CALTECH/ MIT
VOTING TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

A multi-disciplinary, collaborative project of
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TITLE Racial Differences in Election Administration

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Key words:

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Racial Differences in Election Administration

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Summary of talk

• Election administration data
• Turnout differences
• Reasons for not registering and voting (Census Bureau data)
• Voting administration and race (Pew/MIT Survey)
  – Lines
  – Voter identification
What questions are we interested in?

• Do different racial groups have different experiences voting?
  – Getting information about the election
  – Getting to the polls
  – Checking-in
  – Using the equipment
  – Trusting the count
• Do different racial groups turn out at different rates?
• Do different racial groups vote differently?
What data do we have?

- Election returns
- Official voter registration data
- Aggregate Census Bureau Data
- Public opinion surveys
  - U.S. Census Bureau: Current Population Survey, Voter and Registration Supplement
  - American National Election Studies
  - Pew/MIT Survey of the Performance of American Elections
Turnout differences
Turnout Comparison by Data Sources

![Turnout Comparison Graph]

Legend:
- Actual turnout
- Current Population Survey
- Amer. Nat'l Election Study
Turnout by Race

Source: CPS, V&R Supplement
## Turnout by race/age groups (pct.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1972</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, 18-24</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, 18-24</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic, 18-24</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, 65+</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, 65+</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic, 65+</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CPS, V&R Supplement
Section 5 Covered Jurisdictions

*Note: The political subdivisions in Virginia (Augusta, Brule, Beach, Frederick, Greene, Wythe, Pembroke, Accomack, Richmond, Shenandoah and Warren Counties, and the City of Fairfax, Hampton, Salem and Winchester) have "bailed-out" from coverage pursuant to Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act. The United States entered into a declaratory judgment in each of those cases.*
Turnout differences

Source: State election returns and Census Bureau (for VAP)
## Turnout Differences by Preclearance Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Non-White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covered</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not covered</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CPS, V&R Supplement
Reasons for Not Registering and Voting
Reasons for Not Registering, Current Population Survey

Which of the following was the MAIN reason you were not registered to vote?

– Did not meet registration deadlines
– Did not know where or how to register
– Did not meet residency requirements
– Did not live here long enough
– Permanent illness or disability
– Difficulty with English
– Not interested in the election or not involved in politics
– My vote would not make a difference
– Not eligible to vote
– Other reason
### Reasons for Not Registering, by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hisp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t meet reg. deadline</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t know how/where to register</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t meet residency requirement</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent illness/disability</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty w/ English</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in the Election</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My vote wouldn’t make a difference</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible to vote</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the main reason you did not vote?

- Illness or disability (own or family's)
- Out of town or away from home
- Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)
- Not interested, felt my vote wouldn't make a difference
- Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule
- Transportation problems
- Didn't like candidates or campaign issues
- Registration problems (i.e. didn't receive absentee ballot, not registered in current location)
- Bad weather conditions
- Inconvenient hours, polling place or hours or lines too long
- Other
### Reasons for Not Voting, By Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hisp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illness or disability</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of town/away from home</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgot to vote (or send for abs. ballot)</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested/my votes wouldn’t count</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too busy/conflicting schedule</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation problems</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t like candidates/issues</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration problems</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad weather</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient hours/polling place/lines</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administration and Race
# Mode of Voting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On Election Day</th>
<th>In-person before Election Day</th>
<th>Absentee/ by mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>63.2% (70.4%)</td>
<td>16.7% (13.3%)</td>
<td>20.1% (16.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>63.9% (69.3%)</td>
<td>24.3% (23.5%)</td>
<td>11.8% (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>60.8% (70.8%)</td>
<td>25.9% (16.5%)</td>
<td>13.3% (12.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Pew/MIT survey
(CPS V&R Supplement)
Experience at the polls: Questions on the MIT/Pew survey

- How difficult was it to find your polling place to vote? (Very difficult, Somewhat difficult, fairly easy, very easy)
- How well were things run at the polling place where you voted? (Very well, okay, not well, terrible)
- Was there a problem with your voter registration when you tried to vote? (yes/no)
- Approximately, how long did you have to wait in line to vote?
- Did you encounter any problems with the voting equipment or the ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended? (Yes/no)
- How confident are you that your vote in the General Election was counted as you intended? (Very confident, somewhat confident, Not too confident, not at all confident)
- Were you asked to show picture identification, such as a driver's license, at the polling place this November? (yes/no)
## Summary of problems/experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not “very easy” finding polling place*</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling place not run “very well”</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem with registration</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines (minutes)*</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem with voting equipment</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not “very confident” vote was counted at cast*</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked to show photo identification*</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pew/MIT, Nov ’08</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pew/MIT, Super Tuesday ’08</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pew/MIT, Nov ’07</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCES, Nov ’06</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Controls for the state of residence
Voter Identification
Support for Photo ID laws

- Do you support or oppose any of the following proposals for new ways of voting or conducting elections? . . . Require all people to show government issued photo identification when they vote
- Nationwide, 76% support
  - By race: 76% of Whites, 77% Blacks, 79% Hispanics
  - By party: 65% of Dems, 77% Ind., 90% Rep.
  - By ideology: 58% of Liberals, 76% Mod., 90% Cons.
  - By state: 61% in Mass. 88% in Hawaii
  - By existing requirement: 81% where it’s used, 76% where it’s not
Variability of Voter ID Laws

- Photo ID required (5%)
- Photo ID requested, but not required (6% of voters)
- ID Required of all first-time voters (6%)
- Some ID required (32%)
- “HAVA only” (52%)

Source: electionline.org
## Frequency of Being Asked for ID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hisp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photo ID mentioned in law</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo ID not mentioned in law</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What ID do people show?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Category</th>
<th>Photo ID mentioned in law</th>
<th>Photo ID not mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drivers license</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter registration card</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other gov’t ID</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Has a Drivers License?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hisp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any drivers license</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL w/ current name, address, unexpired</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Happens After the ID is shown (all voters)

- **Asked to show ID**
  - **Yes**: (54%)
    - **Have ID**
      - **Yes**: (52%)
        - Vote a regular ballot
      - **No**: (1.6%)
        - Vote prov. ballot
  - **No**: (46%)
    - Vote a regular ballot

- Don’t vote (0.4%)
What Happens After the ID is shown (Black voters)

- **Asked to show ID**
  - **No** (28%)
    - Vote a regular ballot
  - **Yes**
    - **Have ID**
      - **Yes** (69%)
        - Vote a regular ballot
      - **No** (2.8%)
        - Vote prov. ballot
    - **No** (72%)
      - **Have ID**
        - **Yes** (0.2%)
          - Don’t vote
        - **No** (28%)
          - Vote a regular ballot
What Happens After the ID is shown (White voters)

- **Asked to show ID**
  - Yes
    - **Have ID**
      - Yes (52%)
        - Vote a regular ballot
      - No (0.7%)
        - Vote prov. ballot
  - No (48%)
    - Don't vote
What Happens After the ID is shown (Black/White voters)

- **Asked to show ID**
  - Yes
    - Have ID
      - Yes
        - Vote a regular ballot
      - No
        - Have ID
          - Yes (69%/51%)
          - No (2.8%/0.7%)
        - Don't vote (0.2%/0.3%)
  - No (28%/48%)
    - Vote a regular ballot
Conclusions

• Turnout differentials are declining
  – Differentials may be greatest in non-covered jurisdictions
• Many of the differences are not of the terrible vs. great variety, but of the OK vs. great variety
• Much of the experience is the same by race
• African Americans wait in longer lines to vote
  – Not clear why
• Non-whites are asked to show ID more often
  – Discretion plays some role
  – Greater tendency to vote provisionally
Some links

• My e-mail address
  – cstewart@mit.edu

• Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project
  – vote.caltech.edu

• Current Population Survey, 2008 Voting and Registration Supplement

• American National Election Studies
  – http://www.electionstudies.org/

• Pew/MIT Study on the 2008 Election Experience
  – http://vote.caltech.edu/drupal/node/231