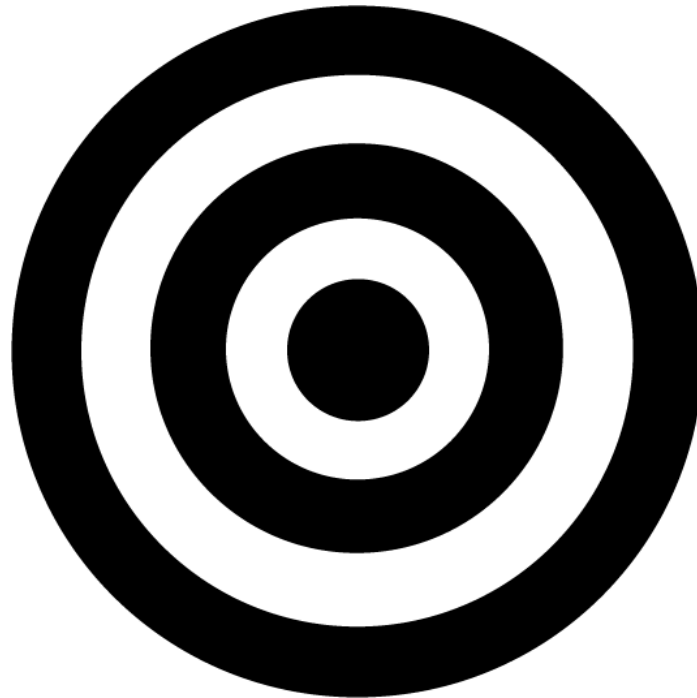


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ENDARCH

JOURNAL OF BLACK POLITICAL RESEARCH

A Publication of
The Clark Atlanta University
Department of Political Science and
Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library

Endarch

Journal of Black Political Research

About

Endarch: Journal of Black Political Research is a double blind peer-reviewed journal published by Clark Atlanta University Department of Political Science in partnership with Atlanta University Center Robert Woodruff Library. The journal is an online publication. *Endarch* seeks to reflect, analyze, and generate activity, which will lead toward the expansion, clarification, and edification of black political thought. We seek to publish high quality works regarding the experiences of African peoples relative to political activities which are investigated, critiqued and evaluated in a manner supportive of greater understanding and constructive developments, and we thereby contribute original scholarship to the field of political science.

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Statement of Purpose*

In a decade characterized by the complete atrophy of all struggle from the sixties and the defection of most of the former participants, the principal question must be, why? What has happened consistently to denature and distort incipiently progressive impulses that appear among Black people? That question must be answered if we are to build a movement, and it cannot be answered apart from careful analysis of the economic, political and sociological structures and functions of capitalism in all its national and international, social and existential mediations. It is time that the victims move seriously to grapple with Leviathan.

Endarch, as its name would suggest identifies with motion; not any haphazard or desultory movement but movement that is conscious of its origins and destinations. As an embodiment of aggregate but mutually consistent perspectives, this journal seeks to reflect, analyze and generate activity which will ultimately lead toward the expansion, clarification and solidification of Black political thought.

The conscious nature of movement is derived from a clear social and analytic methodology. An approach which views the world as a totality but also diaphanously understands that the components comprising this world are not of equal importance. With this in mind, and given Black peoples historical grounding in oppression and exploitation, Endarch sees of paramount importance those phenomena and groups of phenomena which operate in the system of oppression and exploitation. Recognition of such phenomena must lead to the discernment of those vital elements, the crucial essences of which define and condition the world. Our purpose is to expose those essences and through this explication illuminate the totality from the vantage point of a specific oppressed people. Such is the task of a conscious and critical black political thought imbued with the task of defining the black experience in politics. It is toward this goal that we aim.

- Reprint, Endarch, Fall 1974

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Editor's Remarks

In this special edition of *Endarch* we present an interview and two articles from the “Dean of Atlanta City Politics,” Dr. William H. Boone. It is particularly fitting that *Endarch*, a journal dedicated to the study of Black political behavior, present and highlight the perspectives of one the nation’s leading scholars in the area of Black politics. It is due to in no small part the contributions of Dr. Boone among others that the Political Science Department at Clark Atlanta University has become the preeminent center for the academic study of Black politics.

The first article was written by Dr. Boone together with Dr. Tammy Greer. Dr. Greer has worked closely with Dr. Boone in advancing the work Southern Center for Policy Studies. Dr. Greer brings expertise in from the field of criminal justice, and she has also conducted important research in the area of how policy-making affects underserved groups. Greer and Boone provide us with an overview of results from the recent midterm elections in the state of Georgia. They suggest that there is an impending change in the electoral profile of the state due primarily to significant changes in the demographic make-up of the state. Over the past two decades Georgia has experienced a steady influx of new residents who appear to be poised to overturn the right-leaning solidly Republican profile of the state. Greer and Boone traced the changes to the enthusiastic turnouts for the Obama campaigns, continuing with a strong showing by the Clinton campaign, and reaching a peak with the surprising showing of Stacy Abrams in 2018. Democrats in the state have also made steady gains in the legislature, but they have not yet been able to win in state-wide elected offices. Still, the results of 2018 have already caused the Republicans to rethink some of their policy objectives. The Democrats are eagerly eyeing the 2020 elections in hopes that they will be able to make further gains in the state.

The second article in this issue is an informative review of the outcome of 2008 presidential election written by Dr. Boone together with Dr. Keith Jennings, the president and CEO of the African American Center on Global Politics and Human Rights. The article was first printed in 2009 in a document entitled *Changing the Race: Racial Politics and the Election of Barack Obama* published by the Applied Research Center. In this article Jennings and Boone described how presidential politics developed in the South since the 1960s. In the aftermath of the passage of 1965 Voting Rights Act and the tumultuous changes taking place due to the Civil Rights and Black Freedom movements of the 1960s white Southerners began to abandon the Democratic Party whose leaders had largely supported the Voting Rights Act. The Republicans

responded by developing the Southern Strategy which involved cynical appeals to the racist predilections of white Southerners. Jennings and Boone argued that while Obama's election was a challenge to the Southern Strategy, and while that strategy is no longer as effective as it once was due to significant demographic changes in the South, the election of Obama did not bring an end to that strategy, especially in the Deep South, nor did it bring an end to white racism in America. In fact they maintained that Obama's lack of appeal to white women and youth in the Deep South was indicative of racist views still prevalent throughout that region of the country. The authors suggested several strategies for building upon Obama's electoral success in order to enhance the prospects for Black and progressive candidates across the South.

Elections can bring new personalities into elective office, and new office holders can bring changes to public policies, but substantive changes beneficial to the masses of people need not necessarily follow. Black politics includes the study of electoral politics, but it has long been recognized by political scientists that elections are only one part of the political process, and often they are not even the most consequential part. As Dr. Boone points out, beyond election studies, thinking critically about Black politics requires an examination of various causative factors including: organized lobbying efforts, advocacy networks utilized by activists, the activities of regulatory agencies and the means by which policies are implemented, access to funding sources, possibilities for coalition formation, a review of relevant research studies that influence policy-makers and some thought must be given to the normative ideals that are used to motivate and or manipulate the behavior of the general public. All of these factors can either limit or enhance prospects for achieving specific political objectives. Furthermore, an in-depth understanding of Black politics requires an understanding of the social context and historical background in which Blacks must pursue their political interests.

One of the roles of an esteemed and accomplished scholar is to construe complex issues and provide us with clarifying concepts that allow for in-depth analyses of various social phenomena of interest. Due to their wide experiences and accumulated knowledge, experienced and accomplished scholars can give us a grand and magisterial overview of major developments even while pointing out the specific factors which are most critical for bringing about substantive changes. Thus, we turn to Dr. Boone to help us gain a greater understanding of the current state of Black politics. Dr. Boone provides insights on the recent midterm elections, the challenges of political organizing in a highly racialized society, his views on political leadership, and he gives

some practical advice to up-and-coming researchers and scholars. As always Dr. Boone presents us with a clear understanding of how current events developed over time, and he explains the significant factors underlying current trends in electoral politics and policy-making. His work over several decades provides us with an example of consistent scholarly achievement, and his profound insights have helped to elucidate all aspects of the American political system.

N. Welchel
Editor-in-Chief *Endarch*
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About the Authors:

Dr. William H. Boone is currently an Associate Professor of Political Science at Clark Atlanta University. Dr. Boone has served as Associate Provost, Dean of Graduate Studies/Research and Sponsored Programs and former chair of the Department of Political Science. He is a graduate of Morgan State University and received his doctorate degree in political science from Atlanta University. Boone has served as a Faculty Fellow with the United States Office of Personnel Management, and as an Adjunct Fellow with the Southern Education Foundation. He has also served on the faculty of the Africana Women's Center, and has served as a lecturer at the Georgia Institute of Technology. From 1986-89 Dr. Boone served as producer of the television series Black Perspectives. Currently Boone serves as co-producer, writer and Host of the cable TV series, Politically Speaking. Dr. Boone has served as President of the National Conference of Black Political Scientist.

Professor Boone has authored or co-authored publications in the areas of black political parties, state legislative activities, energy policies and the social, political and economic impact of governmental actions on rural communities. Boone is an active member of various professional organizations, and has served as a chairperson, panel organizer, presenter, and local arrangements chair for many conferences. National and local news media outlets frequently consult Dr. Boone.

Dr. Boone has served as a member of various University committees among which have been the University Wide Tenure and Promotions Committee, University Grievance Committee, Treasurer of the Faculty Assembly, member of the Academic Council, and Faculty Representative to the Clark Atlanta University Board of Trustees.

Dr. Boone has been the recipient of awards in the areas of teaching and scholarship. Among which are Teacher of the Year, Outstanding Faculty Award, and Award for Dedicated Scholarship.

Dr. Tammy R. Greer is currently a professor of Political Science in the Department of Political Science at Clark Atlanta University. Dr. Greer has a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and Masters in Security Management from the University of Houston-Downtown and PhD in Political Science from Clark Atlanta University with focuses in American Government, Urban Politics, Comparative Politics, and International Politics. She also serves as an instructor of Social Sciences at Atlanta Metropolitan State College.

Dr. Greer has worked in a variety of positions in state and federal government as well as in the private sector in diverse capacities.

As a scholar, Dr. Greer's research and community/civic involvement focuses on how public policy has an impact on historically underserved communities and how policy makers, intend to make lives better, do so through the lens of the policy maker and not the underserved communities.

Dr. Keith Jennings is a human rights and democratic development specialist. He currently serves as President and CEO of the African American Center on Global Politics and Human Rights (CHR) based in Atlanta, Georgia. In that capacity, he sets overall direction and strategy for the organization and is responsible for guiding and coordinating the implementation of CHR's Strategic Plan, and for measuring success against its goals. He also is the senior strategist responsible for developing programs and campaigns aligned with CHR's mission, which address domestic and international concerns.

CHR functions as a think tank and campaign clearing house on global political issues and human rights concerns for the African American community. CHR is especially focused on global political issues and human rights challenges affecting people of African descent throughout the Americas. Among the organization's key objectives are: promoting unity and solidarity among African descendant peoples; strengthening the capacity of African descendant NGOs to integrate a rights-based approach into their work; advancing public understanding of international affairs; engaging people of color in dialogues on 21st century racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia; and developing a new generation of human rights leaders.

Dr. Jennings possess over 25 years of international and domestic experience in promoting democratic development and respect for international human rights standards. He has traveled extensively, to more than 70 countries on five continents. He also has participated in and spoken at international forums and conferences sponsored by the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN).

Dr. Jennings is a former Sr. Associate and Regional Director for Southern and East Africa at the National Democratic Institute (NDI). While with NDI he also served as the Institute's Director of Citizen Participation and as an NDI Country Director in Indonesia, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa and Zambia. Dr. Jennings also has been a Regional Director for Amnesty International mid-Atlantic region (the organization's first African American director) and deputy regional director for its Southern Region. Dr. Jennings also coordinated Amnesty's cultural diversification program. Dr. Jennings has also served as the National Coordinator for the World Council of Churches' Human Rights Campaign on Racism in the United States and he has been a consultant with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Carter Center, the Children's Defense Fund, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the AFL-CIO and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Dr. Jennings earned his Ph.D. and Master's degrees in Political Science from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, a Certificate in Quantitative Social Science from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania and a Certificate in International Human Rights from the Canadian Human Rights Foundation in Montreal, Canada. He is an honors graduate of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he also served as the student representative on the University's Board of Trustees for three years following his graduation.

Georgia's Journey Down the Purple Brick Road: A Review of the 2018 Georgia Mid-Term Election Results

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Abstract

The demographic shifts that have occurred in Georgia over the last three decades provide the foundation for the move from red to purple and eventually to blue. The new migrants, to Georgia, are not southern Democrats or even right-wing Republicans. Since 2010, the number of Georgia residents has increased 9,688,709 to 10,519,475 in 2018. This is an increase of 830,766 or about an 8% increase in population. These new residents are not driven by southern angst and suspicion of the north. These new Georgians are receptive to moderate social and fiscal policies. The migration of the United States population from the West, Midwest, and Northeast to states in the Sun Belt, such as Georgia is now beginning to bear electoral fruit.

Keywords: electoral politics; voter suppression; African-American vote; demographic shifts

To explain the 2018 midterm election, and in particular the Georgia gubernatorial race, it is important to look at the multiple layers that impacted the election results and not just pinpointing one major issue that swayed the election results one way or another. Political rhetoric, changing demographics, and legalized voter suppression have combined to create an environment challenging traditional thinking and political analysis of the electorate and electoral politics of the present and future for Georgia.

The 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race was noteworthy on many levels, including the nomination by a major southern political party of an African American woman, which was a historic nomination for any state, in particular a southern state, to place the election into the

annals of political history. However, the race became infamous, by some calculations, because of the accusations of systematic voter suppression.

This new environment changing traditional political thinking in the United States as well as in Georgia, has created a space where citizens, who were already untrusting of the political process, had their suspicions confirmed by the legal and state-wide voter suppression techniques and acts. The acts of, including yet not limited to, reducing voting locations, reduction in the number of voter machines, and “exact match” laws, were implemented and highly publicized which could have had an impact on the lack of citizens engaging in the electoral process – contributing to self-imposed voter depression of the vote.

To date, a half dozen lawsuits have been filed, all in some fashion, raising the question of voter suppression. Thus far, five of the suits have been decided in favor of those alleging some degree of voter suppression. The last one is in adjudication, including a new lawsuit brought by the ACLU – three of Georgia’s largest counties alleging voting irregularities in the 2018 general election. The rulings dealt with the arbitrary consolidation of polling sites, the ability of non-English speaking citizens to use an interpreter and raised serious concerns with the so-called “exact match” policy.¹ The latter gave an enormous amount of discretion to election officials to determine if a signature was that of the applicant. The state also used a policy dubbed “use it or lose it.” If a citizen had not voted within a three-year span, his/her name would be placed in appending file to be purged from the voter role under the Georgia Law.²

In the last decade, the Georgia Secretary of State office has purged over one million voters. In 2017, the Office purged approximately 660,000 voters. In 2018, the number of purges

¹ <https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/what-you-need-know-about-georgia-000-pending-voters/0aulxJgIulIpKgMmpexBmK/>

² <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/412195-georgia-purged-more-than-100000-people-from-voter-rolls-because-there-didnt>

was approximately 90,000.³ In many of these purges the reason given was under a state law that allows a voter's name to be purged if the voter did not participate in the previous election. The so-called "use it or lose it" policy. Of the 90,000 purged in 2018, close to 80% were African American citizens – considering African Americans are about 30% of Georgia's overall population. What has occurred is a confluence of factors both nationally and locally. It is important to note that the policies used to implement these purges were all under the color of law.

What has fueled many of the changes is the gutting of the Voting Rights Act (VRA).⁴ In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Section 4 of the VRA was unconstitutional. Section 4 was the trigger that allowed the U.S. Department of Justice to force a jurisdiction to request preclearance before enacting any changes that might dilute or impede voting. In short, federal oversight of voting practices was established under the VRA. The enactment of the VRA helped to drive up voter participation; in some instances, by five (5) to eight (8) percent.

The decision against preclearance gave license to many states, including Georgia, to enact exact match laws and close polling precincts. Many of the closed precincts occurred in predominantly African American or poor neighborhoods. The number of voter roll purges have increased in Georgia since 2013 and the end of the VRA.⁵

While voter suppression efforts plagued the 2018 Georgia midterm election, it is important to note that the 2018 midterm elections also played out in a highly charged, divisive, partisan, and culture-social war. The first two years of the Trump administration have unleashed overt displays of racism, xenophobia, and sexism. The designation of states as either red or blue

³ Van R. Newkirk II, *Atlantic*, November 6, 2018," The Georgia Governor's Race Has brought Voter Suppression into Full View."

⁴ *Shelby County v. Holder* 570 U.S. (2013).

⁵ Desmond Ang, Faculty Research Working Paper Series, "Do 40 years old Facts Still Matter? Long – run Effects of Federal Oversight Under the VRA."

in the media and by politicians only serves to further polarize the country which drives voters to vote party rather than voting on policies. This is a clear when many politicians and television/cable pundits refer to areas that voted for Trump as “Trump Country” further strengthens the polarization of the geographic area and citizens living in those areas. Because midterms are usually a referendum on the sitting president, Trump sought to accentuate this by making a vote for his endorsed candidates as a vote for him. This was evident in the Georgia race. Trump endorsed Brian Kemp during the Republican primary and both Trump and Vice President Pence made appearances for Kemp during the general election.

Comparison of Registered Voters and Voter Turn-Out

Year	Number Registered Voters	Number of Overall Votes Cast	Percentage of Overall Votes Cast
2014	5,191,182	2,596,947	50.3%
2018	6,428,581	3,949,905	61.44

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

While the overt efforts to suppress votes did not impact the percentage of votes cast, the efforts of suppression could have created an environment of self-suppression where voters did not attempt to vote in the election because of the highly publicized efforts to suppress votes. The outcome of the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race will have consequential outcomes not only for Stacey Abrams and Brian Kemp; the outcome will accelerate or slow Georgia’s fade from a red state to a purple state moving forward. The outcome has the potential to force the Georgia Democratic Party to accept the reality that the party’s core constituency is black; and the party’s viability lies with its’ black constituents. Yet, continued African American support will come with a price. The state Democratic Party will need to move beyond symbolic support for African

American candidates and provide the resources needed to win state-wide races. Reliance on white younger émigrés to the state will not sustain and grow the party into the future if the Democratic Party wants to move toward being a more political competitive state.

The demographic shifts that have occurred in Georgia over the last three decades provide the foundation for the move from red to purple and eventually to blue. The new migrants, to Georgia, are not southern Democrats or even right-wing Republicans. Since 2010, the number of Georgia residents has increased 9,688,709 to 10,519,475 in 2018. This is an increase of 830,766 or about an 8% increase in population. These new residents are not driven by southern angst and suspicion of the north. These new Georgians are receptive to moderate social and fiscal policies. The migration of the United States population from the West, Midwest, and Northeast to states in the Sun Belt, such as Georgia is now beginning to bear electoral fruit.

2016 Presidential Results

Candidate	Number of Votes
Trump (R)	2,068,623
Clinton (D)	1,837,300
Johnson (I)	123,641
Difference (vote by which Trump won) – 107,682	
Registered Voters – 5,439,571 – Number of Votes Not Cast 1,401,007	

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

The influence of these migrants was evident in Georgia during the 2008, 2012, and 2016 presidential races when Barack Obama received 45 and 43 percent of the electoral vote respectively, and Hillary Clinton’s share of the popular vote in 2016 was 1,837,300 (45.5%). These numbers, although not winning numbers, demonstrate the steady build of a more moderate

electorate. The 2018 Georgia midterms results will serve as an indicator as to whether the state continues its' move to purple.

For Georgia Republicans, like their national counterparts, this midterm election has graphically pointed out the inability and failure of the party to expand its' base to younger populations, college educated women, and the expanding immigrant populations.

Select Counties Outside Immediate Metro Area – Abrams Percentages

County	Percentage	County	Percentage
Dooly	44.3	Peach	47
Early	46.9	Quitman	43.6
Lowndes	41.6	Twiggs	46.8
McIntosh	39.9	Washington	49
Meriwether	40.4	Webster	40
Mitchell	43.5	Wilkes	40
Wilkinson	44		

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

The Republican base is centered in the rural and non-metropolitan areas of the Georgia, yet, Stacey Abrams expanded the popular percentage of the Democratic vote in the state to approximately 49%. The ability of Abrams to increase the state-wide percentage was helped by cutting into some of the traditionally strong Republican rural and non-farm rural areas outside of the immediate metro area.

Georgia Gubernatorial Races: 2010, 2014, and 2018

	2010	2014	2018
Reg. Voters	5,033,307	5,168,664	6,428,581
Deal (R)	1,365,382	1,345,237	
Barnes (D)	1,107,011		
Carter (D)		1,144,794	
Kemp (R)			1,978,408
Abrams (D)			1,923,685
Difference	258,821	200,443	54,723

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

The table demonstrates the rise in the Democratic vote in Georgia’s Gubernatorial Races.

Democrat Roy Barnes’s lost to Republican Nathan Deal in 2010 and Deal defeated Jason Carter in 2014. In 2018, Abrams also lost to Republican Brian Kemp. However, since Barnes’ lost to Deal in 2010 the participation rates of Democratic supporters in gubernatorial races has increased along with the number of registered voters.

Comparison of Total Registered Voters and Votes Cast

	Registered Voters	Votes Cast	Percentage that Voted
Black Men	905,980	423,496	46.7%
Black Women	1,212,570	717,557	59.2%
White Men	1,771,890	1,101,947	62.2%
White Women	1,967,596	1,222,921	62.2%
Latino Men	94,438	37,026	39.2%

Latino Women	111,514	51,791	46.4%
Asian Men	71,871	31,040	43.2%
Asian Women	79,015	35,921	45.5%

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

The 2018 midterm elections to Georgians was evident in the turnout for early voting, over two (2) million votes were cast. An additional four (4) million votes (60% of voters) were cast in the general election. Both turnouts represent record breaking participation for midterm and off-presidential year general elections for African Americans, women, young whites, and educated white women.

While the historic nature of the Abrams campaign fueled interest and participation in other campaigns in the state, that is, the Abrams' factor helped the turnout for other races, including significant number of general election votes for an African American Democratic candidate for state school superintendent who polled 48.87% of the vote in this state-wide race.

Yet, more predictive of Georgia's move to a politically purple state was the successful election of Lucy McBath in Georgia's 6th Congressional District. The McBath victory comes in part as a result of the failed run of Democrat Jon Osoff in 2017.

Georgia 6th Congressional Special General Election: June 2017

County	Osoff (D)	Handel (R)
Cobb	33,114	45,688
DeKalb	33,928	24,117
Fulton	58,475	64,994
Total	125,517	134,799

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

The McBath victory points to a weakening of the Republican hold on white suburban voters. The sixth district is comprised of parts of suburban Cobb, DeKalb, and Fulton counties. This is a district gerrymandered by the Republican controlled legislature to help Republicans maintain control of the sixth. The district has been represented by hard line Republican conservatives beginning in 1978 including Newt Gingrich, Bob Barr, Tom Price, and Karen Handel. This Georgia district has been flipped by Democrat Lucy McBath and the results may be a harbinger of elections to come in Georgia.

Georgia 6th Congressional General Election: November 2018

County	McBath (D)	Handel (R)
Cobb	40,807	51,297
DeKalb	43,573	29,155
Fulton	75,759	76,423
Total	160,139	156,875

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

McBath won 50.51% of the overall vote for the 6th Congressional District. What is more telling is that she won 44.31% of the votes in Cobb and 49.78% of the votes in Fulton. Her winning percent in Dekalb was 59%. This is of note because both the Cobb and Fulton parts of the district are demographically white but have changed demographically to a younger and more educated populace. The below is a compilation demographic information for Cobb County, DeKalb County, and Fulton County for 2017 and 2018.

Georgia 6th Congressional Demographics

County	White Population	African American Population	Asian Population	High School Diploma	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Average Annual Income
Cobb	63%	28.4%	5.5%	91.2%	45.5%	\$72,004
DeKalb	33%	54%	5%	88.5%	40.9%	\$61,105
Fulton	45.8%	44.6%	7.2%	91.7%	50.2%	\$61,336

Source: www.sos.ga.gov

Overall, the outcome of the 2018 mid-term election netted three state Democratic senators and 11 state Democratic house seats in the Georgia General Assembly.⁶ These netted seats were in Metropolitan Atlanta, specifically Cobb, Dekalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties where republicans were the incumbents.

The political signs point to a new, different reality about the politics in Georgia beginning with the Obama campaign, to the Clinton campaign, and more recently to the Abrams campaign. The decline of the victory gaps between Republican candidates and Democratic candidates continue to close allowing for a constructive discussion of the realities of the politics in Georgia. One of the reasons for this shift in politics is the change in demographics in Metropolitan Atlanta moving toward democratic candidates and away from republican candidates. Abrams presented herself as progressive enough and not too liberal that allowed for Georgia voters to be willing to vote for a democratic candidate. McBath has a similar ideology as Abrams which allowed for McBath to be successful in a suburban area, with less rural voters than Abrams had to compete

⁶ sos.ga.gov

for. The upcoming 2020 election will be another test or sign of Georgia voters' willingness and voting capacity to move forward toward being a more competitive political state.

Grits and Gravy: Obama's Challenge to the Southern Strategy

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Abstract

The facts on the ground suggest that the breakthrough was exactly that – a breakthrough. While it signals what is possible and where the rest of the South is headed, assuming continued political organizing around day-to-day concerns, the current right wing hold on politics in the South remains a formidable reactionary force on city councils, within county commissions, among judiciary and in state bodies. Despite Obama's groundbreaking wins in Virginia, North Carolina and Florida, a closer look at his performance, especially among young white Southerners, suggests that the change many believe has already been achieved has, in fact, not yet arrived. Transformative strategies are necessary to secure and build on the 2008 breakthrough.

Keywords: Presidential politics; electoral strategies; the African-American vote; southern politics, racial politics

The November 4, 2008 electoral victory by Barack Obama was one of the most stunning developments in United States history. Besides being the first Black elected President of the United States, Obama's landslide victory in the Electoral College⁷ reflected a remarkably well organized and disciplined campaign strategy that included the determination to win electoral votes in the South, an area of the country previously considered "safe" Republican Party territory by most political observers.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that the "Southern Strategy" has been defeated, just as it would be enormously naïve to conclude that, because of Obama's victory,

⁷ The final total was Obama's 365 to McCain's 173 electoral votes while the popular vote was much closer at 53%, or 66,882, 230 million votes for Obama to 46%, or 58, 343, 671 votes for McCain.

racism has been overcome. We did not magically enter a “post-racial political period” on November 5, 2008.

In fact our view is quite the opposite. The facts on the ground suggest that the breakthrough was exactly that – a breakthrough. While it signals what is possible and where the rest of the South is headed, assuming continued political organizing around day-to-day concerns, the current right-wing hold on politics in the South remains a formidable reactionary force on city councils, within county commissions, among the judiciary and in state legislative bodies. Despite Obama’s groundbreaking wins in Virginia, North Carolina and Florida, a closer look at his performance, especially among young white Southerners, suggests that the change many believe has already been achieved, has in fact, not yet arrived. Transformative strategies are necessary to secure and build on the 2008 breakthrough.

The Southern Strategy: The Republican Party’s Racial Appeal in the New South

The long struggle for the right of political participation was a central theme of almost all the major Black human rights organizations founded in the early years of the 20th century. Prior to the signing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the overwhelming majority of Blacks, Latinos and Native Americans either could not vote or faced state-sanctioned restrictions on their right to participate in the political process ranging from poll taxes to literacy tests – restrictions enforced by an extrajudicial reign of terror.

From 1948 to 1984, the Southern states, traditionally a stronghold for Democrats, became key swing states, providing the popular vote margins in 1960, 1968, and 1976 elections. But by 1964 it had become clear that the segregationist Democratic Party could no longer contain the tensions within it. Human rights leaders such as Fannie Lou Hamer, along with others in the

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, challenged the segregationist delegation at the 1964 Atlantic City, New Jersey Democratic Convention. The human rights struggles in Birmingham and Selma crystallized the resolve of Blacks to resist political domination by racist conservatives.

During this era, several Republican candidates expressed support for states' rights, signaling their opposition to the passage of legislation to protect the franchise and federal enforcement of civil rights for Blacks. The Southern Strategy emerged as the crystallization of the "anti-civil rights movement" in electoral form. It was led initially by Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, who was able to win five Southern states in 1964 based largely on his opposition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The 1964 Barry Goldwater Campaign was followed by the presidential campaign of the openly racist Alabama Governor George Wallace. Running as an Independent, Wallace was able to carry seven Southern states in 1968. His 1972 campaign was cut short when he was shot.

Changes were clearly on the horizon, bought forth by the civil rights movement in the 1960s. A political backlash emerged, and, with Blacks demanding political representation, many southern Democrats looked for a new home outside the Democratic Party. The switch in party identification by white Southerners was led by some of the most staunchly racist southern Democrats. One of the first policymakers to join the Republican Party was the former Dixiecrat leader and 1948 presidential candidate, South Carolina Senator Strom Thurman, who switched in 1964.

The success of Goldwater and Wallace was not lost on Republican strategists. In a 1970 *New York Times* interview, Kevin Phillips concluded:

From now on the Republicans are never going to get more than 10 to 20 percent of the Negro vote and they don't need any more than that...but Republicans would be

shortsighted if they weakened enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. The more Negroes who register as Democrats in the South, the sooner the Negrophobe whites will quit the Democrats and become Republicans. That's where the votes are. Without that prodding from blacks, the whites will backslide into their old comfortable arrangement with the local Democrats.⁸

Richard Nixon took note of both the 1964 and 1968 developments, and by the 1972 elections the "Southern Strategy" was being perfected. Nixon's coded language of "law and order" and "states' rights" led to his winning in nine southern states. The language used in the racial appeal to white Southerners may have been articulated in less virulent terms than those used by segregationists like George Wallace, but the message was clearly understood: The Republican Party is the party for white people.

The Southern Strategy became the core of the Republican Party's national organizing approach to presidential campaigns. Their faith in that strategy was so firm that in 1980 Ronald Reagan launched his national campaign against Jimmy Carter from Philadelphia, Mississippi, the site of the notorious murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner.

The impact of the mass exodus of white Southerners from the Democratic Party was the routine delivery of the South to the Republican Party. In fact, prior to the 2008 elections, Republicans won seven out of the previous ten presidential contests, largely with a reliable Southern-based vote. The table below reflects part of that history.

Southern States Electoral Votes Won by the Two Major Parties

Presidential Election Year	Democrats	Republicans
1980	18	127
1984	0	153

⁸ See James Boyd, "Nixon's Southern Strategy: It's All in the Charts," *New York Times* May 17, 1970, p. 21

1988	5	147
1992	54	108
1996	64	96
2000	0	150
2004	0	161
2008	57	104

Source: Center for Citizens Participation

Democratic Party Dilemmas

On the Democratic side, even some of the leading officials who were supportive of the goals of the civil rights movement knew that the 1965 Voting Rights Act would split the Democratic Party and cause havoc with respect to a national organizing strategy. In fact, shortly after signing the Voting Rights Act into law, President Lyndon Johnson reportedly stated, “We’ve lost the South for a hundred years.”

As the power of the Republican Party grew in the South and the “Regan Democrats” became a force nationwide, the Democratic Party struggled for a viable strategy. Only in the 1976, 1992 and 1996 elections, with Southern white men at the top of the ticket, were they able to gain the White House.

In 2000 and 2004, the Party made a significant strategic decision to write off the South. The nominees and their top advisors believed they could win without winning anywhere in the South. A number of strategists and academics wrote influential articles and books regarding the best way to “whistle past Dixie” on the way to the White House.

The practical problem with this national organizing strategy was that there was no room for error. With the South conceded, losing any one of the 18 designated battleground states

could mean losing the entire election. The implementation of that strategy in both 2000 and 2004 led to a concentration of resources and basically rendered several potentially competitive states non-competitive.

Perhaps the most glaring error with the “whistling” strategy was that it ignored the most loyal voting bloc within the Democratic Party, i.e., Blacks. Close to 60 percent of the country’s Black population is located in the South and Black voters have provided the Democratic Party with an average of 90 percent of their votes in all national elections since 1964. In most of the Southern states, Blacks now constitute between 40 and 50 percent of the Democratic Party primary voters. However, the national strategy of the Democrats, especially since the 1990s, was to run away from its more liberal base in an attempt to win back some of the Reagan Democrats.

Additionally, a singular focus on the top of the ticket, i.e., winning the White House, meant that very competitive Senate and House seats were ignored time and again. Since Harvey Gantt’s historic contests with the racist Senator Jesse Helms in North Carolina during the 1980s, the Democratic Party had shown little interest in state-wide elections in the Deep South when Blacks were the candidates. Both times Gantt ran he came within a few hundred thousand votes of defeating Helms but did not receive the level of support from the national Democratic Party that he believed was needed to defeat the conservative icon. As Gantt’s chances improved, Helms resorted to an openly racist communications strategy of airing misleading, racially charged anti-affirmative action television ads across the state.

The lack of Democratic Party interest in Southern electoral contests seems odd given the evidence to support the idea of the party being able to offer robust challenges to Republican dominance in the region. Election results at the state and local levels and the possibility of

building strategic coalitions composed of core Democratic constituencies were dismissed or simply ignored.

Obama Challenges the Southern Strategy

That a Southern battleground existed at all during the 2008 elections was clear testament to the resource-rich Obama phenomenon and the campaign's determination to challenge the Republicans all across the country including the South. The campaign's "50-state strategy," supported by Howard Dean and the Democratic National Committee, was successful in challenging the Republicans in states previously won by Bush and a long roster of Republican candidates before him. As the general election neared, the Southern Battleground that took shape included the possibility of wins in Virginia, North Carolina and Florida.

By winning these states, Obama won 57 of the 270 electoral votes he needed to be elected president, or 21 percent. More importantly, he was able to finally break the stranglehold the Republican Party had developed over the entire South over more than 30 years. Chris Kromm of *Southern Exposure* magazine correctly observed: "Those who don't believe that the South is important to national politics will dismiss the results, echoing outgoing Sen. John Warner's claim in a recent interview that Florida, North Carolina and Virginia are 'different' from the rest of the South. On the contrary, these states are symbols of the direction much of the South is headed, not just a region with more "outsiders" but a younger, more urban more richly diverse South overall."⁹

It is important to appreciate the historic nature of Obama's victory in the South. Nationally, he received more of the white vote than any presidential Democratic candidate since

⁹ Kromm, Chris, "A New South Rising," *Facing South*, online magazine of the Institute for Southern Studies, November 23, 2008. www.southernstudies.org/2008/11/a-new-south-rising.html

Lyndon Johnson in 1964. And Obama won close to *20 million* votes in the South. But it would be an enormous mistake to equate the fact that three Southern states helped elect the first Black president with the defeat of the Southern Strategy.

The truth of the matter is that even if McCain had won Virginia, North Carolina and Florida, he still would not have won the presidency in 2008. He would have finished with a more respectable total of 230 electoral votes but little else. In other words, Obama could have won the election without winning the South.

More importantly, a rigorous assessment of the 2008 election provides evidence of how and to what extent the South is changing, while giving the lie to notions of a “post-racial” society or a radically transformed South.

Below are the national results of Obama’s performance among several key demographic groups.

National Election Results

Category	Obama	McCain
Male	49%	48%
Female	56%	43%
18 – 29	66%	32%
30 – 44	52%	46%
45 – 64	50%	49%
65 and above	45%	53%
2004	0	161
2008	57	104

Source: CNN 2008 General Election Exit Polls

Nationwide, Obama won the women’s vote 56 percent to McCain’s 43 percent. However, in the South he lost the white women’s vote to McCain 21 percent to 78 percent. For example, in Georgia white women voted for McCain/Palin 74 percent to 26 percent for Obama/Biden, while Black women voted 97 percent for Obama/Biden to 2 percent for McCain/Palin. In Alabama, white women voted 88 percent for McCain/Palin to 10 percent for Obama/Biden, while Black women voted 96 percent for Obama/Biden to 4 percent for McCain/Palin.

Additionally, Obama was able to win over 40 percent of the total white vote nationwide. In Virginia, and North Carolina, he was able to win 39 percent and 35 percent respectively. However in the Deep South states of South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas, he was able to garner on average only 10 percent of the white vote.

As is clear from the numbers change won’t come easily in the South. Obama did not do as well among white Southern voters as previous Democratic candidates have done since 1976, excluding Dukakis in 1988. A sober assessment of those numbers might lead one to conclude that there was no defeat of the Southern Strategy but only a breakthrough in three Southern states undergoing rapid demographic change. The truth is somewhere in between.

Obama’s nationwide performance among all voters tends to mask the electoral racism that manifested itself on election day. The sad fact is that even among young whites, a group that Obama won handily nationwide 60 percent to 39 percent, in the Deep South an overwhelming majority cast their votes for 73 year-old John McCain.

Young White Southerners and the 2008 Elections

Georgia	Obama	McCain
White 18 – 29	20%	70%

White 30 – 44	32%	67%
Alabama	Obama	McCain
White 18 – 29	13%	84%
White 30 – 44	10%	86%
Virginia	Obama	McCain
White 18 – 29	42%	56%
White 30 – 44	38%	60%

Source: CNN 2008 General Election Exit Polls

A New Electoral Map

Despite Obama’s poor showing among whites in the Deep South, the 2008 elections laid a foundation for the future. The South is the fastest growing region in the country, even outpacing the Southwest. Globalization and deindustrialization in the Northwest and Midwest have led to a major population shift in the country. In fact, for Blacks one of the greatest reverse migrations has been under way for some time. Latino growth in the South is second only to the Southwest. In some Southern states the growth of the Latino population has had specific political impact. In Florida, for example, the Cuban population has been until recently, a reliably Republican bloc. The diversification of the Latino bloc to include Puerto Ricans and Central and South Americans has created new openings for Democratic candidates.

Reapportionment and statewide redistricting will be based upon the upcoming 2010 census. Most projections show New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio and New Jersey losing electoral votes, all of which have been either reliably Democratic states or states in which the party could strongly contend.

Five Southern states are projected to gain congressional seats and electoral votes: Texas, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. These shifts impact the electoral map that helped put Barack Obama in office.

In the past, the most important electoral states for the Democrats have been concentrated in the Midwest and Northeast, which was the rationale for the 18-state Electoral College strategy. However, given the rapid demographic changes, the new electoral map will include states in every region. Perhaps the new battleground states will be composed of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Missouri, Virginia, North Carolina, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado and Minnesota.

Looking Forward

Obama's campaign clearly understood that it made little sense to once again hand the Republicans a 161 electoral vote lead and then try to beat them to the 270 needed to win the presidency. Obama was able to redefine the national strategy of the Democratic Party, perhaps for generations. Democrats can never again consider whistling past Dixie. The Republican Party's Southern Strategy was only able to work effectively with the Democratic Party's acquiescence. There is a new political arithmetic associated with Southern presidential campaigning, in spite of the poor showing among white voters in several Deep South states. The electoral model presented by Obama is a winning model not only for candidates of color at the national, state and local levels but also for liberal and progressive candidates generally.

The "New South" will be in play in the 2012 elections. Given today's realities, it would make sense for a progressive strategy in the South to include the following key elements:

1. Implementation of voter registration and mobilization initiatives

2. Development and advocacy of empowerment strategies around the redistricting debate
3. Identification of key U.S. senatorial races that a mobilized vote can impact
4. A combination of advocacy and electoral coalition-building on community concerns
5. Development and implementation of a comprehensive election observation program

Without implementation of a focused progressive strategy, the political gains won by the Obama will evaporate, the old Southern Strategy will reemerge and the national win will not translate into a thoroughgoing reformation of the politics of the region.

On May 17, 1957, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. declared, “Give us the ballot and we will transform the South.” Fifty years later, Obama and Southern voters used the ballot to challenge the politics of the Old South, making an historic contribution to American political development. This is change we can believe in and continue to build upon.

Endarch Interview with Dr. William H. Boone

William H. Boone, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Clark Atlanta University

Dr. Boone has aptly been called the “Dean of Atlanta City Politics” due to his significant contributions in researching, analyzing and providing informative commentary on the major political events that have taken place in Atlanta over the last 40 years. He has often been called upon by media outlets to give analyses of current issues. He has also been a respected consultant and advisor to a number of federal, state and local officials. Dr. Boone has served in numerous administrative capacities in the academy including as Assistant Provost, the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Chair of the Department of Political Science all at Clark Atlanta University. He is also a past president of the National Conference of Black Political Science.

Dr. Boone is well respected by his students and colleagues as source of prescient insight about developments in local and national politics. He is known for encouraging his students to consider different perspectives with a critical eye in order to discern the underlying reasons for how and why they differ. With the query, “Is that political science?” he constantly reminds his students of what it means to pursue serious and thoughtful scholarship; they must strive to insure that their inquiries are thoroughly conducted in accordance with the highest standards of political science as the systematic study of political behavior. Furthermore, he has always placed a special emphasis on the in-depth study of the political activities and concerns of African Americans. The interview with Dr. Boone was conducted in order to get his views on the outcome of recent 2018 midterm elections, the implications for further developments, and the current state of Black politics.

What are the three most significant outcomes of the 2018 midterm elections? What major policy initiatives might the divided 116th U.S. Congress be able to enact the next two years?

Those are very good questions because the outcomes are very interesting. At the national level there is the seeming repudiation, to some extent, of the results of the 2016 presidential election. And I make that statement based on the fact that Trump did not win, as most folks know, the popular vote. So, here we come back in 2018 for off-year elections, and what we get is the popular vote now really having some say in how governance goes. In the House of Representatives the Republicans lose control. What you have now is Democrats in control. At the Congressional level you really see the popular vote having some influence, some impact, to the extent that they were able to change the composition. One of the things coming out of the midterms is that the country is still very much divided as it relates to the politics of the country in terms of ideology, and the division rests on a good many things. It rests certainly on the values that some think are important in the country. Also, it rests on more tangible things from my point of view because these things generate public policy. Race, xenophobia and to some extent sexism – all of these things were present in the 2016 election, and they have continued to play themselves out in the last two years in terms of public policy.

We also see that for the Republicans, in terms of the midterm elections, they need to re-group. I think that one of the things that more conscious Republicans are looking at is that their base is very, very narrow. They placed their bet on helping Trump get in, and for the last two years, and using their control in the Congress, especially McConnell and the Republicans in the Senate, they were able to get through many appointments at the judiciary level. Certainly one thing that one can count on them to do is to change the American judiciary. Of course, it was not on Congress alone because there were groups outside who were backing them. They worked in the last years of the Obama administration to thwart efforts to get judicial appointments through

and this has now borne fruit for them. They bet on Trump and they won, Trump won. The American federal judiciary now to some extent has changed from a moderate liberal [outlook] to a more conservative outlook particularly on the American Supreme Court. But, more importantly the change has taken place at the circuit and district levels as well. Still the Republicans are now beginning to understand that their base is so narrow, they really cannot maintain this level of control and power in the country unless they broaden that base. The idea that the party is dominated by White males who are aged 50 – 60 if not older is a problem for them given that the country’s demographics generally are changing. The country has seen an increase in the non-white populations – more Brown, more Asians, Blacks have leveled off, but they are still there. There is also more vocal participation by American women.

The Democrats, on the other hand, come away with the idea that maybe if they begin to lean a little more to the left as opposed to being rigidly in the middle and moderate they may do better with certain constituent groups. The Bernie Sanders [message] may not be ringing hollow with working people. There are political constituencies out there that are ready to deal with aspects of Sanders platform. The question for the Democrats is how far to the left will they go, and how fast do they want to go.

For African Americans I think this past election showed that once again if indeed African Americans have some sort of commonality with some of their “enemies”... But, I think much more important for African Americans is that African American women are at the forefront in terms of electoral participation. But, if that continues that may be a problem down the road. It may be a problem in that although elections may become a bit closer, but if you don’t have a broader participation by African American males then it may not be enough. Now, the question for African American women is are they are going to try to leverage their participation inside the

Republican Party, or more likely inside the Democratic Party, or a more progressive group, how do they leverage that? Now, this shows itself at the state level in the state of Georgia – in Georgia’s off year election for governor. It was historic in many ways. One a major political party nominated an African America woman, Stacey Abrams. She continued a trend for this particular state that had begun in 2008 with Obama. Obama won about 43% of the state’s electorate, then Clinton moved to about 46 – 47%, and then Stacey Abrams comes even closer. So there’s a continuing trend. But, even more importantly the gubernatorial race was a marquee race. I think sometimes people forget that in the election of the State Superintendent of Education, [the Democratic candidate] pulled about 48% of the popular vote in the state – that’s significant. And then of course there was the key vote where Lucy McBath was able to carry the 6th Congressional District, a district that was gerrymandered in 1978 by the state legislature controlled by the Republicans to maintain Republican control. That district has been represented by people like Newt Gingrich, Bob Barr, Thom Price, ultra-right wing conservative fellows. Now, here you have McBath coming in and taking a significant win. She beat out Handel who was the last [Republican] representative. And when one looks at the voting returns we see that she got these votes in counties like Cobb, Gwinnett, DeKalb, and north Fulton County. See those counties are the counties that are demographically changing. The percentage in Cobb County has changed in the last seven years eight or nine percent – very significant.

In the book *Beyond Discrimination: Racial Inequality in a Postracist Era* edited by the political scientist Fredrick C. Harris several different scholars argue that there are marketing practices, tax policies, insurance practices, and criminal justice policies that seem to be race-neutral, but that actually operate to reinforce historically based racial disparities despite laws against racial discrimination. What would you say are the major causes of persisting racial inequalities in the U.S.?

One of the things that people who consider themselves to be liberal or progressive on racial issues argue is that we need race-neutral or color-blind policies. There have been arguments by Harris and others, and I do join in those arguments, that there are no color-blind policies. It's not possible if one continues to accept the overarching structure of the American public policy system. What I'm trying to get at there is that you are moving from an historical system that is based upon racial dispensations, and those racial dispensations have become engrained in the system itself, so much so that you get many scholars who write on the question of race [to] observe that folk do not realize that they can practice racism in an unconscious fashion (even when attempting to be race neutral). If we say look, we are going to proceed in a fashion where race is not a question at all you come and present your credentials or whatever, and we look at your credentials, and we disregard race, and we move. But, in the real world of the United States, certain populations, the White population in particular, will still have the advantage because what undergirds such policies is the assumption that we all have equal chances of succeeding and reaching a certain level of education, experience and skills acquisition. Yet, the policies that were in place have already discriminated against some. Stepping outside of the governmental structure into a private structure – let's take labor unions – where Blacks and people of color were denied the right to apprentice as brick masons or electricians. So when you come to a point where you say all is color blind, but then some people don't have the skills to apply. So, if a company says we have openings for ten plumbers, and all you've got to do is have your license, and we welcome everybody, but you've got to have the credentials, you've got to have the apprenticeship to become licensed. The labor unions are now just beginning to recruit people of color. I would argue, in a more nuanced way, that the American constitution itself helps to undergird a great deal of this. When one looks at one of the

more recent Supreme Court decisions, *Shelby County vs. Holder*, the chief justice of the Supreme Court and four of his colleagues argued that the election of Barack Obama meant that the need for [the] Voting Rights Act was unnecessary. In other words the need for federal intervention in making certain that the voting process remained on an even scale was no longer necessary. As evidence to support their view the Court's majority pointed to the electoral victories of Obama winning the presidency twice, and you have had Black elected officials. They used the U.S. Constitution to do that. Just as an aside, one of the justices who was on the losing side, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, in her dissent made an interesting comment. She said something like, "If you're standing in a rainstorm and you open an umbrella so now you're dry, but you cannot then argue that the rain has stopped just because you are standing under the umbrella." But, then you had others like Scalia before his death argued that we did not need affirmative action programs. Let me give you another example. When we talk about unemployment in this country, and we say that the unemployment rate of 5%. That is the percentage at which economists say we have full employment. That is the acceptable level of unemployment for the society. But, that translates for the African American community into 10% and for Latin American people into 10% or 11%. Even those metrics demonstrate the pervasiveness of race [disparities] in the country. The current president, Trump, has argued that Black unemployment is lower than it has ever been at any time in history at 6% but that's double everybody else. And of course that claim is disingenuous because the rate was already going down in the previous administration. All of these things are misleading. They are designed to give the impression that indeed progress is being made, but actually the very foundations upon which we base these policies maintain the racial consciousness of public policy. Even African

Americans sometimes unwittingly go along with these arguments as well, the folks who advocate for Black folks can also go along with that.

The author Linda Burnham has argued that there are five fallacies maintained by the “post-racial, end-of-black-politics crowd.” They include: 1) the absence of overtly racist laws means the absence of racial injustices, 2) Black politics is essentially electoral politics, 3) the most legitimate Black leaders are elected representatives and those recognized by the larger society, 4) voting based on ethnic loyalties will soon become a thing of the past and 5) progress for successful Blacks in the middle class means progress for all Blacks. Do these fallacies give a fair description of how many if not most people in the Black political class (elected and appointed officials, media figures, scholars and activists) approach involvement by Blacks in the American political process today? Did Burnham overlook something?

Linda Burnham may have overlooked some things – I read that piece. But, I think that Burnham has her finger on the question here. As we have just discussed because racial discrimination is not overt, it does not mean that it is not still being practiced. One of the things I think needs a bit more exploration is the difference between Black politics and electoral politics. We tend to define politics in this country as simply voting or electoral politics, and certainly politics means much more than that. In the White community or the controlling community – wealthy Whites – their views are different. And there are a good many publications about where they want to go. Like the Koch brothers for instance – these folks have a plan and an agenda that certainly goes beyond electoral politics. It is their objective to change the way America looks and the values of Americans. As a matter of fact there are those within that group – with the same views as the Koch brothers and which stretches all the way back to the 1940s – their view is that democracy is a very dangerous form of government. What they have attempted to do in some of their exercises and activities is to sort of redefine democracy in appealing to various groups of people. If you go to the Koch brothers or one the right-leaning groups they will say to you, “Look, you want liberty don’t you? You don’t want the government meddling in your

affairs. So we don't need the government doing this or the government doing that. If you are a person of modest or low income or no income you don't need some outside support from some governmental entity because they will subvert your liberty." This is the argument they are putting forward. As a matter of fact I was just reading a book by Nancy MacClean entitled *Democracy in Chains...* She talks about this, how you can redefine democracy and liberty. Take what has happened inside of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the change in regulations that would allow for the exploitation of federal lands without much check on activities by public officials. So, for African Americans our politics must encompass all of this. The Department of Housing and Urban Affairs at the moment is talking about [changing] those rules that have to do with outcomes, which means that we are not going to look at racial disparities in housing. This of course undercuts all of the civil rights initiatives.

Now the question of legitimate Black leaders is an interesting question. I can remember when some Blacks took just the opposite position. Their position was that Black leaders who were elected were the most legitimate because they were elected, mostly by Black folks, and that you had too many self-appointed leaders – folks who would get ten people following them and then label themselves a leader. But, those arguments surfaced at a time when there was push back against people like Jesse Jackson, and now Al Sharpton. But, I think that we do ourselves a disservice when we discount those folks automatically. There is a degree of legitimacy given to folks who offer themselves up within the Black community to represent the Black community. I also think there is legitimacy to a person of the stature of Martin Luther King, Jr. who never held elective office, but certainly people rallied around him, offered up their lives, to support him. But, this is not to argue that everybody who thinks he or she has a following falls into that category. Yet, I don't not want to discount that kind of leadership. Electoral leadership has

come through an electoral process, but [it] may not truly represent Black people, and there are far too many examples of that which we can talk about.

What some scholars talk about in terms of politics is “tribal loyalties” or ethnic loyalties. Ethnic voting has gone on in this country since the very beginning. There’s no way to get around the fact that the Irish went with the Irish, the Poles went with the Polish, and even moving beyond ethnicities, the Catholics went with the Catholics. So the whole idea of Black folks wanting to rally around Black folks is nothing new. In this country you have had class based voting too. You get in the literature sometimes the idea that this is a classless society. That’s never been true at all. I think Linda is right. It’s not going away. The only thing about voting without [any] allegiance to some particular group or tribe, if you want to call it that, is that it would work for only a small group of folk. If you are a poor White person living in Appalachia or a poor Black person living in Alabama, you know you’ve got specific needs that draw upon public resources. But, if you live in Trump Tower then you don’t want people to use your resources to help those people with minimal resources. If the poor folk don’t vote as a tribal group on their issues then their issues will never reach the negotiating table. Those who argue that America is breaking up into tribes move from the assumption that America was tribe-less early on. It has never been a tribe-less society, even within the White tribe. And certainly Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and so forth, they too have had their variations. I’m not quite sure that I agree with the argument that that’s a bad thing. It is certainly being put to the test now. Folks from different tribes have come together in the past to compromise to move certain kinds of issues. They have come together. I mean the Jewish tribe came together with the African America tribe, but now they are split, but they did come together

in certain instances. I do not think that this kind of tribalism will go away because you cannot push effective public policy without some element of collective support. You cannot do that.

I think that progress for the middle class has not always translated into progress for Blacks as a whole. You can document that statistically. Coming out the 1960s and later civil rights era where certain things were done in terms of legislation and public policies enacted and put into place, we still found that those policies tilted toward those of us who had certain skills already so that we could take advantage of those opportunities that came about. If you had a college education then some job program could help you. Something as mundane as being able to go into a restaurant would help you. But, it left behind a large block of Black folks, and that continues until today. Think of the city of Atlanta. For the last forty plus years Black leadership has held the mayoral post, and has for the most part been leading the city council and the school board. Yet, the poverty rate in the city has remained at double digits, as high as 24%. My point is that you have these laws in effect and you have Black leadership, and you have the public policy that you talked about, but you still have persistent poverty. You are talking about a quarter of your population in poverty – that is a serious problem. It's not just Atlanta. You can replicate this in Dallas...New York and across the country in terms of who benefits from public policies. Even within a tribe you can see [differences in] who benefits from certain policies. It is interesting that the city of Atlanta prides itself on the amount of development that has occurred in the city over the last four decades. Undeniably there is a certain form of development, but at the same time that development has not aided underdevelopment here in the city proper, within the boundaries of the city of Atlanta. There are those who think in terms of metropolitan Atlanta, but we are talking about the city of Atlanta. The metropolitan median income may be at \$50k or \$60k but for the city of Atlanta it's not there. If you have a public policy in a city that recognizes

the need for affordable housing, the question becomes how you define affordable housing. If your definition is that affordable housing is based upon the [metropolitan] area median income then you're in trouble. Because in most of these areas they include income from those outside the central city which means the income of those in Cobb County, Gwinnett County are counted in the incomes to make up the median. If that's your base at say \$45K or \$50K, yet inside the city where there is a need for affordable housing the people will not be able to afford affordable housing. It ties into the earlier discussion about public policies that seem to be color blind. But, in fact the actual operation of these the metrics used is rooted in the former policy.

The last midterms were in some ways quite historic for Black electoral politics. We now have 55 members of the Congressional Black Caucus – that's a record – we have five committee chairs – we've got two of the top four leaders in the majority now. We also had the historic runs made by Stacey Abrams and Andrew Gillum. It seems that they counted on taking advantage of demographic shifts across the South, and driving up turnout due to the symbolic nature of their campaigns, which focused on telling their own personal life stories while offering vague statements about “a new day” and “it's our time.” However neither chose to speak directly to or about African Americans as a specific group with distinct political interests. Is this just smart, shrewd politics? Is it no longer possible for candidates to be successful by making direct, specific and substantive appeals to African American voters? If candidates decline to explicitly address issues of racial disparities and injustices in their campaigns should we really expect them to do anything about these issues they once get into office?

You remember the run by [Douglass] Wilder in Virginia. We as political scientists coined the term, non-racial campaign. Wilder asked Jesse Jackson *not* to come to his campaign in Virginia...And Wilder would not raise any specific concerns about the African American plight in the state of Virginia. The Black population in the state at the time was less than a third. You raise a good point here, because it brings us back to the focus on Black elected leadership, and where that thing is going to go. Whether or not Abrams and Gillums ran smart campaigns in terms of being non-racial – it is quote “smart” politics. I think that Black candidates who seek these statewide offices with predominantly non-Black electorates, they need to demonstrate to

the general electorate that indeed we all have common issues that we can all relate to – issues that we can all zero in on. So what I want to do is zero in on the lack of health care. We all need health care, and the cost of health care is much too high, and folks go bankrupt on trying to deal with healthcare. We are not talking about affirmative action; we are not talking about giving somebody a job because they are of a certain hue or color. That’s the smart politics part of it. If you campaign in Georgia or Florida and you go into the most rural White-dominated areas, you cannot go down being Black, you have to go down being kind of homogenized as in we’re for everybody. If you go to south Georgia or further north in Georgia and you talk about if you are pregnant and you have an emergency and it takes you an hour and half or to get to a hospital. You stand in the middle of these White women and young people and you ask, “If you have an emergency and you need to get to a hospital, how long will it take you to get there? Is it 30 minutes, 45 minutes?” In this state they did not take Medicaid so that means that rural hospitals are closing up, they have no way of supporting themselves. So that means there is less availability of healthcare. You see you latch onto those kinds of issues and you pose it in that way. You go back to the idea of the personal stories. The personal stories are there so that you can see that I’m just like you. So, “I came from a Black family and you came from a White family. We had six children. My people were hard working people. My mother went to work, my father. We had six children and they had great expectations for their children like everybody else.” So that kind of resonates with a larger block of people. Your story is my story, my story is the American story, and your story is the American story. So that’s how we come together and connect...As a matter of fact, we have a White campaign manager. I’m serious, this is real politics. They’re trying to win. Now, the question becomes given all of that run up to the election and the election itself, does that really translate into Black issues being put in the forefront. Does

it also call for Black folks to simply say, “We understand, and we will not push the candidate to be out front because we know that the candidate cannot win if we push the Black thing.” This also speaks to the depth of racism in this country and the racialized nature of the country itself. Now, it becomes problematic. It becomes problematic whether or not they can push [Black issues]. If you look at in terms of a case study of Georgia, if indeed Abrams had won she still would have faced a Republican dominated government. Every single other statewide office had gone Republican. She would have been the only [state-wide elected] Democrat in the state. Her party is not the dominant party in the state legislature. So, she would have had an uphill battle, and in trying to push for what are considered to be hard core Black issues, it would have been an impossibility. Now, if we are talking about a specific candidate like Abrams, she never did push for any hard core Black issues anyway. She had a good relationship with Nathan Deal. She stood behind him when they changed the rules around the Hope Scholarship, and made it more difficult for Black students and for poor students to get the scholarship. So, it gets back to the question of whether or not Black representation represents the Black condition.

This also gets back to what you have called the “inside-outside game” and what Ron Walters called “dependent leverage and independent leverage.” Yes, we want to elect Black representatives. And ok, they want to run non-racial campaigns so that they can maximize their appeal. But, we need the independent leverage – the activists, scholars, and other people – pushing them to keep them honest and to get what we need. You need both otherwise....

Good point. If Blacks folks sign on with Stacey Abrams, Andrew Gillum or Jealous in Maryland, if they sign on without any kind demands, covertly or whatever...they have to understand that Black folk will be on them to push for their issues and they should not resent that, but take that like any other interest group pushing their issues before the government for

some kind of results. But, that calls for a certain level of sophistication within the Black community itself. What we have [now] at the national level is, “Don’t embarrass me.”

In what ways do the interests of Blacks differ significantly from those of progressive whites? How do they differ from those of Latinos?

This comes down to the question of coalition building with progressive Whites and our Latino brothers and sisters. Whether or not there are issues which can be merged with African American issues. We reach a point with progressive whites...when the acts against people of color are so egregious, they you can’t deny its bad, then progressives will try to repair those [situations] and get something done with those. But, when we move beyond the more egregious acts, acts like somebody being hanged, shot, killed or raped – when you move to more subtle and more nuanced questions then I think you have a problem with even progressive Whites because they too are moving from a position that if you change the law then everything else will be okay – equal opportunity – that’s all we need. An example of that would be the 1960s split between progressive Whites and civil rights groups headed by Black folk. Whites began to split off when Blacks began to say we want affirmative action to give Black folk a little more of a head start. White Jewish progressive began to split off, and some of them became neoconservatives or whatever. They began to split off from the Black groups because now we have come to the fork in the road where we have to decide what it is we are going to do substantively for the group. White progressives also have a tendency to be more closely aligned with socialism or communism and the socialist internationalist movement. But, that is not necessarily a movement attuned to the needs of African Americans. In a more generalized fashion, they tend to lump us all altogether, and say that the needs of poor Whites and other dispossessed people are [all] the same. I think these are well meaning people who have no animus against Black folks per say,

but when it comes to real issues and changes...When you talk about American White progressives they do have a belief in race-neutral policies. Let's say the qualifications for become a police person you have to be 5'10", a certain level of education and so forth then these are objective qualifications that anybody can meet. But, they are not looking at the history of some of the qualifications as they were written. If someone is just driving while Black its egregious if the police officer approaches the person and shoots the person...But, if the police officer simply stops you as a young Black person, and for no other [apparent] reason, then all they will argue is that well they stop everybody. These are the kind of subtle things that translate into public policy. Stop-and-Frisk was obvious because they zeroed in on Black and Latino boys, but other public policies are less so.

For Latinos, it's interesting because some would believe there should be a natural relationship between people of color. But, among Latinos or Hispanics there are a lot of differences, they are not monolithic. You have those who are more associated with their European heritage than with their African heritage. So there is a split there and it's not as monolithic or homogenized as you might think in terms of their beliefs and their views on questions. But, I also should point out to you that in my experiences I have been with African American groups that have wanted to keep Latinos out. The argument is and was that Black folk have blazed the trail and lost life, limb and property, and now these interlopers have come in trying to trade on what Black folk have done and jump ahead of Black folk. So there is that element of animosity among some between Black groups and Latinos. It's not across the board of course, but you do see some of that cropping up now and then in some groups when we want to attempt coalition building.

It goes back to the idea of what do you bring to the coalition? What I bring to the coalition is so unique it cannot be replaced. If you come to the coalition begging, and have nothing to offer then you become dependent and you do lose out. But, effective coalition building...Carmichael and Hamilton talked about this, is that you bring to the coalition resources – it doesn't have to be money, it could be people, it could be access, you bring something that the coalition lacks without your input, so that your issues become important. You don't come to the coalition begging. It think sometimes that gets lost in coalition building. Remember also that coalitions are not forever, you want to use them to reach specific objectives.

Currently, there are a number of grassroots organizations that promote some version of a “Black agenda” to advance the collective interests of African Americans but none of them have won broad support. What factors have prevented the coalescence of the Black electorate around a Black political agenda?

That speaks to a lot of things. It speaks to a diversity within Black thought in terms of where we want to go. That diversity hits on the class dimension within the Black community that we have to grapple with. We also have to grapple with the question of “How much allegiances do we as Black folk the American dream or the American idea?” How do various groups within this country attach themselves to the [idea of America]. Is there within the African American group a portion of us who have no faith in what is labeled the American dream, and another portion who have a great deal of faith in that idea, and who build their agendas and their actions around that American dream. Those who stand outside of that dream feel that the dream is antithetical to us as a people. Those are the kind of things I am trying to think through. Now, that comes back to your question about the Black agenda. Who will represent folks in terms of creating this agenda? If we look at Black elected officials, do they create the agenda for Black folk, or do Black folk send them in with an agenda? That becomes a

question for me because....if Corey Booker goes into the U.S. Senate, whose agenda is Corey Booker looking at? Is it the folk who he had a relationship with when he was mayor, big corporate interests who helped him out? Is his agenda tied to their agenda or to those who live in Newark who are still suffering and who need a different agenda? So, building the Black agenda becomes very problematic. There are groups that have attempted to define the agenda – the Nation of Islam, they have an agenda, the Black Panthers, they have an agenda, even Tavis Smiley had agenda with the series he did some years ago. Everybody has an agenda, but they don't seem to be talking to each other...I just talked about the allegiance to the American dream. It's something that's pure theory right now, but it's something that I think is worth trying to think through...Does your agenda move toward the American dream paradigm or does it move toward a radical difference from that particular American dream? Those are crucial points. Number one, define the American dream, and then discover what those groups think which stand outside of the [pursuit] of the American dream. Let me give you kind of a crude example. There was a proposal at one time that Black folks should take over the inner cities because that's where the Black population is, and then move out all of the Latinos, all of the Asians and other folk who have come into the community and then this would be our thing. Then we would build something Black Panther style. That's the kind of thing you have to grapple with. Although many agendas have been articulated, trying to implement them becomes a problem. Let's say that I am a Ben Carson, then I'm well inside the American dream, and for me where I take my stand, that whole business about slavery is already taken care of, it doesn't matter, and it's not of any consequence. Let's start from where we are right now; if you are inside the American dream and you are either Shelby Steele or Ben Carson, you are okay with a passing wave at the country's past history. But, if I'm somebody different my position is that all of that history

bears on what happens today...for somebody more radical you will see it in a different way. My grandmother used to say, “You may be through with the past, but it’s never through with you.” She used to say that all the time.... I think that you can certainly have what can be labeled a Black agenda, but the problem becomes is it only going to be manifested with certain Black elected officials or certain self-appointed Black leaders?

What are the key factors that make for effective political leadership?

What makes effective leadership is listening to the constituency and gaining legitimacy from that constituency. There are various avenues to gaining legitimacy. Martin Luther King, Jr. gained legitimacy without benefit of an electoral vote but rather through approval of the masses. Corey Booker or other elected officials gain their legitimacy through the ballot box. Obtaining legitimacy is paramount in order for one to truly be effective. You talk more about what it is that [the people] want than what it is you want for them. You may want to inform what they are trying to push. But, at the end of the day it’s about what the constituency thinks is in its best interest. Effective leadership also calls for constant communication with the constituency. That is that you do not listen to only to those around you, you have communication lines open to that constituency in whatever form it takes. If you are representing somebody eighty years old you are not necessarily going to use the internet. I mean you have open, constant contact going on. Also, effective leadership needs to know the limits of what their group can do alone. There are also times when a leader must know that they need [resources] from outside of the group – that goes back to coalition building. How you understand what coalitions are about, and how you deal with them, that to speaks to effective leadership. Can only Black folk represent Black folk? Does that mean that only women represent women? Is it possible for an African American

groups to consider a non-Black person to be their leader? That's another question. Something that the group itself must think about is resource generation. How are you going to get resources? You do need resources of all kinds in order for Black leadership to be effective. We can question how Al Sharpton's group gets there money, or the group that Jesse Jackson had. But resources are needed and these are real questions.

You already spoke on this, but is there anything more you would like to say about city politics. What would be the most impactful policy initiative to improve the conditions of poor and working people in the city of Atlanta at this time?

I that it's not just for Atlanta but across the country, especially where Black leadership has taken over. But, certainly Atlanta stands out because of its attempt to be prominent. In order for policies to be beneficial for a significant majority of Blacks inside of the city of Atlanta, you have to reorganize the priorities of the city. I argue, and I'm not the only one to argue this, that the priorities of Atlanta have been controlled by the White business leadership, and those priorities for the most part have worked to the disadvantage of the Black population. Because those priorities are priorities that tend to perpetuate what has gone on before. Examples would be the sports arena, the construction of multi-million dollar condos; those are things that the White business leadership has pushed to make the city a national and international city. But, it does not do anything for the bulk of the folk who are stuck in persistent poverty in the city. What you've gotten in the administration of this city in the last four and a half decades has been a continuation of the priorities of a rather small elite group. We talk about the Black leadership turn over. But, there is a case to be made for the White leadership [turn over] as well. It has changed in terms of who they are, but the priorities have remained the same. In terms of trying to placate Black folk and Black leadership they have tried to bring Blacks into the fold at some

level – at the chamber of commerce, membership on this particular bank board – but it has not changed the priorities. If you’re going to build a \$1.5 billion football stadium in Vine City, in a community where the income level is below the poverty level – you can’t do that. Now you’re finally going to clean the sewers out so the waters don’t backup and overflow as they have been doing for many decades. You can have that same kind of entrepreneurial mentality about extending resources in that community. As opposed to the city saying we are underwriting Mercedes Benz stadium. There are hidden benefits [taken] from the city that you don’t see beyond the bonds and other things. Spending those kinds of resources and thinking in an entrepreneurial way in terms of housing and job development in the impacted areas. So that the priority shifts somewhat, but we are not getting that kind of thinking. The most recent act with the new development of the so-called “Gulch” area where now you’re going to bring in five hundred developers, and you’re going to use a tax reallocation district, and the taxes are going to be lost to the city, the board of education and the school system. So those funds cannot be used to educate the children, the city cannot use the funds to go out and do better in the areas that are impacted. You’ve got to expand the priorities. You cannot make it so one group gets 99.9% [of what they want] while the other group is only going to get a tenth of a percent. To me that is the problem of the city of Atlanta – the priorities have not been changed over the last four and a half decades that you have had Blacks in power. [Nothing much happened] over by the Braves stadium. If there are changes in the most recent iteration near the Mercedes Benz stadium it’s only because gentrification has taken place, and the city is moving out all of the former residents, and they are building rental units that the former people cannot afford. But, it’s all in connection with the priorities of that small group of people. This area is now going to be a different area altogether and we’re going to push people further and further down the street.

Given your vast experience, knowledge and wisdom is there anything else you would like to say about the current state of Black politics? What are some things that you would say to the up-and-coming generation of Black political scientists, students and researchers to help them provide more positive and substantive outcomes for African Americans in the political process?

Mack Jones has a piece on “The Responsibility of Black Political Scientists.” I certainly recommend that everyone read that piece; it’s a good piece to read. You should also look at a piece by Alex Willingham and Mack Jones “The White Custodians of the Black Experience.” Also, of course, Harold Cruse’ piece on the *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. We all have responsibilities as Black political scientists to be unapologetic when looking at the Black experience in this country, and to look at how the American experience affects Black people. Also, those of us who look [more broadly] at the Diaspora and Black folk around the world – we have that responsibility. Because there is no one else who is going to take up that responsibility....to think outside of established theory in regards to what is out there, and what needs to be done, as opposed to assuming that all theory has been written. It should be sound theory, and sound propositions you are putting forth. But it should not hamper you when paradigms do not exist for what it is you are trying to do. I also think that those of us who have the training and education, we should put that training and education into activism. Don’t sour on activism. Also, [we must] begin to interact outside of your comfort zone. That makes it incumbent upon us as Black political scientists to know what we are talking about so well that folk understand what we are talking about. By that I mean be able to explain something as mundane as the Electoral College and how that may be to our advantage or to our disadvantage. Know what you’re talking about and be able to use that to help the folk in our community. Also,

I can't say this enough – you've got to read, you've got to study. You cannot [assume] that everything that flows from your mouth is gospel...you've got to read.

Endarch: Journal of Black Political Research

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