The impact of the Black and Hispanic vote for Donald Trump and

the future of the Republican Party

Since the 2016 elections, the conversation about the Black and Hispanic vote has increased and developed. Both of these minority groups make a huge difference in the election results and play a very impactful and insightful voice. Although, the Democratic party is known to get the majority of the minority vote, a shift and change of attitude has developed among young minority voters that have started to become either Independent or vote Republican. As we will see later in this essay, geography and culture also play a huge role in this vote. For example, the Hispanic vote in New York can be much different than the Hispanic vote in Florida or Texas. I will mainly be focusing on the minority vote for Donald Trump and the discussion surrounding the minority support for him. What is interesting about the 2016 and 2020 elections is that although Donald Trump still did not get the majority of the Hispanic and Black votes, he got one of the highest numbers in history for a Republican candidate. In addition, we saw pro-Trump movements from the Hispanic/Latino and Black community that were not seen as much in previous years; for example Blacks for Trump, the Blexit movement and the Latinos for Trump movement in Miami, Florida.

What is the reason behind this and what messaging spoke to these groups that, for some, pushed them to vote Republican for the first time in their lives? This paper examines this topic and the results of the Black and Hispanic vote, specifically focusing on the 2016 and 2020 elections. In addition to that, it will also be focusing on why these groups have lost trust in the system and how that has pushed some of them to vote or lean a certain way or not vote at all due to a loss of trust in our government.

First, I will go over the history of how these specific groups have voted in the past. Second, I will discuss the percentages and numbers of the voting results in these two demographics in the year 2016 and 2020 for Donald Trump. Third, I am going to discuss the important points that matter to the Hispanic and Black community based off of research, what message they are looking to hear from a candidate and Donald Trump’s campaign strategy to win them over. Last, I will be discussing the overall impact the minority support played in the 2016 and 2020 elections and what kind of role they might play in the 2024 elections and the impact it will have. In addition, I will discuss where the Republican party will stand after the Donald Trump’s defeat.

**First**

The Hispanic and Black vote have played a very large and important role in our electorate. Now more than ever before, voter turnout in these two groups has increased dramatically which has been a very positive aspect in our voting system. With that being said, it has not always been this way. To begin with, the African American population was not able to vote until the 15th amendment was passed in 1870 which gave them that right. This was one of the most important symbolizations of freedom for the African American community because they finally had a say in our government process. Around the late 1920s is when African Americans shifted their vote from the Republican party to the Democratic party (history.house.gov). During the election of Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt is when a big turning point occurred with the Black vote because many Black voters did not trust Roosevelt, but they also did not trust Hoover, who did not have much planned to help the Black community economically. Hoover failed to uplift the Black community during the depression era and as time went on more Black Americans began to leave this party and move to the Democratic party thinking that it will best represent them and their needs. Although Hoover was not seen in a favorable light by Black voters, FDR was not more favorable either. He had growing support from the Black community, but still did not dedicate time to civil rights issues and supporting the economy for Black Americans.

Today, the Democratic party still continues to hold the majority of the support coming from the Black community, but in recent years there has been a shift due to a lack of trust in our government. In a Black Swing voter study conducted by American University, a young woman said that “she didn’t believe much what any elected officials say because she didn’t see any results that helped her life” (Steinhorn 4). This is a big issue because the Black vote is one that is ignored, but can truly change the entire outcome of an election, as we saw in this election. Young Black voters play a major factor of our elections today and they are one of the most involved groups in politics and current events. We see this in action with the Black Lives Matter movement, Me too movement, Blacks for Trump groups, etc. Young Black voters definitely embrace the Democratic party more and the Democratic party tends to speak to them more as well, but not all think the same and view the Democratic party as favorably as their parents and grandparents once did. As stated in the “Black Swing Voter” study, young Black Americans “are fed up with being taken for granted by the Democratic Party and will not fall in knee-jerk compliance with the political status quo” (5). This is a shift in tone compared to older Black Americans, but why is this? Is a similar major shift to the one during the FDR era happening in 2020? A large majority of Black Americans just do not see their needs and concerns being discussed about or cared about and rather feel taken advantage of. This is a common theme coming from Black voters from both sides of the aisle.

Hispanic Americans have made a huge impact in the last few years and they have been loud about their concerns and especially about their fear of a socialist government, which became a big platform for Trump to run on for the Hispanic community in Florida, a very important battleground state. The Hispanic vote has a lot of influence stemming from issues such as immigration and socialism. As I mentioned in the beginning, the Hispanic vote does differ depending on what state they live in, but a good amount of older Cuban and Venezuelan Hispanics that live in Florida tend to support the Republican party due to their experiences in their own home country. Their support for Donald Trump in the 2016 and 2020 elections was louder than previous years for a Republican candidate and Hispanic Americans became very involved in politics during this time.

Although the voter turnout rate has increased in recent years, historically, the Latino and Hispanic voters have had a pretty low voter turnout rate. As stated by writer Eliza Carney, “ There are more than 55 million Latinos in the United States and 23.3 million were eligible to vote in 2012, but only 11.2 million actually cast ballots in that presidential election- a 48 percent turnout rate that fell well short of the 61.8 percent turnout overall” (Carney). It is also important to note that the reason for this is also due to many of them awaiting their time to become citizens; “5 million Latinos hold green cards…if all eligible Latino voters actually cast ballots, the size of the Latino electorate would more than double” (Carney). What is very interesting about the Hispanic/Latino vote is that there is a lot of diversity within the group. People who are Latino/Hispanic come from different backgrounds, experiences and cultures, therefore they base their politics off of what they have experienced in their home country or heard about from the older generations in their family. What may be important to a Mexican American can differ from what may be important to a Cuban American. Sergio Garcia-Rios, a political science professor, who spoke to five thirty eight said that “We do a disservice when we paint the Latino vote with a broad brush” (DeVeaux). When it comes to President Donald Trump, it is the Cuban and Venezuelan Americans that tend to be more in favor of him and there are Mexican Americans who are not as in favor of him due to comments President Trump made early on in his 2016 campaign. The Latino/Hispanic community have been known to vote for a Democratic candidate the majority of the time. In the 2012 elections, Barack Obama won a very large percentage of the Latino/Hispanic vote due to his stance and rhetoric on immigration. Authors Matt Barreto and Loren Collingwood wrote that “… a Latino Decisions election eve poll reported that Obama defeated Romney 75%-23%, the highest Latino vote margin ever for a Democratic presidential candidate” (Barreto 490). Obama really spoke to this community and pulled them in when he made policy decisions that would benefit them the most, for example the Dream Act executive order (Barreto). Although the Democratic party has successfully and repeatedly been able to win the Latino/Hispanic vote, whereas Republicans have been consistent with that community in the states of Texas, Arizona and Florida. Writer for NBC news, Suzanne Gamboa and Carmen Sesin, stated that “…In Texas, Republicans have been able to win a third to 45 percent of Latino’s votes; George Bush drew more than 40 percent of the Hispanic vote as governor. And in Florida’s 2018 races, Latino support propelled Republican Gov. Rick Scott to the Senate” (Gamboa). According to Pew Research, John McCain won 31% of the Hispanic vote, but only 5% of the Black vote (Pew Research). Although Trump did not do better than all Republican candidates overall, he beat Romney in both the Latino/Hispanic and Black vote and did significantly better than McCain in 2008 with the African American vote. In addition to this, in 2016 and especially in 2020 ,Trump has done a very good job at attracting the Latino/Hispanic vote, specifically with his promises about the economy and bringing back more jobs that will economically benefit them. It is also important to note that, like Black Americans, many Hispanic voters have been let down and wanted someone who is not the classic politician that will just tell them what they want to hear and this explains part of the reason for their support for Trump in 2016 and 2020.

**Second**

In the 2016 elections, Donald Trump won about 29% of the Hispanic vote and 8 % of the Black vote (Sakuma NBC). This is higher than Romney in 2012, who had 27% of the Hispanic vote and 6 % of the Black vote. In 2020, Trump went up in votes in both of these groups and did better than he did in 2016, especially with younger Black voters. Many young Black voters are part of groups such as Blexit and have become much more supportive of the Republican party and Trump than in the past. The AU study stated that “…the 29% of younger Black respondents who expressed trust in Congressional Republicans to act in their best interest was slightly higher than middle-age Black respondents (21%) and significantly higher than older Black respondents (8%) (Steinhorn 6). In addition to that, the study also mentioned that aside from issues they have with the President and his comments, “more than a third (35%) of the young respondents said they admired President Trump for “the way he shows strength and defies the establishment…”” (7). This trend shows the growing support that minority groups have for Donald Trump compared to past Republicans, which does come as a shock to many. According to the five thirty poll, although the Democratic candidate has always succeeded ahead in winning the minority vote, “Trump’s support among young Black voters (18 to 44) has jumped from around 10 percent in 2016 to 21 percent in UCLA Nationscape’s polling” (Skelley).

Trump has also increased his popularity with the Hispanic community since the 2016 elections. According to the UCLA Nationscape’s polling, “Trump is attracting 35 percent of Hispanic voters under age 45, up from the 22 percent who backed him four years ago in the CCES data” (Skelley). This polling was conducted before the results of the 2020 elections, but it is important to note that in Florida, Trump won a record high amount of the Hispanic vote. According to the NBC News exit polls, Trump won 55% of the Cuban American vote in Florida, 30% of the Puerto Rican vote and 48% of other Latinos, which can include Venezuelans, Dominicans, etc. These results come with no shock due to the Trump administration’s dedication and well spent time in Florida and specifically in Miami, where many of the Cuban and Venezuelan Americans reside.

**Third**

As discussed previously in this essay, the Black and Hispanic community, no matter the party, have felt that their needs and interests were not met and felt like they were let down. They wanted to see change and someone who will really listen to them and act on what they say, not just all talk and no action. The minority groups that did vote for Trump in either 2016, 2020 or both, voted for him for a reason and because they saw a different figure, not just the “typical politician” they have been listening to for years. Some people have a difficult time understanding why so many people from these minority groups voted for someone that they consider to be horrible for them. What really made them vote for Donald Trump and what message were they looking for that convinced them that he was the best candidate?

Many African Americans have not felt heard and have not been heard. A good group of them who did vote for President Trump left people from the Democratic party wondering what they can do to reach out to even more Black voters, particularly Black men, who are the majority of those Black voters who did vote for Trump. Trumps support from Black voters went up in the 2020 elections and a good reason for that comes from his more jobs and let’s make this economy strong rhetoric. As I mentioned previously, the Black community has been let down economically for decades and this new figure who came in and promised a strong economy, spoke directly to them and delivered with economic improvements until COVID hit pushed some Black Americans to stand with Trump. According to a Vox article, Black Trump supporters did not really focus on the way Trump spoke, but rather on economic prosperity and the Black unemployment rate (Collins). Right before the 2020 election, Trump started to work with well-known influencers and celebrities who helped spread the Platinum Plan idea. The Platinum Plan is supposed to economically help the Black community thrive “through a $500 billion investment…fund 3 million black jobs, 500,000 new Black businesses, increased Black homeownership, and new opportunities for Black churches to receive federal dollars” (Collins). This was a good tactic for Trump because he listened to their needs and tried to convince the Black community that he is there to help them and listen.

In addition to economic developments and low unemployment rates for the Black community, Trump really convinced many Black voters that he was the best choice with his criminal justice reform plans. As I mentioned before, many of these voters did not care about the way Trump spoke or his personality, but rather his results. A big issue for the Black community is mass incarceration and the racism and oppression within the criminal justice system. Trump surprised many with his bipartisan work on criminal justice reform and the First Step Act. His effort to work with Democrats and Republicans to promote rehabilitation for prisoners, end long prison terms for nonviolent offenders and more really attracted Black Americans who have been affected by this. Trump also worked to help Alice Johnson get out of jail for a non-violent drug offense; Johnson publicly has expressed support and gratefulness for President Trump and this also attracted many Black American voters to consider voting for him. It was messages and steps such as these that some Black Americans have been wanting to see which convinced them to vote for Trump in 2020.

The Hispanic/Latino community differs dramatically by state, but for those in states like Florida and Texas, the anti-socialist message played a huge role. It is important to remember that President Trump did run on a strict on immigration platform in 2016, so as a result, many Hispanics were not in favor of some of his policies. With that being said, Hispanic/Latino voters were not happy with the new radical left movement that was beginning to emerge within the Democratic party. In a piece by the Washington Post, “One in four Latinos voted for Trump last time. They’ll likely do so again.”, it stated that “…47 percent of Latinos in Florida and 40 percent in Arizona approve of how Trump has handled the economy…some say the Democratic Party is taking an “unpresented hard left turn,” and this could leave many Latino votes on the table” (Corral). The Hispanic/Latino community, specifically those who came from Cuba and Venezuela, suffered very intense and evil dictatorships that left many of them with one option and that was to flee. They suffered under policies that to them look similar like the far left ones and they do not mind looking past Trump’s personality and rhetoric if it means not experiencing what they already have in the past. The Trump campaign used this as a tactic to win their support in 2016 and keep it in 2020; calling the left the socialist party. Trump dedicated a lot of time to Cuban Americans and according to five thirty eight, “The Trump campaign made outreach to Cuban voters a priority early on, emphasizing Trump’s tough record on Cuba while also drumming up the idea that Biden was a “Trojan horse” bringing socialism to the U.S.” (DeVeaux). In addition to this message, Trump also promoted more jobs for the Hispanic/Latino community and economic growth, something they have also struggled with just like the African American community. Another big message that spoke to the Hispanic/Latino community was religion. The Washington Post stated that “Trump won six percentage points more of the Latino Protestant vote than did Romney, for a total of 31.6 percent of this group…This is consistent with evidence noting they hold more conservative views about a variety of issues, including immigration” (Corral). Trump used religion and his pro-life stance to appeal to Protestant and Catholic Latinos/Hispanics who value religion more than anything else. He knew that it was these messages that would garner their support and this is a group of Latinos that will continue to grow and play an important role in future elections. As stated, “The Trump campaign understands this group’s growth and rising political power, holding a January rally at a Latino evangelical megachurch in Florida, the country’s largest” (Corral). Although Trump did not win, it was these tactics that won him Florida and, most importantly, a high percentage of the Hispanic/Latino support for a Republican. According to five thirty eight, in Miami-Dade county, which holds a very high Cuban population, “Trump narrowed his deficit by 22 percentage points between 2016 and 2020”(DeVeaux). In Starr county in Texas, almost the entire population being Hispanic, “Trump improved by a stunning 55 percentage points” (DeVeaux). In addition, although Biden still won the majority of Latino votes and many Latino counties went blue, Trump still had gains in those areas which can really impact the future of the Hispanic/Latino vote for the GOP.

**Fourth**

Lastly, what comes next for Donald Trump, the Republican party and their future with the Black and Hispanic community? As I mentioned previously, although Donald Trump ended up losing many Latino counties, he still had gains in them, according to five thirty eight. In addition to that, he gained in the Hispanic and Black vote in 2020 compared to 2016 and did better than Romney in both groups. This shows that the Republican party is starting to gain more minority support and do better with these groups. The Black and Hispanic vote had a very important impact on the recent 2020 elections and they play a huge role in determining what the 2024 elections will look like as well. Trump was a populist figure and that attracted many people from the middle/working class; a large group of Hispanic/Latino’s and African American’s are part of that working class.

Overall, Trump changed the Republican party in many ways, in my opinion. In a way, it has become his party, at least in the eyes of some Republicans. In the 2020 elections “He made substantial gains across the whole county, but especially in areas heavily populated by Cuban Americans” (DeVeaux). Trump was very successful with minorities in Florida and Texas and this really “showed how the party could expand a “multiethnic, working-class coalition” that did not fit neatly inside the left-right paradigm” (Peters). In addition, the Republican party will really have to follow that populist trend and focus on a middle class message in order to win over the working class group and increase the minority vote. They need to show how they are there for all Americans, no matter their economic status, race and class. The new York times stated that some Republicans “need to accept that Mr. Trump realigned the party’s coalition away from wealthy, well-educated people in the suburbs, and that they should not obsess over winning those voters back” (Peters). I do not believe Donald Trump will disappear easily after this election and it will be very hard for other Republicans to takeover in 2024 and run successfully, keeping both the pro-Trump Republicans and anti-Trump Republicans under their wing, but it is incredibly important that the party keeps and expands their minority support because voter turnout for the Hispanic/Latino and African American community is increasing and will become a large impact in future elections.

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