ORIGINAL PAPER

Getting Out the Vote: Minority Mobilization in a Presidential Election

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Abstract Despite attempts to mobilize communities of color, gaps in turnout among racial and ethnic minorities persist (e.g., Abrajano et al., J Polit 70:368–382, 2008; Pantoja et al., Polit Res Q 54:729–750, 2001; Kaufmann, Polit Res Q 56:199–210, 2003; Ramirez, Ann Am Acad Pol Soc Sci 601:66–84, 2005, Am Polit Res 35:155–175, 2007). Scholars are only beginning to understand how parties or independent groups seek to mobilize these communities. In this paper, we develop and test the Differential Contact Thesis, which holds that turnout differences between whites and minority groups are influenced both by lower rates of contact by the parties and the use of less effective methods of contact. To test this, we examine data from the 2004 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES), 2004 American National Election Study (ANES), and the 2004 Miami Exit Poll. Our results support the Differential Contact Thesis: even controlling for the initial likelihood to be contacted by the parties, racial and ethnic minorities were less likely to be contacted using the most effective techniques. To some extent, non-partisan contact seems to compensate for the inattention of the major parties toward minority voters, but this contact is less likely to mobilize voters than contact from the parties.

Keywords Mobilization · Minorities · 2004 election

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The concept of liberalism, that all people are created equal in the eyes of the government, along with popular sovereignty and liberty, is central to democratic governance. A government or constitution that favors one group over others violates a basic premise of democratic governance and calls its legitimacy into question. Historically, the U.S. government has often acted in a manner that systematically disenfranchises ethnic and racial minorities. While recent decades have seen the passage of laws designed to rectify such actions, the social, economic, and political legacy of discrimination still remains (APSA Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy 2004). If policy makers listen most intently to the voices of those who participate (Fiorina 1999; Verba et al. 1995), participation itself enhances democratic citizenship (e.g., Putnam 2000, 337), and who participates also affects public policy outcomes (Hill and Leighley 1992; DeLuca 1995) then it is important to ensure that historically disadvantaged groups are able to exercise their political rights. Research suggests, however, that political participation among racial and ethnic minorities is both lower than for the majority white population and also substantially lower than can be explained by socio-economic status or socialization alone.

In this paper, we develop and test a new explanation for these differences in participation. While existing accounts focus primarily on resources and socialization, and to a lesser extent on the amount of mobilization, they overlook the additional potential influence of the *quality* of contact from partisan and non-partisan organizations. If minority groups are contacted through less effective methods then gaps in participation would be expected, even if the rates of contact were the same. We refer to this explanation as the Differential Contact Thesis.

An enduring puzzle of political participation is that "gaps between races and ethnic groups persist" (Abrajano et al. 2008; APSA Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy 2004, 651; Kaufmann 2003; Leighley 2001). Whites vote at rates about 10% higher than Blacks and 50% higher than Hispanics and Asians.[1] Explanations for these differences tend to emphasize socialization and resources, but sometimes even when these factors are held constant turnout is somewhat higher among whites. Consequently they provide, at best, an incomplete explanation for minority groups' lesser levels of turnout.

Drawing on unique data from the 2004 elections, we find that minorities are both less likely to be contacted by the major parties and, when contacted, are the recipients of less effective methods. More specifically, minorities are less likely to be contacted in-person—the method that is most likely to motivate participation. We also show, however, that some minorities are more likely to be the recipients of contact from non-partisan groups and more likely than other ethnic groups to be the recipients of a certain kind of in-person contact, at a meeting or congregation rather than one-on-one. To an extent then, non-partisan groups compensate for the inattention of the major parties toward minority voters.[2] Our analysis also indicates,

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[1] In 2004, the Census Bureau's survey shows that 67.2% of non-Hispanic whites voted compared to 60% of African-Americans and roughly 45% of Hispanics and Asians. Of course, African-Americans voted in higher numbers in 2008, seemingly because of enthusiasm for Barack Obama.

[2] Parties may also subcontract their ground operations to "non-party" groups, a point we consider below.

however, that while contact from non-partisan groups positively affects recipients' probability of voting, it is not as effective as mobilization by the major parties.

Mobilization and Minority Participation

Scholars have long been concerned with voter turnout. Some examine psychological cues like how "civic duty" or "social pressure" messages affect the vote (Gerber et al. 2008). Other research examines the effects of different means of communicating messages, such as personal canvassing, direct mail and telephone calls (Cardy 2005; Gerber and Green 2000a). A third field of inquiry looks at the impact of mobilization and recruitment efforts by parties or through social networks such as churches (Gerber et al. 2003; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) and the persistent inequalities across ethnic and racial groups (Leighley 1995). In this paper we combine the second and third fields of research by examining the incidence and means of mobilization of ethnic and racial groups as an explanation for the inequality that characterizes turnout in America.

We know that ethnicity affects the likelihood of mobilization from the major parties. African-Americans, for example, vote in lower numbers, even with the removal of barriers that characterized the South until the 1960s, because their relative lack of individual-level resources means that the major parties are less likely to pay them attention (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Similarly, for Latinos in 2000, "In the end, mobilization was at traditional levels (sparse) and the gap between Latino and non-Latino turnout remained" (DeSipio and de la Garza 2005, 27). The primary remaining barrier to minority participation is therefore directly and indirectly resource-based. A lack of resources leads directly to less contact from the major parties, and factors such as "differential opportunity structures" (Leighley 1995) and networks, to which lower education and income contribute, lead indirectly to less contact: "In short, it is resources, not race or ethnicity, that determine who takes part in American political life" (Verba et al. 1993, 494). Thus, studies that control for factors such as income, education, demographics, and civic orientation sometimes confirm that given a level playing field African-Americans, for example, would participate at equal or higher rates than whites (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Verba et al. 1995[3]).

However, there are wrinkles to resource-based explanations, suggesting that there are unique factors affecting the mobilization of minorities that go beyond resources. African-Americans and Latinos remain the most residentially segregated minorities in America (Iceland and Weinberg 2002). In addition, all else equal minorities are more likely to be residentially mobile and residential mobility is associated with a lower likelihood of party contact (Bowers 2004; Ramirez 2008). Poor blacks are much more likely either to be or to have been incarcerated and thereby less likely to be eligible to vote. Although only 0.5% of the U.S. population is in prison, poorly educated black men are incarcerated more frequently than any other social group,

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[3] It should also be noted that Verba et al. (1995) find that resources are relatively less important to the voting decision than to decisions to partake in other political activities.

and former felons are also residentially concentrated (Mauer and King 2007). In sum, parties want to use their resources efficiently (i.e., where they are most likely to mobilize successfully) and the characteristics of the areas in which minorities live mean that mobilization there may be much less efficient than going to other areas. In addition, minorities are less likely to be registered to vote—according to Ramirez (2008) partisan contact is more likely when individuals are registered; canvassers tend to be white but contact is more likely to be successful when the canvasser is a co-ethnic (Michelson 2004); and Latinos are far more likely to live in non-competitive states (de la Garza and DeSipio 2005). While, to be sure, some of these factors affect white voters also their combination is unique to minorities. Thus, some find that Latinos and Asian-Americans are less likely to participate than other groups even when controlling for material and psychological resources (Aoki and Nakanishi 2001; Barreto 2005; Uhlaner et al. 1989; cf. Leighley and Vedlitz 1999).

There are also wrinkles to studies that examine ethnic minority participation in response to mobilization. de la Garza and Abrajano (2007) show positive effects of Latino-on-Latino mobilization in some but not all states in 2000. Ramirez (2007) demonstrates variation in the influence of mobilization in Los Angeles by registration cohort. For African-Americans, on the other hand, the role of the church in developing civic skills among its activists, and more generally as a mobilizer, is well established (e.g., Harris 1994). In addition, contextual factors such as a developed sense of group consciousness (Dawson 1995; Stokes 2003) and areas where minorities hold public office enhance participation in local races regardless of resources (Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Finally, Leighley (2001) suggests another influence, showing that party mobilization activities in Texas differed somewhat depending on the size of the Black population but were largely unaffected by the size of the Hispanic population.

Missing in all this is whether or not minorities receive the same kind of mobilization, even when they *are* contacted. It is well established that mobilization matters and that individual characteristics like education, partisan intensity, political knowledge, income, race and ethnicity, age, and a strong sense of political efficacy correlate with the incidence of mobilization. At the same time, field experiments have shown both that modern methods of mobilization are often impersonal and also relatively ineffective. Field experiments have established that, for example, face-to-face canvassing boosts turnout (by about 10% according to Gerber and Green 2000a); direct mail does little or nothing to stimulate turnout (about .6% per mailing for up to three mailings in Gerber and Green 2000a) but partisan mail is effective at mobilizing a party's base; the effectiveness of phone calls that urge the recipient to vote is enhanced if the calls are made "live" and delivered in an unhurried and conversational manner but they are less effective than face-to-face communication (Gerber and Green 2000a, b; Green and Gerber 2004; Green et al. 2003; cf. Imai 2005[4]); and the quality of phone calls is more important than whether they are made by volunteers or professionals (Nickerson 2007).

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[4] Imai (2005) is critical of Gerber and Green's (2000a) experimental design and analysis of the efficacy of phone calls. However, his revised estimates do not alter the finding that personal contact is more effective than phone calls, Gerber and Green (2005) dispute the validity of the criticism, and several additional field experiments have confirmed their findings.

It is less clear, however, whether the factors that affect an individual's likelihood to be a target of mobilization by the major parties also influence the *kinds* of contacts that are made. While research on mobilization now tends to focus on its effectiveness across different forms of contact, work on minority participation concentrates on the covariation between political participation and various individual-level resources and contexts, like the prominence of minority issues in campaigns (Ramirez 2007), the political climate when individuals were naturalized (Pantoja et al. 2001), the presence of a co-ethnic on the ballot (Barreto 2007), or mobilization—but not the form it takes—by a co-ethnic group (Barreto and Nuño, forthcoming; Shaw et al. 2000).[5] A clear understanding of the relationship between forms of contact and minority participation is lacking. The current assumption is that lack of minority participation is the result of a lower incidence of party contact than among non-Hispanic whites.[6] For example, Ramirez (2005, 164) writes that, "It is no surprise that political elites focus on likely voters or that Latino voters who live in areas with large minority populations are often overlooked by partisan organizations because of the view that they are less likely to turn out." Even in research that explores factors other than the incidence of party contact, such as Shaw et al.'s (2000) examination of the impact of Latino group contact (see also, Barreto and Nuño, forthcoming; Michelson 2006), the implicit mechanisms for such effects—such as co-ethnic mobilization helping Latinos to draw links between election outcomes and the fate of Latino communities, thus reassessing the costs and benefits of voting (see Leighley 2001)—appear to be inconsistent (de la Garza and Abrajano 2002).

The Differential Contact Thesis

The *Differential Contact Thesis* postulates that the incidence *and* quality of contact help to explain the puzzle of minority mobilization. If minorities are contacted just as often by the major parties but relatively fewer of those contacts are of the highly effective "in-person" type, we would expect fewer minority individuals to be mobilized to vote even though the incidences of contact are the same. If minorities are contacted less often *and* the contact is less likely to bring them to the polls their disadvantage is further compounded. As we have argued above, in-person contact is labor intensive and expensive and is therefore focused on individuals and residential areas where participation is most likely (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). These tend not to be in minority communities.

While non-partisan organizations such as churches for African-Americans may exhibit differences in their propensity to contact minorities, the thesis holds that such contact is less effective in prompting individuals to vote than is contact

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[5] Exceptions include Green (2004), Michelson (2003), Ramirez (2005, 2007), and Wong (2005) who examine the impact of modes of mobilization—such as direct mail, live phone calls, and robotic phone calls—on African-Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos. Their concerns, however, are with the efficacy of these different kinds of contact. We seek to examine the incidence and quality of contact, using their results to inform us of its likely effects.

[6] As shorthand, in the rest of the paper, we refer to non-Hispanic white individuals as "White."

initiated by the parties. This expectation derives from field experiments that demonstrate variation in the efficacy of different modes of contact and show that personal contact is most effective (Green and Gerber 2004), and from research in political psychology that shows that personal messages and personal interactions, for example in which an individual expresses a reason or makes a commitment to vote, have more impact than impersonal or group-based messages (Burgess et al. 2000). If individual personal contact is more effective, a group setting like a church meeting, in which an individual is one of many recipients of a general message encouraging participation, should have a lesser impact than a direct plea to vote from a party. Taken together, these effects could make it appear that minorities are harder to mobilize, when in fact it is the form of contact that is the explanation.[7]

We examine three dimensions of mobilization efforts: who is targeted by partisan and non-partisan groups, how they are targeted, and the effect of partisan and non-partisan mobilization on the propensity to vote. To test the *Differential Contact Thesis*, we examine it against two other explanations for differences in ethnic group contact and mobilization.

The *Amount of Contact Thesis* holds that differences in ethnic group mobilization are driven by the amount of contact. Although minorities tend to receive less partisan and non-partisan election-related contact, there are no systematic differences across groups in the form that contact takes, controlling for socioeconomic factors. Consequently, the *Amount of Contact Thesis* implies that conflating different kinds of contact are of little consequence, a prediction that clearly contradicts the *Differential Contact Thesis*.

The *Party Mobilization Thesis*, unlike the *Amount of Contact Thesis*, holds that the incidence of contact from partisan and non-partisan organizations will vary among ethnic groups, controlling for socioeconomic factors. Contact is driven by partisanship rather than ethnicity, however, as the Republican party relies more on an in-house operation to mobilize voters while the Democratic party relies more on allied organizations. Thus, we will see differences in partisan and non-partisan contact of Republicans and Democrats but once we account for partisanship and resources we will see no systematic variation in contact of ethnic groups.

The *Differential Contact Thesis* is a third alternative which holds that differences in ethnic group mobilization persist even after accounting for socioeconomic factors and party identification. Beyond the amount of contact they receive, white voters are more likely to receive *in-person* party contact, as a result of factors such as residential patterns—what Williams (2004) calls "place inequality"—while the literature suggests that African-Americans may be more likely than other groups to experience election contact in settings such as church congregations. More impersonal group-based contact is likely to be less effective than individual face-to-face contact (Burgess et al. 2000).

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[7] Two field experiments exploring the efficacy of partisan and non-partisan phone messages suggest statistically insignificant differences (Panagopoulos 2009) or greater effects of non-partisan messages—albeit without comparing their effects in the same experiment (McNulty 2005). We do not dispute such findings; we are suggesting that there is systematic variation in the mode of messages received by ethnic groups from partisan and non-partisan groups that have consequences for turnout.

In sum, the *Amount of Contact Thesis* argues that differences in ethnic group mobilization stem from the incidence rather than the form of contact. The *Party Mobilization Thesis* says that differences in ethnic group mobilization are due to variation in partisan allegiances: the Republican and Democrat parties do not mobilize supporters in the same ways, so to the extent that groups have different party allegiances they will also be mobilized differently The *Differential Contact Thesis* also argues that there are likely to be differences in the incidence of contact across ethnic groups but says, first, that there are additional systematic differences in the quality of contact given to different groups and, second, that contact from groups is less likely to bring individuals to the polls than contact from parties. Thus, turnout of ethnic groups does not simply stem from a lower likelihood to be mobilized, as stated by the *Amount of Contact Thesis*—groups such as African-Americans may actually be more likely to be mobilized through organizations such as churches—nor simply from differences in the incidences of party and group contacts resulting from variation in their support for the two major parties as stated by the *Party Mobilization Thesis*.

Data and Analysis

For our analysis of who is contacted we draw on three data sets that, in combination, allow us to evaluate the three theses; they are untestable using any single existing data source.[8] First, the 2004 American National Election Study (ANES) encompasses a random national sample. Respondents were asked whether anyone from the two major parties called or talked to them in person about the campaign or supporting specific candidates. The ANES is therefore limited in its coverage of mobilization efforts—it asks about contact from a party and from non-partisan groups but does not distinguish between different kinds of contact or different kinds of groups—and offers insight into the incidence of partisan contact.[9]

The second source of data, the 2004 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) rolling cross-section, provides data on partisan *and* non-partisan contact. It encompasses 81,422 telephone interviews between October 2003 and November 2004. Questions varied over time. The periods from which our data are drawn are September 23 to October 31, 2004, when the NAES asked whether respondents were offered help by a major party or non-partisan group (as well as a government office or individual) to get an early or absentee ballot, and November 1 to November

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[8] The ideal data would consist of a large national sample with sufficient numbers of whites and minority groups that had both voted and not voted, and it would ascertain the source of contact and the method used.

[9] For non-partisan contact the 2004 ANES asked whether anyone else called the respondent or came around to talk to him or her, thus ignoring several other possible venues for contact. It also asked only about contact concerning "supporting specific candidates in this last election." The 2008 ANES had the same question wording. This excludes non-partisan activity, such as via membership of groups and organizations, and encouragement simply to fulfill one's civic duty by participating in an election, as well as the kind of contact. We do not use the ANES to evaluate kinds of non-partisan activity but later in the paper we employ pooled ANES data to provide a sense of the relative efficacy of partisan and non-partisan contact.

16, 2004, when respondents were asked whether a major party or non-partisan group (or individual) came to their house to remind them to vote. In each period, about 8% of the sample was Hispanic and about 8% was Black, slightly underrepresenting their numbers in the population but adequate for our analysis. While the NAES survey is also less than perfect in its coverage of mobilization efforts in the general election, the strength of the data is that they are from a large random national sample, permitting analysis of racial and ethnic subgroups, and that they cover *broad* efforts by partisan and non-partisan groups to get an individual to vote.

Clearly, the ideal data set would contain information about partisan and non-partisan contact—necessary to be able to test the three competing hypotheses. Without a national sample, the optimal context would be a competitive locale with a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic mix. For these reasons, our third source of data is from Miami-Dade County in Florida, the Miami Exit Poll, also administered in 2004. Unlike the other two, this survey included detailed questions about the incidence *and* nature of partisan and non-partisan contact during the election among the different ethnic groups that constitute the population of Miami-Dade, including different Hispanic subgroups.[10]

Our claim is *not* that Miami-Dade data are generalizable to the nation but that Miami-Dade is an ideal context in which to examine racial and ethnic variation in who is mobilized and by what methods in a competitive, highly partisan, election context. We should be *less* likely to see large differences in Miami because the major parties have incentives to focus their attention on multiple ethnic groups. According to the 2000 census, Cuban-Americans, who vote solidly Republican, constitute about 28.5% of the county while non-Cuban Hispanics constitute another 28%. The county is about 20% African-American, 5% Haitian, and 20% non-Hispanic white. African-Americans and Haitians vote strongly Democratic. Thus, Republicans need more than the Cuban vote and the Democrats also have to build a majority from several different groups. The major parties do not focus on the same ethnic groups, but they are forced to seek votes from an array of ethnic groups in order to construct a winning coalition. Systematic differences in the attention paid to groups in Miami may be indicative of larger differences in less competitive contexts and where the need for parties to build ethnically diverse winning coalitions is absent.

The Miami Exit Poll questioned 1,456 voters in Miami-Dade County, Florida as they left their polling places between October 22, and "election day" November 2, 2004, of whom roughly one-third were Cuban, 250 were non-Cuban Hispanics, 200 were non-Cuban or Haitian Blacks, and slightly more than 100 were Haitian (for more details of the Miami Exit Poll, see online Appendix B). Consequently these data avoid problems with self-reported turnout, or the need to attempt to validate votes. We do not use other data sets such as the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) or various studies by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute because their focus

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[10] We also provide some analysis of the 2008 election in terms of party contact (see footnote 21) and turnout (see Table 5), using ANES data, to provide additional context. The Obama campaign received considerable attention for its efforts to mobilize minorities and the ANES oversampled Blacks and Latinos. We thank Reviewer #1 for this suggestion.

is on Latinos, precluding comparison with non-Latinos. The 2006 LNPS also took place outside an election.

The data sets are all from the 2004 election, an election notable in two ways that may affect our results. First, turnout increased to its highest level in three decades and greater grassroots mobilization appears to have played at least some part (Bergan et al. 2005).[11] Second, the major parties recognized that there were fewer potential voters who could be persuaded than in previous elections and therefore expended a greater ratio of resources on mobilizing the base. According to Matthew Dowd, chief campaign strategist for the Bush/Cheney campaign, "Nobody had ever approached an election that I've looked at over the last 50 years, where base motivation was important as swing, which is how we approached it" (quoted in Bergan et al. 2005, 762). Other evidence suggests that the Democrats also recognized that fewer voters than normal were persuadable (Institute of Politics, Harvard University, 2006). As a result, the 2004 election may provide a context in which we see more mobilization of solidly Republican groups, like Cubans in Miami-Dade, and solidly Democratic groups like African-Americans than would usually be the case. Coupled with the characteristics of Miami-Dade County, this makes us less likely to see differences in party contact across ethnic groups in any of our data sets.[12]

Our analysis and modeling employ three sets of dependent variables: (1) who is targeted by partisan and non-partisan groups, (2) how they are targeted, and (3) the relative impact of partisan and non-partisan contact on the propensity to vote. We model these categorical dependent variables via logit,[13] accounting for potential area effects (e.g., living in a particular precinct or media market), as a function of the major variables suggested by the literature on mobilization and voting behavior (e.g., Leighley 1995; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). The categories are:

> *Social and economic characteristics*: income, education, age, gender (female), ethnicity/race (Cuban, non-Cuban Hispanic, Haitian, African-American), attendance at religious services, first time voter, early voter, voted at previous election
> *Political sophistication*: frequency of watching national news, political knowledge

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[11] On the other hand, the increase in turnout was nationwide (Bergan et al. 2005). The fact that the NAES and ANES samples include respondents from several states that did not have meaningful campaigns reduces the relationship between turnout and mobilization.

[12] Unless the Democratic Party in Florida placed greater emphasis on contact from allied organizations such as unions (the Party Mobilization Hypothesis).

[13] For the form of contact, we also examined alternative estimators such as Heckman probit models and Sartori's (2003) estimator, which also accounts for selection effects but without exclusion restrictions. They are consistent with the logit estimates of the effects of race and ethnicity with one exception—receiving direct mail from a major party in Miami-Dade County—where the logit estimate shows no difference by ethnicity, the Heckman model indicates that Cubans in Miami-Dade are somewhat more likely to receive direct mail, while the Sartori estimator indicates a selection model is inappropriate (and does not show a difference for Cubans). Thus, the implications of the logit model appear sound here as well.

Partisan and policy related predispositions: party identification (Democrat, Republican), intensity of party identification, ideology (liberal, conservative)

We also add views on gay marriage and living in a state with gay marriage to the estimates of influences on turnout—they are not included as predictors of partisan and non-partisan contact—because of the speculation in 2004 that "moral values," including opinion on gay marriage, may have affected participation.[14]

Thus, we follow Leighley's admonition to assess, "*the relative importance of socioeconomic status, civic orientations and political mobilization as influences on individuals' political activity*" (1995, 197). We keep the coding of these variables consistent across the three surveys (see online Appendix C). The exceptions are for Hispanics, where the NAES survey did not have sufficient numbers of subgroups such as Cubans for analysis and the ANES lacks the level of detail about ethnicity of the Miami poll—we therefore include a single category of "Hispanic" for comparison with white and African-American with these data[15]; first time voters, which was only ascertained after the election in the NAES and is not therefore included in the analysis of contact pertaining to early and absentee voting, and was not gauged at all by the ANES; whether a respondent voted at the previous election, which was not asked in the Miami Exit Poll; and political knowledge, where the relevant questions were not asked after the election in the NAES, meaning it cannot be included as a covariate with receiving a reminder to vote.

Relying on survey data to ascertain the effects of mobilization has some weaknesses. First, in contrast to field experiments in which the treatment is assigned, surveys are dependent on recall to determine who was contacted and their subsequent voting behavior. The problem with reports of contact activity appears to be one of underreporting (Bergan et al. 2005, 766), which is likely to lead to underestimates of the incidence and impact of contact.[16] It is also well known that survey respondents tend to overreport turnout, which may lead to reduced estimates of the impact of mobilization if individuals who did not vote in part because they were not mobilized report that they did vote. Both problems render our analysis conservative, however.

On the other hand, mobilization efforts are not random—they target likely voters—and individuals who *recognize* contact activity may be more interested in politics, politically savvy, and therefore also more likely to vote, leading to overestimates of the impact of contact. The Miami Exit Poll sampling frame overcomes the problem of reported turnout, however, because it sampled people after they had voted. In addition, we would expect the ability to recognize contact activity to be similar for partisan and non-partisan mobilization. That we find differences among groups between forms of partisan and non-partisan contact is

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[14] The addition of variables such as whether a respondent's parents were born in the US, the respondent was born in the US (Miami Exit Poll), and language spoken at home (Miami Exit Poll) were generally statistically insignificant and made little difference to our results. This analysis is available on request.

[15] We exclude the other two categories in the NAES, Asian, and American Indian because, particularly in the post-election interviews, their numbers are too small.

[16] Ideally we could conduct an experiment in which we contacted individuals with partisan and non-partisan messages and then test recall of that contact later.

unlikely to be due to a systematic ability to recognize some sources of mobilization but not others that is correlated with ethnicity.[17] Moreover, we control for variation in political knowledge and, as we discuss in footnote 13, alternative selection model estimators that control for initial differences in the ability to recognize mobilization efforts provide similar results.

A second possible weakness is the level of detail with which respondents were asked to recall contact in the Miami Exit Poll. However, checks for the validity of our measures were reassuring: respondents who attended religious services regularly were more likely to be mobilized by religious groups, African-Americans by African-American groups, the elderly by the AARP, and the young by student groups. And there was some detail and variation in contact that we did not capture, including the number of contacts by each method and whether phone contact was in the form of a "robo" message or "live," precisely because we did not feel that we could rely on self-reports at this level of detail.

Third, the Miami Exit Poll could be criticized on the grounds that the list of non-partisan groups is incomplete. The groups that were of primary interest to us were religious and ethnic (we also listed groups like the AARP and NRA—see online Appendix C); we did not list by name non-partisan groups like the Sierra Club, America Coming Together, or unions. We did, however, have an "Other" category for those groups, so this criticism is misplaced.

Finally, while the literature has examined variation in the mobilization efforts that individuals receive, we are unaware of previous research that has compared the efficacy of different forms of contact across ethnic groups. We assume here that modes of contact are equally effective or ineffective. It is possible, however, that the efficacy of modes of contact varies by ethnic group, in which case an exit poll could under- or over-estimate the relative incidence of modes of contact of groups (e.g., if Blacks are *more* responsive to face-to-face contact when it is received). All else equal, however, it is not clear why ethnicity alone would have this effect, although it is worth further testing.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of logit analyses of *who* is contacted by the major parties (i.e., the dependent variable is whether or not a respondent was contacted by one or both major parties). There are four columns of results: the first two display estimates from the NAES data concerning specific kinds of contact from the major parties—obtaining an early or absentee ballot and receiving a reminder to vote at their home from someone on behalf of the major parties.[18] The third column estimates relationships with contact from the major parties—being called up or

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[17] Shaw et al. (2000) make a similar argument. In addition, they rely on recall of contact 10 months after the election.

[18] It bears repeating that the slight variation in model specifications using NAES data are because the survey did not ask all the same questions over time, e.g., during the period respondents were asked whether they had received help to vote early the survey did not ask about first time voting. Excluding the control for first time voters, in the models where it appears, has a negligible impact on the influence of other variables.

Table 1 Predictors of partisan contact in 2004[a]

	NAES (help to vote early)	NAES (reminder to vote)	ANES	Miami Exit Poll
Hispanic	−0.05 (0.23)	−0.62 (0.44)	−1.04 (0.36)**	
Cuban				−0.43 (0.21)*
Non-Cuban Hispanic				−0.10 (0.27)
Haitian				0.10 (0.38)
African-American	−0.78 (0.31)*	0.01 (0.36)	−0.74 (0.29)*	−0.12 (0.31)
Income	−0.03 (0.04)	0.15 (0.08)[#]	0.20 (0.05)**	0.04 (0.05)
Education	0.15 (0.05)**	0.17 (0.09)[#]	−0.01 (0.08)	0.28 (0.08)**
Age	0.08 (0.06)	0.00 (0.09)	0.12 (0.08)	−0.00 (0.09)
Female	0.08 (0.10)	−0.04 (0.19)	0.22 (0.17)	0.16 (0.14)
Frequency of attending religious services	0.02 (0.05)	−0.01 (0.08)	0.13 (0.05)*	0.06 (0.07)
Frequency of watching national news	−0.05 (0.04)	0.12 (0.07)[#]	0.00 (0.05)	0.08 (0.11)
Political knowledge	−0.01 (0.03)		0.13 (0.06)*	0.28 (0.08)**
First time voter		1.04 (0.47)*		−0.34 (0.26)
Early voter	0.35 (0.18)[#]	−0.25 (0.27)	0.58 (0.22)**	−0.04 (0.16)
Democrat	−0.03 (0.15)	0.54 (0.24)*	−0.28 (0.27)	0.59 (0.18)**
Republican	0.39 (0.15)*	0.13 (0.22)	−0.70 (0.30)*	0.40 (0.21)[#]
Liberal ideology	−0.16 (0.15)	−0.11 (0.26)	−0.24 (0.37)	−0.02 (0.19)
Conservative ideology	0.08 (0.10)	0.18 (0.19)	−0.07 (0.35)	−0.36 (0.22)[#]
Voted in previous election	0.61 (0.17)**	0.14 (0.32)	0.88 (0.20)**	
Constant	−4.34 (0.26)**	−3.84 (0.49)**	−1.62 (0.50)**	−1.41 (0.47)**
N	11280	1714	899	1100
Pseudo R^2	0.03	0.03	0.12	0.07

Miami data are weighted (see Appendix B)

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, [#] $p < 0.10$ (two-tailed test). All standard errors are clustered

[a] The NAES sample sizes differ because it was a rolling cross-sectional survey and the period asking whether respondents had received any offers of help to vote early was much longer than the period asking about a reminder to vote

contacted in-person at home about the campaign—about the campaign or supporting a particular candidate from the ANES data, mobilization that encompasses both types of contact included in the NAES but also captures contact that does not take the form of a reminder to vote and is not in-person at the respondent's home. The fourth column of results is from the Miami Exit Poll and pertains to contact from a political party "this year" (see online Appendix C for coding). The reference category for ethnicity in all four columns is whites.[19]

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[19] See online Appendix A Table A1 for statistics on contact in the three surveys. Given the variation in questions, we would expect more people to report partisan and non-partisan contact in the ANES than in the NAES and that is what we see.

Although the results vary a little across data sets, which would be expected given the variation in types of contact, question wording, and context, Table 1 is consistent with the notion that the major parties mobilize individuals with higher resources such as income and education, and individuals engaged with politics and therefore more likely to be in recruitment networks (Verba et al. 1995), as represented by identification with a major party and political knowledge.[20] While it is noteworthy that Republican and Democratic identifiers appear to receive different kinds of attention, the more important message of Table 1 is confirmation that there is an ethnic bias to incidence of contact *nationally*. The ANES data indicate that Hispanics and African-Americans were less likely to be contacted by a major party than whites, while the NAES shows that African-Americans were less likely to be offered help to vote early and Hispanics less likely to be reminded to vote (although the latter relationship does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance). We also looked at the interactions between ethnic group and the resources of education and income. None were statistically significant at $p < .05$.[21]

In Miami-Dade County, however, where there is no ethnic majority, there were fewer ethnic differences, going some way to confirming our contention that Miami presents a tough test of differences in mobilization efforts because there are fewer incentives than elsewhere for the major parties to hone in on particular groups. It was only Cubans who were less likely to be contacted. This is surprising given the solid Republican vote that Cubans represent in Miami; even when we looked at individuals who were contacted only by the Republican party in Miami there were no differences in the likelihood of contact between Cubans and whites. Thus, the data suggest that nationally there are ethnic differences in the likelihood of party contact, even when accounting for resources and civic orientations but that in the context of Miami in 2004 there were not, both because of the ethnic mix in Miami and because of its competitiveness.[22]

When we break these data down into the likelihood of contact from a specific party or from both parties (in analysis not shown here) we get more insight. In all three data sets Republican identifiers were significantly more likely to be contacted by the Republican party only and Democratic identifiers by the Democratic party (based on Wald tests of the differences in coefficients). Republicans appear less

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[20] Standard errors in these and all other tables account for potential area-level commonalities. For the ANES data we cluster by primary sampling unit; with the NAES data clustering is by media market; and for the Miami Exit poll we cluster by precinct location. Alternative area clustering in the ANES and NAES, such as by state or county made little difference.

[21] For similar analysis of the 2008 ANES data, see Appendix A Table A2. Relative to 2004 we see evidence that Hispanic individuals were less disadvantaged compared to whites—the coefficient for Hispanic is negative but statistically insignificant—and that African-Americans were still less likely to be contacted than white individuals. If we focus on party contact from the parties separately the coefficient for Republican contact is negative and statistically significant for African-Americans, while for Democrat contact it is also negative but much smaller and the *p*-value is .21.

[22] There is contradictory evidence for early voters, with the NAES and ANES data suggesting they were somewhat more likely to have been contacted by a major party to vote early and to vote on election day, and the exit poll data indicating that in Miami they were targeted no more than other voters. It is possible that this is a consequence of NAES and ANES early voters including those voting by absentee ballot, who were not captured in Miami, if they were much more likely to receive communications from both parties.

likely to try to mobilize African-Americans, which makes sense given the overwhelming ratios in which African-Americans vote Democratic (see Wielhouwer 2000 for a similar result). A similar explanation may account for the findings for Cubans in Miami. Cubans were less likely to be contacted by the Democratic party only and by both parties ($p < .10$) than whites. It was non-Cuban Hispanics, more of a swing vote, who got the most attention from the Republican party, but not from the Democrats, in Miami.[23]

Thus we see that there is a racial dimension to mobilization nationally but that in a competitive and racially mixed local context such as Miami's the patterns are not the same; there is little variation in the overall *incidence* of party contact by ethnic group. Because the NAES and ANES do not ask about modes of contact we rely on the Miami data to examine this issue. In such a context, what *kinds* of contact do the parties make with prospective voters? In the Miami Exit Poll we focused on three methods of contact: in-person communications, telephone, and direct mail. The dependent variable in this analysis is the mode of contact.

Looking at the results in Table 2 as a whole, the resource and political interest variables tended also to be factors in the form of contact, although there was some interesting variation. Political sophistication, represented by political knowledge and education, was associated with telephone and direct mail contact but not with mobilization in-person. There is also evidence that Democratic identifiers were more likely to be mobilized by telephone than Republican identifiers (based on a Wald test of the difference in coefficients). Women were somewhat more likely to be contacted by telephone and direct mail, while first time voters were less likely. Resources such as income, and variation in individual characteristics such as age and frequency of attending religious services, had no impact, however.

What of ethnicity? It is striking that Cubans, Hispanics, Haitians, and African-Americans—though African-Americans not at a statistically significant level—were all less likely to be have been mobilized in-person than whites,[24] controlling for party identification. We examined the substantive meaning of these results by estimating the probability of an individual being contacted in-person by one of the parties. We set all variables in Table 2 at their modal or mean values, varying only ethnicity. Under this scenario, while a white voter in Miami had a roughly one in three chance of being contacted by a major party in-person, a Haitian voter had a one in seven chance and a Hispanic a one in five chance.[25] Our survey also asked

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[23] Estimates using Miami data do not control for whether a respondent voted at the previous election because the question was not asked. Although the models employing NAES and ANES data suggest that this was an important influence on contact and turnout, if we exclude it the key relationships for ethnic group and the efficacy of contact in Tables 1, 3, and 5 change little. We are therefore confident that the results using the Miami data are not an artifact of not being able to account for whether or not a respondent voted at the previous election.

[24] We also examined interaction effects between each group and party identification; none were statistically significant. We then examined the possibility that ethnic groups provided a disproportionate number of first time voters, who were less likely to be contacted in-person. These interactions were also statistically insignificant, except for Cuban first time voters who were less likely than other Cubans to be contacted in person.

[25] The predicted probabilities on which these and all other point estimates are based are displayed in Appendix A Table A3.

Table 2 Predictors of mode of partisan contact in 2004 (Miami Exit Poll)

	In-person	Telephone	Direct mail
Cuban	−0.80 (0.32)*	−0.36 (0.20)[#]	0.02 (0.22)
Non-Cuban Hispanic	−0.66 (0.35)[#]	−0.08 (0.24)	0.04 (0.24)
Haitian	−1.02 (0.46)*	0.14 (0.35)	−0.10 (0.32)
African-American	−0.34 (0.40)	−0.09 (0.26)	−0.12 (0.23)
Income	0.01 (0.07)	0.06 (0.06)	0.02 (0.05)
Education	−0.00 (0.12)	0.29 (0.08)**	0.35 (0.08)**
Age	−0.14 (0.10)	−0.05 (0.09)	−0.00 (0.09)
Female	0.20 (0.19)	0.26 (0.15)[#]	0.24 (0.16)
Frequency of attending religious services	0.01 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	−0.06 (0.06)
Frequency of watching national news	0.20 (0.10)[#]	0.09 (0.10)	0.03 (0.10)
Political knowledge	0.18 (0.12)	0.39 (0.10)**	0.33 (0.08)**
First time voter	−0.17 (0.22)	−0.41 (0.23)[#]	−0.38 (0.22)[#]
Early voter	−0.26 (0.24)	−0.42 (0.15)**	0.02 (0.19)
Democrat	0.30 (0.25)	0.36 (0.17)*	0.50 (0.21)*
Republican	0.38 (0.28)	−0.16 (0.23)	0.47 (0.25)[#]
Liberal ideology	0.04 (0.20)	0.06 (0.20)	−0.09 (0.16)
Conservative ideology	−0.20 (0.27)	−0.18 (0.22)	−0.44 (0.21)*
Constant	−1.83 (0.70)**	−2.29 (0.55)**	−2.39 (0.46)**
N	1100	1100	1100
Pseudo R^2	0.04	0.10	0.08

Data are weighted (see Appendix B)

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, [#] $p < 0.10$ (two-tailed test). All standard errors are clustered

about in-person contact in the street and at home. Analysis of these kinds of contact indicates that the ethnic differences were driven by the lower likelihood of being contacted at home. As Ramirez suggests for Latinos, this may be a function of other sociodemographic factors that make the parties less willing to expend resources in neighborhoods whose residents have characteristics associated with lower turnout.

The differences for contact by telephone are consistent with this explanation. We see the effects of education and political knowledge referred to earlier but almost none of the same influence of ethnicity. Whereas ethnicity offers the only statistically significant explanatory variables (at $p < .05$) for in-person party contact, for telephone contact traditional resources such as education and political knowledge are important and the only marginally statistically significant relationship for ethnicity is for Cubans who, as for in-person contact, were less likely to be contacted. For contact by direct mail there are no differences by race and ethnicity, to be expected given the more scattershot approach of mail drives. This also reinforces our contention that our findings are not an artifact of differences in the ability to recognize campaign contact.

There are two principal implications of this analysis: first, none of the ethnic groups received the same kind of mobilization as white voters, in line with the

Differential Contact Thesis. White voters were distinctly advantaged by being more likely to receive an in-person get-out-the-vote plea than any other group: twice as likely as Haitian voters in our estimates. Second, only Cubans were different from other groups in also being less likely to have been contacted by telephone, though marginally. Given Cubans' traditional loyalty to the Republican party in Miami, this suggests that part of what we observe may be the result of the major parties conserving their most labor intensive mobilization efforts for voters whose loyalties were more uncertain, or for other counties. If that was the case, however, it is at odds with Matthew Dowd's contention that in 2004 the parties were as concerned with their base as with swing voters. It also neither explains why African-Americans do not appear to have received a similar pattern of attention from the Democrats, nor why the results for Republican identifiers in general are not similar to those for Cubans. Moreover, it cannot explain why white voters received the most labor intensive and efficacious mobilization efforts. In short, our data indicate a tendency for partisan mobilization efforts to exacerbate inequalities based on resources *but also on ethnicity* and not just because of the incidence of mobilization but also its quality.

We now turn to non-partisan contact. We adopt the same approach as for partisan contact, asking first who is contacted, using NAES and Miami Exit Poll data, and then concentrating on the Miami Exit Poll for analysis of differences in modes of contact. Thus, the NAES again helps us to see whether there is an ethnic dimension to the incidence of group contact, although it is limited to offers of help to get an early or absentee ballot and an in-person reminder to vote at home, excluding discussions of the election at church for example. The Miami Exit Poll, on the other hand, listed groups and organizations, asked whether they had contacted the respondent "about the election," and went on to ascertain the form of that contact. This seems more likely to capture a range of non-partisan activity and the notion that mobilization comes from being informed about the election through social networks, not simply help or encouragement to vote.

Table 3 presents the results for the two data sets side by side. The dependent variable is contact by any group.

The NAES data on receiving a reminder to vote reveal almost no relationships, for ethnicity or anything else. In contrast, contact pertaining to voting early shows that some of the same factors that were associated with the likelihood of partisan contact, education and, unsurprisingly, ultimately being an early voter, were also salient to group contact. The relationship is not particularly robust ($p = .17$) but African-Americans, who were *less* likely to be contacted by one of the major parties about voting early, were somewhat *more* likely to have been offered help by a group. We also estimated models with interactions between ethnic group and the resources of income and education. None of the relationships were statistically significant.

The Miami Exit Poll, which asked about a less specific form of non-partisan contact about the election than the NAES, suggests much more strongly that African-Americans were *more* likely to receive such non-partisan contact. We see that African-Americans, Haitians—for both of whom Wald tests show statistically significant differences with Cubans and non-Cuban Hispanics as well as with

Table 3 Predictors of non-partisan contact in 2004

	NAES (help to vote early)	NAES (reminder to vote)	Miami Exit Poll
Cuban			−0.07 (0.21)
Non-Cuban Hispanic			−0.08 (0.20)
Hispanic	0.01 (0.34)	−0.05 (0.30)	
Haitian			0.77 (0.29)**
African-American	0.35 (0.26)	0.14 (0.28)	0.60 (0.26)*
Income	−0.02 (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)	−0.01 (0.05)
Education	0.17 (0.07)*	−0.01 (0.07)	−0.01 (0.07)
Age	0.00 (0.08)	0.04 (0.08)	0.18 (0.09)*
Female	0.41 (0.15)**	0.37 (0.15)*	0.02 (0.15)
Frequency of attending religious services	0.06 (0.06)	−0.02 (0.07)	0.13 (0.05)**
Frequency of watching national news	−0.02 (0.06)	0.01 (0.07)	0.09 (0.08)
Political knowledge	0.07 (0.05)		0.09 (0.07)
First time voter		0.38 (0.41)	0.08 (0.20)
Early voter	0.63 (0.24)**	0.05 (0.21)	0.01 (0.21)
Democrat	0.45 (0.19)*	−0.11 (0.22)	0.19 (0.19)
Republican	0.14 (0.22)	0.09 (0.24)	0.19 (0.21)
Liberal ideology	0.17 (0.19)	0.27 (0.19)	0.29 (0.15)#
Conservative ideology	0.05 (0.18)	0.04 (0.25)	−0.17 (0.21)
Voted in previous election	0.56 (0.27)*	0.36 (0.22)#	
Constant	−5.67 (0.34)**	−3.02 (0.35)**	−1.90 (0.43)**
N	11280	1714	1100
Pseudo R^2	0.03	0.01	0.03

Miami data are weighted (see Appendix B)

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, # $p < 0.10$ (two-tailed test). All standard errors are clustered

whites—older individuals, and more frequent attendees at religious services were most likely to be the targets of this kind of non-partisan activity. Table 4, which analyzes the modes of non-partisan contact, also shows that this contact took a different form to that from the parties. Haitians and African-Americans were both more likely than white voters to have received some form of contact about the election at a meeting or congregation.[26]

We also simulated the probability of non-partisan contact. The probability of non-partisan contact via a meeting or congregation was one in 33 for this hypothetical white voter but roughly one in six for a Haitian voter (i.e., about the same as the likelihood of in-person contact from a major party) and about one in ten for an African-American voter. This suggests that while these groups do not benefit from in-person contact from the major parties relative to whites, nor from in-person

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[26] Haitians were also more likely to have received this kind of non-partisan contact than Cuban and non-Cuban Hispanics ($p < .05$) but the difference between African-Americans and non-Cuban Hispanics is not quite statistically significant ($p = .16$).

Table 4 Predictors of mode of non-partisan contact in 2004 (Miami Exit Poll)

	In-person	Meeting/congregation	Telephone	Direct mail
Cuban	−0.31 (0.32)	0.87 (0.49)[#]	−0.14 (0.26)	0.07 (0.31)
Non-Cuban Hispanic	−0.91 (0.36)*	0.28 (0.65)	0.22 (0.28)	−0.55 (0.38)
Haitian	0.00 (0.41)	1.84 (0.70)**	0.99 (0.37)**	0.50 (0.42)
African-American	0.31 (0.47)	1.18 (0.50)*	0.84 (0.28)**	0.74 (0.44)[#]
Income	−0.19 (0.09)*	0.16 (0.15)	0.04 (0.07)	−0.23 (0.10)*
Education	−0.03 (0.11)	0.23 (0.23)	−0.07 (0.10)	0.07 (0.13)
Age	0.04 (0.12)	−0.09 (0.22)	0.17 (0.11)	0.07 (0.13)
Female	0.17 (0.22)	0.62 (0.36)[#]	−0.10 (0.18)	0.12 (0.28)
Frequency of attending religious services	0.04 (0.09)	0.27 (0.13)*	0.10 (0.08)	0.04 (0.10)
Political knowledge	0.12 (0.12)	0.32 (0.20)	0.22 (0.10)*	0.10 (0.13)
First time voter	0.27 (0.29)	−0.23 (0.63)	−0.05 (0.25)	0.43 (0.30)
Early voter	−0.34 (0.29)	−0.06 (0.31)	−0.20 (0.19)	−0.24 (0.31)
Democrat	0.58 (0.31)[#]	−0.24 (0.40)	0.14 (0.24)	0.53 (0.31)[#]
Republican	0.87 (0.31)*	−0.12 (0.45)	−0.15 (0.33)	0.88 (0.38)*
Liberal ideology	0.02 (0.23)	0.71 (0.60)	0.31 (0.20)	0.01 (0.26)
Conservative ideology	−0.42 (0.32)	0.17 (0.54)	−0.19 (0.24)	−0.87 (0.29)**
Constant	−2.36 (0.63)**	−6.45 (1.49)**	−2.80 (0.56)**	−2.81 (0.72)**
N	1100	1100	1099	1100
Pseudo R^2	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.06

Data are weighted (see Appendix B)

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, [#] $p < 0.10$ (two-tailed test). All standard errors are clustered

non-partisan contact relative to whites,[27] to some extent non-partisan groups may compensate with a different kind of face-to-face contact. This further supports the *Differential Contact Thesis* and is clearly contrary to the *Amount of Contact Thesis*.[28] Haitians and African-Americans were also more likely than white, Cuban, and non-Cuban Hispanic voters to have been contacted by phone. Finally, Table 4 again shows some parallels in the voters that partisan and non-partisan groups target. Either party identification or political knowledge, both indicators of political skills, tend to be associated with each form of contact, although the relationships are not as strong as with partisan group contact in Table 2. In addition, indicators of resources such as income and education have no, or even negative, effects on the likelihood of contact. Thus, non-partisan contact does not appear to be driven wholly by the same factors we saw for partisan contact in Tables 1 and 2. Moreover,

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[27] In-person contact from groups is more likely than contact in a meeting or congregation, though only marginally for Haitians (see Appendix A Table A3).

[28] We referred to African-Americans but not to Haitians in the *Differential Contact Thesis*. We were agnostic about other groups—relying on the data to tell us—primarily because there is very little literature on, for example, Haitian political behavior (though see Rogers 2006).

it is some of the ethnic groups who were disadvantaged in terms of partisan mobilization that benefited most from non-partisan mobilization.

This support for the *Differential Contact Thesis* cannot be explained away as the result of differences in the ground operations of the two major parties (i.e., the *Party Mobilization Thesis*). First, key ethnic group differences in Table 4 relate to contact in *meetings or congregations* rather than in-person door-knocking by groups working on behalf of the parties. Second, Table 4 controls for party identification and uncovers no differences in incidences of non-partisan contact between Democratic and Republican identifiers. These results support the notion that contact mode varies by race and ethnicity since if the results were an artifact of the Democrats subcontracting their ground operation to other organizations we would expect systematically larger effects for Democrats than Republicans after controlling for ethnic group. Third, when we examine the sources of non-partisan contact for African-Americans and Haitians they are distributed across African-American, Haitian, religious, neighborhood, and student groups, as well as "other" organizations. However, the numbers mentioning other organizations, which could have included unions and groups such as Americans Coming Together, are not as large as many of the other categories.

Perhaps we should be unconcerned because the mobilization of minorities by non-partisan groups may offset the lack of quality attention from the major parties. But we have suggested that non-partisan contact such as in Miami, where it was often as part of a meeting or congregation, may be less effective. To investigate we need to examine the relative impact of partisan and non-partisan mobilization efforts in bringing voters to the polls. Unfortunately the Miami Exit Poll data cannot be used here because the sample excluded non-voters. The NAES data, however, allow us to compare the impact of a reminder to vote from a party as opposed to a group on the probability of voting.[29] Although we have expressed skepticism about the ability of the ANES to capture many forms of non-partisan contact, in this case the data provide some additional leverage over the question of the relative efficacy of partisan and non-partisan contact, albeit for contact in general rather than for specific kinds of contact.

The first two columns of Table 5 present analysis of the influence of contact from either major party or a non-partisan group on turnout in 2004 according to NAES and ANES data. We include all the variables from previous models and add a variable to account for the possibility that individuals living in states with gay marriage measures on the ballot would be more likely to vote (partisanship is operationalized by strength of partisanship rather than its direction, as is standard with turnout models). For additional perspective we also include similar analysis of the 2008 election in the third column of results.[30]

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[29] The question about offers of help to vote early was not asked after 10/31/2004. We are therefore unable to gauge their impact on the likelihood that an individual voted.

[30] At the time of writing the 2008 ANES data do not include the requisite codes for a measure of political knowledge. We therefore control for interest in the campaign instead.

The results are similar across all three data sets[31] in suggesting a smaller impact of contact from a non-partisan group than contact from a major party; indeed, the analysis using NAES data shows no impact of group contact.[32] However, Wald tests of the *differences* between these coefficients do not reach conventional levels of significance, so these results are merely suggestive. Yet it is critical to the implications of the analysis that has come before to be more certain. We therefore no longer focus solely on the 2004 election; instead, we pool data from the ANES since 1984—when the non-partisan contact questions were first asked—and the NAES in 2000 and 2004. This allows us to examine the impact of contact over several elections, with more respondents, and therefore to be confident either that the lack of a statistically significant difference in partisan and non-partisan contact in 2004 is also true of other presidential elections, or, given the greater precision offered by more data, that the differences in 2004 should be seen as more than suggestive. The fourth and fifth columns in Table 5 present the results. They show somewhat smaller influences of partisan and non-partisan contact than the first two columns but the *differences* in partisan and non-partisan contact are statistically significant at $p < .05$ in both models (based on a Wald test). Thus, the pooled data allow us to say with greater confidence that non-partisan contact is less effective in bringing voters to the polls than is partisan contact.

We also examined the pooled models with dummy variables for election year. They did not alter our findings; indeed they strengthened them with the NAES data. In addition, we looked at interactions between contact and ethnicity, which were also statistically insignificant. Thus, there is no evidence of differential effects of non-partisan contact on minority communities, which could compensate for the lack of attention from the parties, or indeed of any differences in the efficacy of partisan and non-partisan contact by ethnic group.

To be sure, the impact of contact may be exaggerated if parties and groups contact those individuals who are most likely to respond to their entreaties, but our interest is in the difference in the impact of these contacts rather than their absolute effects. However, the results also do not preclude the possibility that parties are better at targeting voters than are groups. We re-estimated the models using the pooled data, focusing only on respondents who had been contacted by a major party or excluding respondents contacted only by a non-partisan group. The idea in each

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[31] This is not true for Hispanics in 2004. Even with control variables the NAES shows Hispanics less likely to vote than African-Americans and whites, whereas the ANES shows no difference. While the bivariate relationship between Hispanic and voting in the ANES is negative and statistically significant, and is also more resistant to the introduction of control variables than the relationship for African-Americans, it disappears with the inclusion of education and income. In addition, African-Americans were more likely to vote, all else equal, despite being less likely to be contacted by a major party (see footnote 21). The Obama campaign seems to have energized African-Americans to vote but not because they were any more likely to be mobilized.

[32] We also looked at potential interaction effects between ethnic group and types of contact and between views on gay marriage and living in a state with a gay marriage measure on the ballot, none of which were statistically significant. And we estimated models with separate variables for Democratic and Republican identifiers and with interactions with contact. We find evidence of a small Republican advantage in propensity to vote, although it was not statistically significant, but no evidence of interaction effects. More importantly, accounting for a potential Republican advantage barely alters the coefficients and standard errors for partisan and non-partisan contact.

Table 5 The effects of partisan and non-partisan contact on turnout

	ANES (2004)	NAES (2004)	ANES (2008)	ANES (1984–2004)	NAES (2000–2004)
Contact (reminder to vote) from a major party	0.82 (0.24)**	1.80 (0.66)**	0.59 (0.19)**	0.80 (0.10)**	0.83 (0.13)**
Contact (reminder to vote) from a non-partisan group	0.73 (0.33)*	0.87 (0.86)	0.31 (0.23)	0.41 (0.11)**	0.35 (0.15)*
Hispanic	0.05 (0.43)	−0.76 (0.32)*	0.01 (0.19)	−0.10 (0.12)	−1.02 (0.15)**
African-American	0.21 (0.30)	−0.36 (0.40)	0.96 (0.34)**	0.00 (0.10)	0.03 (0.16)
Income	0.11 (0.08)	0.37 (0.07)**	0.13 (0.07)[#]	0.33 (0.03)**	0.34 (0.03)**
Education	0.19 (0.11)[#]	0.29 (0.09)**	0.33 (0.12)**	0.39 (0.05)**	0.43 (0.05)**
Age	−0.33 (0.13)*	0.04 (0.10)	0.03 (0.10)	0.14 (0.03)**	0.48 (0.05)**
Female	0.15 (0.24)	0.01 (0.21)	0.44 (0.19)*	0.10 (0.07)	−0.01 (0.09)
Frequency of attending religious services	0.03 (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)	0.13 (0.07)[#]	0.20 (0.02)**	0.18 (0.04)**
Frequency of watching national news	0.15 (0.10)	0.22 (0.11)*	−0.09 (0.09)	0.09 (0.03)**	0.16 (0.04)**
Political knowledge	0.27 (0.12)*			0.32 (0.04)**	
Interest in politics			0.35 (0.12)**		
Intensity of party identification	0.56 (0.20)**	0.33 (0.12)**	0.79 (0.14)**	0.63 (0.06)**	0.50 (0.05)**
Liberal ideology	−0.20 (0.51)	−0.25 (0.29)	0.74 (0.29)*	0.30 (0.09)**	−0.05 (0.12)
Conservative ideology	−0.10 (0.49)	0.35 (0.29)	−0.06 (0.27)	0.27 (0.07)**	0.20 (0.11)[#]
Voted in previous election	2.39 (0.27)**	2.53 (0.21)**	2.22 (0.23)**	1.63 (0.08)**	
Oppose gay marriage ban	0.08 (0.10)	0.45 (0.23)*			
Live in state with gay marriage on the ballot	−0.28 (0.36)	0.13 (0.32)			
Constant	−1.59 (0.70)*	−2.42 (0.52)**	−2.79 (0.36)**	−2.98 (0.15)**	−2.51 (0.20)**
N	861	1282	1224	8749	4484
Pseudo R^2	0.33	0.41	0.38	0.31	0.24

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, [#] $p < 0.10$ (two-tailed test) All standard errors are clustered

case is that excluding respondents contacted by relatively inefficient non-partisan groups should enhance the impact of non-partisan contact on the likelihood to vote if parties more effectively target voters than do groups. This is not what we see: the coefficients for group contact are smaller and the difference with party contact

larger, while the impact of control variables is largely unaffected. Moreover, the interaction between partisan and non-partisan contact is negatively signed in both cases, strengthening the evidence that the differences in the efficacy of contact are not simply an artifact of better targeting by parties.

Finally, we examine the substantive meaning of Table 5 by simulating probabilities of turnout, in which we allow party and group contact to vary. The estimates from the pooled elections data show that contact from a major party increases the probability of voting by about 3–5% more than contact from a non-partisan group. This implies that the differences in the incidence and quality of partisan contact of minorities that we have identified could indeed lead to gaps in turnout. If non-partisan contact in elections is not as effective as party mobilization, then the non-partisan mobilization of groups like African-Americans and Haitians— *even if this is deliberate strategy on the part of a party like the Democrats*—is not equivalent to the quality of attention that white voters receive from the major parties.

Our data cannot tell us exactly *what* it is about non-partisan contact that brings certain ethnic groups to the polls but we suspect, particularly for African-Americans, that churches factor prominently as past research has suggested (e.g., in addition to those cited earlier, Calhoun-Brown 1996; Dawson et al. 1990; Djupe and Gilbert 2006; Harris 1994; Verba et al. 1993).[33] For Haitians, on the other hand, it is not the church but Haitian groups and organizations—groups like the Haitian Neighborhood Center, Sant La, and the Haitian American Citizenship and Voter Education Center—that engage in education and contact about the campaign (see Rogers 2006 for an examination of Afro-Caribbean residents of New York City). Such attention may help to explain why the gap between white and African-American turnout is not as great as for other groups (the Census Bureau does not provide turnout data for Haitians).

A counter-example to this pattern, and to the extra contact from direct mail that Cubans receive, was non-Cuban Hispanics who were both less likely than other groups to have been contacted in-person by a major party and less likely to have been contacted in-person by non-partisan groups—this is consistent with Verba et al's (1993) finding that Latinos were less likely than Anglo-Whites and African-Americans to be the targets of political activity across political and non-political contexts. Thus, part of the answer to the puzzle of gaps in Latino and non-Latino participation may be evident in Miami, where some Latinos were disadvantaged in the frequency and form of contact from partisan and non-partisan groups, while even Cubans, who are "empowered" in Miami (Bobo and Gilliam 1999—though see Leighley 2001 for evidence that this effect does not extend to Latinos), were less likely to be the recipients of forms of communication that are most effective in bringing people to the polls. Clearly, we do not intend to refute claims that co-ethnic contact is effective at mobilizing minorities but our findings imply that such face-to-face contact may not occur often enough.

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[33] We examined differences across groups in the Miami Exit Poll in reports of contact about the election through religious groups or organizations. African-Americans were somewhat more likely to report this kind of contact than Whites (though at $p = .10$). Haitians were no more or less likely to report contact through religious groups or organizations than any other ethnic group.

Discussion and Conclusion

We began by asking what might explain the differential rates of turnout between minority groups and whites. Our 2004 turnout data show that minority groups continue to vote at lower rates than whites and that this finding holds, although the gaps are reduced, even among registered voters. Minority participation is a function of more than resources and opportunity structures, although our data confirm that they matter too, just less for non-partisan than for partisan contact. The *Differential Contact Thesis* provides a potential solution to this puzzle. Minority groups are neither contacted at the same rate, nor in a manner that is as effective as are whites.[34] For some groups, such as African-Americans and Haitians in Miami, our data suggest that non-partisan contact about the election may compensate somewhat for this inattention. For other groups such as non-Cuban Hispanics, however, there was no such compensation.

We used two data sets from 2004—the NAES and ANES—to gauge national patterns in the incidence of contact and a third—the Miami Exit Poll to overcome the measurement problems that conflate the source, extent, and type of contact in other surveys. These last data confirmed that Miami provided a particularly attractive and tough test in which to find differences in partisan and non-partisan efforts to mobilize ethnic groups. It is therefore striking that we have shown, for example, that in-person mobilization by the parties had an ethnic dimension in Miami, particularly contact in the home which is the most effective in bringing voters to the polls. White voters were more likely to be the recipients of this kind of attention than others. We also found, however, that other ethnic groups were more likely than whites to have received non-partisan communications about the election in meetings or congregations. We have suggested that because the attention is less personal than individual face-to-face contact it is less effective (Burgess et al. 2000). Nevertheless, the results indicate that non-partisan groups may play a particularly important role in mobilizing otherwise disadvantaged ethnic groups. Ramirez (2005, 68) argues of Latinos that, "it is imperative that nonpartisan organizations focus on the neglected Latino voters." Our research suggests that this imperative may apply more broadly to politically disadvantaged ethnic groups but that it still does not make up for inattention from the major parties and that what we are seeing is not just the subcontracting out of ground operations to groups such as unions by the Democrats.

Field experiments have told us a lot about the impact of different forms of contact but the incidence of different kinds of contact in elections is largely unknown. It is important in studies of mobilization to be sensitive to the modes of contact individuals receive. It may appear that minorities are less likely to be mobilized— the data confirm this—and that mobilization efforts have less impact on them. Our findings suggest that minorities may not be harder to mobilize; they may simply be the recipients of mobilization efforts that are less effective in bringing them to the

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[34] To be sure, the Miami Exit Poll interviewed members of non-white ethnic groups who *did* come to the polls, but this appears to have been in spite rather than because of the mobilization efforts of the major parties.

polls. Our data cannot say what lies behind this but we do not wish to imply that it is a conscious strategy by the parties; more likely it is a consequence of other factors such as socioeconomic characteristics, residential mobility, and other residential patterns—which was suggested by our findings concerning in-person contact in the home as opposed to on the street—that make the parties unwilling to expend their most labor intensive efforts on minorities. Nevertheless, the implications for minority participation are profound.

There are, of course, limits to the inferences we can draw from this research. Our data are mostly from a single election context and the detailed questions on forms of partisan and non-partisan contact are from one county. Clearly, our findings merit additional testing. Moreover, we cannot be sure of how well the voting population in Miami reflects the voters that various groups targeted, or non-voters, but it seems unlikely that non-voting minorities receive heavier, high quality, targeting but are simply less responsive.[35]

Clearly the positions of minorities vary across the United States but our results suggest a solution to some of the remaining puzzlement about minority participation in elections: even when minorities are targeted by the major parties they are targeted in ways less likely to bring them to the polls, a lack of attention for which non-partisan contact only partially compensates.

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[35] Indeed, we examined additional models predicting partisan and non-partisan contact using the pooled ANES and NAES data (used in Table 5) by whether an individual was a voter or non-voter and their interaction with *Black* and *Hispanic*. In both models, being a voter was associated with contact, as would be expected, *but ethnicity did not moderate the relationship.*

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