination against Asians; but their population share, at about 4.6 percent in 2006, was still small. Hispanics have become the largest minority with more than 44.3 million already in 2006. Their size will continue to grow because of their high birth rate and high legal and illegal immigration.[13] With the growth of minority populations in the United States, white population share has declined to about 75 percent. Whites, who are non-Hispanics, are less than 70 percent of the population. In California, the nation's largest state, non-Hispanic whites are no longer the majority in the twenty-first century; instead, they are only the largest minority. In Hawaii, non-Hispanic whites are not even the largest minority.

The Electoral Success of Minority Candidates before 2008

As suggested in Chapter 2, the growth of the minorities in the country leads to more minority politicians elected through multiracial coalitions.[14] We provide more empirical data here. Minorities, especially African Americans, had long tried to make their voice heard in the electoral arena. The growth of their political power, thanks to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, translated to enhanced political representation. In the 2006 midterm election, forty-one African Americans were elected to the House of Representatives. Though African American incumbents lost one House seat due to Harold Ford Jr.'s unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate in Tennessee, there were remarkable successes overall. African Americans represented 9.4 percent of the total 435 members after the midterm election, although it was still below their 13 percent share of the population. In 2006, at the state level there were 622 state legislators.[15] The most significant gain for African Americans in the 2006 midterm election was the election of Deval Patrick as Massachusetts' first African American governor and the second African American ever elected to the job in the United States in the post–civil rights era.[16]

The 2006 election also brought three Hispanic senators: New Jersey Democrat Bob Menendez, Florida Republican Mel Martinez, and Colorado Democrat Ken Salazar, along with twenty-four Hispanic representatives to the U.S. Congress. In the executive branch, George W. Bush's second cabinet already included powerful Hispanics Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

Asian Americans are another diverse minority group, having origins in the Philippines, China, Japan, India, Pakistan, Korea, and many other places. They do not always vote as a "voting bloc." Many of these Asians still do not have the citizenship yet, thus they are not eligible to vote. Relatively speaking, in 1992 and 1996 many Asian ethnic voters supported Republican presidential candidates, and in 2000 and 2004 they supported Democrats. Overall, Asians are the most evenly politically divided among American racial and ethnic groups.[17] Generally, Asians are a small minority located throughout the United States. In two states, California and Hawaii, however, Asians represent 13 percent and 56 percent of the population, respectively. They are also 8 percent of the population in New Jersey and Washington, and more than 7 percent in New York. Asian American lawmakers Daniel Inouye and Daniel Akaka, both Democrats, have represented Hawaii in the U.S. Senate. The electoral successes of Asian Americans in California, among others, included the late Robert Matsui reelected to Congress as a Democrat from California in 2004, replaced by his wife Doris Matsui (who was elected in the 2006 midterm election). At the state level, for example, Democrats Wilma Chan, Leland Yee, Judy Chu, Carol Liu, and Republican Alan Nakanishi all won the California Assembly elections in 2004. Asians have been more active in local elections in recent decades, with many elected to city-level government positions in states such as California, Hawaii, New York, and sometimes even in Midwest states such as Minnesota.

RACIAL CHANGE AND THE TWO-PARTY COMPETITION

Given the growing sizes of minorities and their increasing political representation at all levels of American government, the remaining question was whether minorities could help determine who would win the major national elections. With the nation increasingly diversified in terms of the population structure, it is certainly not correct to suggest that politicians, Democrats or Republicans, do not pay attention to minorities when they design their campaign strategies. Even for Republicans, right after the 2000 presidential election, Karl Rove, President Bush's top political strategist, told the president that if he did not improve his 2000 minority

vote (he gained 9 percent from African Americans and 35 percent from Hispanics), he would probably lose his reelection bid.[18]

Arguably, Bush's proposal to introduce a new immigration policy for undocumented immigrants, enabling them to obtain temporary visas for limited stays, was designed to attract Hispanic votes. However, after President Bush introduced his proposals, politicians from his own political party launched a strong attack on him in the media. Eventually, the Republicans could not agree on the immigration reform with many congressional Republicans denouncing the president's proposals. The president's immigration proposals were an issue in the 2006 campaign and continued into the 2008 primaries.

At the same time the Democratic Party was also wary of racial issues. Although African Americans make up about 13 percent of the population, their overwhelming support for the Democratic Party, combined with the Democrats' inability to win most white voters, has made the African American contribution to the Democratic Party essential. In 1976 Jimmy Carter received 18 percent of his votes from nonwhites. In 2000 Al Gore got 20 percent of his votes from nonwhites. But an intriguing pattern before Obama's 2008 election was that the larger the percentage of the Democratic presidential vote that came from minorities, the less chance that candidate had of winning. The reason for this pattern was simple. After all, the bulk of the voters were white. Before the 2008 presidential election, a Democrat could not win a two-candidate race with less than about 80 percent of his or her vote coming from whites. Thus, to a great extent, both Republicans and Democrats were dependent on white votes to have a realistic chance to win. This is a very important point to remember as we will discuss Obama's campaign, which was centered on the theme of "hope."

As shown in Chapter 2 about the minimum winning coalition, a Democrat can lose a majority of whites and still win, but Democrats must still come close among white voters. If we look at the racial presidential vote breakdown between 1976 and 2004 based on the Democratic votes, in five of eight presidential elections (i.e., 1976, 1984, 1988, 2000, and 2004), the two major parties obtained over 95 percent of the vote. In the three remaining presidential elections (i.e., 1980, 1992, and 1996), minor parties also received between 6 and 10 percent of the votes cast. Looking only at the five elections dominated by the two major parties, Democrats won when they gained 47 percent or more of the white non-Hispanic vote and lost when they gained 42 percent or less. In other words, Republicans won when they secured 54 percent or more of the white non-Hispanic vote and lost when they received 52 percent or less.

Obama eventually won 43 percent of the white votes in 2008 according to the exit poll, which is more than the minimum white support for a multiracial coalition, as discussed in Chapter 2. In terms of the size, however, Obama's coalition was not much larger than a minimum winning coalition, thus he certainly did not win with an overwhelming majority. In short, elections can be won without the support of a majority of white voters; nonetheless, a final electoral victory still demands significant white support, especially at the state (or national) level. To win white voters, candidates must find issues that can transcend the racial divide. As a result, "one of the most important defining features of American politics in the Post-1964 era is the paradox—the rising electoral potential of minorities is occurring simultaneously with the trend towards deracialized campaigns and policymaking."[19] This explains why Obama would eventually adopt a message of hope—a determination of looking optimistically at controversial issues, especially race, to build his multiracial coalition.

Deracialization in the Post–Civil Rights Era

Politicians use the strategy of deracialization to minimize the effect of race and focus on other issues.[20] Why do politicians want to adopt a strategy of deracialization? From the perspectives of politicians, it is imperative to analyze the strengths and weakness of all racial groups before their campaign platforms are made. To build a minimum winning coalition, there are four factors candidates need to evaluate in relation to any given minority group: its size, homogeneity, distribution, and turnout level.

In terms of the group sizes, Hispanics and African Americans are clearly more powerful than Asian Americans, but none of these groups is big enough to guarantee a major party's success at the national or even state level. Indeed, African Americans (the most loyal minority group for Obama, see Chapters 4 and 5) are the most homogeneous group among the minorities, thus the most powerful one. But their strongest regional location is in the South, where Republicans are very strong among whites. Democrats' electoral fortunes in the recent presidential elections had always been related to how white Southerners voted. For Obama, therefore, his "black base" could become an "unsolvable campaign liability" if he is perceived as a politician overly occupied by an African American political agenda.

Hispanics are much less homogenous than African Americans, and the voting behavior varies significantly across the Hispanic subgroups.[21] The three major Hispanic groups tend to live in the Southwest, Florida, and the Northeast, though the growth of Latino population in states like Colorado and Utah has also drawn attention from politicians. Cuban

Americans are traditionally concentrated in Florida and have supported Republican candidates. Mexican Americans, the overwhelming majority of Latinos, are more loyal to the Democrats in the Southwest states such as New Mexico, but they may vote for GOP too, as what happened in Texas, where they have supported George W. Bush and earlier John Tower.[22] Puerto Ricans, who are concentrated in New York, more likely support Democrats. African Americans and Hispanics as a whole have supported the Democratic Party in those states with large urban centers like California and New York.

Asian Americans were only about 4.6 percent of the U.S. population. One more limitation on their political power is that they are not homogeneous. There are many ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Indians, Pakistanis, and Filipinos, and they may be very different from each other culturally and politically.[23] They are also spread out among the states geographically; they cannot form a large voting bloc in any states, except in Hawaii and California.

No matter how large a group size is in the population, its political power can only be realized when its members actually vote. Whites participated at the highest rate. They also have the largest numbers. Because of their higher turnout rate, in 2000 non-Hispanic whites cast 81 percent of the votes and 84 percent in the 2002 election. In comparison, due to the racial gap in turnout, in a typical national election only 11 percent of the votes were from African Americans, 7 or 8 percent Hispanic, and approximately 1 percent Asian.

Many studies have proposed different models based on social economic status, mobilization factors, and community structures to explain the low turnout rates among minorities.[24] Thomas Kim argued that the American two-party system structurally disadvantages minorities because of the need to appeal to the white electorate. With the perception of "perpetual foreigners," party organizations often exclude Asian Americans from their mobilization process.[25]

Given that elections cannot be primarily won with minority voters, "rational" politicians focus on the white majority first, and then they use a deracialization strategy. Successful politicians have used deracialization strategies not only in presidential elections but also in many state and local elections.[26] Deval Patrick's campaign for Massachusetts governor in 2006 provides a striking example of the successful deracialization strategy. Running on the "politics of hope," Patrick skillfully downplayed the role of race during his campaign: "It's America, so it's on people's minds. . . . But I don't think it's been an issue in the race because I'm not offering to be just the first black governor of Massachusetts."[27] As a Harvard-educated

lawyer who served as assistant U.S. attorney general for civil rights under President Bill Clinton and held executive jobs at companies such as Texaco Inc. and Coca-Cola Co., Patrick rallied the traditional Democratic supporters. More importantly, however, his deracialized campaign also appealed broadly to moderate Republicans and independent voters. At one point, a group of eleven prominent local Republicans came together to endorse him.[28]

Deval Patrick's success in 2006 offered a special strategic direction for Barack Obama's historic run to be the first African American President. Obama asked for help, and Patrick later accepted the position to be Obama's national campaign cochair. Together, the Obama team sought to maximize the white vote first to win the White House. "African Americans will rally behind me once they see that I can win the white vote," Obama optimistically predicted before the primaries. Indeed, American politics has entered into a new stage of deracialization. Obama knew that he would not win the highest office if he used Jesse Jackson's and Al Sharpton's focus on racial equality and minority empowerment.

Deracialization in Public Policies

To further show the significance of deracialization politics, it is also beneficial to briefly examine the directions of public policymaking at the time when Obama decided to run for president. Entering into this new era of post–civil rights politics in the twenty-first century, politicians repeatedly emphasize issues like jobs, the economy, and foreign policy, not racial issues. In Chapter 1, I documented the public opinion data on white opposition to the affirmative action program. As a result of this white opposition, race-based public policies have met challenges in the federal government.

For example, in 2003 a major test of affirmative action policies regarding college admissions ended with a 5–4 split decision from the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled on *Grutter v. Bollinger* involving the University of Michigan's law school, and *Gratz v. Bollinger* involving the undergraduate program of the same university. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote in her majority opinion that the Constitution "does not prohibit the law school's narrowly tailored use of race in admissions decisions to further a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body." Justice Clarence Thomas, in his dissenting opinion, provided reasoning against affirmative action: "The law school, of its own choosing, and for its own purposes, maintains an exclusionary admissions system that it knows produces racially disproportionate results. Racial discrimination is not a permissible solution to the self-inflicted wounds of this elitist admissions policy."[29] But most importantly

for the affirmative action program, while the court eventually upheld the race-conscious admission policies of the university's law school, in her pivotal opinion, O'Connor, the first-ever female Supreme Court Justice, made it clear that she was against affirmative action on principle, and she called for racial preferences to end in twenty-five years.

Meanwhile, the use of race in redistricting to create majority-minority districts has also been limited by several key Supreme Court decisions such as *Shaw v. Reno* and *Miller v. Johnson*. According to the Supreme Court, if race is the "predominant factor" in a redistricting plan, "strict scrutiny" must be applied to make sure that the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause is not violated. More recently in *Georgia v. Ashcroft* the Supreme Court further consolidated its stand on the "strict scrutiny" rule about redistricting by reversing a three-judge federal district court's decision, which had denied the 2000 round redistricting plan of Georgia's state senate. The Supreme Court ruled that the district court was incorrect "because it focused too heavily on the ability of the minority group to elect a candidate of its choice in the [safe] districts," without giving sufficient consideration to other factors such as the state's creation of additional "influence and coalition districts."[30]

With respect to educational policy, President George W. Bush, with the help from key Democrats such as Senator Edward Kennedy, passed the controversial No Child Left Behind Act. Regardless of its eventual impact on schools, the federal government's previous emphasis on racial equality in education was no longer the highest priority of public policymaking in education. As Kenneth Jost put it, "Whatever has or has not been accomplished in the past, the nation's changing demographics appear to be combining with law and educational policy to push ethnic and racial mixing to the side in favor of an increased emphasis on academic performance."[31]

Minority Interests and the Politics of Hope Reexamined

As a young and rising star in the Democratic Party largely due to his name-making keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic Convention, Barack Obama anticipated that the media's coverage of his run for the Presidency would start with his skin color. In fact, race and ethnicity have always been central to the understanding of the historical development of American democracy. Interestingly, the topic of race invites both sad feelings about the past and a sense of progress over time. To understand Obama's candidacy centered on the politics of hope, it is important to bear in mind that in the United States, "democracy" perhaps has never been perceived

as the political system that guarantees "equality of results." While running on issues such as health care reform, Obama insisted that he was not for a government that offers "handout" and encourages "irresponsibility." He was only for a government that would be "fair" and "wise."

Because of the deep-seated individualism in the United States, Obama repeated the theme of the American dream in his campaign. In 2007, Obama remarked, "We all have a responsibility to instill in children the values of self-determination and self-sacrifice, dignity and discipline, honesty, accountability, and hard work."[32] Obama reminded the black audience of the success already made in the country:

> One story [in the U.S.] celebrates the extraordinary fact that some of this country's top financial institutions have black chief executives, that a black woman is president of an Ivy League university, that the current and previous secretaries of state are black Americans, that a black coach led his team to victory in the Super Bowl, that the college graduation rate of black women has never been higher, that homeownership by blacks is as high as it has ever been, and that blacks have penetrated nearly every barrier in law, business, medicine, sports, education, politics and public service. Black influence on art and culture is as strong as it has ever been, and black voters should feel empowered by a reauthorized Voting Rights Act.[33]

Yet Obama also understood that the civil-rights movement of the 1960s only achieved an "ambiguous victory" in that open racism has been subjected to profound moral and political challenges.[34] More importantly, the integration policies of the federal government had failed to achieve the goal of complete integration. Segregation in schools was rising, while affirmative action programs have never been a popular remedy for repairing the historic wounds.

By and large, African Americans have made gains over the past half-century but remain marginalized in American society. In his early campaign Obama also highlighted the current conditions facing African American community and the work to be done:

> A quarter of all black Americans live below the federal poverty level, a poverty rate about twice the national rate. More than a third of all black children live in poverty and almost two-thirds grow up in a home without both parents. In some cities, more than half of all black boys do not finish high school, and, by the time they are in their 30s, almost six in ten black high school dropouts will have spent time in prison. . . . The typical black household earns only about 60% of the earnings of white households and has a net worth only about 10% that of Whites. The HIV/AIDS rate is highest

for black Americans, and blacks are more often the victims of inadequate healthcare and preventable health maladies.[35]

A 2006 report described most Latino immigrants in the United States as poor. Three-fifths are "working poor" or "lower middle class" with annual incomes of less than $30,000.[36] Certainly, marginalization is not just restricted to a person's economic well-being, but it arguably has an impact on many other aspects of life. In short, abundant evidence shows that African Americans and Hispanics are not benefiting from America's prosperity to the extent whites are.

The political reactions of these minorities to their marginalization have differed. African American groups and elected leaders pushed for more federal programs directed at funding for the poor.[37] Hispanics focused on immigration and language issues.[38] Though significant intra-racial differences did exist among the Hispanic communities, in comparison to other racial groups it appeared that Hispanics wanted increased access to legal status within the United States. They resisted pressures to further marginalize them through "English only" legislation that would restrict government functions to one language.[39] For Asian Americans, though the major economic indicator of median family income consistently showed that they were generally prosperous and successful within the American social and economic system, they suffered from century-old racism, exclusion, racial profiling, and racial crimes committed against them. Many prominent Asian American leaders challenged the notion of "model minority," which lumped all ethnic Asian subgroups together, demonized other minority groups, and limited the equality causes of Asian Americans as a whole.[40]

Because of these differing views, Obama rationally formulated his campaign theme based on what the country had accomplished, and its lofty goals for the future. He said before the primaries, "Thanks to the success so many black Americans have realized so far, the dreams of my daughters can be bolder and brighter than the dreams of their parents, their grandparents, or any forebears. This story of continued progress toward our highest ideals of freedom and equality affords us pride and hope."[41]

Conclusion: Obama and the Party's Strategies to Win the White House

Through the theory of the minimum winning coalition, I demonstrated in Chapter 2 that the long-term demographic change in the United States has pressured the Republican Party to enlarge its white electoral base. But white share in the population, as shown in this chapter, has been

shrinking. The 2006 midterm election showed clearly that if the Republican Party were to keep in control of all three branches of the government in the long run, then the party would need to find a new coalition partner. Latinos—with a population of more than 44 millions and as the largest minority group with the fastest population growth rate both in terms of immigration and nature birth—became the strategic target of the Bush administration.

It is "irrational" and "impractical" to send those illegal immigrants all back to Mexico or other Latin America countries, repeated President George W. Bush, as the 2008 election was under the way. He tried to enact the comprehensive immigration reform. But Bush failed to convince his own party members during the 2008 primaries, especially the conservative whites in U.S.-Mexico border states, to embrace his strategic plan to increase Latino votes to control Washington. Immigration issue eventually faded away in the 2008 general election because of the inner conflict of the GOP.

The Democratic Party needed to keep the old coalition together, which already included an overwhelming number of African Americans and a significant majority of Latinos. An increasingly difficult political task, especially for black candidates, was how to find common ground and campaign themes to unite minorities. In fact, Latinos have competed with African Americans in socioeconomic and political arenas for jobs and influences.[42] In 2008, more importantly, Obama needed to attract new voters, especially white male voters, who had not supported the Democratic Party presidential candidates with more than 45 percent of their votes in more than two decades.

For sure, the unpopularity of race-related public policies, such as the affirmative action program, had reflected a general trend in U.S. politics in the new era before Obama started his campaign to be president. To understand the importance of deracialization, it is essential to examine the relationship between race and elections. Deracialization had been a campaign strategy used by white as well as minority candidates to maximize their chance of electoral success. These politicians won elections based on the campaign themes different from those seen during the civil-rights era. In this context, Obama ran on a message of hope in an attempt to unite voters from different races and build a minimum winning *multiracial* coalition.

Before the primary election, Obama saw both opportunity and challenge ahead of him. He carefully crafted and polished his message of hope. In his announcement speech in Springfield, Illinois, on the cold day of February 10, 2007, he said to his audience,

If you will join me in this improbable quest, if you feel destiny calling, and see as I see, a future of endless possibility stretching before us; if you sense, as I sense, that the time is now to shake off our slumber, and slough off our fear, and make good on the debt we owe past and future generations, then I'm ready to take up the cause, and march with you, and work with you. Together, starting today, let us finish the work that needs to be done, and usher in a new birth of freedom on this Earth.[43]

Obama's speech sounded optimistic, but his ability to appeal to different racial groups to form a winning multiracial coalition would be quickly tested by the former first lady, Senator Hillary Clinton from New York.

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The 2008 Democratic Primaries and the Presidential Selection Process

Of course, the 2008 Democratic nominating contest sparked unusual interest because of the clash of superstar candidates Obama and Clinton.
—Darrell M. West, "Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns"

THROUGHOUT THE FIRST TERM OF GEORGE W. BUSH'S ADMINISTRATION, the media speculated about a possible revisit to the White House for Hillary Clinton, not as First Lady, but as the president. The 2006 midterm election sent a clear disapproval note to the Republican Party. The Democrats not only took control of both chambers of Congress but also were positioned to take back the White House. Senator Hillary Clinton quickly became a front-runner in the field of potential Democratic presidential candidates. The *USA Today*/Gallup Poll released on August 6, 2007, showed that Clinton led Obama by a 22 percent margin, with 48 percent of the Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents indicating Clinton as their choice for the Democratic nomination.

"People are seeing her as the one ready to be president," Mark Penn, Clinton's chief strategist after the Democratic debate on foreign policies, said confidently.[1] In the televised debate sponsored by CNN and YouTube in July 2007, Barack Obama said that, as president, he would meet with rogue foreign leaders such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. Obama's statement triggered many Democrats to believe that Clinton would do a better job as president than Obama in handling terrorism, the Iraq war, and relations with unfriendly nations.

There was even better news for Hillary Clinton before the primary: "About 60 percent of African-American Democrats support Hillary Clinton, while only about 20 percent support Barack Obama." Nevertheless, being a woman did not help Clinton in the early poll. As many as 81 percent of black voters and 58 percent of white voters told pollsters that "a white man will get the Democratic nomination" even though "women are more likely than men to support Hillary Clinton."[2]

The discussions of possible obstacles to the first female president, or the first African American president, in U.S. history were quickly started in early 2007. When Barack Obama sat at his Chicago headquarters in November of 2007 with his two chief advisors, David Axelrod, a political strategist, and David Plouffe, a campaign manager, none of the three had ever been on a team that had won a presidential nomination, not to mention a general election. But from the outset, they knew that they needed to handle the issue of race and make voters "comfortable with the idea of putting a black family in the White House." The team believed that it "was imperative to define Mr. Obama's candidacy in terms that would transcend skin color." Moreover, the campaign team focused on Iowa and New Hampshire. "We had to disrupt her early," said Plouffe. "If she had been able to prevent us from winning Iowa, she would have been the nominee."[3]

From Iowa to Texas

Obama's team worked diligently in the homogenously white state of Iowa, the first state in the nation to have a caucus election in 2008. They quietly built up an army of volunteers. In the little town of Algona, Iowa, for example, the Obama team sent a young Yale University graduate, Nate Hundt, to organize the community. Hundt opened his campaign headquarters in the H&R Block office downtown. He "joined a local environmental group, showed up for the high school football games," and became a constant presence at various civic events. Hundt eventually became such a familiar face in the community "that the town leaders asked him to stay on after the caucuses and run for city council. But Hundt had other work to do. The Obama campaign sent him to Colorado, Ohio and North Carolina during the long primary season."[4]

In addition to the well-organized community networks, Obama asked for help from well-known figures who could have the "star-power" to mobilize the white community to vote on election day. Oprah Winfrey, for example, gave a passionate endorsement speech in Iowa prior to the January 3 caucuses. In the end, Obama won 34.9 percent of the votes, a first-place finish, while John Edwards and Hillary Clinton trailed him

at 31.2 percent and 30.4 percent, respectively. More importantly, the proportional representation rule of the Democratic Party primary gave Obama 38 percent of the Iowa delegates, while Clinton took 29.5 percent to run third behind Edwards, who drew 29.8 percent.

While Democratic candidates Joseph R. Biden and Christopher J. Dodd decided to quit the race after the Iowa caucus, Hillary Clinton focused her campaign message on winning the general election and her readiness to lead: "What is most important now is that, as we go on with this contest, we keep focused on the two big issues, that we answer correctly the questions that each of us has posed. How will we win in November 2008 by nominating a candidate that will be able to go the distance? And who will be the best president on Day One? I am ready for that contest."[5]

According to the original plan of the Obama team, the team knew that "winning Iowa would be a devastating blow to Mrs. Clinton that would lead to victory in New Hampshire." Instead, five days later on January 8, 2008, Clinton won New Hampshire with 39.1 percent of the total votes, while Obama received 36.5 percent. According to Axelrod, "Mrs. Clinton was back on the march" because "she teared up in response to a supporter's warm words at a coffee shop." In doing so, "she had accomplished something Mr. Obama had not: presenting herself as a real person with real concerns to voters in a state that even then was anxious about the economy."[6]

However, Hillary Clinton made a costly decision after her New Hampshire win. Clinton focused her attack on the "false hopes" raised by Obama's campaign rhetoric. In response, Obama highlighted the visions of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) that changed the modern history of the country. Obama effectively forced the Clinton camp to admit the importance of vision and inspiring speeches. Making her campaign even more difficult, Clinton introduced Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) to try to make a case that the great vision of MLK can come true only after a pragmatic politician like LBJ gets the landmark laws enacted.

"It took a president to get it done. That dream became a reality, the power of that dream became real in people's lives, because we had a president who said we're going to do it and actually got it done," Clinton argued.[7] Perhaps unintentionally, Clinton's decision to compare LBJ with MLK brought the issue of race into her campaign. This decision proved to be a major mistake because it invited a debate on race and the relative roles of LBJ and MLK in U.S. history when Clinton needed not only New Hampshire, a white-dominant state, but also South Carolina, a black-dominant Democratic electorate, to defeat Obama in the following primaries.

"She started this campaign saying that she wanted to make history, and lately she has been spending a lot of time rewriting it," Obama told reporters during his conference call on January 13, 2008. John Edwards, another competitor for the Democratic nomination, also told a black audience in South Carolina that he was "troubled" by Clinton's comment on LBJ and MLK.[8]

Hillary Clinton responded on *Meet the Press* on January 13, 2008: "I don't think this campaign is about gender, and I certainly hope it is not about race." The debate about race became worse for Hillary Clinton when Bill Clinton remarked that Obama's campaign (or his vision for Iraq, according to Bill Clinton's own explanation) was a "fairy tale." Hillary Clinton later agreed with Obama that they would end their debates on race as a campaign issue for good. But it was too late, and she lost South Carolina after her much-needed comeback in New Hampshire and Nevada. The race went on to the February 5 Super Tuesday. Obama won thirteen of twenty-two primary races on Super Tuesday.

Facing strong criticisms, Patti Solis Doyle, Hillary Clinton's Latina campaign manager, resigned on February 10, 2008. Two days later, Clinton's crushing losses in Maryland and Virginia signaled an erosion in what had been solid advantages among women, whites, the elderly, and working- class voters. On February 15, black Representatives David Scott and John Lewis switched from endorsing Clinton to Obama.

The media war between Obama and Clinton intensified in late February. The Hillary campaign accused Obama of plagiarizing Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's remark. The media intensified reports on Obama's association with Tony Rezko, the indicted Chicago businessman. Meanwhile, Obama's wife, Michelle, drew attention for saying that she was really proud of her country for the first time in her adult life. To add to the question about the Obamas' patriotism, a photograph circulated on the Internet showing Obama dressed in traditional local garments during a visit to Kenya in 2006. On February 28, Hillary Clinton put in use the famous "red-phone" ad alerting citizens that Obama was not ready to lead during international crises.[9]

Before the March 4 primaries, Austan Goolsbee, a key Obama economic advisor, reportedly discussed his candidate's economic policies with the Canadian Consulate in Chicago, who later wrote a memo suggesting Obama's anti-North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) campaign was only designed for a political audience and should not be taken too seriously. The memo was circulated in the national media, and the Obama team tried hard to deny the significance of the contact with the Canadian Consulate. The damage, however, already seemed to be done for Obama.

He lost Ohio, Rhode Island, and Texas on March 4, 2008, after recording an impressive eleven-straight wins prior to the losses.

The Turbulent March and April

Instead of feeling the warming spring, March 2008 turned out to be "chilly" for Barack Obama. On March 7, 2008, Samantha Power, Obama's key foreign policy advisor, Harvard professor, and Pulitzer Prize winner, was quoted in a Scottish newspaper calling Clinton "a monster" who would do anything to win the presidency. Power resigned after the heavy media scrutiny. On March 11, Obama's aide, Susan Rice, called on the Clinton camp to fire Geraldine Ferraro, the only woman yet to run on a major party's presidential ticket, after her comments to a Los Angeles newspaper reporter. "And if he was a woman—of any color—he would not be in this position. He happens to be very lucky to be who he is. And the country is caught up in the concept,"[10] Ferraro said.

Though Ferraro resigned her position, the heated debate about whether or not Hillary Clinton, as a first female candidate with a realistic chance to win the White House, had been unfairly treated by the media and the election process would continue all the way to the end of the primaries. No crisis, however, was greater than the Rev. Jeremiah Wright episode for the Obama campaign. In a sermon excerpt widely viewed on major television networks and the Internet, Rev. Wright commented,

> And the United States of America government, when it came to treating her citizens of Indian descent fairly, she failed. She put them on reservations. When it came to treating her citizens of Japanese descent fairly, she failed. She put them in internment prison camps. When it came to treating her citizens of African descent fairly, America failed. She put them in chains, the government put them on slave quarters, put them on auction blocks, put them in cotton field, put them in inferior schools, put them in substandard housing, put them in scientific experiments, put them in the lowest paying jobs, put them outside the equal protection of the law, kept them out of their racist bastions of higher education and locked them into positions of hopelessness and helplessness.

In Wright's most televised remark, which caused a public frenzy, he made a "fiery" accusation that the American government was not only racist but also anti-God. Wright said, "The [American] government gives them [i.e., the Blacks] the drugs, builds bigger prisons, passes a three-strike law and then wants us to sing 'God Bless America.' No, no, no, not God Bless America. God damn America—that's in the Bible—for killing

innocent people. God damn America, for treating our citizens as less than human. God damn America, as long as she tries to act like she is God, and she is supreme."

As a longtime member of Rev. Wright's congregation, Barack Obama was under heat. Obama's well-known book *The Audacity of Hope* was named based on a sermon given by Rev. Wright. Obama's wedding ceremony with Michelle Obama was officiated by Rev. Wright, and he also later baptized their two children. To control the damage, on March 14 in a Fox News interview Obama called Rev.erend Wright's strong antiwhite and anti-American government statements appearing on television and the Internet "completely unacceptable and inexcusable." Obama said the words of Rev. Wright did not reflect the kind of sermons he had heard from him while attending services at Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ.

Obama's interview on Fox clearly did not stop the media's continuing coverage of the issue of race, and Obama's alleged association with the so-called radical black theology. On March 18, Obama made his historic speech on race, "A More Perfect Union," in Philadelphia to ask for unity and compassion and to stop racial blaming in the country. Obama passionately stated, "The profound mistake of Reverend Wright's sermons is not that he spoke about racism in our society. It's that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress has been made; as if this country—a country that has made it possible for one of his own members to run for the highest office in the land and build a coalition of white and black; Latino and Asian, rich and poor, young and old—is still irrevocably bound to a tragic past."

The speech generated more than 1.2 million views on YouTube within the first twenty-four hours after the delivery. Though the speech was well received in both liberal and conservative circles, the issue continued well beyond the primaries (see Chapter 7).

The Obama team decided to attack Hillary Clinton in order to sway public attention from racial issues. Mainly they questioned her leadership in foreign policy during President Bill Clinton's administration. In late March, the Obama camp and the media scrutinized Hillary Clinton's role in bringing peace to Northern Ireland and Bosnia. With her campaign seemingly unprepared for the heavy media coverage and constant questions from the Obama team, on April 6, Clinton's top advisor Mark Penn resigned for failing to win the primaries deep into the spring of 2008.

Obama's inability to complete a close race was also highlighted in the media coverage of the campaign in April 2008. On April 12, Obama apologized for his remarks on working-class voters who, according to Obama, "cling to guns or religion" during stressful economic times. Obama's

comment deeply alienated the white working-class voting bloc in the rest of the primaries. In the meantime, Rev. Jeremiah Wright openly defended himself in front of a national audience. The race issue once again occupied the headlines. On May 1, 2008, Obama decided to denounce Rev. Jeremiah Wright altogether in public.

The Controversial Finish

Knowing Obama's clear weakness to attract white working-class voters, Hillary Clinton decided to focus on the economy in the early May primaries. Obama and Clinton engaged in the so-called gas tax break debates back and forth before the North Carolina primary. Furthermore, Clinton held her white female base. On May 10, Ellen R. Malcolm, Emily List's founder, defended Clinton in a public letter. She urged Clinton to continue the race and asked for women's unity in fighting for their own equality.

On May 15, Obama received the much-needed endorsement from John Edwards, his former rival in early primaries. This endorsement at least gave Obama the argument that the working-class people, who were the focus of the unsuccessful Edward campaign, could support Obama. After the wins in North Carolina and Oregon, and almost a tie in Indiana, Obama saw the finish line in mid-May 2008. The media started to intensify the reports on the delegate counts and the "exit strategy" for Hillary Clinton. After winning Kentucky, however, Clinton decided to continue the campaign despite her troublesome financial debt and the mounting pressure from the Democratic Party leaders. Hillary Clinton forcefully pushed for representation in Florida and Michigan and for delegations in the Democratic Convention in August 2008 in hopes that she could win the nomination. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) punished these two states for not following the official party primary schedule, and their delegations were to be unseated in the convention (see Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the primary procedure and controversies). Obama simply ignored the legal request of the Clinton camp and started his own campaigns against John McCain, who already secured the Republican nomination.

On June 3, 2008, Obama finally won the Democratic nomination after winning Montana and losing South Dakota. Table 4.1 provides the detailed election outcomes of the primary contests in terms of vote shares and delegate counts at the state level (see Chapters 5 and 6 for the statistical analyses of these results).

Table 4.1   2008 Democratic primary election outcomes at the state level

State	Clinton delegates	Obama delegates	Clinton (% votes)	Obama (% votes)	Edwards (% votes)
AK	4	9	24.71	75.16	0.00
AL	25	27	41.57	55.96	1.46
AR	27	8	70.05	26.25	1.87
AZ	31	25	50.37	42.39	5.18
CA	204	166	51.47	43.16	3.82
CO	19	36	32.26	66.53	0.08
CT	22	26	46.66	50.70	0.97
DE	6	9	42.29	53.07	1.29
FL	53	34	49.77	32.93	14.38
GA	26	61	31.11	66.39	1.72
HI	6	14	23.58	75.77	0.11
IA	6	25	30.43	34.91	31.20
ID	3	15	17.21	79.54	0.65
IL	49	104	32.76	64.66	1.95
IN	38	34	50.56	49.44	0.00
KS	9	23	25.76	73.98	0.14
KY	37	14	65.48	29.92	2.03
LA	23	33	35.63	57.40	3.39
MA	55	38	56.01	40.64	1.60
MD	28	42	35.78	60.66	1.20
ME	9	15	39.85	59.30	0.00
MI	35	30	54.61		
MN	24	48	32.23	66.39	0.46
MO	36	36	47.90	49.32	2.03
MS	13	20	36.67	61.15	0.91
MT	7	9	41.05	56.56	0.00
NC	49	66	41.61	56.14	0.00
ND	5	8	36.55	61.15	1.49
NE	8	16	32.18	67.56	0.00
NH	9	9	39.09	36.45	16.94
NJ	59	48	53.76	43.93	1.38
NM	14	12	48.94	47.80	1.44

Table 4.1 2008 Democratic primary election outcomes at the state level
(continued)

State	Clinton delegates	Obama delegates	Clinton (% votes)	Obama (% votes)	Edwards (% votes)
NV	12	13	50.82	45.09	3.71
NY	139	93	57.37	40.32	1.18
OH	74	67	53.49	44.84	1.67
OK	24	14	54.76	31.19	10.24
OR	21	31	40.50	58.52	0.00
PA	85	73	54.40	45.26	0.00
RI	13	8	58.37	40.35	0.61
SC	12	25	26.49	55.42	17.63
SD	8	7	55.35	44.65	0.00
TN	39	29	53.82	40.48	4.45
TX	65	61	50.88	47.39	1.04
UT	9	14	39.07	56.72	2.86
VT	6	9	38.59	59.31	1.25
VA	29	54	35.47	63.66	0.53
WA	25	53	31.15	67.56	0.00
WI	32	42	40.76	58.08	0.60
WV	20	8	67.00	25.69	7.31
WY	5	7	37.83	61.44	0.00

The Controversy over the 2008 Democratic Primaries

Winning a close race can be especially emotional if the opponent is powerful and seems to be invincible. A minimum winning coalition can be especially rewarding to the coalition members if the race is long, competitive, dramatic, and hard fought. Winning can also be very controversial if the procedure or rule of the game is questionable and the result can go either way. The 2008 Democratic primaries were not only competitive but also controversial. One criticism is on the sequential voting procedure used in the primaries: fifty-four electoral units (states and districts) had their elections on different points of time (dates), and the national Democratic Party had a final say on the sequence of voting. Iowa held the earliest caucuses on January 3, 2008. Montana and South Dakota, however, did not have a chance to vote until June 3, 2008.

Eventually Obama won arguably the most competitive nomination contest ever. Why did he win some states and lose others? Did the 2008 Democratic primary outcomes reflect the preferences of voters? Did Barack Obama actually succeed in those states because of the specific sequence used in the first place? Political scientists stress that an electoral system may produce certain "biased" election outcomes. Caroline Tolbert and Peverill Squire, for example, organized a panel of respected scholars after the 2008 primaries to reexamine the nomination process.[11] After a careful study of 2008 primary outcomes, the panel called for reforms to reduce future biases.

Tolbert and Squire strongly expressed dissatisfaction with the current electoral system, sequential voting: "The 2008 presidential nomination was marked by the most aggressive frontloading in recent history; the process was a mess from the outset."[12] The controversy regarding front-loading and other alleged problems of sequential voting stemmed from the historical development of the presidential selection system. The following section reviews the Democratic Party's primary system used in the past four decades. The next chapter will highlight the main arguments illustrated in the momentum theory that was the basis against the sequential voting procedure of the 2008 Democratic primaries. The next chapter will also scrutinize the actual sequence of voting and the outcomes in 2008, and it will show why the momentum theory failed to predict and explain the 2008 Democratic nomination process. The final goal, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, is to reveal the rationality of voters in the 2008 presidential election.

Why Do Political Scientists Question the Selection of Presidential Candidates?

The 2008 Democratic primaries were destined to be historical even before the first vote was cast in Iowa on January 3, 2008. The nation anticipated either a woman or an African American as the presidential nominee for the first time in history. The whole process of the primary contests was intense from the beginning to the end. "Unexpected dramas" such as the Geraldine Ferraro's "gender and race" remark and the Rev. Jeremiah Wright's radical antiwhite preaching immediately captured the attention of the media, voters, political observers, historians, and certainly the candidates and their campaign teams. Emotions ran high from both sides, and naturally the election outcomes were continually questioned.

Scholars, politicians, and political parties have always debated the presidential nomination process. There have been four types of systems regulating the selection of the presidential candidates in the nation's history. They are the congressional caucus, the party convention, the emergent

primary, and the media primary.[13] To be more specific, the first, or original, selection method (1788–1828) was called the congressional caucus because party nominees were chosen in congressional caucuses. The second period (1832–1900) used a system where party nominees were chosen in national conventions attended by delegates from state and local party organizations. The third period (1904–1968) saw the emergence of party primaries used for a minority of national convention delegates. The current system, especially since 1972, is one where the majority of national convention delegates are chosen through primaries, while caucuses are also used in a minority of states.

I will focus on the third system (i.e., the emergent primary) and the transition to the fourth, the media primary. To begin, one may consider a system of presidential selection mainly from these angles: Who can be the candidates? How does one become a candidate? What is the basic procedure the candidates have to go through in order to be formally nominated by a major political party (the Republican Party or the Democratic Party)? The emergent primary system was still a system in which the real decision making regarding the nominations was controlled by powerful insiders of the parties. Then the primary was used in only about sixteen states. Though primaries democratized the selection process, the primaries originally tested how much support the candidates could receive from the electorate. This system finally was challenged in the 1964 and 1968 elections, especially the latter.

The 1964 presidential election saw several powerful groups emerge within the Democratic Party. Led by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party, the members of the so-called New Left demanded that the whole process of nomination should be opened up and a special, democratic commission that would examine the nomination process should be established and report the results of its investigation. This reform proposal led to the final creation of the Hughes Commission, which examined the fairness of the delegate-selection process. Later, the Hughes Commission recommended new guidelines to open up the nomination system.

In 1968, the "New Left" movement was pushed forward because of the controversial nomination of Hubert Humphrey, which generated a news-making mess in the Democratic convention in Chicago. Humphrey did not enter any primary election in 1968, and thus was regarded by the New Left as a man who received the nomination through an undemocratic and corrupted presidential selection system. The 1968 Democratic "convention-cum-riot" finally led to the creation of the McGovern-Fraser Commission. It offered important reform proposals. For instance, the delegate-selection process should be more open and the stateconvention

delegates should be more diverse. More importantly, the party mandated better implementation of primary elections.

Primary elections became the principal mechanism of delegate selection in 1972. (More than forty states have used this system or a combination of this system with some other voting methods such as the more recent caucuses.) To be sure, the McGovern-Fraser reform also influenced those states that continued to use party caucuses. As former Senator Howard Baker pointed out, the reform had turned the caucus system into the "functional equivalent" of primary elections. The chief reason is that caucuses have to be more open so that everyone who calls themselves a Democrat can attend a caucus and declare his or her preference for a presidential candidate. Moreover, the first stage of caucuses must be held on the same day. These process changes effectively weakened the power of the party apparatus and put more power into the hands of "newcomers." This certainly helps explain why candidates like Barack Obama could launch an effective speedy challenge to powerful party leaders such as Hillary Clinton.

The reform of the presidential selection process was accompanied by another change in the presidential elections in the 1970s. The passage of the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) and its amendment further regulated the process of presidential selection and the possible resources used for the nomination. According to political scientist Frank Sorauf, the new campaign finance law reformed electoral politics into something no longer dominated by political parties. Due to this reform, individuals, Political Action Committees (PACs), the candidates themselves, the parties, and the public could supply funds for presidential campaigns.[14]

The examination of the reform supporters can also help us better understand why the presidential selection process had to be changed near the end of the 1960s. Clearly, the reformers argued that the presidential nomination process should be more open, fair, and democratic. They wanted to make the presidential selection reflect the will of the people and produce high-quality candidates. Nevertheless, as James Soule and James Clarke noted, the power struggle between "amateurs" and "professionals" within the Democratic Party in the 1968 convention was the real drive to reform.[15] Jeane Kirkpatrick even adopted the term "New Presidential Elite" to describe the nature of the new party activists.[16]

In terms of the ideological components of the major political parties, the 1960s' political parties experienced more conflicts than compromises. The fundamental reasons for these conflicts were probably because of the changing electorate itself. Everett Ladd and Charles Hadley argued that

postindustrialization created new issues,[17] such as human rights movements, racial conflicts, and new ideologies, which focused more on nonmaterial values, and placed more pressure on the old party system.[18] In this sense, the reforms concerning the presidential process near the end of the 1960s only reflected the social change in the electorate.

Many political scientists seemed to be unsatisfied with the unintended consequences of the reforms. While the Democratic presidential nomination was more democratic, the party became more fragmented and weaker in the sense that the central party organization had less control over the party members due to the reforms. While the new reformed system allowed more candidates to seek the presidential nomination since 1972, it pressured the Democratic Party to find a unifying force. The implementation of the Federal Election Campaign Law with the inclusion of public funding also encouraged more potential nominees. The natural results of these developments were a divided party and less unified campaigns.

One more problem that was once again intensively debated in 2008 within the Democratic Party was the nomination process. The process allocates its eventual delegates of the presidential convention in terms of a proportional representation (PR) system, not a winner-takes-all. Thus, those candidates who do not win the primaries still may remain in the party convention, and they do have the incentive to stay in the convention in order to increase their publicity, which is certainly beneficial to their own political future if they choose to run again in the next election season. The Republican Party, on the contrary, uses a winner-takes-all system so that in the conventions the delegates, who are likely to be on the nominee side from the beginning, may show more coherence and unity. The PR system might have especially benefited Obama because some black congressional districts were rewarded higher proportions of delegates due to their consistent and high level of success for the Democratic Party in important elections. No research, however, has been done systematically to analyze whether Clinton also benefited from the PR system as other voting blocs, such as Latinos, were her loyal voters (see Chapter 5).

Party conventions are especially important for parties because they formally start the general election stage. They attempt to form a party platform in the fall of the election year. A division in the conventions may harm the party in the general election because the party will have problems convincing the electorate that it can unite the various forces of the nation. For this reason, the reforms on the presidential selection process engendered more negative impacts on the Democratic Party than on the Republican Party.

The Democratic Party did notice the unintended consequences of its reforms. In 1982, based on the recommendation of the Hunt Commission, a team of "superdelegates," which included governors and other party elites, was formed to review the nomination process. The rationale for having this team was that the Democratic Party should have at least some peer review of its nomination given the mess in the previous conventions. Initially superdelegates were to have a limited, rather than determinative, effect on the eventual outcomes of presidential selection. Superdelegates only represented about 15 percent of all delegates in the DNC in 1984. This proportion was increased to about 20 percent before 2008.[19] Moreover, in the 2008 primaries the existence of superdelegates arguably helped Obama secure the nomination because of his ability to rally party elites, especially toward the end of the process.

The Super Tuesday primaries also helped the Democratic Party control the presidential selection process ("Super Tuesday" means that a number of states have their primaries on the same day: a Tuesday in February). The original goal was to make the nomination result determined as early as possible (most likely in March) so that the Democrats could be united behind a candidate. Furthermore, the moderate Democratic Leadership Council designed Super Tuesday to promote moderate Democratic candidates. They hoped to offset the advantage enjoyed by more "ideological" candidates who usually won in Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primaries. In 2008, "Nearly half of the states held their events on that date [February 5, 2008], when 45 percent of Republican delegates and 52 percent of Democratic delegates were chosen."[20]

The creation of Super Tuesday, nevertheless, arguably produced some unintended and negative consequences for the Democratic Party. First, political scientists believed that few moderate candidates could really take advantage of Super Tuesday. The winners of Super Tuesday, like Michael Dukakis, were the most liberal Democrats in the races. Second, Super Tuesday in the South made more white voters switch their party affiliation and go to the Republican Party. Third, it was the Republican Party that became unified because of the pressure of Super Tuesday. With the help of the winner-takes-all system, the Republican candidates, such as John McCain in 2008, drew considerable support immediately after they won Super Tuesday.

Although Republicans gained more benefits from Super Tuesday, it is perhaps wrong to argue that the reforms of the presidential selection process have largely increased the Republicans' political fortunes overall in presidential elections. For one, opening up the candidate selection process also produced divisions within the Republican Party. As political

scientists John Green and James Guth noted, the GOP has suffered internal conflict between the moderate party regulars and "Religious Right" activists who have been very active in the presidential elections.[21] At the same time, more and more Republican candidates, who challenged the general standing of the party on issues, have tried to win the party nomination, which certainly could increase the division within the Republican Party. John McCain, for instance, was such a Republican candidate in the 2000 presidential election. Sometimes, this type of candidate may even pressure incumbent Republican presidents who seek their reelections. Moreover, the federal election campaign law further reduced the advantages of the GOP over the Democrats in getting money from "fat cats." In short, the Republican Party has not been able to avoid the negative consequences of the reforms.

There have been more opportunities for ambitious presidential candidates under the current system. Indeed, it would have been difficult for a candidate like Barack Obama to be nominated under the old system. However, the tradeoffs for these "new types" of candidates are that they have to spend more time and get more money. Under the current system, the presidential selection process actually starts from the so-called invisible primary between the end of the previous presidential campaign and the first primary.

To a certain extent, the media have replaced the political parties in seeking valuable and potential winners and advertising them. Name recognition has become one of the most important factors in the presidential elections. As a consequence, the system places enormous demands on candidates to travel from state to state and to raise as much money as possible.

Conclusion

In order to build a winning multiracial coalition, Obama, first, needed to be nominated by his own party through primaries. As an underdog, he defeated Hillary Clinton, a much more experienced political opponent. Controversies regarding how he won the nomination persisted during and after the 2008 Democratic primaries. This chapter first examined the primary contests between January and June of 2008, and the chapter also discussed the reasons why the presidential selection process of the Democratic Party has always invited controversies. Perhaps William Mayer summarized the controversies concerning the Democratic nomination system the best. He pointed to the multiple problems of Democratic primaries: "The central role of the news media, the declining importance of formal party organizations, the disproportionate influence of Iowa and New Hampshire, the roller-coast effects of momentum, the

candidate-centered campaigns and the consultants who run them, the marathon-length 'invisible primary' that precedes the formal selection of delegates, the huge amounts of money needed and the laws that regulate its raising and spending."[22]

For some political scientists, the current nomination process has been in a way "undemocratic." These political scientists questioned not only the procedures of the primaries, such as proportional representation and the use of Super Tuesday, but also the consequences of the reforms. They pointed to the domination of radical party activists and the extreme ideological tone of those activists in recent decades.[23] The winners of the Democratic primaries, it has been argued, tend to be "newcomers," rather than the high- quality "experienced statesmen."

Disproportionate, special interest group influence also led to criticism of the nomination process. Frank Sorauf, for example, examined the contribution of interest groups and other sources of campaign money. He found that interest groups had increased their share while there was a decline in individual contributions in the sum of the campaign money between the mid-1970s and 1992.[24] The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA), however, further raised individual donation limit from $1,000 to $2,000. With the inflation adjustment, the maximum donation from an individual in 2008 was set at $2,300. The criticism of the presidential selection process, based on the limited power of individual voters, should also be withdrawn because more recently the Democratic candidates such as Howard Dean and Barack Obama have found innovative ways to raise campaign funds from individual donors through the Internet. Especially in 2008, Obama's campaign contributions from individuals and small donors were so instrumental to his success that Hillary Clinton was significantly disadvantaged when the constant and expensive "air war" was much needed.[25]

In the long run, the system of presidential candidate selection has evolved into a process that the major political parties have a tremendous difficulty in controlling, especially as far as the final primary outcome is concerned. This evolution perhaps reflected the decline of the old-fashioned party politics and the increasing influence of new-style issue and candidate-centered politics. Regardless, the Democratic nomination process did allow Obama, a relative newcomer, to build his enormous organization within a short period of time.

As for democracy, some scholars also indicated that the turnout level for presidential elections, especially primaries, declined in recent decades, despite some upward movement in the last two presidential election cycles. Political scientists also pointed to a lower level of political participation,

along with the erosion of social capital, at the society level that had been previously a hallmark of American democracy.[26] Thus, the argument was that the original goal of the reforms on the presidential selection process, which was to make the system more open and more democratic, had not been fully reached.

The lack of enthusiasm of Democratic voters to the nomination contests was certainly reversed in the 2008 Democratic primaries, which crushed almost all previous primary participation records. The turnout in the Iowa caucuses, for example, exceeded 239,000 in 2008, far above the 124,000 who participated four years prior. As shown in this book, the 2008 election turned out to be a highly competitive and emotionally charged political process. The remaining question, still, is whether Obama won the nomination mainly due to the presidential selection system that was in his favor or if he won the minimum winning coalition because of his effective campaigns to mobilize rational voters regardless of the system. The next chapter will examine the specific accusations made against the 2008 Democratic primaries and the Obama nomination. It will show that voters' rationality in voting is more important than the sequence of voting used in the 2008 Democratic primaries.

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BUILDING THE WINNING
COALITION IN TIME

There is, in short, a natural tension between a party's desire to win elections and its interest in achieving whatever gains make elections worth winning in the first place. The more internal unity a party demands, the less likely it is to win elections. But the more groups and viewpoints a party tries to include within its ranks, the less valuable each election victory becomes. Every organization is itself a kind of compromise.

—William G. Mayer, *The Divided Democrats:
Ideological Unity, Party Reform, and Presidential Elections*

THE 2008 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY ELECTION WAS ONE OF THE most competitive nomination contests in the nation's history. In fifty states, a total of 36,618,960 votes were cast. Hillary Clinton received 17,555,267 votes (47.94 percent), and Barack Obama 17,351,643 votes (47.38 percent). Thus, in terms of the share of total votes cast, Clinton had a slight edge over Obama. However, because Michigan and Florida decided to move their voting schedule before what was allowed by the national party, the election outcomes of these two states were declared invalid by the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Thus, if the final counting of the votes excludes Michigan, where Obama was not even on the ballot, and Florida, where no campaign was conducted by Obama or Clinton, Obama received 16,775,429 votes (48.95 percent) and Clinton 16,355,922 votes (47.73 percent). Obama had a slight edge in this way of counting.

Regardless, the 2008 Democratic nomination contest was a close race. Whenever there is a close race, both candidates have a chance to win, and the two electoral coalitions are both in the proximity of the minimum winning coalition line (see Chapter 2). It is thus not unusual that emotion ran high on both sides. The intense five-month campaign led to controversies. The 2008 primaries quickly drew attention from scholars as well. Speculations were made on how Obama actually won. Political

scientists Caroline Tolbert and Peverill Squire, for example, asserted that "Obama's surprising win in Iowa generated the momentum that allowed him to secure the Democratic Party nomination."[1] The concept of election momentum is certainly not new in political science. As Larry Bartels indicated, "By 1980 the concept of momentum . . . was virtually institutionalized. Political reporters and pundits adopted it as a standard part of their analytical repertoire. Textbooks, even those with their roots in the old system, recognized it. Politicians in Iowa and New Hampshire, cognizant of their states' critical importance to candidates and the media in a momentum-driven system (and the consequence increases in local morale and hotel bookings) fought to preserve their first-in-the-nation status."[2]

In recent decades, however, the concept of momentum "has been stretched and manipulated to the point where it lacks clear meaning."[3] This chapter will first discuss the rationale of the momentum theory in general and the arguments against the 2008 Democratic primaries in particular. It will then provide a detailed account for the election outcomes based on the actual sequence of the primaries. The goal is not only to show the inability of the momentum theory to explain the election outcomes but also to indicate the rationality of voters that was reflected in the election rather than distorted by the primaries.

The Momentum Theory and the Arguments against the 2008 Primaries

Frontloading Problem

The first accusation of the sequential voting bias is the so-called frontloading problem. States tried to push their voting schedule as early as possible believing that by doing so their states will have greater impact on the final election outcomes. In 2008, twenty-eight states held their primaries or caucuses before or on the so-called Super Tuesday (February 5, 2008). This is especially problematic, according to Tolbert and Squire: "Because the nomination process was so heavily frontloaded and started so early in the year, nobody found it particularly satisfying, save perhaps for the partisans of the winning candidates and those observers who delight in high voter-turnout rates."[4]

The major piece of evidence of why frontloading may cause problems is the scheduling conflicts that the national party had to deal with and their lack of control regarding actual voting. In particular, Michigan and Florida failed to follow the voting schedules designated by the national party. Michigan eventually voted on January 15 and Florida held its primary on January 29. As a punishment, the DNC decided to unseat all

delegates from these two states in the party convention (see Burden 2010, 25–26, concerning the detailed account of states' competition for early schedule in the 2008 primaries and DNC's official rulings). In doing so, it raised a problem of whether or not the DNC's decision disfranchised the voters from Michigan and Florida. As the primary election became increasingly intense, the disputes between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton regarding the legality of the Democratic Party's decision dragged on for months until the completion of voting in all fifty-four election units on June 3, 2008, Hillary Clinton finally conceded the election on June 7.

Before we examine the actual consequence of frontloading in 2008, it is necessary to point out that the fight to move voting dates as early as possible does not in any way prove that sequential voting is an unfair electoral system that should be ended in the future. The scheduling conflicts can only be resolved by a more powerful national party that can control the schedule, and the "obeying" states that are willing to follow the party decisions. Is it necessary to get rid of the whole sequential voting electoral system, such as the one used in the 2008 Democratic primaries? To answer this question, one should not just focus on frontloading. It is imperative to demonstrate that the sequence of voting matters in the first place to blame the "evil" of sequential voting.

The Impact of Iowa and New Hampshire and the Media Expectation

The critics of sequential voting are also concerned with the disproportional impact of the two states that have the earliest caucuses and primary elections, Iowa and New Hampshire. Barry Burden summarized the momentum theory as "the earliest events matter most" in that the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary "matter more than all the other state nominations combined."[5] To be sure, these two states invariably drew enormous amount of media coverage at the beginning of the primary election season. Using the data before the 2008 primaries, William Mayer and Andrew Busch estimated that up to three-quarters of media coverage of nominations in the past could be devoted to Iowa and New Hampshire.[6] For the critics, this is not fair, because it gives more weight to the two states that may or may not represent the rest of the country. Furthermore, it is believed that winning these two states is the eventual ticket to the party nomination. Candidates who are not previously well known can rely on a strategy to win these two states "surprisingly" to beat the media's pre-election expectations. This surprising win in Iowa and New Hampshire, according to the critics of sequential voting, will generate a "momentum" that will make their eventual win of a nomination inevitable. Todd Donovan and Rob Hunsaker called this the "share markets"

model: "In share markets, when a firm exceeds its earnings expectations, its share price may rise. If it fails to meet expectations, its share price may fall. Likewise, more media attention may be earned by candidates who exceed expectations. Those who fall short of expectations may see their share of news coverage shrink."[7]

Using the data for ninety-one candidates between 1976 and 2008, Donovan and Hunsaker reported that "the Iowa vote share" and "Iowa place of finish" are "significant predictors of the New Hampshire vote share, the likelihood winning in New Hampshire, and the place of finish in New Hampshire."[8]

What happened to the 2008 primaries in terms of the role of Iowa and New Hampshire? Before the Iowa caucuses, the media reported a comfortable margin of Clinton's lead over Obama and other Democratic candidates. On January 3, 2008, however, Obama "surprisingly" received 34.9 percent of the votes, a first-place finish, while John Edwards and Hillary Clinton were second and third at 31.2 percent and 30.4 percent, respectively. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 4 about the Democratic Party's reform on presidential selection process, the proportional representation rule of the Democratic Party primary, which was originally designed to be "democratic," gave Obama 38 percent of the Iowa delegates while Clinton took 29.5 percent to run third behind Edwards who drew 29.8 percent. Obama seemingly gained advantage for his first-place finish in Iowa.

However, was Obama able to take advantage of his early win in Iowa for his later contests in other states? The quick answer appears to be no because of the fact that he lost the New Hampshire primary to Clinton only five days after the Iowa caucuses. Neither Tolbert and Squire nor Donovan and Hunsaker examined the intriguing comeback of Hillary Clinton in New Hampshire in their recent studies of 2008 Democratic primaries. Maybe Iowa caucus still played some unique role, despite the fact that Obama lost immediately after Iowa. One previous study cited by recent critics of sequential voting may provide some basis for the Obama advantage after Iowa. Based on their experimental study, Rebecca Morton and Kenneth Williams found "some strong evidence of a momentum-like effect when early voters are nonrepresentative and have knowledge of their most preferred candidate. In these cases, their most preferred candidate is significantly more likely to win election, building on her early success with nonrepresentative early voters."[9]

However, even if the argument of Morton and Williams does provide some support for Obama's success based on his Iowa performance, to test their claim empirically one remaining question is whether the voters in Iowa are "representative" of the later voters. In this vein, Lewis-Beck and

Squire used the indicators of "descriptive representation" to measure the representativeness of Iowa. They asked "to what extent do social, economic, and political characteristics of Iowa describe those of the nation itself?"[10] Michael Lewis-Beck and Peverill Squire used fifty-one variables based on the data between 2000 and 2007 to perform a principal component analysis, and they discovered three underlying factors, which they called economics, diversity, and social problems. Lewis-Beck and Squire then added up the absolute values of the three factor scores to develop a "representation score". The Iowa representation score is ranked at twelfth in the nation. In particular, Iowa did badly in the diversity factor: "Iowa is too old and too white to represent the nation."[11] But Lewis-Beck and Squire argued that Iowa was reasonably representative, especially because it best represented the nation's "economic conditions" that played a pivotal role in the U.S. presidential election.[12]

The Later States' Role

Perhaps, the strongest theoretic claim of the nomination bias thesis is that sequential voting disadvantages the states that are scheduled to vote toward the tail end of the sequence. The critics assert that too often when voters in the later states cast their votes, the nomination process is in effect over. Tolbert and Squire indicated that "in 1976, 10% of the delegates had been chosen by March 2. In 2008, 70% of the delegates had been chosen by that same date";[13] thus, the election outcome based on this schedule is not democratic. Tolbert and Squire raised their concerns based on the true meaning of democracy: "The nomination system should strive for equality among the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories that participate in terms of allowing all Americans to cast a meaningful vote." The later states may have different voter preferences from earlier states. However, "the current system may give too much power to Iowa and New Hampshire to narrow the field of candidates, while citizens from large states in a typical election year, such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas, may have virtually no say in the selection of presidential candidates or no meaningful representation because the contests are over before they reach them."[14]

The Evidence from the 2008 Democratic Primaries

Not surprisingly, the recent studies of 2008 Democratic primaries concluded that sequential voting produced biases and not the true preferences of voters. This conclusion in fact represents the "conventional wisdom" of the influential momentum theory. A closer look at these recent criticisms

of sequential voting, nevertheless, reveals a surprising lack of attention to the sequence used in the whole process of the 2008 Democratic primaries. None of the previous studies discussed the 2008 Democratic primaries based on the actual sequence that took place between January 3 and June 3 of 2008.

Figure 5.1 shows the number of states that held their primary or caucuses on the same election day. As shown, the overall election process did not indicate a serious frontloading problem. Indeed, the Super Tuesday on February 5 was the date with twenty-two states. Most states, however, had their own separate schedules. March 4, 2008, was the second busiest election day, but that date had only four states. In this way, most states did receive at least some independent news coverage.

Figure 5.2 shows the voting participation trend in terms of votes cast based on the sequence of the election. The frontloading problem almost disappeared if we measure the power of states in this way. Iowa and New Hampshire indeed constituted only a very small portion of participation nationwide. Later states cast significant amount of the votes.

To see the impact of the sequence of the primaries on actual election outcomes, Figure 5.3 shows the number of delegates earned over
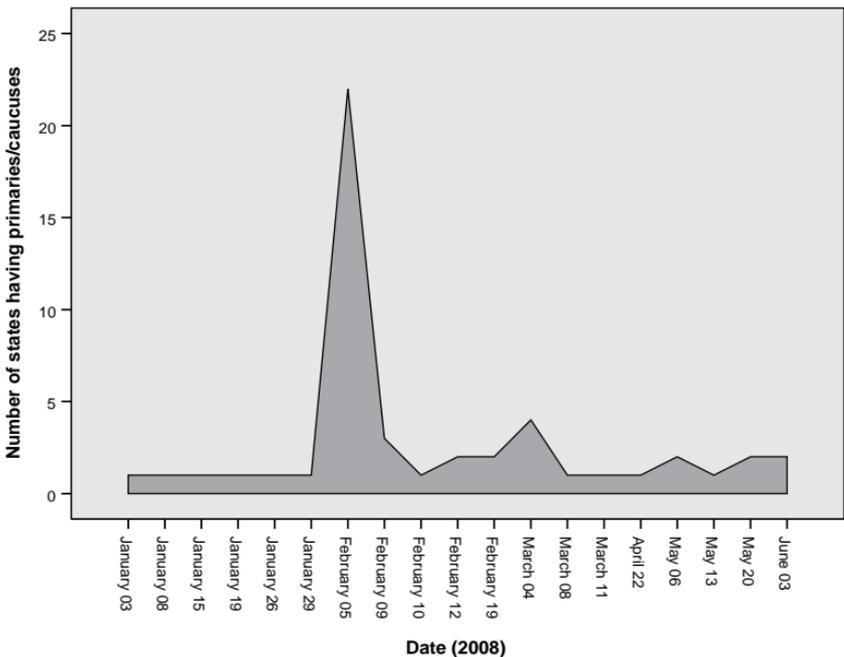
Figure 5.1   Election schedule of the 2008 Democratic primaries in the United States
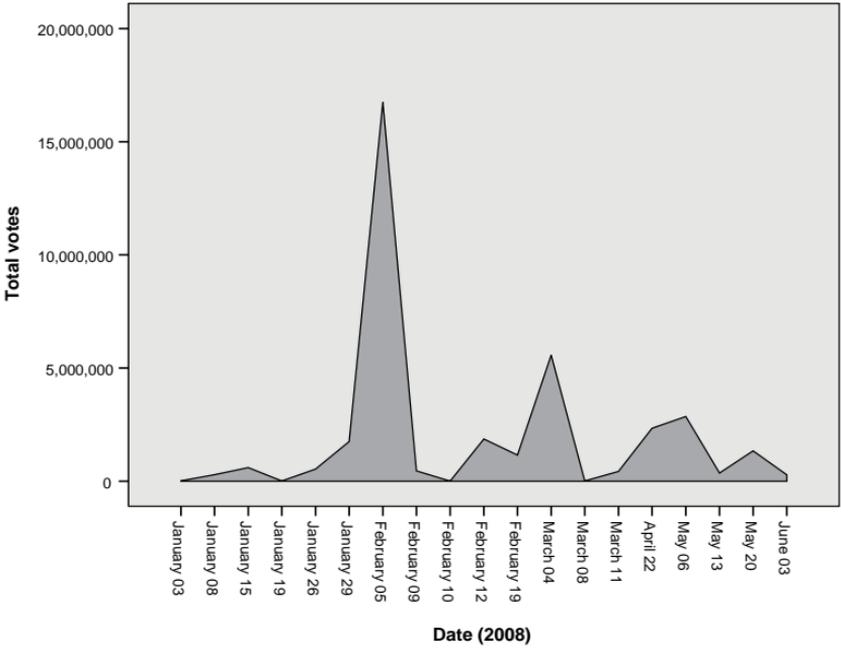
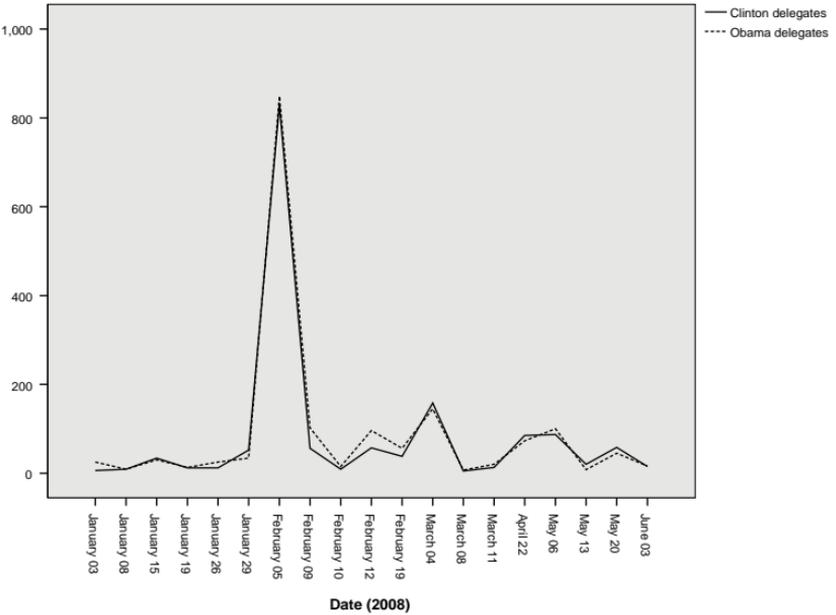Figure 5.2   Voting participation in the 2008 Democratic primaries (total votes cast)

Figure 5.3   Delegates won by Obama and Clinton, 2008 Democratic primaries

time by Clinton and Obama (see the difference between delegates and superdelegates explained in Chapter 4). Overall, Figure 5.3 reveals a very competitive election between the top two candidates. No momentum can be identified from this figure for either Obama or Clinton.

Figure 5.4 further examined Obama's performance over the course of the primaries. The trend is drawn based on the share of votes he earned on each election date. Clearly, the ups and downs of his gains over time indicated that the schedule of the election did not produce a favorable trend for him, as his share of votes did not increase over time. (Note that January 19 had no data due to the absence of Obama on the Michigan ballot that day.)

To further test the momentum theory, I provide a more detailed look at the statewide election outcomes in the sequence of 2008 Democratic primaries. Figure 5.5, based on Obama's vote shares in each state, showed that Obama in fact received more support from the majority of other states than he did in Iowa and New Hampshire. Conceivably, one can argue that Obama did not receive a high percentage of vote shares in Iowa and New Hampshire because there were more than two candidates in the race competing for votes before the Super Tuesday primaries. But the real important theoretic question is, did Obama generate any momentum because of his "surprising" first-place finish in Iowa? The following will demonstrate that this was not the case.
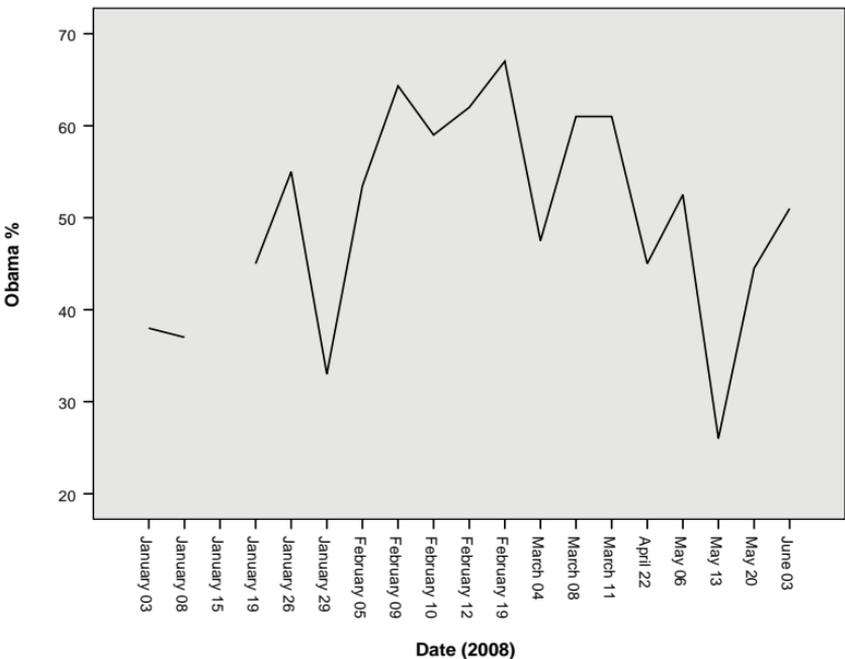

Figure 5.4   Obama's performance in primaries (percentage of votes in sequence)
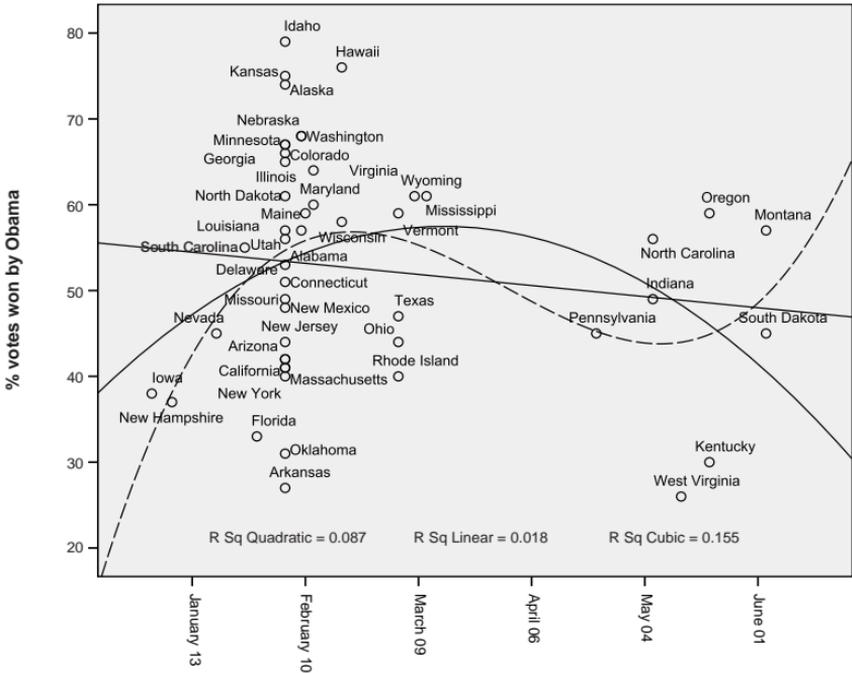
Figure 5.5   Obama and the 2008 Democratic primaries—an election sequence and election outcomes (percentage of votes)

It is important to note that there have been many intense debates among political scientists regarding how momentum should be measured. Some scholars focused on the media coverage over the course of primaries to measure momentum.[15] For others, momentum is bested measured by various psychological processes at the voter level, such as the good feeling of "going with the winner."[16] Momentum can also be measured by the candidates' own resources such as campaign contribution over time.[17]

Given the continuing debates on the meanings and measures of momentum in primaries in the political science literature, it is critical to indicate that the eventual impact of momentum should be directly measurable through election outcomes at the state level. Was Obama a winner of nomination because of the momentum somehow generated in the race? We first discuss the issue of media coverage in 2008. For sure, Obama's win in Iowa quickly received intensive national media coverage. For example, the *Washington Post* reported the Iowa result in this way: "Obama's victory came after the longest, costliest and most intensely fought campaign in the history of the Iowa caucuses. The year-long competition produced a huge turnout that temporarily swamped some

precincts and reflected the energy and enthusiasm among Democratic voters determined to recapture the White House in November.[18]

More importantly, the report seemed to use Iowa to "test" Obama's success: "Obama's victory was the latest chapter in a remarkable political story. A neophyte on the national stage whose inspirational message first captured the imagination of Democrats at the party's 2004 national convention, Obama has passed the initial test against one of the most popular names in the Democratic Party."[19]

Thus, the positive media coverage of Obama's Iowa success appeared to be perfectly in line with the momentum theory. However, there would be no momentum in New Hampshire. After Iowa, two Democratic candidates, Joseph R. Biden and Christopher J. Dodd, decided to quit the race. Hillary Clinton continued her campaign message on winning the general election and readiness to lead.

Contrary to the momentum theory, when the election outcomes were announced in New Hampshire on January 8, Clinton won New Hampshire with 39.1 percent of the total votes, while Obama received 36.5 percent. Thus, Donovan and Hunsaker's notion that Iowa election outcomes produce election momentum is not validated.

After Obama lost New Hampshire to Clinton on January 8, he lost again in Nevada on January 19. He was finally able to increase his vote share and win in South Carolina on January 26, 2008. Was it possible that Obama's momentum was eventually built up because of his success in South Carolina rather than in Iowa or New Hampshire? Even if this were true, however, at least we have no evidence to support the sequential voting critics' argument of Iowa and New Hampshire advantages (see Chapter 6 for a further discussion of the electorate of South Carolina compared to those of Iowa and New Hampshire).

What happened after the South Carolina primary further points to the problem of momentum theory. On the Super Tuesday, February 5, 2008, Obama won thirteen of twenty-two states. However, there was no sign of voters' converging preference for Obama on that day. In fact, there was a considerable variation in terms of the support for Obama across twenty-two states, ranging from almost 80 percent in Idaho to less than 30 percent in Arkansas. Contrary to the prediction of the momentum theory, this high level of variation in Obama vote shares suggested that Obama still had difficulty in convincing many voters in states such as California.

If there was any momentum for Obama in the sequence of the 2008 Democratic primaries, it appeared to be short and late: after Super Tuesday, Obama recorded eleven straight wins before losing in Ohio, Rode Island, and Texas on March 4, 2008 (see Figure 5.5). More importantly,

Obama's losses in these three "later states" turned out to be a major turning point of the 2008 Democratic primaries. Obama would have to face a long, competitive, and expensive campaign after March 4, 2008. The media started to question his ability to "finish the game." Moreover, unlike what Tolbert and Squire suggested, in fact Texas and Ohio were the two of the most important states in the 2008 Democratic primaries. The game was not ended on March 2 as Tolbert and Squire claimed.[20]

The role of later states was magnified after the Ohio and Texas primaries. Obama's continuing trouble in later states such as Pennsylvania provided strong empirical evidence to show that later states actually mattered. The reports on Obama's connection with his longtime pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, "forced" him to make his "More Perfect Union" speech in Philadelphia on March 18 and publicly denounced Wright on May 1, 2008. Moreover, Obama experienced problems with white working-class voters, especially, and he publicly apologized on April 12, 2008, for his comment that these voters "cling to guns or religion" during economic stressful times (see Chapter 4). Indeed, Obama had to campaign hard in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and North Carolina in the late stage of the primaries. Because of the intense competition, the nation's enthusiasm toward the 2008 Democratic primaries was raised so high that it went much longer beyond March 2, the date that Tolbert and Squire argued was the end of the race.[21]

Overall, it is clear that there is no clearly identifiable pattern of momentum. The Iowa and New Hampshire at the left of Figure 5.5 actually represented Obama's low points of primaries in terms of *vote shares*. Within the Super Tuesday election span, the variation among states was beyond question. The short period of peak arguably can be spotted after Super Tuesday. The election became more competitive afterwards.

Figure 5.5 also uses multiple models to further detect any hidden curvilinear pattern that may exist. The linear model has a negative slope, suggesting that overall Obama's vote shared declined over time. However, the R-squared is only 0.02, suggesting that only about 2 percent of variation can be explained by this linear model. The quadratic model improves the R-squared to 9 percent. The cubic model, in comparison, is the best model that explains almost 16 percent of the variation in Obama's vote share at the state level. It is shown in the cubic model that Obama's support peaked around February 19, when Wisconsin held its primary. Late April and early May saw another drop in Obama's vote share.

In sum, the 2008 Democratic primaries overall offered a strong rebuttal to the momentum theory. The election outcomes demonstrated that "being late" in the schedule may have the advantages that earlier states

do not have. With respect to the frontloading phenomenon that Tolbert and Squire argued as the major empirical evidence of the messiness of the 2008 primaries, Michigan and Florida were not among the first states to have their primaries.[22] Given the competitiveness of the 2008 primaries, the two states would have been much better off if they had stuck to their original dates. If they had voted later rather than sooner, they would have played a much larger role in determining the final election outcome. Indeed, what actually happened in the 2008 primaries was a clear rejection of the early state advantage thesis.

Perhaps the reason states such as Michigan and Florida tried to push their voting schedule as early as possible was exactly a result of the academic research that misinformed state decision makers about the so-called advantages of early voting. The scholars who supported the sequential voting bias thesis also misread an important earlier study of sequential voting that was used often by the critics. A careful read of Morton and Williams's original work on sequential voting reveals that the authors in fact did claim that states that vote later may in fact have advantages. This is due to what Morton and William called the "learning" effect of later states. According to Morton and Williams,[23] "We also find some evidence of Bayesian updating by our subjects in the experiment when they are provided with detailed information about early voter choices. Later voters, with detailed information, are more likely to learn and make fewer errors. Learning in this fashion is more likely when voters are risk-averse, which also supports a Bayesian interpretation of voter use of information."[24]

Thus, Morton and Williams' original study, which many critics of sequential voting relied on to attack the sequence of voting in the Democratic primaries, in fact provides a rationale to choose later slots on the voting schedule. Being late in voting sequence may give voters more time to "learn" more about candidates and make better informed and rational decisions based on voters' own interests.

Conclusion: Why Was the Momentum Theory Wrong?

After comparing the empirical findings presented in this chapter with the arguments provided by the sequential voting critics, one clearly finds counterevidence that leads to the rejection of 2008 Democratic primary bias thesis. The empirical evidence presented in this chapter strongly demonstrates the fallacy of suggesting that Obama's eventual win was due to his success in Iowa. Instead of a "converging" behavior patterns over time that the momentum theory would predict, it is shown in our cubic model that there were ups and downs in voters' support for Obama in the

Democratic primaries—a pattern that should be described as "seasonal" rather than an upward trend of momentum.

Given the lack of empirical support for the momentum theory, why did the sequential voting critics still insist that the nomination process was a "mess" and needs to be "reformed"? In fact, even the Democratic Party itself also reportedly considered new measures to correct possible "mistakes" made in the 2008 primaries.[25] It is thus very important to further analyze the basic assumptions of the momentum theory.

The critics of sequential voting make at least two critical assumptions: first, they suggest that voters are not well informed, and these voters may be even irrational, as their vote choices perhaps do not represent their best interests. Second, related to the first assumption, voters are easily manipulated by media and schedule and procedures adopted by the national party. They followed "the winners" as described by the media. Writing in 1987, Garry Orren and Nelson Polsby provided a strong theoretic justification for this notion of media primary that would be fully embraced by momentum scholars for more than twenty years. "In the post-1968 system of presidential nomination," claimed Orren and Polsby, "the news media are of commanding importance." Moreover, "the news media probably exert more of an influence on the nomination process—where party preference cannot be used as a means of differentiating among contestants—than on the general election." Orren and Polsby further made their case by theorizing voters' limited ability: "The voters' political knowledge in the primaries is often scant, and the cue that helps them interpret political information in other situations—their partisan allegiance—is missing. Thus, far more than during the general election, the public needs the media to keep score, to define the standards of victory, and to interpret the results."[26]

At any rate, the momentum theory, similar to the white guilt thesis reviewed in Chapter 1, is based on the fundamental assertion that voters are "naive," and may vote for their best interests. Donovan and Hunsaker, for example, argued that "a two-candidate contest between an alleged frontrunner and a surprising opponent is a hard story for reporters, editors, and producers to resist because it is an easy story. It is easy, and more exciting, to report that a candidate had a surprise second place or that someone failed to meet expectations than to explain how Iowa actually works. The reality of Iowa—for Democrats at least—is that actual voter support for candidates is not reported."[27]

These accusations of media bias, for the most part, have not been proved by Donovan and Hunsaker empirically. It is important to note that in their logit model that is used to predict the eventual winner of party nominations, both Iowa and New Hampshire election outcomes

(vote share and place of finish) are statistically insignificant.[28] The changes in media coverage after Iowa and New Hampshire also failed the statistic tests in their study. It is important to note that *If the media are very often 'surprised' by the early primary states' election outcomes which are different from their own 'original expectations,' then this fact alone suggests that voters in the early states are much more rational, sophisticated, and they are not easily manipulated by the media.*

The sequential voting critics also assume that the media have an interest in "ranking" the candidates before the actual election as if there is a conspiracy inside the media. Thus the surprising winner, who beat the expectations, can take advantage of the win to build momentum to come quickly to the finish line. This assumption clearly defines the media as a profit-driven entity, which benefits from reporting "dramatic events." If this assumption is true, however, arguably the media should have the incentive to make primaries long and competitive, rather than quick and short, for the longer and the more competitive the primaries are, the greater the chance for the media to continue their reporting and make profits.

The 2008 primaries actually proved that the nomination game can be long and tough when there are two compelling candidates. But what exactly were the driving factors determining how people cast their votes in the primaries? In the next chapter, I will perform an empirical test on both "time and space" to show that both voters and candidates are much more sophisticated than the sequential voting critics have suggested. Indeed a close race can be "dramatic," and emotion can run high for both sides. But "voters are not fools," as argued ardently by V. O. Key in his influential book *The Responsible Electorate*.[29] Based on the spatial analysis presented in next chapter, I will demonstrate how the overall election outcome reflected well what voters, given their own racial interests, wanted regardless of the sequence of voting in the primaries. As shown in the next chapter, the preferences of voters were only reinforced, rather than distorted, by the sequence used in the primaries.

Building the Winning Coalition in Space

> The states are, at one and the same time, well-integrated parts of the overall American civil society and also separate civil societies in their own right with their own political system.
>
> —Daniel J. Elazar, *American Federalism: A View from the States*

"In 2008 the presidential nominating campaigns were especially long and strange," observed political scientist Barry Burden. The reason to call it "long and strange" for Burden was because "just about every prediction about the 2008 nominations was wrong." Most importantly, the 2008 primaries forced scholars to "revise our understanding of 'momentum.'"[1] If the voting sequence of the 2008 Democratic primaries did not lead to any favorable pattern, or momentum, over time for Barack Obama as shown in Chapter 5 of this book, what was the real reason behind his success in winning the nomination? To answer this question, this chapter provides a spatial, or contextual, analysis of the 2008 Democratic primaries.

This chapter suggests that "place matters," and political geography is the key to uncovering the "secret" of Obama's winning multiracial coalition. The most important indicator of the political geography at the state level is the racial composition of a state. As stated in Chapter 2, the racial composition of the electorate affects the formation of electoral coalitions through its impact on the minimum winning coalition line. The major purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to test the propositions introduced in Chapter 2 of this book concerning different racial groups' rationality in their state contexts. Here are summaries to briefly reintroduce these propositions:

1. When the racial composition of an electorate changes to favor minorities, minority candidates will be more likely to run for electoral offices by building a winning multiracial coalition.

2. The minority voters who share the racial identity of the electable candidate are more likely to vote for the candidate than are the minority voters of difference race because of the "perceived" linked fate and/or shared racial interests. Black voters are more likely to support Obama than are Latino and Asian voters.

3. Minority voters are rational in making their voting decision to maximize their own racial group interests. They will vote for the candidate who will maximize their group interests and also have a *realistic* chance to build a minimum winning coalition.

4. White-majority voters who perceive a threat of minorities to white interests in their environment will vote against the minority candidate.

5. White voters' perception of racial threat of minority candidates reflects the racial tension of the places that these white voters live in. The higher the level of racial tension, the lower the level of white support for an electable minority candidate.

6. The level of racial tension can be determined by both the demographic presence of the minorities and the value system of the place where the white voters live.

The Red-State Advantage

Building a winning coalition requires careful consideration of not only the timing of election but also, more importantly, the place where the election will take place. South Carolina, for example, differs from Iowa or New Hampshire. To further show the limit of the momentum theory, it is very valuable to use spatial analysis to see the patterns of voters' preferences regardless of the order of voting.

Figure 6.1 shows a map of the 2008 Democratic primaries in the forty-eight continental states. There is a clear geographic pattern in terms of the states that Obama won. Regardless of the sequence of voting, Obama won mainly in three regions—the Southeast, the Mountain West, and the Upper Midwest.[2] Indeed, a common problem in the studies of sequential voting critics is that they all ignored the geographic distribution of voters, which candidates themselves are very concerned with during their campaigns.

Sequential voting, unlike the simultaneous elections, forces candidates to be sensitive to both time and space. Obama and his team, for example, made both a sequential plan and a fifty-state strategy (time and space). This two-part strategy allowed him not only to be competitive over time but also to win the states that Clinton had clear weaknesses (i.e., the "red" or Republican states). To see Obama's successful red-state strategy, it is important to identify the loyal voters who voted for him. For example,
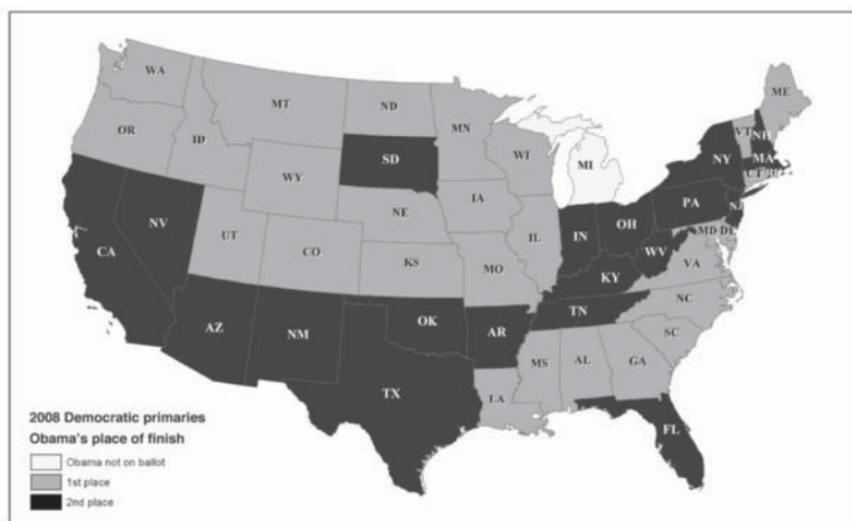
Figure 6.1   Spatial pattern of Obama's place of finish at the state level, 2008 Democratic primaries

Obama's vote shares in Iowa and New Hampshire were both in the range of 35 to 40 percent. In the state of South Carolina, however, his vote share jumped to more than 55 percent. This change certainly had less to do with momentum, and more to do with the compositions of the electorates in these three states. Whites dominate Iowa and New Hampshire, while South Carolina had a large share of African Americans in the Democratic electorate.

Figure 6.2 shows that African Americans cast a much high proportion of their votes for Obama than did white voters over the course of the primaries. Furthermore, the overall trend for Obama's black votes indicated a learning effect suggested by Morton and Williams.[3] While relatively low at the beginning of primary sequence, black-voter support for Obama increased after Super Tuesday and remained steady afterward. Geographically, black support for Obama helped him win many key red states.

While the black support in the primaries of the five Deep South states (South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana) was 85.6 percent, only slightly higher than Obama's black support in other states at 82.1 percent, black voters cast 51 percent of the total votes in the five Deep South states, which made him the clear winner there (see Figure 6.3). In comparison, black shares of votes in other states were only 13.5 percent. Therefore the high level of black support for Obama in other regions of the nation was not enough for him to win. At any rate, to win
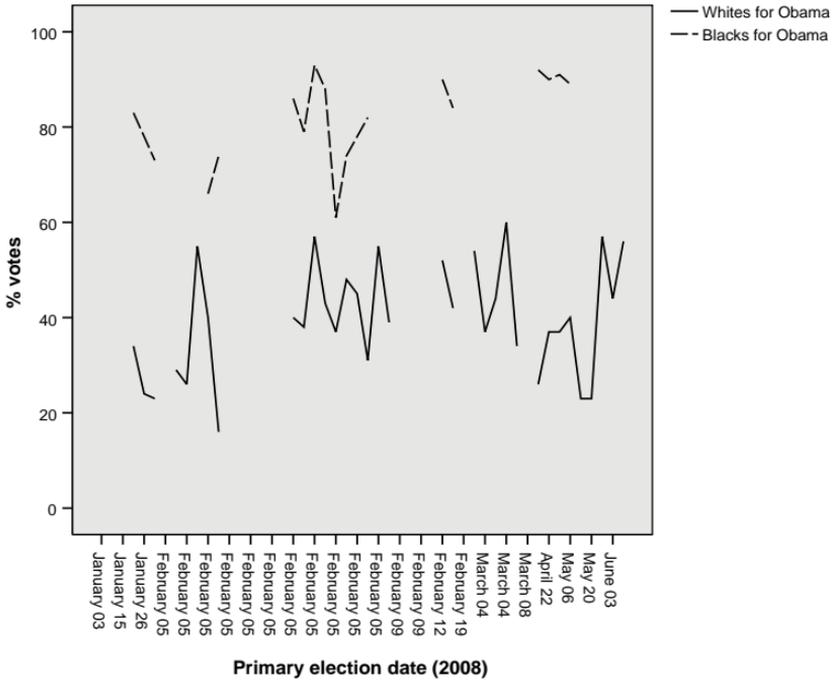
Figure 6.2   Obama's white and black support during the 2008 Democratic primaries
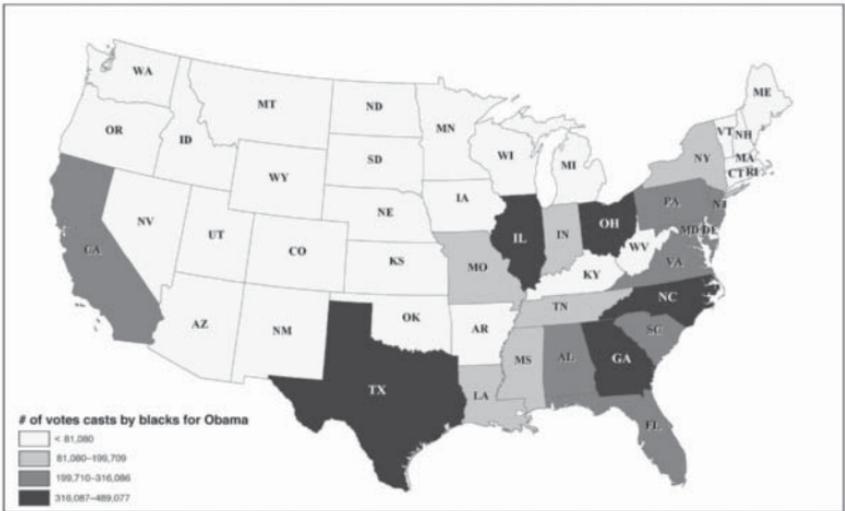
Figure 6.3   Obama's black votes in the 2008 Democratic primaries

non–Deep South states, Obama needed to find more votes from other racial groups.

In the Southwest, Latino voters were an influential group in the Democratic primaries. For example, Latinos cast 35 percent of the total votes in New Mexico and 32 percent in Texas. Our hypothesis stated in Chapter 2 suggests that Latinos are less likely to support Obama than are Blacks. Indeed, Obama's candidacy in the primaries proved less attractive to Latinos than the well-established Clinton organizations. According to the exit polls, Obama's Latino support was over 50 percent only in three primary contests: Virginia, Connecticut, and Illinois where the Latino votes were not as influential as in the Southwest.[4]

In the Southwest, Obama received less than 45 percent of the Latino votes. Obama was especially less competitive in Nevada, where he received only 26 percent of the Latino votes.[5] In New Mexico, Obama did slightly better among Latinos than in Nevada (he received estimated 18,800 Latino votes there according to the exit poll and election return data), which was about 36 percent of the Latino votes. Obama was also ineffective in receiving Asian-voter support in the primaries. Again, Asians are a noncoethnic group that did not vote as one bloc for Obama. In California where Asian cast 8 percent of the total Democratic primary votes, Obama only received 25 percent of the Asian votes.

The lack of support for Obama from other nonblack minority voters made the white-voter support a key in the non–Deep South regions that allowed him to be competitive in the primaries. Overall, as shown in Figure 6.2, white voters' support for Obama had no clear, identifiable trend over time. Spatial patterns offer the most insight in explaining Obama's white support. Figure 6.4 maps the geographic pattern of the white support for Obama in the Democratic primaries. The highest levels of white support tended to be located in Mountain West and the Northwest (i.e., the red states). White support in these states proved to be vital to Obama's success in defeating Clinton in the long and hard-fought Democratic nomination process.

In sum, to understand the nomination outcomes of the 2008 Democratic primaries, one needs to not only consider black support for Obama in the Deep South states but also account for the geographic distribution of white voters. To explain the spatial pattern of white distribution of Obama votes, I propose an empirical measure of racial tension at the state level. Borrowing the recent political development literature, I suggest that there is a deep level of racial tension that still influences how white voters perceive black threat.[6] To derive my racial tension measure, I develop an index at the state level based on a principal component analysis of four
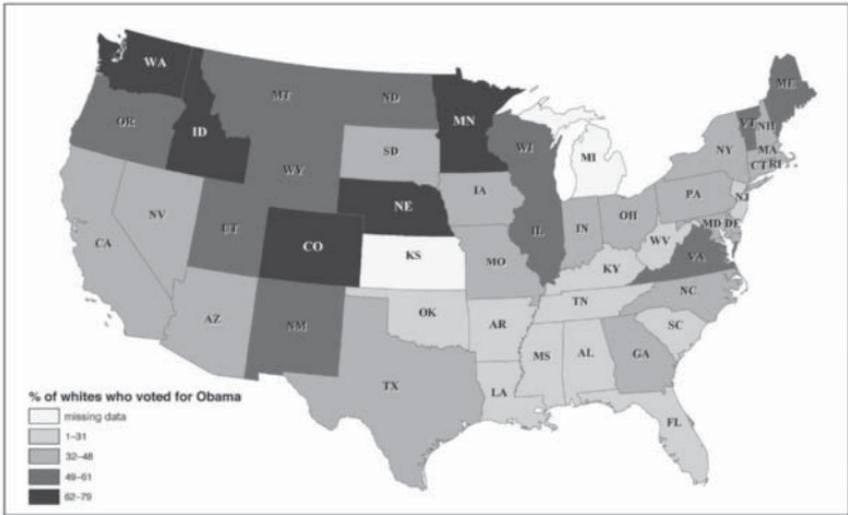
Figure 6.4   Obama's white support in the 2008 Democratic primaries (percentage of white votes)

contextual variables that were identified in the previous state racial politics literature. These contextual variables are black density, racial diversity, state political culture, and social capital.

White Voters and Racial Tension in American States

Arguably, place determines why a same "qualified" black candidate received different levels of white support in different states. Based on the racial coalition theory developed in Chapter 2, whites, as rational voters, cast less votes for Obama in places where they perceived a high level of racial tension that may threaten their racial group's interests than did the white voters in low racial tension states. A key theoretic and empirical question, therefore, is what are the contextual variables that contribute to the perception of voters on the level of racial tension in their state?

This chapter identifies those four variables, which are *black density*, *racial diversity*, *social capital*, and state-level *political culture*. I first provide a theoretical justification for these four variables based on the literature of state contexts, followed by an empirical study using state-level data to demonstrate the impact of these four contextual variables on the levels of racial tension in states.

The concept of context can have many meanings. It often refers to a variety of characteristics of a specified geographic area. Context can also be based on "the distribution of a population characteristic."[7] The

population characteristic that receives the most attention perhaps is the relative percentage of blacks within a certain area or *black density*. Political science literature has shown repeatedly a negative relationship between black density in an area and white racial tolerance.[8] Originated from V. O. Key Jr.'s classic study of Southern whites, the black threat theory explains this relationship based on whites' group interests and the relative threats posed by blacks in different contexts.[9] According to this black threat theory, different contexts affect white perceptions of how their group interests are threatened by blacks.[10] A higher level of black population density may produce a higher level of white perception of black threat, and therefore a lower level of white crossover voting.[11]

Perceptions of threat may be reduced by civic engagement and interpersonal trust, or *social capital*. Robert Putnum, in his seminal work *Bowling Alone*, assembled an array of empirical measures of social capital to demonstrate that individuals, who interact with others in their communities, possess both high levels of interpersonal trust and civic engagements. These individuals are the "social capitalists," who, based on Putnum's state-level measure of social capital index, are psychologically happier and more socially and economically successful than those who are "hermits." Moreover, states reveal different contexts in terms of the level of collective social capital. Putnam also tried to control for the effect of racial composition of the state when he assessed the impact of social capital. He concluded that social capital more likely explained success. When he analyzed the effect of social capital on education and childcare, for example, Putman insisted that "a state's racial composition and rate of single-parent families also affect child well-being, though far less consistent or strongly than do poverty and low social capital. . . . The beneficial effects of social capital persist even after accounting for a host of other factors" such as racial composition.[12]

How did the white social capitalists react to Obama's historical candidacy? It is reasonable to suggest that social capitalists, because of their high level of interpersonal trust and civic engagement, may be more likely to support a black candidate who represents positive changes, rather than seeing him as a "black threat." Putnam emphasizes social capital as the "features of social life-networks, norms and trust-that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives."[13]

Putnam's influential work on social capital has always invited criticisms about its implications on race.[14] In his most recent book, *Racial Diversity and Social Capital*, Rodney Hero "juxtaposed" the social capital thesis and the racial diversity thesis. Derived from his own empirical analysis of racial makeup of states, which takes consideration of not only black population

but also whites and other minorities such as Latinos and Asians, Hero insisted that the racial diversity variable is the key to understanding political, social, and economic differences across American states. Hero placed both social capital and racial diversity in the same empirical models. He tested the relative effects of each variable. Based on his racial diversity thesis, Hero asserted that race is so basic that "when racial diversity is appropriately factored into the research design and political and policy indicators, the salutary effects of aggregate social capital are dramatically diminished."[15]

Hero positions his racial diversity argument and Putnam's social capital thesis at two opposite ends of the spectrum in American political science. According to Hero, the two theoretical traditions emphasize either a pluralist society centered on a group approach (pluralism), or the unequal structural elements in American political institutions that have long suppressed minorities into a disadvantageous position. Hero argued that the social capital thesis belongs to the first approach that in the history of American political science has produced influential works from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*[16] to Daniel Elazar's state political culture in *American Federalism*.

Elazar's work on state culture in *American Federalism* is especially important because it is a major scholarly work on how states developed their own cultural identities throughout U.S. history and how these identities shaped the nature of American federalism.[17] The states in which white voters live, according to Elazar, may influence their vote choices. There are three major types of state cultures, which Elazar called moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic. The basic differences between these cultures are that an individualistic culture views government as a "market" or "means to respond efficiently to demand," a moralistic culture views government as a "commonwealth" or "means to achieve the good community through positive action," and finally a traditionalistic culture views government as a "means of maintaining the existing order."[18] Based on the elaboration of political cultures in the states, clearly one can assume that the whites from traditionalistic states would be most likely to oppose the change that Obama, a black candidate, was trying to bring to America. On the other hand, the moralistic states would be most likely the places where the white voters embraced "positive" changes that Obama was campaigning for. The whites in the individualist states would be more skeptical of Obama than were those of moralistic states because of the lack of understanding of Obama's real ability to bring the necessary change to the political "marketplace."

Were white voters in the 2008 presidential elections influenced by these deep-seated cultures based on where they lived? For Hero, both

Elazar and Putnam inherited the same tradition. In this tradition, the overall tone is that Americans are empowered by joining the associational networks that shape how political influence is structured. The major flaw of this tradition, according to Hero, is its rejection of looking at how unequal the system has been, especially the inegalitarianism associated with race and ethnicity. Hero argued that both social capital and state cultures were less effective than racial diversity in explaining state-level economic outcomes, political participation, and public policy outputs.[19]

Hero's diversity thesis, however, does not have to be theoretically or empirically in conflict with the pluralism tradition that Elazar and Putnam represented, as demonstrated in the following sections of this chapter. Though Hero's empirical studies were constructed on the need of comparing social capital and state cultures with racial diversity to show the relative explanatory power of these state-level contextual variables, the variables that measure social capital, state cultures, and racial diversity were in fact statistically correlated, as seen in Hero and Putnam's books.[20] But neither Hero nor Putnam provided a satisfying discussion on the possible solutions to the problem these correlations may generate.[21] The following sections of this chapter accordingly fill an important theoretical and empirical void, and suggest that all four contextual variables contribute to the levels of racial tension in different states.

Hypotheses and Preliminary Findings

The four theories of contextual effects all provide plausible explanations for the components of state racial contexts and for why white voters voted for Barack Obama at different rates in different states in the 2008 presidential election. I derive four testable hypotheses based on these competing theories and test these four hypotheses by using the state level data. A state-level analysis is especially important because the U.S. presidential election outcome is based on the states as the election units. Both candidates and voters are arguably sensitive to the state contexts in their decision-making processes. I first provide the four hypotheses from the above discussion of racial contexts at the state level:

> *Hypothesis 1.* The black threat theory, formulated originally by Key, suggests that the increase in black density in an electoral unit will enhance white voters' perception of black threat to their own racial group interest, and therefore, reduce their willingness to vote for Obama.

Hypothesis 2. According to Putnam's social capital thesis, white voters who live in rich social capital states with a high level of interpersonal trust will vote for Obama at a higher rate than white voters from low social capital states.

Hypothesis 3. Elazar's political culture thesis suggests that the level of white vote for Obama will be higher in states with moralistic cultures than individualistic and lower yet in states with traditionalistic culture.

Hypothesis 4. Finally, Hero's diversity thesis suggests that the greater the racial diversity a state has, the smaller the likelihood that white voters may support Obama.

To test these four hypotheses, the data from exit polls are used to measure our dependent variable, Obama's white support in states.[22] The social capital data for states are directly from Putnam's 2000 social capital index (range = –1.43 to 1.71, mean = 0.02, sd = 0.78), and the racial diversity measure is based on the 2000 census population data concerning the population shares of whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians (range= 0.07 to 0.77, mean = 0.37, sd = 0.17).[23] The census data also include the measure of black density based on the percent black in the state population in 2000 (range = 0.3 to 0.36, mean = 9.79, sd = 9.54). The state culture measure is from Elazar and Hero (range = 1 to 8, mean = 4.14, sd = 2.52).[24]

One way to simultaneously test the four hypotheses derived from the existing literature is to use multiple regression. The following is the result of this Ordinary Least Squares OLS operation:

Obama's white-voter support in primaries =

47.42 + 7.55(social capital) + 2.54(political culture) +
23.1(racial diversity) – 0.14(black density)

This equation has an R-squared value of 0.55, indicating 55 percent of variation was explained in the dependent variable. With respect to the four contextual variables, social capital and political culture are statistically significant (t = 2.05 and 2.38, respectively) and, as expected, are shown to be the positive factors on white voting decision to support Obama. However, racial diversity is also shown to be a positive impact on white support for Obama (t=1.78). Though black density is negative, as suggested by Hypothesis 1, it is statistically insignificant (t = –0.56). Thus, the OLS operation seems to show a mixed result for our hypothesis testing. Based on the findings reported above, only the two hypotheses concerning political culture (Hypothesis 2) and social capital thesis (Hypothesis 3) are confirmed empirically.

However, the regression results reported above may be biased due to the high correlations among the four contextual variables that produced a high level of multicollinearity, a technical term for difficulty of differentiating possible causes. In this regard, the theories of black threat, racial diversity, social capital, and state culture suggest that the four variables are closely interconnected, though conceptually they measure different state contexts. Putnam, for example, reported that his social capital measures for 1980 and 1990 at the state level are highly correlated with Elazar's state culture scores (R-squared = 0.52),[25] while Hero repeatedly drew inspirations from Key's original study of black threat.[26]

Table 6.1 further provides a bivariate correlation matrix for these four variables. As Table 6.1 shows, the four contextual measures are indeed highly correlated. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.46 between black density and racial diversity, –0.7 between black density and social capital, –0.66 between black density and state culture, –0.62 between social capital and diversity, –0.47 between racial diversity and state culture, and 0.78 between social capital and state culture. These coefficients are all statistically significant at 0.01 or 0.001 level. Thus, it is extremely problematic to use these variables in the state-level regression analysis simultaneously. The observed correlations not only make the empirical tests of the four competing hypotheses uncertain but also demand a strong theory to explain the correlations among the four contextual variables.[27]

Table 6.1   Bivariate correlation matrix for black density, racial diversity, social capital, and state culture

	Black density	Racial diversity	Social capital	State culture
Black density	1			
Racial diversity	0.462**	1		
Social capital	–0.698***	–0.624***	1	
State culture	–0.657**	–0.472**	0.780***	1
Number of cases	50	50	48	50

Note: ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001 (two tailed)

A Principal Component Analysis of Four Contextual Effects and Racial Tension at the State Level

No previous studies have proposed a workable empirical and theoretic solution to the problem of multicollinearity caused by the high correlations among the four contextual variables. To fill this gap, this chapter conducts a principal component analysis to capture the underling logic of state racial contexts and facilitate the data reduction in the further explanations of white voting behavior. Using principal component method, Table 6.2 reveals that there is indeed an underling pattern reflected by factor one. All the four variables measuring black density, social capital, state culture, and racial diversity are strongly clustered onto factor one, which explains more than 62 percent of total variance according to the unrotated method and more than 51 percent of total variance according to the rotated model. The loadings for the four contextual variables in the unrotated model have very high values of more than 0.804 (absolute values), suggesting that they all strongly contribute to the underling pattern of state context.[28] Social capital has the largest absolute value of loading (.902), while the other three variables are fairly close (between 0.804 and 0.837).

The signs of the loadings provide more clues about the nature of factor one. The four variables are linked to factor one in a way revealing the potential level of *racial tension* a state may exhibit to voters once a racially sensitive event, such as Obama's historical run for the presidency, is taking place. To see this, according to Table 6.2, more social capital and a change of state political culture in the order of from traditionalistic to individualistic and further to moralistic can *reduce* racial tension (shown through the negative signs of their respective factor one loadings), while greater black density and racial diversity both *enhance* the level of racial tension in the states (the positive signs of the loadings for these two variables). Therefore, the loadings logically and empirically suggest that factor one is indeed a state context measuring the level of racial tension, which is increased by black density and racial diversity and mitigated by social capital and moralistic culture. The standardized factor one scores thus represent the state-level racial tension (range = –1.39 to 2.49, mean = 0, sd = 1).

To see the spatial distribution of the state racial tension contexts, Figure 6.5 provides a geographic information system (ArcView GIS) map of factor-one scores in forty-eight continental states.[29] There are five ordinal categories of racial tension based on the ArcView operation. A geographic pattern, or spatial autocorrelation, is clearly shown in the map (the Moran's I index is 0.24 with a significance level at 0.01, confirming this spatial pattern). More specifically, the five Deep South states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana exhibit the

Table 6.2   Principal component analysis of racial tension in American states

	Unrotated factors		Rotated factors based on varimax with Kaiser normalization	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
Black density	0.837*	–0.223	0.833*	0.239
Social capital	–0.902*	0.167	–0.86*	–0.32
State culture	–0.804*	0.487	–0.94*	0.004
Racial diversity	0.831*	0.367	0.524*	0.742*
Urban (%)	0.522*	0.810*	0.031	0.963*
Initial eigenvalues	3.123	1.106	2.59	1.639
Total variance (%)	62.468	22.112	51.805	32.776

Note: * denotes that loading is greater than an absolute value of 0.5.

highest level of racial tension. As expected, the four composite variables indicate that these five states are those with the greatest black density, traditionalistic political culture, a high level of racial diversity, and low social capital that made these the key places where racial tension is greater than any other states. At the other end of racial tension spectrum are twelve states where black density and racial diversity are low, social capital is high, and state political culture is oriented to moralistic direction,
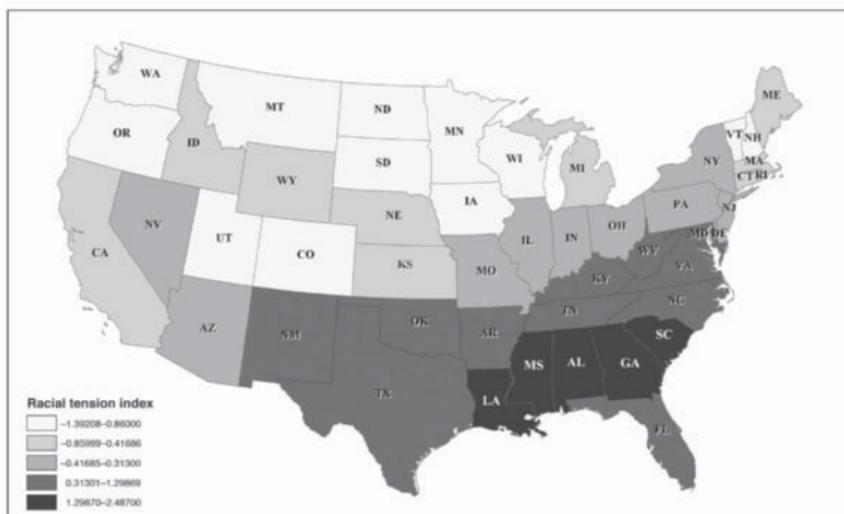
Figure 6.5   Racial tension index at the state level

rather than traditionalistic "existing order." These twelve states are mostly located in the northern part of the country. Between the most racially confrontational states of the Deep South and the racially tolerant North are the three layers of racial tension from the Southeast to the Northwest. These three layers of intermediate states reflect the complexity of hybrids of the four composite contextual variables.

TESTING TIME AND SPACE WITH MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS

Table 6.3 assesses the effect of time and space through multiple regressions. The first model examines Obama's white-voter support in primaries at the state level, while the second shows the effects on Obama's vote shares. Two variables are used to test the time effect, the sequence of primary elections and a dummy for Super Tuesday states. Both time variables failed the statistic significant tests. The racial tension score is our spatial variable, derived from the factor one scores of the principal component analysis, and it is statistically significant for Obama's white support. More specifically, white voter support for Obama in the Democratic primaries displayed a spatial pattern. In the Mountain West and Upper Midwest, whites were more supportive of Obama because of a relatively lower level of racial tension in these states. On the contrary, the white voters in the Deep South were least likely to support Obama because of high racial tension still existing there. These geopatterns revealed an enduring, rather than vanishing, effect of race on the 2008 Democratic nomination outcomes.

The second model of Table 6.3 is used to test the impact of time and space on Obama's vote shares, controlling for other possible factors during the campaigns. Women's political success at the state legislatures actually helped Obama's vote shares, instead of hurting him. This finding seems to show the limited appeal of Hillary Clinton's campaign as the first female candidate with a realistic chance to win a major party nomination. Our major interest here, however, is the effects of time and space. Despite the Durbin-Watson statistic (1.14) showing possible first-order autocorrelation, the OLS results indicated that the sequence of elections and the Super Tuesday election date did not affect Obama's vote shares, controlling for other variables. More importantly, the space variable—that is, the racial tension score—actually influenced Obama's eventual vote shares in a curvilinear way. The quadratic term for racial tension score is statistically significant.

Figure 6.6 provides a scatterplot between racial tension and Obama's vote shares at the state level. There is clearly a U-shaped curvilinear relationship captured by Figure 6.6. Obama received a very high level of support in low racial tension states. His vote shares dropped as racial tension increases. However, in the five Deep South states where the racial tension was the

Table 6.3   Multiple OLS regressions of 2008 primary election—testing time and space

	Obama white support		Obama vote share	
	b	**Standard error**	**b**	**Standard error**
Racial tension scores[a]	−7.71	1.77***	−2.8	2.22
Racial tension scores squared			4.53	1.84*
Election sequence	0.190	0.410	0.202	0.466
Super Tuesday	1.11	3.57	0.416	0.936
% mass public liberal	0.950	0.658	−0.65	0.701
% women state legislators	0.582	0.313	0.742	0.34*
% urban	−0.08	0.110	0.091	0.135
% age 19 or younger	2.61	0.824**	1.26	0.936
Intercept	−45.57		−2.25	
R-squared (adjusted R-Squared)	0.616 (0.546)		0.332 (0.192)	
Durbin-Watson statistics	1.30		1.14	
N[b]	46		47	

Notes: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001 (two tailed)

[a] Racial tension scores are from the factor one scores of the principal component analysis of black density, political culture, social capital, and racial diversity. Election sequence is a simple counter variable that orders the sequence of primary elections. Super Tuesday is a dummy (1 = on Super Tuesday, 0 otherwise). The data on the percentage of women state legislators are from 2006–2007 data, the percentage of union and the percentage of age 19 or younger are based on the 2004 census data, and the percentage of the mass public who are liberal are from Pollock, The Essentials of Political Analysis.

[b] N should be 50 if the data were available for all fifty states. However, Alaska and Hawaii were excluded from the analysis because of lack of data on their state-level social capital. Michigan was excluded because Barack Obama was not on the ballot in primary. No exit poll data were available on Kansas white voter support for Obama in the primary.

highest in the country, Obama's vote shares increased. As discussed above, this increase in the Deep South was due to the extremely high level of black support regardless of the sequence of the primaries. In short, in low racial tension states Obama's votes were mainly from the white voters. In high racial tension states, he relied on black support. It is in those "median racial tension" states where Obama experienced the lowest level of support.

It is worth noting that some of these median racial tension states are located in the Southwest, where Latinos are the increasing force in the elections. In the 2008 Democratic primaries, Latino voters were strongly behind Hillary Clinton. Obama's vote shares were the lowest in the
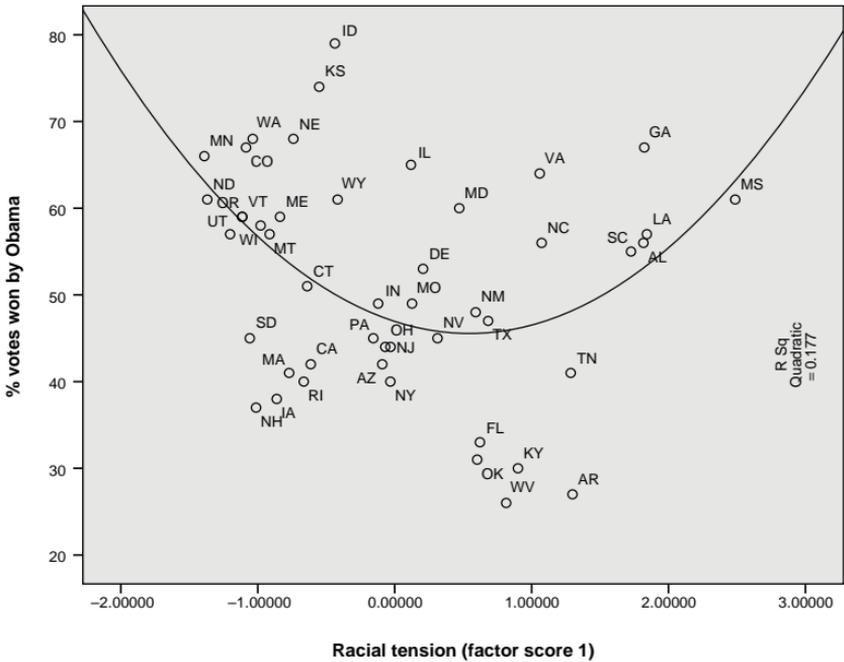
Figure 6.6   U-shaped relationship between racial tension and Obama's vote share, 2008 Democratic primaries

"border states" of West Virginia, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Oklahoma where there were not enough black voters in the Democratic primaries and his white support level was extremely low as well.

Conclusions: Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians as Rational Voters in the Primaries

To explain why the sequence used in the 2008 primaries did not distort the preferences of voters, contextual analysis in this chapter shows that voters were persistent in their vote choices regardless of the sequence of their voting schedule. The findings presented in this chapter provide a strong rejection to the momentum theory commonly adopted by scholars to attack the primary system of the last four decades. Unlike what was expected by the momentum theory, voters were rational and showed a level of sophistication that the media may find hard to manipulate.

Indeed, many voters became emotional during the primaries. But that was most likely *a result* of a highly competitive and constantly disputed nomination contest. The emotions of the voters, however, did not change the preferences given their strategic consideration of candidates. Black

voters, as shown in this chapter, provided a key voting bloc for Obama especially in Southern Democratic primaries. Black support was always higher than the support from any other racial group, and it was further consolidated throughout the primary process once African American voters realized that Obama would have a realistic chance to win the nomination. This finding strongly confirms the hypothesis made in Chapter 2 regarding the minimum winning coalition building process. When a minority candidate runs an election against a formidable white candidate, the minority voters of the same race (in the case of Obama campaign, for example, the African American voters) are the most loyal group.

In comparison, the minority voters of different race (i.e., Latinos and Asian American voters) perceived their racial interests differently, and they were consistent in their support for Hillary Clinton during the primaries. In fact, their support for Clinton proved so crucial to Clinton that she clearly enjoyed the advantage in the median racial tension states mostly located in the Southwest. The lack of enthusiasm from the Latino and Asian voters for Obama further demonstrates the limit of the theory based on the psychological need to elect an African American candidate due to the nation's history of slavery and racial inequality. It is clear that Latino and Asian voters at least did not see the need to elect an African American when they had a choice to vote for Hillary Clinton, a candidate who had a longtime establishment in Latino and Asian communities, thanks to her close involvement in Bill Clinton's previous campaigns and administration.

Rodolfo de la Garza and Louis DeSipio argued that Latinos helped Bill Clinton in the 1992 presidential election to be competitive in six of nine states where Latino populations were concentrated.[30] This Bill Clinton connection with the Latino voters clearly translated to Hillary Clinton's advantage in the 2008 primaries.

The white-guilt thesis was further rejected by the findings regarding Obama's white support in the primaries. Less than 45 percent of the white voters supported Obama in the primaries. We see a clear spatial pattern of the Obama white voters, regardless of the sequence of the primaries: his main strength among whites in the primaries was in the Mountain West and the northwestern part of the "red states." Some political scientists were "shocked" by this spatial pattern, and attributed this pattern to the difference between primary and caucuses states, as Obama was clearly more successful in caucuses than was Clinton. Barry Burden indicated that "the distinction between caucuses and primaries" was "critical," and yet no previous studies had predicted the influence of this distinction in 2008.[31] Burden himself did not provide an answer to why this was the case. This chapter links this spatial pattern to the four contextual

variables: black density, racial diversity, social capital, and political culture. Indeed, the racial tension that is intrinsically associated with these four contexts at the state level is the most powerful predictor of Obama's success in the white electorate. Caucus states were more likely to be those with homogeneous racial demographics, high social capital, and moralistic cultures (i.e., the states with lower racial tension).

The multiple regression results strongly suggest a spatial effect, controlling for other plausible explanations of Obama success. The findings are indeed very intriguing. Race is revealed as one of the most powerful factors in voters' mind. In the South, for example, few whites supported Obama. In a sense, Obama built a minimum winning coalition in the primaries, but he and his campaign team had to study the political geography that was formed based on the nation's long history of racial conflict and competing ideas about how to deal with racial inequality. The egalitarian moralist political culture and social capital of the states proved to be the key value system for white voters to mitigate their perception of black threat in their states, thus to vote for Obama. These moralist culture and social capital are more likely to be found in the "red states." The Obama team successfully developed a red-state strategy that allowed him to compete with Hillary Clinton and secure the nomination in the end. The spatial pattern of white voting would continue into the fall of 2008, and as reported in the next chapter, Obama's multiracial coalition would be further tested and consolidated in the general election when he faced the challenge from John McCain.

Winning the General Election

> This revised form of the rationality condition can be verified in only one way: that is, by showing that a model using it permits the deduction of nonobvious hypotheses which can themselves be verified by experiment, observation, and prediction.
>
> —William H. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*

In the first two months after winning the nomination contests of the Democratic Party, Barack Obama enjoyed a constant lead over his general election rival, John McCain, according to the Gallup Tracking Poll (see Figure 7.1). Obama also raised $52 million in June 2008, which "swamped" John McCain by more than two to one. He had already raised $340 million at that point compared to McCain's $132 million. On the economic front, the news did not help John McCain's Republican Party. In particular, the Bush administration, and the treasury secretary in particular, had to swat away increasing news reports that indicated that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the pillars of the mortgage business, might be crumbling.[1]

Focusing on building his foreign policy credential, Obama traveled to the Middle East and Europe. His visit to the U.S. troops in Iraq on July 20, 2008, received extensive media coverage. Obama reassured Israel during his trip that he would be a friend to Israel. He also discussed economic and war issues in that week of July with European leaders. His major speech in Berlin, Germany, electrified his audience. Inside the United States, the Obama team busily prepared a general-election plan to win more red states among the Republican strongholds.

One plan was to target the Latino communities, which Obama failed to win during the primaries (see Chapter 6). In particular, Obama asked Antonio Villaraigosa, the popular Latino mayor of Los Angeles, to build up his networks among Latino activists. A massive $20 million project
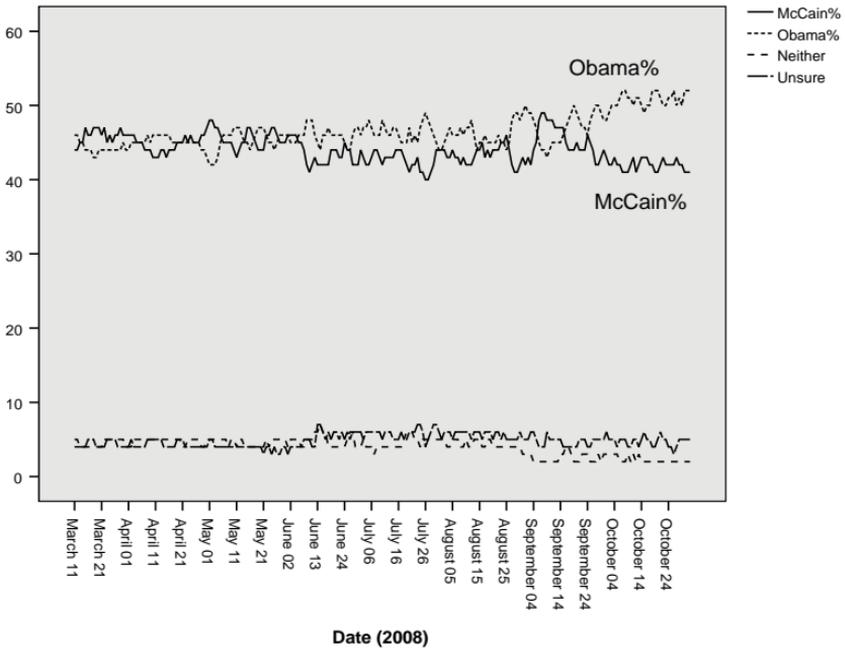
Figure 7.1   Gallup daily tracking poll of the presidential choice of registered voters

was carried out for this mission. The goal was to win more key Southwest states that went to Hillary Clinton in the primaries.

Early September of 2008 turned out to be a period that Obama's previous lead over McCain evaporated. The nation seemed to be picking between the two candidates (see Figure 7.1). One reason was because McCain found an effective way to attack Obama. The McCain camp compared Obama repeatedly in national television commercials to Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, two controversial Hollywood personalities. It mocked Obama as "Messiah-like" and as a "celebrity" who had no substance. On August 13, 2008, Jerome R. Corsi published his best seller, *The Obama Nation: Leftist Politics and the Cult of Personality.* Conservative voters were energized, and Obama's poll number further dropped.

The Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Denver during the last week of August was a success for Obama. He chose Joseph Biden, a U.S. Senator from Delaware, as his vice presidential nominee. Democratic voters responded enthusiastically. Furthermore, Hillary Clinton was publicly shown fully committed to the united front against the Republicans. Though Obama delivered his well-received acceptance speech at the DNC convention, the Republican Party's convention eventually occupied the spotlight. On August 29, John McCain chose Alaskan Governor Sarah

Palin as the GOP's vice presidential candidate. This surprise move put McCain ahead of Obama in public polls as many as 4 percentage points (Figure 7.1). This choice consolidated conservatives behind McCain. The independents also seemed to swing to the GOP.

In late September 2008, Obama finally rebounded in the public polls. This reverse of lead in polls, in a short run, arguably might be related to the increasing uneasiness of the public toward the unreadiness of GOP vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin. Her performances in the interviews with several major national television networks in September led to wide criticism, even by her own party leaders.[2] More troublesome for the McCain campaign, the deteriorating economy and the ill-advised reaction of McCain to the crisis cast doubts on McCain's ability to deal with the economy.

Figure 7.2 shows the Electoral College map based on statewide polls conducted before September 23. It was estimated that Obama would receive 273 Electoral College votes, more than the 270 minimum to win the White House, if the election were to take place on September 23. It is important to note that the polls already indicated that Obama would have a comfortable lead in New Mexico and Colorado, the two states with significant Latino voter presence.

On September 24, 2008, Obama rejected McCain's call to delay the presidential debate in order to engage fully in the economic recovery plan in Congress. During the first presidential debate on September 26, 2008,
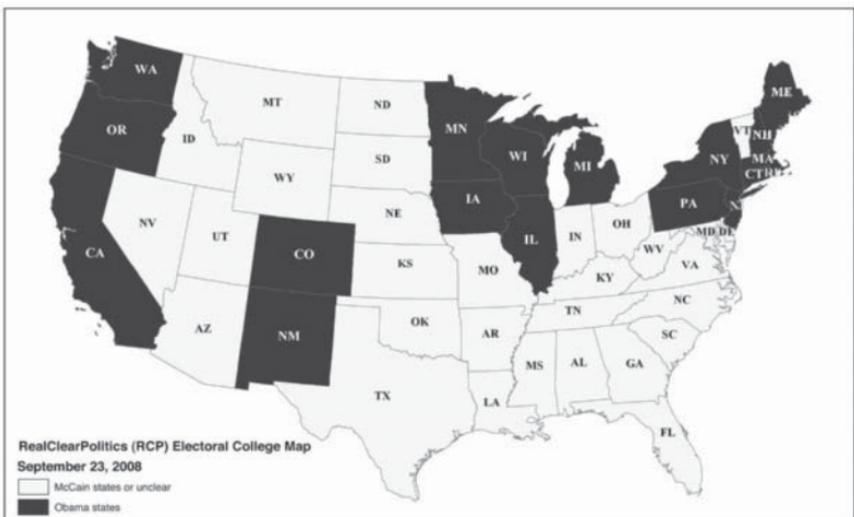
7.2　Obama's Electoral College map on September 23, 2008

Obama showed a statesman-like calmness and detailed attention to the economic issues confronting the nation. The polls conducted nationwide and in key states all gave Obama the clear edge, suggesting his lead was growing. Based on the RealClearPolitics (RCP) average statewide survey results taken after the presidential debate, Obama added the critical Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia into his column. His Electoral College votes increased to 327 based on the RCP average survey scores.[3] Already a clear favorite to win, Obama gained support in the super majority of the states, while only losing more than 2.7 average percentage points in Maine and Montana, according to RCP scores. Obama also performed steadily in the second presidential debate on October 7, 2008. The only vice-presidential debate between Joseph Biden and Sarah Palin on October 2 did not play out in favor of the Republicans. Palin, in particular, could not reverse the negative news coverage of her campaign despite her focused attack on the "biased media."

Negative Attacks in the Final Period of the Campaign and Voter Emotions

As the 2008 presidential election approached the finish line, John McCain increasingly went negative. This news first came after McCain's senior adviser Greg Strimple offered the "new" McCain plan on October 2, 2008. Strimple told reporters, "We're looking at a very aggressive last 30 days of turning the page on this financial crisis and getting back to discussing Mr. Obama's aggressively liberal record and how he will be too risky for Americans."[4]

McCain confirmed this strategic shift during a Colorado event when a voter asked, "When are you going to take the gloves off?" He answered, "How about Tuesday [the second presidential debate] night?" What followed were month-long television advertisements repeating the same question: "Who is Barack Obama?"

The Republicans who welcomed McCain's negative attacks suggested that it should be legitimate to raise questions about Obama's associations with Antoin "Tony" Rezko, a former Obama top fundraiser, and William Ayers, founder of a 1960s radical group. Obama campaign spokesman Bill Burton countered that the McCain team was trying to distract voters from the economic crisis by launching character attacks.

Negative ads may appear to be the height of partisan politics, but they are common practice in close races regardless of party. Many of the attacks that McCain used reminded voters of the same strategy used by Hillary Clinton during her run for the Democratic nomination against Obama. Tony Rezko, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, and William Ayers were all familiar

names in the 2008 Democratic primaries. Negative attacks do not even have to name names as long as they are targeting the opponents in a negative way. Here is one of the most memorable moments during the 2008 Democratic primaries: "It's 3 a.m. and your children are safe and asleep. But there's a phone in the White House and it's ringing. Something's happening in the world. Your vote will decide who answers that call."

This ad aired before the Texas, Ohio, and Rhode Island primaries and can be traced back to the famous "red telephone" spot that Roy Spence, a Clinton adviser, made for former Vice President Walter Mondale's 1984 run for the Democratic nomination against Gary Hart.

Many political pundits concluded, uneasily, that negative attacks worked, unfortunately! Indeed, politicians who lost elections often blamed their failed campaigns on their opponent's negative attacks. Blaming attack ads, may increase the stigma of this type of campaigning, but it may also increase the use of negative attacks by reinforcing the impression that negative attacks were "necessary" to win.

As soon as Hillary Clinton aired the red phone ad in the primaries, John Kerry, who had endorsed Obama, warned voters that it was an act of "swiftboating." Many believed that Hillary Clinton's red phone ad did effectively extend the 2008 primaries after Obama's stunning eleven straight wins after the Super Tuesday (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, Hillary Clinton did not win the nomination at the end. The same would happen to John McCain in the general election.

Regardless of their real effects on election outcomes, negative campaigns are most likely to be used as a final resort when a candidate is behind. Using negative campaigns, a candidate may believe, can reduce the size of the "winning" coalition of the opponents. One reason is that all negative attacks focus on the alleged "weaknesses" of the opposing candidates. In doing so, the attacker's own strengths are either highlighted or implied. Thus, the calculus of negative campaign, from the perspective of the attacker, is that the attacks will gain votes without losing any votes.

Many negative attacks are indeed designed to cut into the opponent's coalition by wooing away undecided or persuadable supporters. A second reason for using negative campaigns, often ignored by the media, is to consolidate the attacker's own base. After all, no candidate can win an election by gaining new votes when his or her base is eroding.

For this second reason, negative campaigns often become a norm in the final stage of a heated election. Hillary Clinton sharpened her attack on Obama by repeatedly telling voters: "I've got a lifetime of experience. Senator McCain has a lifetime of experience. Senator Obama's whole campaign is about one speech he made in 2002."

Negative campaigning showed the effects of a minimum winning coalition on voters' emotions, as discussed in Chapter 2. In campaigns, committed voters tend to run out of patience and urge their candidates to be tough and attack. The negative attacks of John McCain during the final month of his campaign, to a great extent, were due to the call of his own members of electoral coalition "to take the gloves off." Indeed, if "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," then in elections "strength is in the eye of the supporter." One of the best ways to show your strength is to take the gloves off. Emotions run high for both sides of electoral coalitions, but only the losing side develops increasing anxiety and frustration, which ironically demands more negative attacks.

Final Election Outcomes

On election day, Barack Obama won 365 Electoral College votes, more than doubling John McCain's 173 votes. Elections in the United States, as this book has shown, essentially involve coalition building because of the nation's diversity and pluralism. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Democratic Party and Republican Party built two different kinds of electoral coalitions centered on race. Eight years before the Obama coalition, the nation saw Al Gore, the Democratic candidate, build a coalition that was almost exactly the same size as the one constructed by George W. Bush (i.e., the two coalitions that were extremely close to the minimum winning coalition line). To see the Obama coalition from a comparative perspective, Figure 7.3 compares Obama with Al Gore based on their vote shares in the fifty states. Two noticeable differences come out of Figure 7.3, although the two coalitions are strikingly similar.

First, Obama did better than Al Gore in the majority of the states, as most data points are located above the forty-five-degree line, with the only exception of seven Southern and border states: Arkansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Alabama. Second, as shown in Figure 7.3 the triangles are the states that Obama won, Obama won seven more states than did Al Gore: Colorado, Nevada, Indiana, Ohio, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida.

Figure 7.4 further compares Obama's coalition with the one built by John Kerry, the Democratic nominee in 2004. The pattern observed in Figure 7.3 continues, with Obama being even more successful. Kerry did better than Obama in only five Southern states, but Obama won eight more states than did Kerry. Obama's success in building a larger multiracial coalition over his two Democratic predecessors was the key for him to win the presidential election.
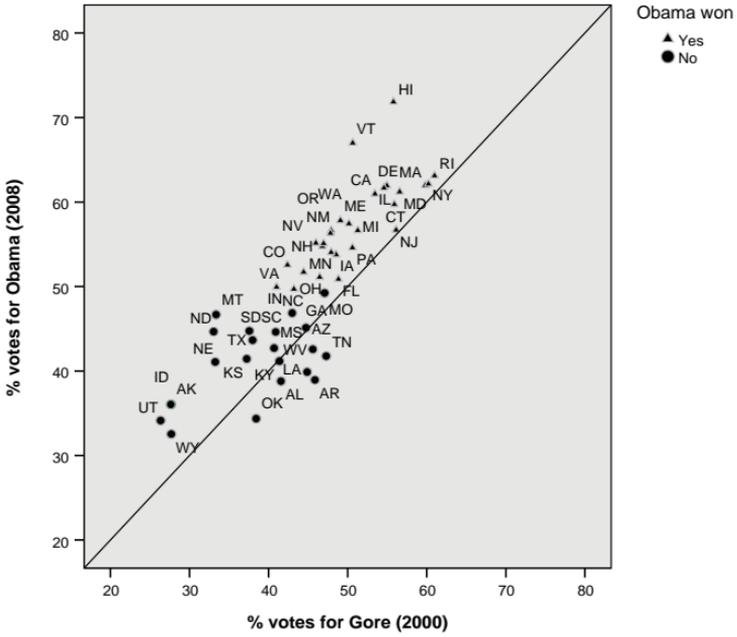
Figure 7.3   Outcomes of 2008 and 2000 presidential elections, compared
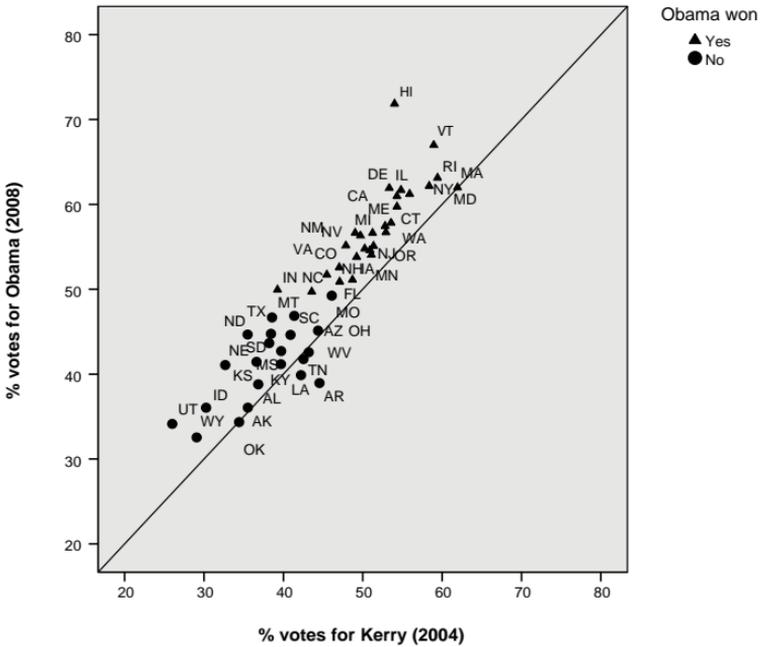
Figure 7.4   Outcomes of 2008 and 2004 presidential elections, compared

The Winning Multiracial Coalition

Barack Obama not only won the historic 2008 presidential election to become the nation's first African American president, he was the first *minority person* who built and led the most racially diversified winning coalition in history as well. As expected, Obama's most loyal supporters were his coethnic group (i.e., the African American electorate). Based on exit polls and election return data, African Americans cast an estimated total of 14,969,083 votes for Obama in the general election, which was 23.59 percent of Obama's total vote.

African Americans' emotion ran especially high in anticipation of history in the making. Many of them were surprised by the speed of change that was taking place in front of their eyes, and some still remembered the struggles of the previous generations for the basic civil rights. For sure, being on the side of a new minimum winning coalition can be especially emotional because the reward is great. In the eyes of African Americans, the opposition side had been powerful for a long time in elections. As William Riker suggested in his theory of the minimum winning coalition, there is a sense of "zero-sum" game.[5] One side's loss is the other side's gain. Many African Americans remained at the bottom of the racial hierarchy of social economic indicators. Obama's success was seen as a liberating force for these African Americans' racial interests.

The expectation of a minimum *winning* coalition pushed many coalition members to volunteer their time and labor in their neighborhoods and donate their money on line. Winning, in short, led to this unprecedented enthusiasm. Hope and fear both existed for some African Americans before election day.

"With my generation, in the 1960s every leader that we had was killed," said Lula Cooper, a seventy-five-year-old black voter who was put in jail in the civil rights movement for protesting segregation in Wilmington, Delaware.

"Then it's almost like a plate over your heart. Once you've been hurt—King, Kennedy, Medgar Evers—you dare not put that much emotion out there again," said Cooper.[6]

Throughout the five-month nonstop campaign in the general election, rarely was there any report about African Americans' disapproval of Barack Obama. The only noteworthy incidence of African Americans against Obama took place in Coral Gables, Florida, on September 19, 2008, when a group of black protesters holding signs reading "Blacks Against Obama." The incident disrupted Obama's speech,[7] but it did not gain much mention in the media. The American Free Press (AFP)

online service, for example, only offered four short-paragraphs of notes as follows:

> Around 20 African-Americans heckled Barack Obama at a rally here Friday, screaming chants and holding up placards accusing the White House hopeful of selling out the black community.
>
> As the Democrat, who would be the first African-American US president, spoke, the protestors jumped up from their seats in a corner high up in the University of Miami's basketball arena. One of their signs said: "Barack Obama endorsed by KKK (Ku Klux Klan)."
>
> Police and Secret Service agents intervened, as thousands of Obama supporters responded with boos and jeers. The protestors did not appear to resist as they were hustled out of the stadium.
>
> "OK, let's get back to work," Obama said after the five-minute interruption, resuming a speech dominated by attacks on Republican rival John McCain's record on women's issues and the economy at a time of financial crisis.[8]

On election day, according to the exit poll, 95 percent of the African American voters nationwide cast their votes for Barack Obama. Statistically, indeed, African Americans fully supported Obama in the general election.

Latino Voters

Relying on only African Americans would not have produced the historic win for Obama. As explained in Chapter 3, Obama needed a multiracial coalition based on the theme of hope, which downplayed the racial hierarchical history of the nation. Deracializing issues, however, did not lead to the automatic support from the Latino and Asian communities. We have already seen that the Latino and Asian voters embraced Hillary Clinton in the primaries. Matt Barreto, Luis Fraga, Sylvia Manzano, Valerie Ebers, and Gary Segura described "the Latino vote in 2008 as pro-Clinton," but they made it clear that "it would be a mistake to interpret it as anti-Obama."[9] The rationality thesis discussed in Chapter 2 suggests that it is best to understand Latino voters as rational voters who try to find the best candidate based on racial group interests, available in elections.

After the primaries that ended Clinton's hope to be the first woman to win the White House, it was time for Latinos to decide whom to vote for in the general election. Voters are not only rational but also *strategic*, which is one of the chief assumptions of the minimum winning coalition theory stated in Chapter 2. In this sense, Latino voters indeed showed that despite Obama not being their favored candidate in 2008, they had a choice between John McCain and Obama in the general election. Most

of them, in the end, joined the Obama multiracial coalition to be on the winning side (i.e., being strategic).

Arguably, the Latinos' decision to vote for Obama was also due to the mobilization effort of the Obama campaign. As indicated above, the Obama team spent as much as $20 million in the focused effort in the Latino communities in the summer. Latino politicians, such as New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and Los Angeles Governor Antonio Villaraigosa, not only endorsed Obama—they worked untiringly for his campaign as well.

It is also important to note that John McCain as the nominee of the Republican Party for president perhaps enjoyed the highest popularity as a Republican candidate in the Latino electorate. He had received as many as two-thirds of the Latino votes in his home state of Arizona to win his reelection as a U.S. senator in 2004. He had been the major force inside the Republican Party to push for more "racially friendly" comprehensive immigration reform. But during the 2008 general election, McCain had to withdraw from his proimmigration position. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, Republican presidential candidates must attract enough white voters to pass the minimum white support threshold. The immigration reform issue, unfortunately, for McCain was the issue he must avoid in his presidential campaign. McCain's ambiguity on his own history of Latino-related policymaking, however, would provide a chance for Obama to increase his standing among Latinos in the general election.

On election day, 67 percent of the Latino voters voted for Obama. Latinos cast a total of 7,308,791 votes for Obama in the general election, which was 11.52 percent of Obama's total vote, based on exit polls and election return data. Latinos showed their electoral power the best in New Mexico with half of the Obama votes were from Latino voters, leading to five Electoral College votes. Thus, we can say that Latinos alone delivered at least one state for Obama—something that even African Americans were not able to do on their own in the 2008 general election.

Obama also reversed his fortune in Nevada, the state that Hillary Clinton won convincingly in the primary. Though 56 percent of the Obama votes were cast by whites in Nevada in the 2008 general election, Latino voters represented 21 percent of the Obama electoral coalition, the second largest racial group in Nevada. In the mean time, more than two-thirds of Obama coalition members were white in Colorado, but Latinos played a critical role in this fast-growing Mountain West state. Latinos represented 15 percent of the Obama voters in Colorado, a key state Obama won in 2008 to show his effective red-state strategy.

On August 2, 2008, the influential Asian American interest group named "80-20 PAC" held its endorsement convention in Foster City, California. The interest group decided to endorse Barack Obama. In the endorsement letter sent to their massive e-mail list, 80-20 PAC wrote: "Senator Obama committed unequivocally to give Asian Americans equal opportunity, while Senator McCain did not." The 80-20 PAC endorsement also pointed to the official letter signed by Obama showing commitment from him to future Asian American interests.[10] Consistent with the minimum winning coalition theory illustrated in Chapter 2, the 80-20 PAC Asian interest group linked their endorsement of Obama and the Democratic Party directly to the *racial group interests* of Asian Americans based on issues such as equality in workplace, education, and immigration. The endorsement further explained,

> Senator Obama's party did more deeds for Asian Americans in the last 4 years. On Oct. 25, 2006, the Chair of The Democratic National Comm., Gov. Howard Dean, wrote to the President of 80-20, promising to work with 80-20 to encourage Congress to hold a public hearing on the glass ceiling over Asian Americans in workplaces. After the Democrats gained control of the House and the Senate, the legislation sponsored by Congressman David Wu (D) was finally passed by Congress, giving underserved Asian American students the same educational assistance long available to other minority groups—a historic first. Democrats sponsored immigration bills favoring family reunion, and legislations with stiff penalty for hate crimes. All of the above areas are important to the Asian American community.[11]

On election day, Asian Americans cast 62 percent of their votes for Obama. The Asian influence was especially important in California, the state with the largest number of Electoral College votes in the nation. Asians' votes represented 6 percent of the Obama coalition in California.

The Obama White Vote and Its Geopattern

Before Obama's run for president, all previous Democratic candidates had failed to win the White House if they received less than 42 percent of the white votes (provided that there was no minor party candidate that divided votes significantly, see Chapter 3). The coalition with a significant level of white support, as shown in Chapter 6, needed to be geographically distributed in a way to give Obama a chance to build a minimum winning coalition in the country. Obama proved that he could be competitive in the red states where the moralistic political culture and rich social capital,

in addition to the low presence of black population, mitigate the white perception of black threat and thus embrace Obama's politics of hope. In Chapter 6 I used the racial tension index to show the spatial pattern about white vote distribution in the 2008 Democratic primaries. Does the same geographic distribution of white votes we witnessed during the primaries still holds true for the general election?

Certainly, the final rebuttal to the momentum theory described in the previous two chapters can only be reached if we see that the spatial pattern of white voters continues, regardless of the sequence of the primaries as well as the general election. After examining the exit poll and election return data, the answer is yes. Obama's strength among the white electorate in the general election, once again, was from the states with lower racial tension.[12] Table 7.1 provides the Obama racial support at the state level in the general election.

At the national level, Obama received 43 percent of the white voters. This surpassed John Kerry's 41 percent and Al Gore's 42 percent white support. Whites cast a total of 38,568,116 votes for Obama in the general election, which was 60.79 percent of Obama's total vote based on exit poll data and actual election returns. Figure 7.5, a bivariate map through ArcView GIS technology, further shows the relationship between Obama's white support and the level of racial tension in states.

As shown in Figure 7.5, racial tension had a direct and negative effect on white willingness to vote for Obama. For example, the *relatively* lower
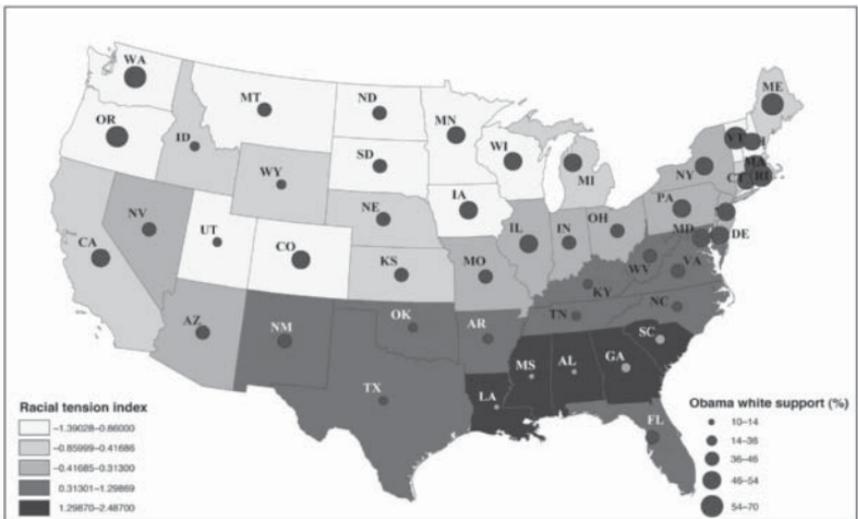
Figure 7.5   Racial tension and white support for Obama in the 2008 general election

Table 7.1. General election outcomes and racial support for Obama, 2008

State	Obama white support (%)	Obama black support (%)	Obama Latino support (%)	Obama vote share (%)
AK	32	NA	NA	36.05
AL	10	98	NA	38.80
AR	30	95	NA	38.95
AZ	40	NA	56	45.12
CA	52	94	74	60.96
CO	50	NA	61	52.57
CT	51	93	NA	59.72
DE	53	99	NA	61.94
FL	42	96	57	50.88
GA	23	98	NA	46.86
HI	70	NA	NA	71.85
IA	51	93	NA	53.78
ID	33	NA	NA	36.04
IL	51	96	72	61.68
IN	45	90	77	49.94
KS	40	NA	NA	41.44
KY	36	90	NA	41.17
LA	14	94	NA	39.89
MA	57	NA	NA	61.98
MD	47	94	NA	61.21
ME	58	NA	NA	57.83
MI	51	97	64	56.63
MN	53	NA	NA	54.05
MO	42	93	NA	49.24
MS	11	98	NA	42.71
MT	45	NA	NA	46.68
NC	35	95	NA	49.70
ND	42	NA	NA	44.66
NE	39	NA	NA	41.07
NH	54	NA	NA	54.77
NJ	49	92	78	56.70
NM	42	NA	69	56.64

Table 7.1   General election outcomes and racial support for Obama, 2008 (*continued*)

State	Obama white support (%)	Obama black support (%)	Obama Latino support (%)	Obama vote share (%)
NV	45	94	76	55.15
NY	52	100	NA	62.15
OH	46	97	NA	51.12
OK	29	NA	NA	34.36
OR	59	NA	NA	55.09
PA	48	95	72	54.60
RI	58	NA	NA	63.12
SC	26	96	NA	44.63
SD	41	NA	NA	44.75
TN	34	94	NA	41.77
TX	26	98	63	43.65
UT	31	NA	NA	34.14
VT	68	NA	NA	66.99
VA	39	92	65	51.71
WA	57	NA	NA	57.43
WI	54	91	NA	56.33
WV	41	NA	NA	42.58
WY	32	NA	NA	32.54

Note: NA = Data not available

racial tension score of North Carolina (1.1) compared to those of Louisiana (1.8), Alabama (1.8), Mississippi (2.5), South Carolina (1.7), and Georgia (1.8) explains why Obama intentionally increased his campaign effort in North Carolina. It shows why he could receive more white support at the end in North Carolina (more than 35 percent) than in other Deep South states (less than 25 percent). Another example was in Indiana, which Obama won, where the white support for Obama was more than 45 percent, which is about 10 percent higher than in Kentucky despite the similar racial composition of the two states. The reason for this disparity, according to our racial tension theory, is that Indiana has a lower racial tension score (–0.1) than Kentucky (0.9). We can compare Indiana with Kentucky based on a closer historical scrutiny.

RACIAL TENSION FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: A CASE STUDY

Our analysis suggests that racial tension was *relatively* lower in Indiana than in Kentucky, which affected how voters voted in the time of Obama's election (i.e., whites voted at a greater rate for Obama in Indiana than in Kentucky). If this reasoning is true, arguably the two states should have exhibited a difference in their historical patterns of political behavior/choice as well.[13] To see this, we borrow insights from some historians whose valuable studies may allow us to compare how Indiana and Kentucky reacted to the same historical event in U.S. history. We use the Civil War period to make the comparison, because it was one of the most racially charged events in U.S. history.

We look at Indiana first. The respected Indiana historian Emma Thoronbrough once observed, "The extreme manifestations of racism in the laws of Indiana [before the Civil War] undoubtedly reflected prevailing prejudices, but they do not give a complete picture. It is doubtless true that a majority of the population was convinced of the innate inferiority of Negroes and was determined that they should be kept forever in a degraded condition. But there was a minority who opposed the Black Laws and worked actively for their repeal and also tried in other ways to improve the conditions of the Negro population."[14]

Thoronbrough indicated that the antislavery force in Indiana was mainly from "the Quakers, especially those in the eastern counties—Wayne, Randolph, and Henry" and these Quakers "had come to Indiana from the South, especially North Carolina, because of their opposition to slavery."[15] As the Civil War appeared to be inevitable, "counties in southern Indiana were frightened at the prospect that Kentucky would secede and thus bring the boundary of the Confederacy to the Ohio River."[16] Indiana thus chose its antislavery position to be allied with the federal side.

At the same time, Kentucky displayed a different path to the Civil War. According to historian Clement Eaton,

> From a military point of view Kentucky was, next to Virginia, the most important border state. The people of the state were in the uncomfortable position of having conflicting loyalties. The hearts of a majority probably were with the South, but their heads were with the North. Kentucky therefore stood for compromise, and throughout the secession crisis the legislature refused to summon a convention. However, the governor, Beriah Magoffin, was a secessionist, and replied to Lincoln's call for troops, "I say emphatically Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States."[17]

Thus, while Indiana firmly took the position of anticonfederacy, Kentucky was, at least, much more hesitant and there was clear hostility to Lincoln's federal force of antislavery at the highest level (the governor's office). In short, by examining how racial tensions have shaped the state politics differently in Indiana and Kentucky in history, one witnesses a notable consistency in geopolitics. The two states were indeed different in race-related positions. The following section relies on a more systematic data analysis to yield more convincing statistical conclusions about the 2008 presidential election and the impact of racial tension in states.

A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF RACIAL TENSION ON OBAMA'S WHITE VOTE

Table 7.2 tests the effect of racial tension on Obama's white support in the 2008 general election, controlling for other possible explanations. The difference between the two models in the table is that the first model does not contain the contextual variable, racial tension, while the second does. Racial tension contributes greatly to the explanation for Obama's white support, as the Adjusted R-squared increased from 0.59 to 0.89 when racial tension is added to the regression. The second model also shows that for every unit increase in racial tension score, Obama's white support declines by more than 8 percentage points. Among the control variable,

Table 7.2   Multiple OLS regressions of the 2008 general election

	Obama white support		Obama white support	
	b	**Standard error**	**b**	**Standard error**
Racial tension scores			−8.34	0.768***
% College graduates	0.151	0.378	−0.338	0.208
% mass public liberal	1.42	0.505***	1.26	0.267***
% women state legislators	0.540	0.234	0.078	0.127
% urban	0.037	0.970	0.066	0.051
% age 19 or younger	−1.33	0.627*	−1.87	0.347***
Intercept	34.435		72.998	
R-squared (adjusted R-squared)	0.632 (0.590)		0.949 (0.885)	
N	48		48	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$ (two-tailed)

Alaska and Hawaii were excluded from analysis because of lack of data on their state-level social capital.

the proportion of liberals in the general public also is a positive factor indicating that Obama was able to build the traditional liberal Democratic coalition, which he failed to do when competing against Hillary Clinton in the primaries (see Table 6.3).

To understand the impact of racial tension, one needs to remember that racial tension index developed in Chapter 6 was derived from four contextual variables. To recap, a higher racial tension state tends to have a higher level of black density and racial diversity and a lower level of social capital and egalitarian "moralist government" values. Thus, throughout both primaries and the general election, white voters had shown an impressive consistency of vote choice based on how they perceived the threat of minorities measured through our racial tension index. The white voters who were against Obama in both primaries and the general election tend to be those who were from higher racial tension states.

This finding also strongly shows the limitation of the white guilt thesis introduced in Chapter 1. Whites did not forget about the possible racial "threat" of the Obama candidacy to their group interests. Whites' perceptions of racial threat were greatly affected by the place where they live. In a way, this is both good and bad news for the multiracial coalition building process. It shows that the remarkable progress the country can make in terms of racial relations, and a viable black candidate can generate an unprecedented 43 percent of the white votes in the nation to form the winning coalition. On the other hand, Obama's success also showed that his success had to do with the nation's long history surrounding race. The racial tension rooted in both the value system and changing demographics was still a major factor in the election. In short, a new page of history was turned to on November 4, 2008. The world witnessed the election of Barack Obama as the first African American president. The vote choices of whites in 2008, however, were still shaped by racial tension in their own states.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the 2008 general election to see whether the hypotheses derived from our minimum winning coalition theory can hold true. As explained in Chapter 2, among the minority voters, the minority voters who share the racial identity of the electable candidate are more likely to vote for the candidate than are other minority voters because of the perceived "linked fate" and shared group interests with the candidate (i.e., black voters are more likely to support Obama than are Latino and Asian voters).[18] African American voters provided almost unanimous support for Barack Obama in the general election.

The election outcome of the 2008 presidential election further shows that Latino and Asian voters rationally made their voting decision to maximize their own racial group interests. They also voted for the candidate that had a realistic chance to build a minimum *winning* coalition. Though Obama was not their favorite candidate in 2008 (they voted for Hillary Clinton, rather than Obama, in the primaries), most Latino and Asian voters proved to be rational in voting for Obama in the general election, since voting for McCain did not lead to a conclusion of better protection of these minorities' group interests. The minority interest groups, such as the 80-20 PAC, made it clear that their endorsement of Obama was based on racial groups' interests. The role of Latino voters, in particular, was critical to Obama's winning coalition, as Latino voters alone were able to deliver New Mexico (a swing state) to Obama.

As for Obama's white votes, based on our racial tension index, those whites who perceived the threat of minorities to white interests voted against Obama, a black candidate. This chapter further demonstrated that white voters' perception of racial threat of minority candidates reflected the racial tension of the places that these voters lived in. The multiple regression results show that the higher a state's level of racial tension, the lower its level of white support for Obama. Most importantly, the level of racial tension can be determined by both the demographic presence of the minorities and the value system of the place where the white voters live. Black density, racial diversity, social capital, and political culture are all important in affecting white voters' perception of black threat, thus their vote choice in the 2008 general election.

The findings of this chapter, overall, strongly suggest that far from a postracial politics where race became irrelevant, all racial groups examined here made their voting decisions in 2008 based on their perceived group interests. Voters, in general, voted against the candidate whom they perceived to be a potential threat to their racial interests. The perception of black threat to white interest in a particular state, it should be pointed out, is conditional on the state's overall context, manifested by its minority presence, political culture, and collective social capital. I will discuss the implications of these findings in our concluding chapter.

Conclusion

The Obama Racial Coalition

> When interests are shared under certain political circumstances, major
> victories with lasting value will be won.
>
> —Raphael J. Sonenshein, *Politics in Black*
> *And White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*

As early as 1973, Ira Katznelson in his classic study, *Black Men, White
Cities*, noted that the United States had elected more minorities into elected
offices than Britain.[1] Writing in 2005, however, Robert C. Lieberman, in
his *Shaping Race Policy: The United States in Comparative Perspectives*, also
pointed out that African Americans in the United States had been less fully
integrated into social welfare programs than blacks in Britain.[2] The sig-
nificance of electing Barack Obama into the most powerful office, for sure,
will continue to be a subject of interest for students of politics and race for
many years to come. How did Obama win in the first place? Does his elec-
tion to be the first African American president suggest that race has become
irrelevant in the U.S. electoral process? This book provides an answer at
both the macro and micro levels. At the macro level, the book examines
the two-party competitions based on their different racial strategies. At the
micro level, this book investigates the details of the sequence of the primary
elections and the contextual and spatial effects of racial relations in Ameri-
can states. The findings are very intriguing, and the conclusion is clear: race
continues to be a major factor in the U.S. electorate.

The United States has witnessed the profound racial changes in the last
four decades. Minorities are seeing their unprecedented population growths
while white-population share continues to decline. In this context of racial
change, Barack Obama ran one of the most thoughtful, organized, and
disciplined campaigns in the nation's history. Using a coherent message of
hope, Obama defeated the formidable opponents in both the primaries and

general election. His message of hope electrified those who attended his rallies. The campaign intensified his voters' emotions. They not only passionately volunteered their time but also donated money through the Internet. The Obama voters believed in the power of change and enjoyed the sense of unity that Obama brought together. These voters represented different social classes, age groups, and genders, and they formed an unprecedented multiracial coalition led by a minority person.

The message of hope was empowering, but Obama persuaded only 53 percent of the voters who cast their votes on November 4, 2008. Why did some voters respond to Obama's call for change while others did not? This book argues that rational voters make decisions based on their own group interests. Very often, these group interests are defined by race, and this race-driven motive became especially salient, rather than diminished, in 2008 as the skin color of Obama reminded voters of "racial stake" in the election. But seemingly, some voters did not vote just based on the racial lines, for if so Obama would have certainly received less than 20 percent of the total votes cast—from only the African American voters, of course. If African Americans voted for Obama because of what Michael Dawson called the perception of "linked fate,"[3] what were the reasons for the voters of difference races to vote for him in 2008? In essence, this book provides an answer by examining the two parties' coalition building process. It shows how the two parties positioned themselves in the coalition space to win, and how voters reacted rationally to the strategies of political parties.

To be sure, Obama won because he built a successful *multiracial coalition*. As shown in Chapter 2, Obama did not need to build a "grand" or "overwhelming majority" coalition. All he needed was to reach the minimum winning coalition line by assembling voters from different racial groups. But how did he build such a minimum winning coalition, especially when he faced the most powerful political opponents in both the Democratic and Republican Parties?

The Limits of Emotion and Momentum

History will record the 2008 presidential election as emotional, competitive, and one of the most racially significant democratic contests of all time. For many political scientists, however, this election was "ambiguous" as most previous models of presidential elections failed to explain the 2008 outcome.[4] Controversies are common if elections feature strong candidates and the outcomes are close. But because of the historic nature of Barack Obama as the first minority person to win the White House, the most powerful office in the Western democracies, invalid theories

were coined during and after the election to explain his stunning success. This book focuses on two of such theories.

The first theory is centered on the notion that Obama won because of the special emotional need of voters who responded to his eloquence, but not substance. As early as 1944, Gunnar Myrdal published his classic work on race relations, *An American Dilemma*, in which he forcefully claimed the existence of "the guilty conscience of the white man."[5] For Myrdal, the enduring "American Creed" of freedom and equality since its founding would be the most powerful cure to the disease of white racism depicted vividly and systematically in his influential book. Is Myrdal's "white guilty" concept still relevant in the modern era? In this regard, Shelby Steele's study of white psychology in the post–civil rights era was especially influential in some observers' account of Obama phenomenon.[6] Ironically, this modern-version of "white guilt" thesis presented a negative view on racial relations, and it insisted that Obama represented a new generation of black leadership that took advantage of white people's need to "redeem" the nation from the "sinful" past of racism and inequality. In so doing, voters did not engage in rational decision making in elections that is required for a healthy democratic process. Instead, they allowed emotion to take over. Throughout the campaign, Hillary Clinton and John McCain, Obama's chief opponents, also took notice of the power of Obama's message of hope. They consistently reminded voters that experiences, rather than emotion, should matter the most when they voted for the most important electoral position.

The second theory—the momentum theory in the academic research—focuses on the primary election process. According to the momentum theory, the sequential voting is "unfair" or at least "problematic." In particular, the Democratic primaries used sequential voting procedures that arranged the voting in states based on the party-controlled schedules. This sequential voting is believed to be the main reason for Obama's success, because of the momentum he generated after his surprising win in Iowa, the first caucus state on the election calendar to vote. The theory also argued that the media, which had an economic interest in making the competition "surprising," intentionally "rank-ordered" candidates, and Obama received the favorable coverage because of his unique success and election momentum as the first-ever African American candidate having a chance to win.[7]

This book shows that both theories are off the target. The most important finding presented in this book is that voters acted rationally, and they were much more sophisticated than what these two theories claimed. Indeed, in 2008 emotion ran deep in the longest, highly competitive,

technologically innovative, expensive, and heavily scrutinized election of modern time. But voter rationality was often below the surface. In this book, I proposed a minimum winning coalition theory centered on racial interests. I argue that voters' rationality can only be shown when examined with the lenses of both *time and place*. Moreover, political geography, which is mainly defined by the racial composition and political culture and collective social capital of states, is the key to the secret of Obama success. To understand this political geography is to see how voters reacted to Obama's call for change given their perceived racial interests.

THE MINIMUM WINNING COALITION: THE OBAMA WAY

One way to look at the 2008 presidential election is that it "started" as early as the 1960s, and during the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Borrowing insights from rational choice theory of political coalitions, especially the early writing of William Riker,[8] I developed an empirical measure of the minimum winning coalition that was built along or cross the nation's racial lines. Chapter 2 documented the two-party competitions around the minimum winning coalition lines over the four decades. I emphasized that party strategies have always been centered on racial coalitions.

In particular, during the Johnson administration landmark laws were enacted that included the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and more importantly, the 1965 Voting Rights Act that enfranchised African Americans effectively through the federal government's institutional resources and enforcement under the Justice Department. These legislative policy changes led to a profound impact on the minimum winning coalition line by raising the black share in the electorate. They rotated the minimum winning coalition line. In so doing, Johnson also strategically located the Democratic Party at the multiracial position in the coalition space. Moreover, the 1965 McCarran Act was also signed into law, which ended the previous immigration quota system and more than a century-long practice of immigration policies that systematically favored white Europeans. The Johnson administration thus not only institutionalized the increase of black share in the electorate through the civil-rights and voting-rights federal laws but also opened the gate of the United States to new immigrants from Asia and Latin America. The minimum winning coalition line further rotates counterclockwise, reducing the Democratic Party's pressure to receive white voter support to win federal elections.

In short, Obama's success depended on the broad process of demographic changes in the nation that had increased the minority populations and provided a greater long-term advantage to the Democratic

Party's multiracial coalition building. Facing the changing electorate, parties and their candidates as well as voters were rational in making strategic decisions to build, join, and sustain a winnable coalition.

In the coalition space, the Grand Old Party (GOP) naturally moved closer to the location that would primarily rely on white support as the key strategic coalition plan to reach the minimum winning coalition line. In fact, the Democratic Party has never won most white voter support ever since Johnson's 1964 landslide election. The Republican Party, through its Goldwater coalition in 1964, the Nixon's Southern strategy of the 1970s, and Reagan revolution in the 1980s has consolidated its white electorate basis.[9] The problem for the GOP, however, is that it must find campaign themes that can avoid the erosion of its white support when the white proportion in the electorate is reduced over time.

Despite its long-term advantage due to the racial change in the last four decades, the Democratic Party had to solve the issue of internal unity. To understand the Obama candidacy, one has to examine the context of post-2006 midterm election. Chapter 3 explained why Obama developed a message of hope in that context, which was rooted in the need to build a minimum winning coalition through deracializing issues, and emphasizing "unity, hope, and change." A major reason for Obama to develop such a message in his campaign was the need to gain sufficient, though not necessarily majority, support from white voters. Obama needed to demonstrate that his candidacy was racially friendly to white group interests as well.

Though the minority groups may share the same interest in a more egalitarian policy orientation, their special needs (e.g., the economic interests of African Americans and the immigration reform concerning Latinos, the integration of Asian Americans into the mainstream socio-economic networks, and tribal issues of Native Americans) do not guarantee a success of multiracial coalition building for the Democratic Party. In the meantime, the unpopularity of race-related public policies among whites has pushed for more racially neutral languages in campaigns and public debates. In this context, Obama launched his electoral campaign in Springfield, Illinois, in 2007.

In spite of an inspiring message of hope that attracted many whites in the earliest nomination contest of Iowa, Obama's political skill would be tested to the maximum when he faced the challenge and resilience of Hillary Clinton and her formidable political organization during the primaries. The nomination contests were long, hard fought, and controversial. This book documented the competitions between the two camps and highlighted the controversy concerning the way the primaries

were conducted. Chapter 4 specifically linked the controversy back to the Democratic reform started in the 1960s to change the nomination process to be more open to the voters and some of the unintended consequences that took place in the primary elections afterwards.

Without any doubt, my main task to show how race mattered in the 2008 nomination contests and the general election was, first, to provide the empirical evidence on why the momentum theory failed to explain the election outcomes of the primaries. I argued that Obama did not win the nomination just because he won Iowa to build his momentum. Through a careful scrutiny of the primaries, I showed that Obama's win in Iowa actually reflected well his strength in the white voters of many other red states. After Iowa, Hillary Clinton quickly won in both New Hampshire and Nevada, where whites and Latinos were the important forces in the elections, which "forced" us to pay attention to the racial makeup of states.

It turned out that instead of being misinformed and manipulated by the media, voters showed a high level of understanding of what was at stake, and they seemed to be able to make the best choice for their racial interests given the electoral context. To be more specific, Latino and Asian voters exhibited a consistent pattern of supporting Hillary Clinton, who clearly had a track record and a longtime establishment in these minority communities. African Americans were most supportive of Obama's campaign, and their support was more consolidated when it was clear that Obama had a realistic chance to win.

White Democratic voters never showed an emerging pattern of momentum for Obama throughout the primaries. Instead, the white support was much more geographically determined, rather than influenced by the sequence of election or the media manipulations as suggested by the momentum theory. A key question raised in Chapter 5 is what were the conditions under which white voters still developed a perception of black threat despite Obama's message of hope and his deracialization campaign?

To find the answer, Chapter 6 provided a detailed spatial and contextual analysis of the racial voting patterns in the primaries. The maps exhibited a clear advantage of Obama campaign in the "red states," (i.e., the presumably strongholds of the Republican Party in the past presidential elections). This pattern persisted regardless of the sequence of primaries, which certainly ran against the irrationality thesis expected by the momentum theory. To explain this geographic distribution of votes, I developed a racial tension index based on four contextual variables identified by previous studies of state politics rather than just simplified his success as a result of the use of caucuses in the nomination contests. After all,

why did the caucus states show the similar characteristics, such as being homogeneous red states, in the first place?

The four variables I identified to successfully explain Obama's winning patterns are black density, racial diversity, social capital, and political culture.[10] It is shown that a state tends to have a higher level of racial tension, if the black density and racial diversity of the state are high while the social capital and the egalitarian "moralistic government" political values are low. Most importantly, the higher the level of racial tension, the lower the level of support of white voters for Obama during the primaries, because of the perceived black threat to white interests. This spatial characteristic of white voting in combination with the minorities' voting patterns of blacks, Latinos, and Asians led to the red-state advantage of Obama in the primaries. He defeated Hillary Clinton largely because of this red-state strategy.

I further examined this way of thinking about voters' rationality in the general election (Chapter 7). Despite the noticeable disadvantages of the GOP candidate, John McCain, due to the increasing economic crisis, the unpopularity of the Bush administration, as well as the McCain team's mistakes and limitations in economic issues the spatial pattern of white votes exhibited in the primaries did continue into the general election. In other words, the consistency of white votes throughout the 2008 presidential election strongly confirms V. O. Key's voter rationality thesis. It rejects the notion of white guilt, which stressed that Obama won white support because of the psychological need of these voters to feel good about themselves by electing a black candidate. Our statistical analyses repeatedly showed that the higher the level of perception of "black threat" reflected by the racial tension of a state, the higher the level of propensity for white voters to vote against Obama.

In the meantime, Latinos and Asians cast their votes mostly for Obama in the general election, though their choice in the primaries showed that Obama was not their most favored candidate. This "change of heart" was likely related to Obama's massive mobilization efforts especially in the Latino communities. The star endorsements from prominent figures such as Bill Richardson and Antonio Villaraigosa signaled to the Latino community that an Obama administration would be favorable to the Latino racial interests. Moreover, this strategic move on the part of Latinos and Asians indicated that these minority groups rejected McCain, who withdrew from many previously "racially friendly" legislation efforts of his own in issues such as immigration. In short, McCain failed to "erase" the "image" that he would be an eventual ally of the hard-line Republican position on issues concerning minorities. The strategic decision of Latino

voters to vote for Obama in the general election turned out to be crucial for Obama as he won some key battleground states in the Southwest, largely due to the support of Latinos.

A Further Note on the 2008 Election and Future Research

While this book has presented an explanation for Obama's historical win in 2008 based on racial coalitions, it does not suggest that all factors have been examined, or even mentioned. For example, this book has not examined how the issue of gender might have played a role in some women's (or men's) decision to vote for (or against) Hillary Clinton. The rapid development of Internet and "blogsphere" might have also influenced the Obama coalition one way or another. John McCain might be negatively affected by his age. Indeed, no single book on the 2008 election can claim that it has "exhausted" all possible answers to such complex questions as how voters made their decisions in one of the nation's most important elections. Nevertheless, this book offers a compelling theory and convincing empirical evidence for readers to look for answers from the angle of racial relation and the party coalition-building process.

In the end, this book is a story of America shaped by its own history of fighting for greater equality, seeking for better justice, and competing for more influence in the electoral arena. It is imperative for students of American politics to know that such a story naturally has many "narratives." Undoubtedly, the "epic journey" of 2008 will continue to amaze more people in the United States and around the world who ask questions about the "magic" power of American democracy. In this sense, this book has no concluding chapter.

It is clear that many of the topics this book addressed need further research. Racial tension, for example, can be measured by more than the four major contextual factors identified in this book. Longitudinal data may be especially useful for scholars to see how racial tension may vary over time. More survey data can also be used to measure voters' response to racial tension at the individual level. In some areas of the nation, such as Southwest and the Pacific Coast, where Latinos and Asians have been more "visible" than blacks, different measures of the "Latino threat" or the "Asian threat" are important for scholars to understand the complexity of racial coalitions in the nation. For sure, the stunning victory of the Obama candidacy has provided many new opportunities for both minority politicians as well as scholars of American politics to look into the future of American democracy. The final section of this concluding chapter only takes a "preliminary" look.

Looking at the Future

Prominent political scientist David Mayhew remarked on the uniqueness of 2008 election: "Nothing caused more comment during the 2008 election than race."[11] Many controversial episodes, such as Rev. Jeremiah Wright's provocative "antiwhite" video and Geraldine Ferraro's public assertion on Obama's alleged advantage because of "who he was," were centered on the role of race in politics. On the other hand, Barack Obama eventually won the election with 53 percent of the popular votes. Many believed that the role of race had declined in U.S. politics. Political scientists James Ceaser, Andrew Busch, and John Pitney, in their book *Epic Journey: the 2008 Elections and American Politics*, suggested that "in an odd way, it showed how far race relations had progressed"[12] and that "this result [of Obama's election] leaves open the possibility that, like the question of Catholicism after the 1960 election (where John Kennedy's religious affiliation was considered), race will diminish as an issue in national electoral politics in the future."[13]

This book offers an important perspective of racial coalition building to look at the future of American politics. Barack Obama's unprecedented success forcefully demonstrates that minority candidates can indeed win major electoral victories in the American democracy, which as a story itself will certainly continue to inspire minorities in the United States and the world to achieve high goals. In this sense, the founding fathers'idea of limiting "the tyranny of the majority" (in this case, the racial majority) is certainly alive in the new era of multiracial politics. The changing demographics of the United States will continue to facilitate the trend of minority electoral success. To be sure, the most important claim of this book is that voters are rational, and their vote choices generally reflect their group interests given the electoral conditions they are in. Politicians can only win when they appeal to the interests of voters. Thus, minority candidates running for major electoral offices will not be successful with campaign themes that focus on only minority interests. The campaign style of a minority candidate, such as the politics of hope that was effectively adopted by Obama, can help him win, but a multiracial coalition that is winnable must be based on the deep understanding of the racial groups' various interests and the state contexts in which elections take place.

Obama won some key red states in the primaries (e.g., the Mountain West states) and the general election (e.g., Indiana). Will these impressive statewide wins lead to a future success of the Democratic Party in the traditional Republican strongholds? The answer from this book is mixed. The good news for minority candidates who run future campaigns in these Republican states is that whites in these states feel a low level of

racial threat. Our analysis in this book shows that the low level of racial tension in these red states is related to the moralistic and egalitarian political cultures of these states[14] and the rich collective social capital that can enhance interpersonal (and interracial) trust.[15] The same low racial tension, nonetheless, is also a function of a relatively lower level of presence (or density) of minorities in these states in the first place.[16] It is possible that the increase in the minority populations in these red states will also lead to a heightened perception of minority racial threat, thus making the election of minority candidates more difficult in the future.

Many red states, it should also be emphasized, especially the Deep South and border states, will continue to be solidly behind the Republican Party.[17] This book provides valuable and convincing empirical evidence for these states to remain as Republican strongholds based on their high level of racial tension. The Republican Party, however, will have to readjust its coalition position to remain competitive at the national level. Indeed, the minimum winning coalition model developed in this book indicates that the pressure on the Republican Party to find future campaign themes and policy areas to appeal to and enlarge its white base will continue to grow. The rotation of the minimum winning coalition line, based on Chapter 2 of this book, raises the threshold of white support consistently for the GOP. Past research has shown that it is difficult for the Republican Party to reverse its image among minorities, especially African Americans, that it is a "racially conservative" party despite its "symbolic gestures" to reach out to them.[18]

The Democratic Party, as already stated above, will continue to run deracialized campaigns to maintain the unity of its multiracial coalition. It will not be an easy political task. For sure, the Democratic Party cannot win based on an explicit "minority agenda." The internal conflicts between white liberals and minorities and between black and Latino voters will not disappear. It takes a high level of leadership skill for the Democratic Party to sustain the strategic multiracial coalition. If the Republican Party can find a policy area to make a significant gain among Latino and Asian voters, the Democratic multiracial coalition will be less likely to reach the minimum winning coalition line. For this reason, the immigration debate will continue since it is crucial to both parties' future.

As for Barack Obama's remarkable multiracial coalition, it already made history because arguably it was led by one of the most "politically gifted" minority candidates ever. This multiracial coalition will only be sustainable, however, when the members of the coalition see the benefits of joining and staying in it.

Notes

Preface

1. AFP, "Obama fury over Clinton backer Ferraro's race remark," *Yahoo! News*, March 11, 2008, http://news.yahoo.com/.
2. Key Jr., *The Responsible Electorate*, 7.
3. Hero, *Racial Diversity*.
4. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*.
5. Elazar, *The American Federalism*; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

Chapter 1

1. Obama, "Full Text of Senator Barack Obama's Acceptance Speech for President."
2. West, *Air Wars*, 31.
3. Sidoti, "Campaign for the Ages."
4. *The Economist,* "It's Time."
5. Steele, "Identity Card," 46–47.
6. Steele, *Bound Man*, 133–34.
7. Wright, "2008 Election Coverage," *ABCNews*, February 19, 2008.
8. Duffy, "Race Spells Trouble for the Dems."
9. Obama, "We Are Who We Have Been Waiting for."
10. Corsi, *Obama Nation*.
11. Corsi, *Obama Nation*, xv.
12. Freddoso, *Case against Barack Obama*.
13. Ibid., xii.
14. Ibid., 56-57.
15. Steele, *A Bound Man*,133-34.
16. Kinder and Sears, "Prejudice and Politics."
17. Sniderman and Piazza, *Scar of Race*.
18. Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney Jr., *Epic Journey*, 27.
19. Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney Jr., *Epic Journey*, 27.
20. Lewis-Beck, "The Economy, Obama, and the 2008 Election," 457–65.
21. See Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, for an early racial liberalism assertion about "the guilt conscience of the white man"; see Collins, *Whither Solid South?* for an early work on racial conservatism and white interests.

22. Ong, *Impacts*.
23. Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, 175.
24. Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*.
25. King and Smith, "Racial Orders," 75–92; McClain and Stewart Jr., *Can We All Get Along*?
26. Kaufmann, *Rethinking Ethnicity*.
27. Cain, "Racial and Ethnic Politics," 45–66.
28. Winant, "Behind Blue Eyes," 3–16; Swain, *The New White Nationalism*; Kaufman, *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America*.
29. Kurtz, "Barack Obama's Lost Years."
30. See, especially, Olson, "The Failure of Multiculturalism and Color Blindness," 95–124; Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*; Hero, *Latinos and the US Political System*.
31. Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*, 179.
32. Kaufmann, *Rethinking Ethnicity*.
33. See Wu, *Yellow*. That process, arguably, is likely to continue as more minorities, especially Asians, become socially constructed as "white" or the so-called the model minority. The model minority myth, according to Frank Wu, has harmed Asian Americans' quest for racial equality. It not only inaccurately describes the Asian racial group, but also enhances the perception of Asian threat and the lack of effort of non-Asian minorities, especially African Americans, to achieve higher social economic status.
34. Browning, Marshall and Tabb, *Protest Is Not Enough*; Behr, *Race, Ethnicity, and Politics of City Redistricting*; Jennings, "Racial Hierarchy and Ethnic Conflict."
35. Hajnal, *Changing White Attitudes*.
36. Liu and Vanderleeuw, *Race Rules*, 208–28; Behr, *Race, Ethnicity, and the Politics of City Redistricting*.
37. Liu and Vanderleeuw, *Race Rules*. Behr, *Race, Ethnicity, and Politics of City Redistricting*.
38. Hajnal, Changing White Attitudes; Liu, "Whites as a Minority."
39. For example, in the 1990s, white opponents defeated David Dinkins and Wilson Goode in New York and Philadelphia. In Chicago, according to a *New York Times*/WBBN-TV poll, more than three-quarters of the whites who had voted for a black candidate, Harold Washington in 1983, voted for a white candidate, Richard M. Daley, in 1989.
40. Thernstrom and Thernstrom, *America in Black and White*.
41. Hajnal, *Changing White Attitudes*; Swain, *Black Faces*; Bullock, "Racial Crossover Voting."
42. Liu, "Deracialization and Urban Racial Context," 572–91.
43. Wright and Middleton, "The 2001 Los Angeles Mayoral Election," 692–703.
44. Obama's early deracialization approach met a public challenge when he faced the controversy surrounding his longtime pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright.
45. Reeves, *Voting Hopes or Fears*? 24, 45.
46. Liu, "Whites as a Minority," 69–76; Howell, "Racism, Cynicism, Economics, and David Duke," 190–207.

47. Howell, "Racism, Cynicism, Economics, and David Duke," 190–207; see Davidson, *Biracial Politics*, 273–75, for his early study of biracial politics in the Houston metropolitan area where he argues that a biracial coalition between whites and blacks should be based on the redistribution of income, opportunity, and power that should attract more lower-class whites in the long run. A biracial coalition may be "radical" in the sense that it "would constitute significant departures from the elitist liberalism of the 1950s and 1960s."

48. Steele, *Bound Man*.

49. Eisinger, *The Politics of Displacement*.

50. Ibid., 162–82.

51. Ibid., 183.

52. Liu and Vanerleeuw, *Race Rules*.

53. Sniderman and Piazza, *The Scar of Race*, 178, 13.

54. Herring and Forbes, "The Overrepresentation of a White Minority," 432.

55. Ibid., 431–45.

56. Kinder and Sanders, *Divided by Color*; Kinder and Sears, "Prejudice and Politics, 414–31.

57. Browning, Marshall, and Tabb, *Racial Politics*; Browning, Marshall, and Tabb, *Protest Is Not Enough*.

58. Sonenshein, *Politics in Black And White*, 134–35.

59. Kaufmann, *The Urban Voter*; Judd and Swanstrom, *City Politics*.

60. Ifill, *The Breakthrough*, 1.

Chapter 2

1. Earvin "Magic" Johnson, interview by John King, *CNN*, February 15, 2009, before the 2009 NBA All-Star Game in Phoenix, Arizona.

2. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, 39.

3. Ibid., 47–76.

4. Ibid., 55.

5. Ibid., 55.

6. Downs. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*.

7. For an elaboration of Down's theory and its development, see Merrill and Grofman, A Unified Theory of Voting; for a critique of Downs based on racial relations, see Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*; Kim, *The Racial Logic of Politics*.

8. Mayhew, *Congress*.

9. Philpot, *Race, Republicans*, 37.

10. Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 210.

11. Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 142.

12. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, 56–57.

13. Ibid., 66.

14. Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*.

15. Davidson and Grofman, *Quiet Revolution in the South*.

16. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*.

17. Clymer, "Republican Party's 40 Years of Juggling on Race."

18. Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right*, 6.
19. Philpot, *Race, Republicans*; Fauntroy, Republicans and the Black Vote.
20. Philpot, *Race, Republicans*, 47–48.
21. Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote*, 156.
22. Sanchez, *Les Republicanos*.
23. Mayer, *The Divided Democrats*.
24. Philpot, *Race, Republicans*, 163.
25. Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right*, 7.
26. See Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*, chap. 3 to 4. Bartels's own explanation is that the white working class's support for the GOP was mainly "a Southern phenomenon." As far as the presidential votes, whites gave disproportional support for the Republican candidates because the Republican presidents were successful in increasing the tangible economic gains for the individual voters only in the year prior to their reelections.
27. Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right*, 7.
28. Ibid., 7.
29. Liu and Vanderleeuw, *Race Rules*.
30. Dawson, *Behind the Mule*.
31. Key, *Southern Politics*.
32. Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.
33. Elazar, *American Federalism*; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.
34. Philpot, *Race, Republicans*, 61.

Chapter 3

1. Democrats had 49 senate seats and Republicans 49 based on the 2006 midterm election outcomes. Two independents, Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Joseph Lieberman caucused with the Democrats, however, giving Democrats effective senate control.
2. Sanchez, *Los Republicanos*.
3. Obama, *The Audacity of Hope*, 232.
4. McClain and Stewart, "Can We All Get Along?"; Lien, *The Making of Asian America*; Alvarez and Bedoll, "Similar Yet Different;" Hero, Latinos and the US Political System.
5. Obama, "Full Text of Senator Barack Obama's Announcement for President."
6. Wong, *Democracy's Promise*; Leighley, *Strength in Number*?
7. Liu and Darcy, "The Rising Power of Minorities, 146–64.
8. Wong, *Democracy's Promise*; Lien, Conway and Wong, *The Politics of Asian Americans*.
9. Gimpel, *Separate Destinations*.
10. Philpot, *Race, Republicans*; Fauntroy, *Republicans and Black Vote*; McClain and Stewart, "*Can We All Get Along*?"
11. Liu and Vanderleeuw, *Race Rules*.
12. See Epatko, "Planners Consider the Future of New Orleans."

13. It is important to note that Hispanics are of all races. Many from Mexico are of Native American descent; many from the Caribbean have African ancestors. Many more are white.

14. McClain and Stewart, "*Can We All Get Along*?"; Liu and Vanderleeuw, *Race Rules*.

15. Ifill, *The Breakthrough*, 11.

16. Before Deval Patrick, L. Douglas Wilder won a statewide election as the first black elected governor in Virginia (1990–1994).

17. Lien, *The Making of Asian America*.

18. Brown, "Minority Politics," 107–18.

19. Liu and Darcy, "The Rising Power of Minorities."

20. McCormick and Jones, "The Conceptualization of Deracialization," 66–84; Liu, "Deracialization and Urban Racial Context," 572–91.

21. Abrajano, "Who Evaluates a Presidential Candidate by Using Non-Policy Campaign Messages?" 55–67.

22. Sanchez, Los Republicanos.

23. Nakanishi and Lai, *Asian American Politics*.

24. Liu, Austin, and Orey, "Church Attendance," 576–92.

25. See Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," 105–38, a thesis on racial triangulation thesis that focuses on the interracial relationships between Asian Americans and other racial groups.

26. Liu and Vanderleeuw, *Race Rules*.

27. Szep, "Democrat May Be First Black Massachusetts Governor."

28. Ibid.

29. Trachtman, *The Supremes' Greatest Hits*.

30. Kommers, Finn, and Jacobson, *American Constitutional Law*.

31. Jost,"School Desegregation," 173–97.

32. Obama, "Foreword," 11.

33. Ibid., 9.

34. Winant, "Behind Blue Eyes," 3–16.

35. Obama, "Foreword," 9–10.

36. Sanchez, "For Hispanics, Poverty Is Relative," B07.

37. Liu and Darcy, "The Rising Power of Minorities." American Indians see their opportunities through tribal sovereignty, especially tribally operated gambling facilities outside the limits of state regulation.

38. Garcia and Sanchez, *Hispanics and the U.S. Political System*.

39. Reimers, *Unwelcome Strangers*.

40. Wu, *Yellow*.

41. Obama, "Forword," 9.

42. McClain and Tauber, "Black and Latino Socioeconomic and Political Competition," 101–16; McClain and Karnig, "Black and Hispanic Socioeconomic and Political Competition," 535–45.

43. Obama, "Full Text of Senator Barack Obama's Announcement for President."

Chapter 4

1. Page, "Polls."
2. Steinem, "Right Candidates, Wrong Question."
3. Nagourney, Rutenberg, and Zeleny, "Near-Flawless Run."
4. Klein, "Obama's Victory Ushers in a New America."
5. Balz, Kornblut, and Murray, "Obama Wins Iowa's Democratic Caucuses," A01.
6. Nagourney, Rutenberg and Zeleny, "Near-Flawless Run."
7. Ifill, *The Breakthrough*, 55–56.
8. Cornish, "Race Matters."
9. The red-phone television advertisement stated, "It's 3 a.m. and your children are safe and asleep. But there's a phone in the White House and it's ringing. Something's happening in the world. Your vote will decide who answers that call."
10. AFP, "Obama fury over Clinton backer Ferraro's race remark,"
11. Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process," 27–31.
12. Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process."
13. Patterson, *The American Democracy*, 384.
14. Sorauf, *Inside Campaign Finance*.
15. Soule and Clarke, "Issue Conflict and Consensus," 64–88.
16. Kirkpatrick, *The New Presidential Elite*.
17. Ladd and Hadley, *Transformations of the American Party System*.
18. Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*; also, see Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*.
19. Burden, "The Nominations: Rules, Strategies, and Uncertainty," 22–44.
20. Burden, "The Nominations: Rules, Strategies, and Uncertainty," 26.
21. Green and Guth, "The Christian Right," 150–65.
22. Mayer, *The Divided Democrats*, 13.
23. See Keefe, *Parties, Politics, and Public Policy in America*. Also, see Wayne, *The Road to the White House 2008*.
24. Sorauf, *Inside Campaign Finance*.
25. West, *Air War*.
26. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

Chapter 5

1. Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process," 27–31.
2. Bartels, *Presidential Primaries*.
3. Burden, "The Nominations: Rules, Strategies, and Uncertainty," 41.
4. Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process," 27.
5. Burden, "The Nominations: Technology, Money, and Transferable Momentum," 19.
6. Mayer and Busch, *The Front-Loading Problem*.
7. Donovan and Hunsaker, "Beyond Expectations"; Lewis-Beck and Squire, "Iowa," 42.45–52.

8. Donovan and Hunsaker, "Beyond Expectations," 49.

9. Morton and Williams, *Learning by Voting*, 124.

10. Lewis-Beck and Squire, "Iowa," 39–44.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 42.

13. Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process," 27.

14. Ibid., 29.

15. Donovan and Hunsaker, "Beyond Expectations"; Keeter and Zukin, *Uninformed Choice*.

16. Bartels, *Presidential Primaries*; Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*.

17. Mutz, "Mechanisms of Momentum," 104–25; Aldrich, *Before the Convention*.

18. Balz, Kornblut, and Murray, "Obama Wins Iowa's Democratic Caucuses."

19. Ibid., A01.

20. Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process."

21. The media started the discussion of Hillary Clinton's lack of chance to win the nomination in late April after the Pennsylvania election. But the serious call for the end of Hillary Clinton's nomination did not come until May 20 when Obama's delegate lead seemed to be insurmountable. Even after May 20, Hillary Clinton continued to push for the delegate counts of Michigan and Florida. Obama, on the other hand, continued his campaign until June 3 when the final election result was announced in South Dakota.

22. Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process."

23. Morton and William, *Learning by Voting*.

24. Ibid., 124.

25. Balz, Kornblut, and Murray, "Obama Wins Iowa's Democratic Caucuses"; Tolbert and Squire, "Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process."

26. Orren and Polsby, *Media and Momentum*, 3–4.

27. Donovan and Hunsaker, "Beyond Expectations," 51

28. Ibid., 50, Table 7.

29. Key Jr., *The Responsible Electorate*, vii.

Chapter 6

1. Burden, "The Nominations: Rules, Strategies, and Uncertainty," 22–44.

2. Note that Obama was not on the ballot of Michigan primaries, so there was no "place of finish" in Michigan for him.

3. Morton and Williams, *Learning by Voting*.

4. Barreto et al., "'Should They Dance with the One Who Brung 'Em?'" 757, estimated that the Latino support for Obama was more than 50 percent in six states. Three of these states (i.e., North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Washington, DC), however, did not have exit poll data concerning the Latino votes. Barreto et al. also estimated the Latino support "based on ecological inference using precinct level results and Latino voting age population," Ecologic Inference (EI) estimation based on this procedure may be problematic since the

voting age population data may not show the racial composition of the 2008 Democratic primaries in these three states.

5. The exit poll data were retrieved from the CNN web site at http://www.cnn.com/Election/2008/result. The state-level election outcome data were obtained from http://www.uselectionatlas.org. It is estimated that only 419 Latino votes were cast for Obama in Nevada based on the exit poll and election returns.

6. King and Smith, "Strange Bedfellows?" 686–703; also, see King and Smith, "Racial Orders," 75–92.

7. Huckfeldt, *Politics in Context*.

8. Taylor, "How White Attitudes Vary with Racial Composition of Local Populations": Longoria, "The Impact of Office on Cross-Racial Voting"; Glaser, "Back to the Black Belt"; Herring and Forbes, "The Overrepresentation of a White Minority"; Giles and Buckner, "David Duke and Black Threat."

9. Key Jr., *Southern Politics*.

10. Hero, *Faces of Inequality*; Taylor, "How White Attitudes Very with Racial Composition of Local Populations."

11. Huckfeldt, *Politics in Context*; Welch et al., *Race and Place*, however, have used the social interaction theory to propose the positive impact of black density. White voting behavior in general reflects the way that whites interact with the other racial group, such as blacks. Contrary to the black threat thesis, the studies done in this social context indicate that black density has a positive impact on whites' crossover voting and racial attitudes. In Carsey, "The Contextual Effects of Race," 221, and Welch et al., *Race and Place*, 434–58, the empirical works of social interaction theory, however, tended to rely on data analysis roughly at smaller units such as the neighborhood level, rather than state level.

12. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 298–99.

13. In Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 664–65, the author also indicated the so-called dark side of social capital that suggests that the individuals who are involved in racially homogeneous communities may in fact develop more racial resentments. Few previous studies, nevertheless, empirically link social capital with vote choices in biracial elections. Thus, this study takes an important step in filling the gap.

14. In Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, and Field, *Social Capital*, one focus of the debate is the empirical operation and theoretic significance of the differences between bonding and social capital, as far as the white social capital and the minority interests are concerned. Bonding social capital ties exist between individuals from homogenous racial, class, or religious groups. Bridging social capital networks are those that "bridge" diverse social groups and allow them to find common ground and common cause. While it is important to emphasize the distinction between bonding and bridging, it should also be noted that bonding and bridging, as Putnam puts it, "are not 'either-or'" categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but 'more or less' dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital."

15. Hero, *Racial Diversity*, 17.

16. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*; Elazar, *American Federalism*.

17. Elazar, *American Federalism*.

18. Ibid., 120.

19. Hero, *Racial Diversity and Social Capital*; Tolbert and Hero, "Dealing with Diversity."

20. Hero, *Racial Diversity and Social Capital*, 73; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 487.

21. The high correlations between explanatory variables may cause a multicollinearity problem that prevents models from been effectively tested through statistical means.

22. The exit poll data were retrieved from the *CNN*, http://www.cnn.com/Election/2008/result. The state-level election outcome data were obtained from http://www.uselectionatlas.org/.

23. See Branton, "Voting in Initiative Elections"; Hero, *Faces of Inequality*; Rae, *The Political Consequences*; and Campos and Kuzeyev, "On the Dynamics of Ethnic Fractionalization," for the discussion of this measure in the U.S. elections. Diversity is the difference between 1 and the sum of squared population shares of whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians (i.e., $D = 1 - \sum_{i}^{n} S_{i}^{2}$, where S_i is the share in total population belonging to group i).

24. I use the following measure for the political culture variable, where 8 = moralistic, 7 = moralistic individualistic, 6 = individualistic moralistic, 5 = individualistic, 4 = individualistic traditionalistic, 3 = traditional moralistic, 2 = traditional individualistic, and 1 = traditionalistic.

25. See Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 487.

26. Hero, *Faces of Inequality*.

27. King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 122–23.

28. Stevens, *Applied Multivariate Statistics*; Guadagnoli and Velicer, "Relation of Sample Size to the Stability of Component Patterns"; MacCallum, Zhang, and Hong, "Sample Size in Factor Analysis."

29. The advantage of ArcView GIS map is that it allows readers to quickly see the spatial distribution patterns of a quantity of interest. In our case, we would like to know how racial tension is geographically distributed.

30. de la Garza and DeSipio, *Ethnic Ironies*, 29, 42, commented on Bill Clinton's successful campaign in 1992 among the Latino communities and argued that "campaigning on issues of concern to Latinos such as educational reform and job training, but describing those issues in terms that appealed to all Americans, proved to be a win-win strategy [for Bill Clinton in 1992] . . . from the Latino perspective, this approach in no way diminished the ability of Hispanics to make demands regarding issues that most concerned them, since these were at the core of Clinton's agenda."

31. Burden, "The Nominations: Rules, Strategies, and Uncertainty," 24.

Chapter 7

1. McCain's chief economic adviser Phil Gramm unwillingly resigned after his "whiners" remark.

2. See Pomper, "The Presidential Election," 45–73. Political scientist Pomper shared a keen observation about Governor Palin's impact: "At first, choosing Palin appeared to be a brilliant stroke, the bold and unconventional choice of a woman who might appeal to former loyalists of Hillary Clinton, a conservative who would rally those on the right still skeptical of McCain's reputed moderation, and a state executive with some claims as a reformer of political ethics. Palin also cast an exotic personal figure. . . . Soon, however, the glamour faded. Televised interviews showed that Palin had little knowledge of most national issues, particularly those involving foreign policy. Admiration turned to ridicule in the news media and television comedies when, for example, she claimed expertise in international affairs because Russia is within sight of Alaska. Intensive investigations also raised questions about Palin's personal's character, including her spending of $150,000 of party funds for campaign clothing, her use of Alaska State travel funds for days spent at home, and the possible abuse of her gubernatorial power in a dispute with her former brother-in-law" Pomper concluded, "Palin's ultimate effect on the election is uncertain, but it was probably harmful to McCain" (59)

3. *Yahoo!*, http://news.yahoo.com/ (accessed September–November 2008).

4. Babington, "Obama Allies Warn GOP to Back Off Attacks."

5. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*.

6. Washington, "Cautious Joy as Blacks Imagine Obama Win."

7. Whitesides, "Obama Backs Recovery Plan."

8. AFP, "Black Protestors Heckle Obama at Rally."

9. Barreto et al., "'Should They Dance with the One Who Brung 'Em?'" 757.

10. See, The 80-20 Endorsement. http://www.80-20.us/data/obama.zip.

11. Ibid.

12. It is important to note that the racial tension index is derived from four contextual variables of black density, racial diversity, social capital, and political culture (see Chapter 6 for the detailed discussion on these four contextual variables).

13. It is important to note that the racial tension index created in this book is not an equivalent of racism measurement. A racially tolerant individual, for example, may perceive racial tension in his or her environment, thus makes a decision to avoid people of different races. It is also possible that a racially intolerant person may decide to "make a peace" with people of different races due to lack of racial tension in the environment. At the aggregate level, a relatively low racial tension score in Indiana, compared to Kentucky, does not suggest that there is always less racism in Indiana. In fact, Indiana was the site of the Klan resurgence in the 1920s. One of the most famous acts of lynching, captured in pictures, took place in Marion, Indiana.

14. Thoronbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850–1880*, 15.

15. Ibid., 15.
16. Ibid., 108.
17. Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy*, 43.
18. Dawson, *Behind the Mule*.

Chapter 8

1. Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities*.
2. Lieberman, *Shaping Race Policy*; see also Thompson, "Race and Urban Political Theory."
3. Dawson, *Behind the Mule*.
4. Burden, "The Nominations: Rules, Strategies, and Uncertainty," 36.
5. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*.
6. Steele, *A Bound Man*.
7. Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney Jr., *Epic Journey*.
8. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*.
9. Philpot, *Race, Republicans*; see also Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote*.
10. See Key Jr., *Southern Politics*; see also Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; Elazar, *American Federalism*; and Hero, *Racial Diversity*, for the major contributions from these scholars.
11. Mayhew, "The Meaning of the 2008 Election."
12. Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney, Jr., *Epic Journey*, 107.
13. Ibid., 28.
14. Elazar, *American Federalism*.
15. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.
16. Hero, *Racial Diversity and Social Capital*; Key, Jr., *Southern Politics*.
17. Black and Black, *Rise of Southern Republicans*.
18. Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote*; Philpot, *Race, Republicans, and the Return of the Party of Lincoln*.

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Index