

**THE MINORITY OUTREACH PROJECT:
ORIGINS, PREMISES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

**AMERICAS MAJORITY FOUNDATION
Shaping the Future of Conservatism**

By

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Introduction

It is tempting to view the political loyalties of ethnic and racial groups as carved in stone from ancient origins, like geologic formations. One might suppose that the predisposition to vote Democratic was a dominant gene among blacks, to judge by the resignation shown in many Republican circles.

Yet the Republican Party had the black vote locked up for the last third of the nineteenth century. Even as recently as 1960, Richard Nixon got 32% of the black vote. (1) Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the affirmative action legislation of the 1970s marked the great divide, after which the black electorate became solidly Democratic. (2) Since then, the high-water mark has been the 18% of the black vote polled by Richard Nixon in his 1972 landslide victory over George McGovern. (3)

The Democratic tilt by Hispanic voters is of much more recent vintage, but it still provokes the same feelings of futility and inevitability among Republicans. Yet it was only 2004, a mere six years ago, when George Bush chalked up 44% of the Hispanic vote. (4) Today, Hispanics figure in Republican-Party politics primarily as objects of demonization on right-wing talk radio, where the doom-laden electoral implications of illegal immigration by Hispanics are endlessly repeated.

A conservative party commanding the black vote of a Richard Nixon, circa 1960, and the Hispanic vote of a George W. Bush, circa 2004, would be electorally impregnable. That prospect alone is enough to provoke the imagination. Nor is this simply wishful thinking. There are solid reasons to view this goal as attainable.

Conservatives can learn a valuable lesson from the Libertarian Party. For decades, Libertarians have used their "World's Smallest Political Quiz" as a tool for research and outreach. It classifies the quiz-taker's political orientation based on his or her responses to fundamental political and economic questions. Blacks have consistently tested "conservative." That is, based on their responses, they should be voting for Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan. Instead, they vote for Lyndon Johnson and Walter Mondale. This suggests reason for hope rather than hopelessness in pursuit of the black vote.

Debate over the issue of assimilation by Hispanic immigrants into American culture has sparked considerable research into Latino behavior and attitudes. This research paints a picture that should lead conservatives to pursue, not abandon, the Hispanic vote. Hispanics tend to preserve strong religious and family ties. The entrepreneurial urge is strong within Hispanic communities. Demographically speaking, Hispanics are the only U.S. demographic group with a positive rate of reproduction. As the great demographer Ben Wattenberg has pointed out, Islamic cultures are reproducing rapidly while Americans, Europeans and Japanese have falling birthrates. Theological distinctions aside, the relative lack of political and economic freedom in Islamic countries points up the possibility of a bleak demographic future.

The Minority Outreach Project was organized by the late Richard Nadler and the late John Uhlmann. It began in 2002 with a series of political-issue advertising placements designed to recruit blacks and Hispanics to the conservative viewpoint. In practice, the words “conservative” and “Republican” often overlap or even coincide. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the project was not intended as a promotional vehicle for the Republican Party *per se*. Consequently, our ads are not candidate-specific, but instead focus on conservative ideals and the failure by Democrats to address the concerns of minorities.

Every election year since 2002, Nadler’s political-action committees and foundation (Council For Better Government, Americas Pac, Americas Majority and Americas Majority Foundation) have run political-issue ads presenting the conservative viewpoint in minority media – radio, broadcast television and cable television. During his lifetime, Nadler followed up each campaign with a summary of results that compared Outreach with non-Outreach jurisdictions and original results with subsequent ones.

Those comparisons are striking and undeniable. “Christianity,” somebody once remarked, “has not been tried and found wanting – it has been found difficult and not tried.” Similarly, Republicans have failed to win minority votes not because the votes are unwinnable, but because of lack of effort. Nadler himself put it more delicately in his 2002 summary of results: “The voting results and cost data of this analysis imply a reformulation of the G.O.P.’s electoral challenges in communities of Latinos and African Americans. It is not minority liberalism, nor minority exceptionalism, that defines the G.O.P.’s underperformance among these groups, but minority isolation – the cultural isolation of many Blacks and the linguistic isolation of many Hispanics.” (5)

A few brief highlights of each Minority Outreach Campaign follow.

2002

In evaluating the results of a minority outreach campaign, the criterion for success seems obvious. More votes for conservative candidates come first to mind as the ideal measure. Thus, we considered an increase in the Republican share of the minority vote in MOC-advertised precincts as an indicator of political-issue advertising success. (Republicans are not the only conservatives, but - for various reasons - this was the indicator most likely to be germane to our project.)

At first glance, the most likely scenario for our success would be one in which a listener to MOC ads switches political allegiance from Democrat to Republican. In practice, the matter becomes much more complicated.

Very often, the reaction of a voter whose long-held sympathies are successfully challenged is not to switch party allegiance. It is to refrain from voting altogether. The psychology of this is fairly transparent. Feelings of disillusion, disgust and bitterness often accompany the realization that a longtime relationship has been unavailing. Instead

of immediately choosing a new political allegiance, the voter may experience a period of electoral disenchantment. This is usually not permanent, but rather a temporary respite allowing sufficient time for the wounds of political rejection to heal. This is a universal phenomenon, often observed in the transition from one-party to politically-competitive environments. (6)

Yet another possible scenario is one in which a politically-inactive listener is moved to action by hearing MOC ads and votes for a conservative (i.e., Republican) candidate. Quantitatively speaking, disentangling these various possibilities is not easy. Fortunately, it is not vital to our success.

Economists recognize that competition is beneficial. A consumer need not consume the product of a new entrant into the market in order to benefit, since his or her preferred producer will have to lower price and/or increase product quality in order to compete. This logic applies just as strongly in politics as it does in the commercial marketplace. Hence, the disruption of traditional voting patterns actually empowers the minority community by creating competition for their votes and providing them with more choice at the ballot box.

The results of the Minority Outreach Campaign in 2002 demonstrate success by both the straightforward and subtle criteria laid down above. In congressional districts in which the MOC advertised, the increase in the black vote compared with the previous election in that district averaged 3.16%. The average Hispanic vote total averaged 6.14% higher than in the previous election. (7)

Just as significant, and perhaps even more intriguing, is the fact that black and Hispanic turnout in MOC districts declined by 45% and 48%, respectively, compared with statewide norms. (8) In previous elections, Democratic strategy had been to ramp up interest in minority areas in the closing weeks of a campaign by running ads portraying Republicans as threats to the employment, incomes, physical well-being and even the very lives of the residents. Now those ads were countered by logical arguments explaining why socialism, the welfare state, abortion, high taxes and government schools were harming those same residents. Clearly, this intellectual competition caused many minority residents to change their votes and even more to retire from the fray to ponder their position. (9)

An overview of the 2002 campaign reveals just how impressive its results were. This MOC covered 11 states and 29 different areas. Nadler painstakingly analyzed the results for each area in three ways: [1] by comparing Republican minority vote totals in relevant 2002 races with a 2002 election benchmark such as the Presidential campaign; [2] by calculating minority turnout; and [3] by comparing that turnout to a relevant norm, such as overall statewide turnout for 2002. He also compared each area to a control area – a neighboring area in which the MOC was not active. This method enabled him to calculate what the Democrat performance would have been in both the MOC-active area and the control area, had performance followed that of the 2000 baseline. The difference between

the MOC-active area and the control area in this last respect was the gain (or loss) from the MOC issue-advertising program.

Republicans *increased* their minority-vote percentage in *27 out of 29 MOC areas*. (The two decreases were minute; the top gains were 10.34% in black-vote percentage and 17.75% in Hispanic-vote percentage.) Democratic turnout in the MOC-active areas *decreased* relative to the statewide norm in *27 out of 29 areas*. (The largest declines were 135.89% greater than the norm in one black-vote case and 102.02% greater than the norm in one Hispanic-vote case.) Republicans gained from the MOC issue advertising *in all 29 cases*. (The largest gains were 31.19% in one black-vote area and 166.67% in one Hispanic-vote area.) (10)

2004

In 2004, the MOC was limited by lack of funds. Nevertheless, it advertised in key “battleground” states such as Florida, New Mexico and Ohio. (In 2000, the year of the notorious contested Presidential election, Bush carried Florida by 537 votes and Ohio by a somewhat larger margin, while Al Gore narrowly won in New Mexico.) The Republican Party actually improved somewhat on its previous performance among minorities, particularly with Bush’s 44% performance among Hispanics. (11)

The Republican average was pulled up by the MOC performance in the three battleground states. In MOC-advertised precincts, the Republicans averaged 14.04 % of the black vote and 47.17 % of the Hispanic vote. This compared very favorably with the baseline 2000-election performance of 9% of the black vote and 35% of the Hispanic vote. The net vote margin in those precincts represented 74% of Bush’s victory margin in Ohio, 63% of Bush’s victory margin in Ohio and virtually the entire margin in New Mexico.

In overall terms, the MOC placed 24,297 ads in 21 areas located in 7 different states. The black program targeted 4 states (Florida, Nevada, Ohio, Wisconsin), while the Hispanic program targeted 6 states (Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, Wisconsin). (12)

Ohio case study

OHIO 2004 AND 2006

The MOC results in 2006 can perhaps be best summarized in capsule form with a case-study comparison involving battleground states.

The first case compares the same state – Ohio – in successive elections. What happens when a minority campaign is continued in consecutive election cycles? In both 2004 and 2006, Americas PAC ran ads in Ohio. In 2004, George Bush obtained 16% of the black

vote in MOC-advertised precincts, and this represented 74% of George Bush's victory margin. (13)

In 2006, the Republicans suffered crushing defeat in the off-year elections, but the MOC campaign in Ohio nevertheless *maintained* Republican share of the black vote. Ken Blackwell obtained 20% of the black vote, while Michael DeWine garnered 15%. (14) This helped Republicans to protect three Republican congressional seats in the midst of a general debacle.

These data point up a virtue familiar to any commercial advertiser: consistency. It applies in politics just as it does when selling soap. It is difficult to appreciate the value of consistency when there is no minority program in the first place, as has traditionally been the case in official Republican campaigns.

In contrast, the MOC has been able to develop consistency by making the most of its limited funds. It has bought nearly 70,000 radio and cable TV ads over five election cycles with a total budget of just over 2 1/2 million dollars.

Ohio vs. Pennsylvania in 2006

A different kind of case study comparison is cross-section rather than time-series. In comparing a state where the MOC was active (Ohio in 2006) with one where it was not active (Pennsylvania in 2006), additional valuable insights emerge.

Pennsylvania borders Ohio and shares similar demographics. In 2006, there were many political similarities between the two states. In both states, for example, several incumbent Republicans were underdogs in their races. Republicans also ran black candidates for governor in each state, Ken Blackwell in Ohio and Lynn Swann in Pennsylvania. As a former Pittsburgh Steeler and a Hall of Famer, Swann had the advantages of star power and name recognition.

While both candidates were soundly defeated, Ken Blackwell received 20% of the black vote while Lynn Swann only received 13%. (15) Indeed, Blackwell's total would probably have been enough to gain victory for a Republican candidate in a normal political climate.

The gubernatorial race was not the only one to provide an instructive comparison. Ohio Republican Senatorial candidate Michael DeWine obtained 15% of the black vote whereas Pennsylvania Senatorial candidate Rick Santorum garnered only 10%. (16)

Not only did the candidate who ran in MOC-advertised precincts receive an unusually high percentage of the black vote in each case, but the total substantially exceeded that won by a comparable candidate in a comparable neighboring state.

In overall terms, the 2006 placed 16,671 ads in 21 areas located in 11 states.

2008 Wisconsin, Colorado and Ohio

A casual observer might have predicted that the MOC had its back to the wall in 2008 when the Democrats nominated the first black Presidential candidate in American history, Barack Obama. To make matters worse, the death of the MOC's primary funder left the initiative with its lowest-ever total of available funds. Nonetheless, the MOC achieved two notable successes.

Wisconsin was one of two states in which the MOC ran a statewide campaign targeting a black audience. Obama captured the highest percentage of the black vote (95%) in postwar election history – the average for the McCain-Palin ticket was only 4%. Yet in Wisconsin, the ticket won 9% of the black vote. (17) The likelihood that this outcome was due to coincidence or to some factor outside the influence of the MOC seems unlikely.

In 2004, George Bush collected 44% of the Hispanic vote. The McCain-Palin ticket performed dismally by winning only 31% of Hispanic votes. The only state in which McCain-Palin outperformed Bush-Cheney was Colorado – *which was the only state in which the MOC advertised statewide to a Hispanic audience.* (18) Once again, this is difficult to ascribe to any factor other than the presence of the MOC.

Over five election campaigns covering nearly 30 states, the only outright failure suffered by the MOC was in Ohio in 2008. The McCain-Palin campaign won only 2% of the black vote in the state despite extensive statewide MOC involvement. (19) It is even possible that there was a backlash against our involvement in an election featuring the first black Presidential candidate in history – although it is not clear why it did not also affect our results in neighboring Wisconsin.

In overall terms, the 2008 MOC placed 13,572 ads in 14 areas located in 5 states.

2010

In 2010, the MOC was operating without the benefit of its founders, Richard Nadler and John Uhlmann, both of whom died within months of each other in 2009. It was also denied the services of the man who had been its key negotiator in previous ad-buying campaigns. It lacked a single key funder, unlike its position in 2002, 2004 and 2006. Nonetheless, the MOC continued to succeed by utilizing the techniques and previous creations of its founders and guiding spirits, much as the Spanish once won a key battle against Moors by following the leadership of El Cid - *even after his death.*

The MOC outreach program focused intensively on Wisconsin, advertising on the four leading black-oriented radio stations in Milwaukee. Its ads stressed the virtues of a freer market in education and lower taxes, explaining how public education has especially failed the black community and high taxes have stymied local economic development.

The Republicans captured major statewide federal offices, including marquee victories in Senate and Governor's races. Their black-vote percentage in those races (14%) exceeded the Republicans' national average by 44%. Compared to the last midterm election in 2006, black turnout in MOC-advertised precincts fell by 20%. (20)

Compare these results with neighboring Illinois, where Republican Senatorial candidate Mark Kirk won 3% of the black vote and gubernatorial candidate Bill Brady won 6%. In Ohio, John Kasich won 8% - nowhere close to what Republicans had done when MOC had advertised there in past elections. (21)

The MOC also advertised in Nevada and Colorado. Nevada is an interesting case, because it yields still another type of comparison: one in which the Democrats ran the same Senatorial candidate, Harry Reid, in two successive elections. In 2010, the MOC ran both black and Hispanic programs in Nevada (more specifically, in Las Vegas and surrounding Clark County). Reid's 2010 opponent, Republican Sharon Angle, garnered 11% of the black vote and 30% of the Hispanic vote. But in Reid's previous campaign, 2004, his previous Republican opponent, Ziser, won only 7% of the black vote and 27% of the Hispanic vote. Thus, Angle's performance was a considerable improvement. (Her loss was probably attributable to her winning only 53% of white voters, compared to the 62% carried by victorious gubernatorial candidate Sandoval, who won 10% of the black vote and 33% of Hispanics.) (22)

In overall terms, the 2010 MOC placed 2868 ads in 4 areas located in 4 states.

Conclusion

The foregoing is a fragmentary summation of the MOC's activity and results in the five election cycles in which it has operated. Richard Nadler produced extensive summaries for 2002 and 2004, but time constraints and changes in external circumstances precluded further summaries prior to his death. Eventually, we hope to use his methods to further analyze the work of subsequent years. Meanwhile, Nadler's early summaries are the best in-depth recapitulation and analysis of the MOC, and they also provide an excellent presentation of the motives and rationale for the project.

Richard Nadler's Minority Outreach Project presented nearly 70,000 political-issue ads to blacks and Hispanics in nearly 40 different areas located in over 20 states. These areas contained the heaviest population densities of minority residents; consequently, they represented some of the strongest and most intransigent supporters of the Democratic Party. Yet in almost every case, the MOC was able to increase the Republican vote percentage and reduce turnout for Democrats, compared to a relevant benchmark. It is safe to say that this outcome would have been considered unthinkable and impossible prior to its achievement.

It is hoped that this brief summary will introduce the reader to the Minority Outreach Project and pique his or her interest in a project that has attracted international attention

working in a battleground traditionally abandoned by traditional Republican campaigns (23) (24).

Even on the basis of this brief exegesis, it should be clear that this lack of Republican focus is an inexplicable omission and that ceding the minority vote to the Democrats is a tragic and unnecessary mistake.

References

1. Exit polling did not begin until 1972, so estimates prior to that year vary even more widely than subsequent ones. The 32% figure was provided by Robert George, editorial writer for the *New York Post*, in an article in *National Review* magazine in 2000. A more widely-cited figure is the 30% advanced by such sources as Ronald W. Walters' 1988 book, **Black Presidential Politics in America**. This lower number still seems huge by today's standards, but it compared unfavorably with Dwight Eisenhower's estimated showing of 39% of the black vote in 1956. Eisenhower purportedly benefited from the *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, which occurred on his watch. In contrast, Nixon was allegedly outmaneuvered by John F. Kennedy's celebrated phone call to Martin Luther King, Jr., who was being held in a Birmingham, AL jail after having staged a civil-disobedience demonstration in the Presidential campaign's closing days. Many contemporary observers ascribed Nixon's defeat to his relatively poor showing among black voters.
2. This is highly ironic in at least two respects. First, the Civil Rights Act was passed by a coalition of Republicans and liberal Democrats, over the objection of southern segregationist Democrats – the term “Solid South” originally referred to the stranglehold these Democrats gained precisely by virtue of their segregationist policies. Second, as pointed out by the noted black economist Thomas Sowell in his book **Economic Facts and Fallacies**, the black poverty rate fell dramatically between 1940 and 1960 – *before* passage of the Civil Rights Act and affirmative action legislation. This decline in black poverty slowed significantly after 1964 (the year the Civil Right Act was passed) and virtually stopped during the 1970s (after passage of affirmative-action legislation began).
3. 18% is the figure cited by the *New York Times* in its compilation of Presidential exit polls. Other sources, such as the Walters book noted above, cite 15%.
4. This is the figure cited by the CNN and Roper exits poll for 2004. See reference (10) below.
5. “Republican Issue Advertising In Black And Hispanic Population Areas: A Meta-Study of the 2002 Mid-Term Election,” by Richard Nadler.
6. People invest differing amounts of emotion in the choice of goods and services. Those people who “purchase” a political candidate as they choose loyalty to a sports team, by investing a great deal of emotion in the outcome of games or elections, are more likely to experience this temporary phenomenon. In contrast, those who “purchase” a candidate as

dispassionately as they choose a brand of automotive tire or a pair of underwear are much less likely to undergo it.

7. “Republican Issue Advertising In Black And Hispanic Population Areas: A Meta-Study of the 2002 Mid-Term Election,” by Richard Nadler.

8. Nadler recognized that the relevant comparison contrasted minority turnout with the contemporary norm, which he defined as the statewide turnout in that election for all voters.

9. This gave rise to a somewhat comical situation when Democrats began complaining about Republican “vote suppression.” While this calls up images of redneck Southern sheriffs patrolling polling places with snarling German Shepherd dogs to physically prevent black entry, the truth is more mundane. It was black voters themselves who were “suppressing” their own turnout, by refusing to turn out to support Democrats in whom they no longer placed unquestioning faith.

10. This figure has generated intense controversy among proponents and opponents of immigration, with the latter arguing that it is inflated. However, nobody seems to object to an estimate of 40%. In his summary of results, a 2008 *National Review* article and other work, Nadler himself used 41.7%, based primarily on his review of actual precinct vote totals in areas heavily populated by minorities.

11. “The Influence of Republican Issue Advertising On Partisan Vote Share Among African American and Hispanic Voters in the 2004 Presidential Election,” by Richard Nadler.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. CNN state exit polls, 2006.

15. CNN state exit polls, 2006.

16. CNN state exit polls, 2006.

17. CNN state exit polls, 2008.

18. CNN state exit polls, 2004 and 2008.

19. CNN state exit polls, 2008.

20. CNN state exit polls, 2006 and 2010.

21. CNN state exit polls, 2010.

22. CNN state exit polls, 2004 and 2010.

23. The initial campaign by the Council For Better Government was so unique that press stories on its activities were covered as far away as Britain as well as being covered by ABC News, The New York Times and many other major dailies.

24. In addition to receiving independent media coverage, MOC often had an additional latent function. Left to their own devices, DJs and other on-air personalities were often highly critical of both Republicans and conservative values. However, confronted with a major boost in advertising dollars, station managers were more than willing to provide a welcome and friendly outlet for our commercials and our ideals, effectively curbing the vitriol of on-air staff in the process.