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## Issues on Voter Participation among African Americans and Bureaucratic Behavior

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## **Cover Page Footnote**

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**Editors' Introduction**

# **Issues on Voter Participation among African Americans and Bureaucratic Behavior**

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**T**he *Ralph Bunche Journal of Public Affairs* begins its twenty first century volume three by looking at articles, research, and essays that intersect social justice and equity implications of public policy decisions as they pertain to minorities and other disadvantaged groups in the United States. In this volume, contributors explore current analyses of issues ranging from voter participation among African Americans and a century of riot commissions to local law enforcement bureaucratic behavior and zero-sum politics as a trust dilemma in presidential representation of group interests.

The opening article, "The Impact of Politicized Churches and Party Contract on African American Voter Turnout," authored by Randolph Burnside and Stephanie Pink-Harper examines the impact of politicized churches and party contract on the voting behavior of African Americans. Using data from the National Black Election Study, both Burnside and Pink-Harper discover that politicized churches have more influence on voter turnout than party contact. They conclude that while age and education determine who votes, linked fate significantly affect African American political activism.

In the second article, "What Happened to the 9/11 Commissions? What a Century of Riot Commissions Teaches us about America's Dependency on Independent Commissions," Lindsey Lupo uses both historical and comparative case study methods in explaining how the 9/11 Commission functioned like riot commissions despite their conceptual and jurisdictional differences, and concludes that these commissions' recommendations seldom result in substantial policy change at the national level.

The third article, "Pursuing an Answer: Bureaucratic and Legal Accountability in Local Law Enforcement Pursuit Policies," authored by Casey LaFrance uses both qualitative and quantitative data in explaining the decision-making processes deployed by

law enforcement managers in reviewing pursuit related accidents involving an innocent third party in contiguous counties. The analysis concludes that similarly situated counties could craft a universal policy solution to remedy common problems encountered by law enforcement officials in interpreting the existing pursuit policies in their jurisdictions.

In the fourth article, “About Face: A Perspective on Civilian Military Relations through the Lens of the Principal-Agent Theory,” Randall D. Swain deploys the principal-agent theory in explaining shirking tendencies by the United States military in its relations with civilian elected and political appointed officials. While civil-military relations are continually evolving and changing, Swain concludes that shirking tendencies by the military are more to occur when the White House is occupied by a Republican than when a Democrat is in control.

Zulema Blair looks at the African American voter turnout in the 2008 presidential election in the fifth article, “What We Should Have Known about the Black Vote: A Comprehensive Analysis of Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections.” Using a logistic regression model for presidential election years 1980 through 2000, the analysis explores factors that help to explain away voter turnout among African Americans in such elections. Surprisingly, the model reveals that low-income African Americans are more likely to vote than any other group, while their middle and upper-income counterparts are less likely to do so. These findings are contrary to the prevailing theory on the impact of socioeconomic factors on voter turnout.

Continuing on the 2008 presidential elections, Kristine Coulter, Jennifer R. Garcia, and Christopher T. Stout examine the effect of the presidential candidacies of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and the vice presidential candidacy of Sarah Palin in the sixth article, “Representing the Underrepresented: Descriptive Representation and Political Interest of African Americans and Women in the 2008 Election.” Using theories of descriptive representation, the article finds that while there are intra-group differences in political interest among African Americans and women, the younger generations within these groups experienced the largest growth in their interest during the 2008 elections.

In the final article, Shayla C. Nunnally deploys multiple regressions and embedded survey experiments to examine the level of trust among minority and majority Democrats in Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton to represent racial, gender, and intersectional interests in “Zero-Sum Politics as a Trust Dilemma? How Race and Gender Affect Trust in Obama’s and Clinton’s Representation of Group Interests.” Among all Democrats surveyed, the study results reveal that race and gender matters when it comes to voters’ perception of trust and their likelihood to vote for a particular candidate in the 2008 presidential elections. However, the distrust of the national government decreases African Americans’ level of trust for both candidates.

In sum, we would like to thank our editorial board members, reviewers, and staff for their willingness to serve the *Ralph Bunche Journal of Public Affairs (RBJPA)*. We also extend our thanks to all the contributors in this volume for considering *RBJPA* as an outlet for their scholarly work.