INTRODUCTION

The federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) is an iconic civil rights statute. It was adopted in 1965, and amended in 1970, 1975, 1982, and 2006, the later revision including an extension of its special time-limited provisions, applicable to primarily southern states, to July 27, 2031. It is widely regarded as the most effective civil rights law in the history of the United States. It quickly opened the electoral processes in the South to participation by African Americans, and then protected their votes from being diluted by the adoption of election structures and rules that seriously impeded, and sometimes precluded, their ability to elect people from within their group. Charles Bullock and R. Keith Gaddie join the chorus, writing in The Triumph of the Voting Rights Act in the South that “both in voting and descriptive representation [referring to the election of African Americans], progress is undeniable and most evident where the Act has been in force the longest” (p. 5).

Only the special provisions of the Act have been in force longer in some states and localities than others. These are provisions that are not applicable nationwide. They apply only to states or local political jurisdictions in which conditions specified in the law are met, conditions that concern the previous use of discriminatory rules and regulations accompanied by low levels of participation in elections. Section 5 of the Act is the major provision triggered by these conditions. It prohibits the implementation of any changes in election rules and arrangements in covered jurisdictions before they are “precleared” by either the U.S. Attorney General or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Changes that are retrogressive, i.e., make things worse for protected minorities, are not supposed to be granted preclearance. These provisions have been in force the longest in the South.

The South is defined in this book in a conventional (among political scientists at least) and reasonable way; it consists of the eleven states that formed the Confederacy. Six of these states, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia, and their political subdivisions, were captured by the Act at the time it was adopted in 1965. Many counties in North Carolina were also captured then as well. In 1975, provisions were added to the Act to protect “language minorities” (Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Alaskans) that brought Texas and its political subdivisions under coverage, as well as some counties in Florida. The only Confederate states never affected by the special provisions are Tennessee and Arkansas, both of which are considered Rim South states. This ambitious book contains a separate chapter on each of these eleven states.

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1These state-specific chapters were originally part of a series of reports by the authors sponsored by the Project of Fair Representation, American Enterprise Institute, for inclusion in the legislative record of the 2005 and 2006 congressional renewal of the special provisions of the VRA. Registration and turnout data for non-Latino whites available for the 1998 and subsequent elections have been added to the chapters, as have analyses of elections held subsequent to the preparation of the reports (xiii–xiv).
Three dimensions of political incorporation are covered in each state chapter. The first is the increase in minority voter registration and turnout. The second is the increase in minority elected officials. The third is the extent to which the candidate preferences of voters are divided along group lines, primarily racial, in these states. The first two have already been well documented by previous scholars as well as by testimony in congressional hearings. The third, by contrast, is a revisionist view of racial voting patterns, arguing that racial divisions in the South are now simply a matter of party preference. Whites as a group prefer the Republican Party and African Americans as a group prefer the Democratic Party. This partisan division is somehow credited with cleansing the often acute racial divisions in candidate preferences of any racial content. The well-known role that race played in the development of these party divisions in the South, however, is ignored.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND TURNOUT

The first two dimensions of incorporation, the increases in African American voter registration, turnout, and descriptive representation, as noted above, have been well documented. Bullock and Gaddie provide more recent data reflecting these changes. The assessment of racial differences in voter registration and turnout rates relies almost exclusively on the Census Bureau’s Current Population Surveys (CPS). After every November federal election since 1964, the CPS has asked a sample of residents in every state to self-report whether they were registered to vote at the time of the election and whether they turned out to vote in that election. Since 1980, the results of these surveys have been reported by race and Latino ethnicity, and since 1998 for non-Latinos by race as well. Bullock and Gaddie reproduce the results of these surveys for these groups in the South for the 1980 through 2006 elections in appendices to the book. The most surprising finding from these data for many readers is likely to be that the African American turnout rate among the citizens of voting age (CVAP) exceeded that for non-Latino whites in 12 of the 55 state estimates since 1998. Each of these is duly noted in the text. The amounts by which the African American turnout rates in these 12 instances exceeded that for the non-Latinos whites ranged from 0.7 percentage points in South Carolina in 2000 to 10.8 percentage points in Mississippi in 2006.

Such results should not be accepted at face value however. Bullock and Gaddie do acknowledge that the self-reported data on voter registration and turnout, such as that relied upon in the CPS, are “subject to inflation” (p. 23) due to a tendency for survey respondents to over-report these matters. They do not point out, however, the well-established finding that when self-reported registration and turnout in surveys are compared with validated data on the same from actual voting records, African American and Latino respondents have had a tendency to over-report such behavior more than non-Latino whites, thereby inflating the estimates for African Americans and Latinos more than those for non-Latino whites. Indeed, the study they cite for evidence of self-reported participation being inflated generally focuses on the racial differences in this phenomenon.²

The authors also reference official registration and turnout counts by race available in some southern states, but do not use these “validated” numbers to make comparisons between estimates from the two sources. While the counts themselves are not a perfect baseline, given that deceased registrants and those who have moved away might not be thoroughly purged, Bullock and Gaddie do identify the counts as being “more accurate” (p. 85) and “more reliable” (p. 172) than the CPS estimates, which is no doubt correct. It is possible in eight of the 12 cases, however, to make direct comparisons between the CPS estimates of the percentage of registered voters who turned out to vote and the corresponding percentages based on the official counts of the same. The first can be calculated from the detailed tables for the CPS available from the Census Bureau, while the latter are avail-

able from the states and in all but one case reported by Bullock and Gaddie. These comparisons are provided in the Table 1 and clearly show the need to be skeptical about the CPS estimates.

Reported in the table are the percentages of African American registered voters and white registered voters who turned out in that particular election in the state identified. The corresponding estimates derived from the CPS are juxtaposed against those from the official state counts. The CPS estimates reported for African Americans are for those identifying as African American only, which is the category for which Bullock and Gaddie report. (Those reporting that they are part African American are generally so small in number as to have little if any impact on the estimates.) Likewise the CPS estimates for whites are based on those who report being single race only, which is again consistent with Bullock and Gaddie, but include whites who also identify as Latinos. This is because the official data for these states do not separate white Latinos from non-Latino whites. White estimates of turnout that include white Latinos are typically lower than those that do not, and therefore reduce the differences between African Americans and whites.

The results of the comparisons show that in seven of the eight cases, the CPS estimate of the African American turnout exceeds that for whites. The exception is the 2000 election in Georgia in which white turnout is estimated to be 3.6 percentage points higher than that for African Americans. The average percentage point difference for the other seven cases is 5.5 in favor of African Americans, but this is primarily due to the 18.6 point difference in Louisiana in 1998. Official state counts, however, depict a very different situation. In seven of the eight cases, turnout for whites based on this source exceeds that for African Americans. The exception is Louisiana in 1998, in which the official counts show the African American advantage in turnout to be only 1.3 percentage points higher, compared to the 18.6 in the CPS. The average difference in the other seven cases is 7.8 percentage points in favor of whites, with the highest being 11.0 in South Carolina in 2006. There is no doubt that, in many cases where the CPS shows white turnout exceeding African American turnout, the reported differences are smaller than the true differences. The CPS is a convenient source of estimates but, unfortunately, a problematic one as well.

**DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION**

Bullock and Gaddie identify the increases in the election of African Americans in the South (and of Latinos in Texas and Florida) as “the living proof of voting-rights progress” (p. 17). The increases are indeed impressive. They provide figures for all of the southern states showing the growth in the numbers of African Americans elected to county and municipal offices, and school boards from 1969 to 2001. These are based on numbers compiled by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.
They also provide corresponding figures for the election of Latinos to such offices in Florida and Texas. In addition, numbers covering various time-frames but usually ending in the mid-2000s, compiled by various sources, and sometimes by the authors themselves, are reported for the elections of African Americans, and in some states Latinos, to state legislative chambers, the federal House of Representatives, and also statewide offices.

The gains in descriptive representation in legislative bodies at the local and state levels, and the U.S. House, have been widely attributed primarily to the adoption of majority-African American and Latino districts, most of which resulted from the dilution protections of sections 2 and/or section 5 of the VRA. Yet, curiously, the role of these districts at the local level is rarely mentioned; the only chapter that references them at that level is that for Alabama. In five of the state chapters, when increases in descriptive representation in the state legislatures are discussed, redistricting is mentioned but no reference is made to the role of majority-minority districts. Bullock and Gaddie do not challenge the importance of these districts at these levels. The important role that majority-minority districts have had in increasing descriptive representation in the southern delegations to the U.S. House, however, is not ignored.

**Racially Polarized Voting**

The other major topic covered in every state chapter is racial voting patterns. There are numerous tables on this topic containing estimates of African American (or sometimes Latino) support for candidates and white (or non-Latino white) support for them. Most of the estimates have been compiled by the authors, while some have been drawn from expert witness reports in redistricting litigation and a few from published studies. They are based primarily on aggregate data analyses, although exit poll results are reported in some places. With only three exceptions, all of the elections analyzed for a state are general elections, primarily for U.S. House seats and statewide offices, and the vast majority of them, not surprisingly, do not involve a minority candidate. The tables reveal consistent and often pronounced differences in candidate preferences along racial lines.

Bullock and Gaddie acknowledge that racial differences in candidate preferences are pervasive in southern elections. And they acknowledge that race is the prominent demographic variable in the partisan voting divide in the region. Although they themselves do not recount the central importance of racial issues to the “wholesale movement of white voters to the Republican Party” (p. 343), they do note that “[o]thers have detailed the role of race in the movement of southern whites to the GOP” (p. 343). But when it comes to contemporary southern politics, they argue that race is now...
only a demographic divide, and that it no longer carries any racial content. This is because, according to them, "increasingly throughout the South the racial policy motive for whites has disappeared in structuring their voting" (p. 356, emphasis added). Contemporary racial divisions, they maintain, "do not find their basis in racial attitudes or racial motivations" (p. 356).

This argument, however, remains a theory. As Bullock and Gaddie admit, "it is increasingly difficult to distinguish a racial vote from a party vote" in general elections in the South (pp. 361, 362), and no attempt is made to do so in this book. "Throughout the South," they state, "when black candidates lose [statewide] general elections, they typically lose because they run as Democrats and not because they are minority candidates" (p. 343). Yet they also note, at the same time, that when African American Democrats challenge Republican incumbents in these elections, they "often have less appeal for white voters than white challengers" (p. 343), suggesting that something other than party also plays a role.

The authors adopt a strange premise, which is that racial voting and party voting are mutually exclusive. This is certainly not a premise that social scientists studying southern politics adopt. Their adoption of it could be driven by their obvious interest in minority vote dilution litigation under the Voting Rights Act. They clearly think that if voting is solely attributable to party, then no matter how great the racial divide in candidate preferences, voting cannot be found to be racially polarized. This would result in minority plaintiffs losing these cases because proof of racially polarized voting is a necessary condition for plaintiffs to win. They also suggest that if voting in the South is solely attributable to party, the constitutionality of Voting Rights Act protections are in serious question (pp. 356, 362).

As noted above, white flight to the Republican Party in the South has been directly related to racial issues. And while Jim Crow-style racism may have been largely eradicated in the region, racial resentment is found to relate to contemporary party preferences there. Racial resentment entails perceptions that African Americans make "excessive demands and get too many undeserved advantages," and that their contemporary disadvantages result from a poor work ethic, not from discrimination, past or present. The best cross-sectional research on race and party in the contemporary South, that by Nicholas Valentino and David Sears, finds that more resentful whites are more likely to identify as Republicans, and that this relationship has been strengthening. This phenomenon, they also find, is distinct from general political conservatism and is more acute in the South than outside it. Valentino and Sears conclude that "specifically racial attitudes have structured the Southern-based partisan realignment of the past four decades" (emphasis in original).

The only reference provided in support of this statement is Earl Black and Merle Black, The Rise of Southern Republicans (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002). Unfortunately, they provide no page numbers within this book where such support can be found. None of the pages listed after "White voters" in the index contain it. In fact, on those pages one can find impressive evidence of "racial resentment" (discussed below) among white southerners regardless of their socioeconomic status (see ibid., at 252, 253, 258, 261, and 264). Unsurprisingly, Black and Black do state that "a purely racial explanation of partisanship in the South" is not appropriate (ibid., at 250), but that is far short of saying that racial referents have been disappearing from white voting decisions in the region.

In the elections for the U.S. House, of course, whether African American Democrats win is very dependent on the racial composition of the districts, with non-incumbent African American victories occurring almost exclusively in districts in which African Americans constitute a majority of the voting age population.

Further empirical support for this statement can be found in David C. Kimball, Matthew Owings, and Michael Artime, "Race, Class and Religion in the Southern Realignment," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 22, 2010.


Valentino and Sears, supra n. 11, at 677–683, 685–686. They also report that negative black stereotypes are related to Republican identifications among whites in the South. Ibid., at 683.

Ibid., at 683. This study is not referenced by Bullock and Gaddie.
In addition, recent experimental work on this topic finds that explicit racial appeals, when “highlighting racial differences on salient public policy disputes,” can influence the party preferences of white southerners.\textsuperscript{15} Vincent Hutchings, Hanes Walton, Jr., and Andrea Benjamin presented respondents to a statewide survey in Georgia in 2004 with newspaper “articles” that framed the debate in a referendum over the state’s flag earlier that year in different ways. Respondents were randomly chosen to be either (1) in a control group, exposed to a frame entailing African American opposition to the Rebel Cross, which was featured on the Confederate battle flag, (2) exposed to a frame entailing support for that symbol on the flag by a white hate group, or (3) exposed to a frame entailing support for the cross as part of southern heritage.\textsuperscript{16} The results revealed that after being exposed to the explicitly racial appeals, white respondents, especially white men, reported significantly lower identification with the Democratic Party. The predicted probability of identifying with the Democratic Party among white men was .40 in the control group and .32 in the group receiving the heritage frame. These figures dropped to .16 for both those receiving the African American opposition frame and those receiving the hate group frame. For white women, the probability of identifying as a Democrat was .38 for the control group, .25 for those exposed to the heritage frame, and .36 for those exposed to the black opposition frame, but dropped to only .19 for those exposed to the hate group frame. Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin, after also looking at respondents’ flag preferences following the different framings, concluded that “partisanship continues to have some racial meaning even in the ‘New South.’”\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{16}Georgia had adopted a flag in 1956 that featured the Rebel Cross. This flag was not an option for voters in the referendum because a deal in the state legislature had resulted in that flag being removed from consideration. The black opposition frame and the white hate group frame entailed explicit racial appeals. The opposition frame highlighted African American opposition to the Rebel Cross being on the flag and blamed black Democrats in the legislature for the symbol being removed as an option. It also included a picture of an NAACP rally concerning the issue. The hate group frame highlighted hate group support for the symbol on the flag, and blamed Democrats, not just black Democrats, in the legislature for its removal as an option. It included a picture of Ku Klux Klan members displaying the Confederate flag. In the heritage frame the cross was described as “an important part of Georgia history” and both Democrats and Republicans were blamed for its removal as an option in the referendum. The photograph accompanying this frame was of “white protesters, some dressed in Confederate garb.” \textit{Ibid.}, at 1180.

\textsuperscript{17}Id., at 1185. One of the “Senate factors” that courts might consider in VRA cases is whether “overt or subtle racial appeals” have been used in campaigns in a jurisdiction [S. Rep. No. 97-417, 97th Cong., 2d Sess. (1982), 28–29]. Bullock and Gaddie identify the “white hands” television advertisement used by Republican incumbent Jesse Helms in his 1990 campaign for reelection to the U.S. Senate in North Carolina as “a classic racial-appeal advertisement” (p. 208). Helms was competing with an African American Democrat, Harvey Gantt. The ad depicted a white man’s hands as he read a rejection letter from a potential employer. The voiceover stated that the man was the best qualified person for the job but the job had to go to a minority person because of a “racial quota.” They also reference the more recent “bimbo” television advertisement (sometimes called “the wink”) that the Republican National Committee used to support Bob Corker in his 2006 campaign for the U.S. Senate in Tennessee. Corker was running against African American Harold Ford, Jr. The ad included a white actress, a young, attractive blonde, who at one point in the ad stated excitedly, “I met Harold at a Playboy party.” The 30-second ad concluded with the same actress appearing again, winking and saying flirtatiously, “Harold, call me!” They report that this ad, which has been called “the most controversial and racially divisive ad of the [2006] midterm elections” [Sekou Franklin, “Situational Deracialization, Harold Ford, and the 2006 Senate Race in Tennessee,” in Andrea Gillespie, (ed.), \textit{Whose Black Politics?: Cases in Post-Racial Black Leadership} (New York: Routledge, 2009), 229] constituted “the closest thing to a racial appeal” in that campaign (297, emphasis added). Nothing was provided to explain why the ad fell short of being one however. Others have clearly identified the ad as such. John Geer, for example, a political scientist at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee who specialized in the study of negative political advertising, stated at the time “I just couldn’t believe what I was seeing. I don’t see how you can think it’s not playing a racial card.” Quoted in Peter Wallsten, “GOP Attack Draws Heat for Racial Overtones,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, October 24, 2006, (<http://articles.latimes.com/2006/10/24/nation>, last referenced September 23, 2010). The ad is the first entry in \textit{Race-Bait '08: Lessons Learned from the Political Dirty Dozen; 12 Cases of Playing the Race Card 1983–2007}, A Report by Researchers at The Golden School of Public Policy and the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity and Diversity, UC Berkeley Law School, The University of California at Berkeley, December 2007, 11–14. This report notes that “the taboo of a black man having a sexual relationship with a [white] woman in the South is a trigger that can be tripped with an implicit message” (\textit{Ibid.}, at 13). The “white hands” ad was the third entry in the list (\textit{Id.}, at 16–19).
The studies referenced above do not conclude that all Republicans in the South are racist, or vote based on racial referents. Clearly neither is the case. But they do indicate that it is premature to view the divisions in party preferences there as now cleansed of any racial content whatsoever. It has not been a secret that there has been, since the middle 1960s, a wide gap in Democratic and Republican responsiveness to what African Americans see as their interests. The Democratic Party is viewed as being “more favorably disposed toward blacks and their interests” than the Republican Party. Indeed, one student of the role of race in party politics today notes that the Republican Party “has a reputation for apathy—or worse—toward blacks.” These party images cannot be dismissed as a contributing factor in why “it is the Republican Party that is [now] the party of southern whites, at least in the minds of many of the people who live there.”

Kerry Haynie and Candis Watts candidly state that, in politics today, “the more the Republican Party attempts to incorporate and accommodate racial and ethnic minorities and their policy interests, the more white supporters they are likely to lose.” This is no doubt more applicable to the South than any other region. The findings in the studies referenced above reveal one reason why, as Bullock and Gaddie note, it is so difficult to disentangle party voting from racial voting in the South.

The stress on party voting by Bullock and Gaddie is presumably the reason why the election analyses reported in this book deal almost exclusively with general elections. As they state, general elections are now “the elections of consequence” in the region (p. 356, emphasis added). But this is much too narrow a focus, especially in a book on minority voting rights. Party primaries also have consequences; they are an important step of the electoral process in which the candidates of choice of minority voters protected by the VRA can be, and depending on the racial composition of the electoral unit often are, eliminated from the competition prior to a general election. Voting in party primaries is not ignored in voting rights cases, and should not be ignored by anyone concerned with minority vote dilution. Racial divisions in party primaries are often part of the evidentiary record relied upon by courts in finding racially polarized voting within defendant jurisdictions.

Bullock and Gaddie provide the results of analyses of some Democratic primaries for only three states, Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas, and no Republican primaries. When the candidate choices in those states involved African American and white candidates, or Latino and Anglo candidates, there were usually acute divisions between voters along group lines, with voters demonstrating clear preferences for candidates from within their own group (pp. 99, 101, 211, 245).

**THE OBAMA ELECTION**

The authors also provide an epilogue on the 2008 presidential election, in which Barack Obama became the first African American to be elected president of this country. They identify the VRA as “critical” to this historical event (p. 365). When it came to obtaining the Democratic Party nomination, they point out that “Obama’s entire delegate margin was provided, on balance, by the nine south-

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20James M. Glaser, *The Hand of the Past in Contemporary Southern Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 169. Glaser reports a telling anecdote from a 1996 campaign for a U.S. House seat in Virginia, quoting the campaign manager for a Republican candidate as stating, “We’d have loved to get him [the white Democratic opponent] publicly going after black votes, as we’d get a lot of white votes from him,” at 111.
21Haynie and Watts, supra n. 18, at 108.
22See Engstrom, “Thernstrom v. Voting Rights Act,” *supra* n. 10, at 207–208. (I note a correction to this review: In footnote 25 on page 208, the citation to *Sessions v. Perry* should be 298 F. Supp. 2d 451, 493 (E.D. Tex. 2004).) Nonpartisan elections, another context in which candidates are not identified by partisan affiliation, are also often part of the evidence supporting court findings of racially polarized voting. *Ibid.*, at 208. This reviewer does not recall any nonpartisan elections being the subject of analyses in this book.
23The small number of African Americans participating in Republican primaries might make it difficult to get reliable estimates of African American support for the candidates within them. This should be more feasible, however, when it comes to estimating the same for Latino voters.
ern Section 5 states” (p. 366). They further note that “Black voters constituted majorities or near majorities” in all of the southern primaries he won except Virginia (p. 366). While no estimate of the racial breakdown in candidate preferences in these Democratic primaries is provided for any state, one would have to consider these results, and the stress Bullock and Gaddie place on the African American portion of the primary electorate, as strong circumstantial evidence of racially polarized voting in the region. Estimates of the racial breakowns for general election preferences between Obama and the white Republican candidate, John McCain, are provided for all of the southern states. These are taken from the Voter News Service’s exit polls. Bullock and Gaddie note that “the most starkly polarized electorates” in this election were in the Deep South states (p. 369). The African American vote for Obama exceeded 90 percent in all of the southern states. The percentages of the white vote for Obama in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina, in contrast, were estimated to be 11, 12, 14, 23, and 26 respectively. He did better among white voters in the Rim South, receiving from 26 percent in Texas to 42 percent in Florida. He even carried three of the Rim South states, Flor-

24 The use of additional information concerning candidates and their campaigns in this book appears to be less than balanced. It is used at times to offer explanations for why white voters didn’t support African American candidates. For example, a Democratic African American candidate who lost a general election for state Treasurer in Mississippi is described as “more experienced than his Republican opponent, having directed the state’s Department of Finance and Administration,” but was “unable to match” the opponent “in fundraising” (pp. 43–44). A losing African American Democratic candidate for a U.S. House seat in a majority-white district in Georgia is described as “deeply flawed” because he “had been arrested multiple times, although never convicted” (p. 90). This candidate is also described as running an “inept campaign” (pp. 90–91), while another African American Democratic candidate that lost a general election for Insurance Commissioner in Georgia is said to have failed to run a “credible” campaign (p. 106).

Yet, when estimates of white voter support for African Americans Democratic candidates in general elections suggest that white voters cast a majority (albeit small) of their votes for them, no such efforts at embellishment are made. When two estimates of the white vote for U.S. Representative John Lewis in his 1998 reelection to the Fifth Congressional District in Georgia are 50.2 percent and 53.7 percent, this is described in the text as “notable” (p. 100). Two other notable things about this election do not make it into the text, however. One can be derived through the associated table (p. 101), and that is his Democratic opponent was also an African American, therefore leaving voters without an option to vote for a white candidate. The other, which can only be partially derived from the table, is that his opponent shared his name; he was John Lewis, Sr. But perhaps more surprising, given the comments noted above about African American candidates running less than credible campaigns, is that when U.S. Representative Artur Davis in Alabama won reelection in 2004, the text reads “African American Artur Davis, running in the majority-black 7th District, commanded an estimated majority of the white vote in his 2004 reelection bid” (p. 75). The estimate, contained in the associated table, was 50.2 percent of the white vote. Nowhere however is his opponent, or his opponent’s campaign, mentioned. The opponent was Steve Cameron, a white who was unopposed in the Republican primary. According to Associated Press coverage of the campaign:

Steve Cameron says he’s running for Congress in hopes of changing the face of the Republican Party by recruiting more black Christians to the GOP. The only thing standing in his way, he says, is the Confederate flag. “What the problem is in this state, Southern whites won’t let go of that flag,” he said. “Blacks agree with us on so many biblical questions but the whites are too proud to let it go. The Republican Party would be strengthened with black Christians.”

The AP further reported that Mr. Cameron “said he disassociates himself from the term ‘conservative.’” (http://usatoday.printthis.clickability.com; last accessed May 29, 2010). (I would like to thank Edward Still for providing me with access to this AP coverage.) This no doubt would be considered a less than credible campaign conducted by Mr. Davis’s opponent, and in this context, 50.2 percent of the white vote for an African American incumbent is hardly impressive.

CONCLUSION

As noted above, the role of the VRA in the growth in minority voter registration, turnout, and descriptive representation in the South is well documented. There is much information about each in this book, which can serve as a handy updated source for these phenomena. The book also provides evidence that pervasive and often pronounced racial divisions in candidate preferences still characterize elections there. But the idea that these divisions no longer have any basis whatsoever in “racial attitudes or racial motivations” (p. 356) is not persuasive. It is certainly not documented in this book.

The authors warn readers about “single-factor explanation[s]” of these divisions when those explanations attribute “all of the difference to race” (p. 156). Yet the authors come very close to doing the same, using party as the single factor. While attachments to the Republican Party, as those to the Democratic Party, have multiple determinants, one cannot ignore the fact they are not totally void of racial referents. The fact that the Democratic Party is more responsive than the Republican Party to African Americans’ perceived needs and interests is not exactly a secret in American politics. It is clearly something that both whites and African Americans are aware of, and any suggestion that these perceptions play no role in party choice in the South is naive at best. Racial resentment has been shown to affect the Republican Party identifications among southern whites more than whites outside the South. The authors simply have not succeeded in disentangling race from party choice, which they themselves acknowledge is a very difficult thing to do!

The little attention that party primaries receive in the analyses also reveals racial divisions in candidate preferences. Indeed, the relative absence of attention in the authors’ analyses to party primaries, and the complete absence of attention to local elections, whether partisan or not, is a glaring weakness in their analysis of racial voting patterns. There is evidence of racial divisions in these elections in numerous expert witness reports in voting rights cases in the South, as well as the decisions in those cases, that could have been referenced. A more complete review of voting in the region would have assisted readers in assessing for themselves whether racial referents have been eliminated from what are still racial divisions in voting there.

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26Some additional matters are addressed in this book. Each chapter on a state covered by section 5, even partially, contain statistics on the number of objections by the DOJ to voting changes adopted in it. And the assignment of federal observers to elections in some of the states is recounted. The concluding chapter contains commentary on the “Norwood Amendment” to change the coverage formula for section 5, which was not added to the 2006 reauthorization (pp. 345–349), and the Supreme Court’s decision in the *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number One v. Holder*. In NAMUDNO, the eight-person majority did not respond to a claim that section 5 was unconstitutional, except in dicta, although Justice Clarence Thomas dissented on this issue, announcing that he would hold section 5 unconstitutional. 129 S.Ct. 2504 (2009).

27While this warning is appropriate in theory, no citations are provided to such explanations actually being offered. They are not found in serious social science scholarship.