

THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND POLITICAL INFORMATION: HOW DO RACE, AGE, AND POLITICAL EVENTS IMPACT POLITICAL INFORMATION CONSUMPTION?

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black youth project™



The 2008 Presidential Election and Political Information: How do Race, Age, and Political Events Impact Political Information Consumption?

During the 2008 presidential election, PBS and YouTube collaborated on a project called Video Your Vote, which encouraged voters to film their Election Day experiences and post their videos online.¹ The social-networking Web site Twitter also provided a forum for sharing and disseminating political information; users not only “tweeted” about their political views, but also organized political protests at the Republican National Convention, contacted press, reported on the length of lines at polling places, and even avoided police with the help of the Web site.² The flurry of political information from digital and electronic sources that surrounded the 2008 election was unprecedented, and these forms of “new media” are increasingly replacing more “traditional” sources and print media. This report investigates whether the election has had a lasting impact on the types of political information that people use, and whether there are race- and age-based differences in the sources of political information that people prefer. Below, all references to data gathered before the election indicate Wave 1 survey results, while all references to data from after the election refer to Wave 3 survey results.

ATTENTION TO NEWS ABOUT POLITICS BY AGE AND RACE

A comparison of surveys taken before and after the election indicates that the amount of people who paid attention to politics declined dramatically after the election. In response to the question “In general, how much attention are you paying to news about the campaigns for President?” 25 percent of all white, 31 percent of black, 12 percent of Asian, and 21 percent of Latino respondents answered “A great deal” (see Figure 1a and Table 1 below). After the election, 13 percent of white, 11 percent of black, 10 percent of Asian, and 9 percent of Latino respondents answered that they paid “a great deal” of attention to politics. Thus the percentage of people in each group except Asians (whose level of attention to politics was lower than

all other groups to begin with) who paid “a great deal” of attention to politics declined by about half after the election.

The same trend is evident among young people (age 35 and under) in each ethnic group: among young white, black, Asian, and Latino respondents, 18, 24, 12, and 14 percent, respectively, said they paid “a great deal” of attention to politics before the election. After the election, these figures were 6, 7, 10, and 6 percent, respectively. As with the general Asian population, young Asians who paid a great deal of attention to politics remained stable.

The percentage of respondents who said they paid no attention to politics before the election was relatively low and was similar across racial groups: 4 percent of

¹<http://www.youtube.com/videoyourvote>.

²Simon Owens, “Citizens, Media, Use Social Media to Monitor Election, November 3, 2008, <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2008/11/citizens-media-use-social-media-to-monitor-election308.html>.



Figure 1a

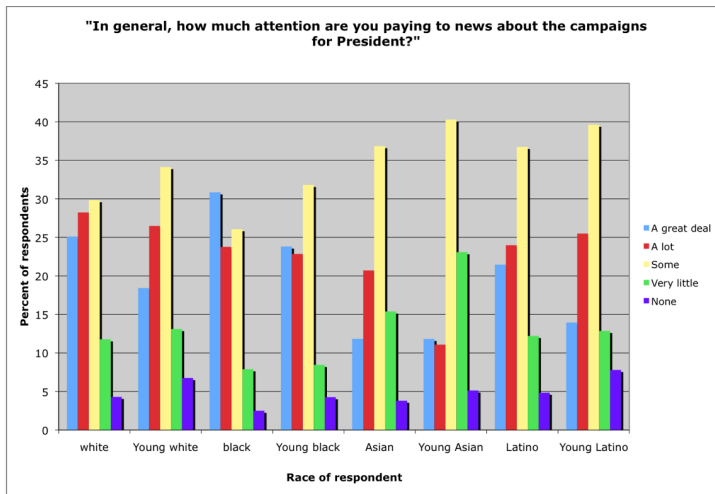


Figure 1b

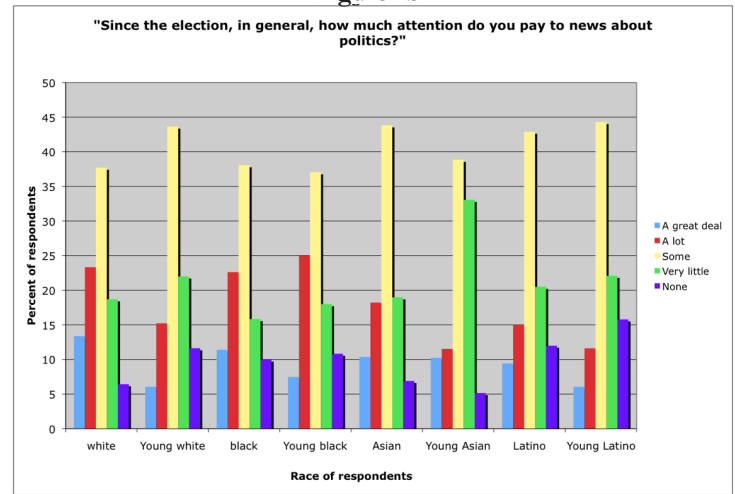


Table 1: Attention paid to politics before and after the election

Response	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	White	Young white	Black	Young black	Asian	Young Asian	Latino	Young Latino
A great deal	25	18	30	24	12	12	21	14
	13	6	11	7	10	10	9	6
A lot	28	26	24	23	21	11	24	25
	23	15	23	25	18	12	15	12
Some	30	34	26	32	37	40	37	40
	38	44	38	37	44	39	43	44
Very little	12	13	8	8	15	23	12	13
	19	22	16	18	19	33	21	22
None	4	7	3	4	4	5	5	8
	6	12	10	11	7	5	12	16

Note: Numbers in black indicate percent of respondents before the election. Numbers in gray indicate percent of respondents after the election.

whites, 3 percent of blacks, 4 percent of Asians, and 5 percent of Latinos chose this response. After the election, these numbers increased to 6 percent (white), 10 percent (black), 7 percent (Asian), and 12 percent (Latino). For every group except Asians, these differences were greater for young people: 7 percent of young whites, 4 percent of blacks, 5 percent of Asians, and 8 percent of

Latinos said they paid no attention to news about the election. After the election, this percentage went up, and 12, 11, 5, and 16 percent, respectively, said they paid no attention to news about politics (see Figure 1b and Table 1 below for the percent of each group who paid “a lot,” “some,” or “very little” attention to politics before and after the election.)

Figure 2

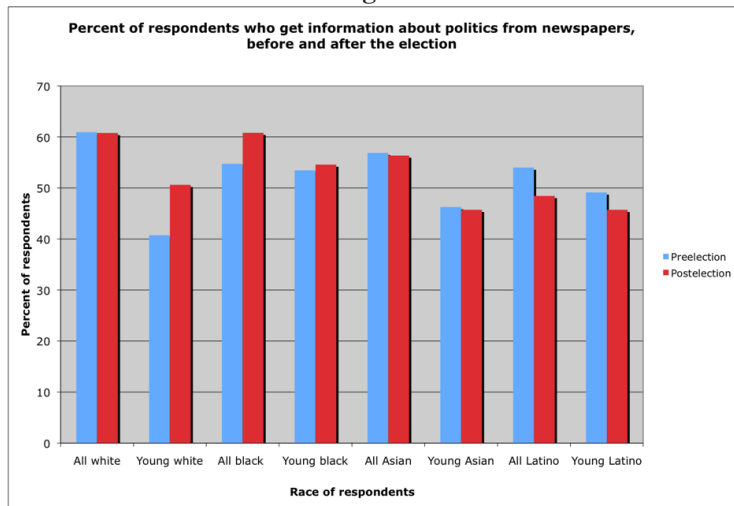


Table 2: Newspaper reading before and after the election

	Respondent, by race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	60.93	40.74	54.73	53.45	56.88	46.26	54.00	49.12
Post-election	60.78	50.62	60.81	54.59	56.36	45.72	48.44	45.72

TYPES OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION SOURCES, BY AGE AND RACE

NEWSPAPERS

Before and after the election, respondents were asked to indicate where they get their information about politics. Among all white, black, Asian, and Latino respondents, 61, 55, 57, and 54 percent, respectively, answered that they got news about politics from newspapers (see Figure 2 and Table 2 Above). After the election, these percentages were 61 (whites), 61 (blacks), 56 (Asians), and 48 (Latinos). Thus, among whites and Asians, the percentage using newspapers stayed about the same, while this percentage increased among blacks and decreased among Latinos. In the population of young people, 41 percent of young white people got information about politics from newspapers before the election, jumping to 51 percent after the election; these figures for young blacks were 53 percent before and 54 percent after, 46 percent before and 46 percent after for

young Asians, and 49 percent before and 46 percent after for young Latinos. (See Figure 2 and Table 2 above.)

TELEVISION

By and large, the most prevalent source of information about politics among all age and racial groups is television. Before the election, 90 percent of white, 85 percent of black, 74 percent of Asian, and 91 percent of Latino respondents said that they used television as a source of information about politics. After the election, these numbers were similar for all groups except whites, at 84 percent (white), 86 percent (black), 78 percent (Asian), and 89 percent (Latino). Among young white, black, and Asian, and Latino respondents, 83, 81, 70, and 89 percent, respectively, watched TV before the election, and 73, 75, 69, and 85 percent, respectively, watched TV for political information after the election. As with the general white population, the young white population's use of TV for political information decreased. For

Figure 3

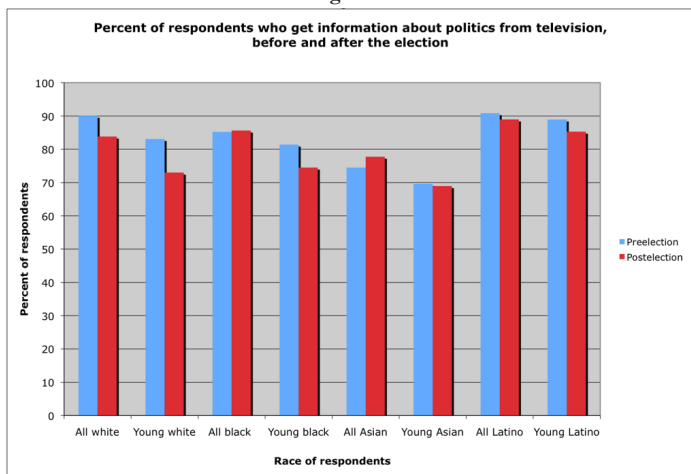


Table 3: Television as a source of political information, before and after the election
Respondents, by age group and race, %

	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	90.05	83.1	85.22	81.42	74.49	69.59	90.84	88.95
Post-election	83.84	73.01	85.63	74.5	77.76	68.95	88.98	85.29

all other young groups, TV watching remained about the same. (See Figure 3 and Table 3 above.)

MAGAZINES

Before the election, similar percentages of white (21 percent), black (22 percent), Asian (23 percent), and Latino (20 percent) respondents said that they got information about politics from magazines. After the election, these figures were 19 percent (white), 26 percent (black), 29 percent (Asian), and 18 percent (Latino). While magazine reading went down slightly among all whites after the election, among young whites it increased from 13 to 15 percent. As with all black respondents, among young blacks magazine reading increased, from 26 to 28 percent. Among young Asians, magazine reading remained constant, at 21 percent before and 22

Figure 4

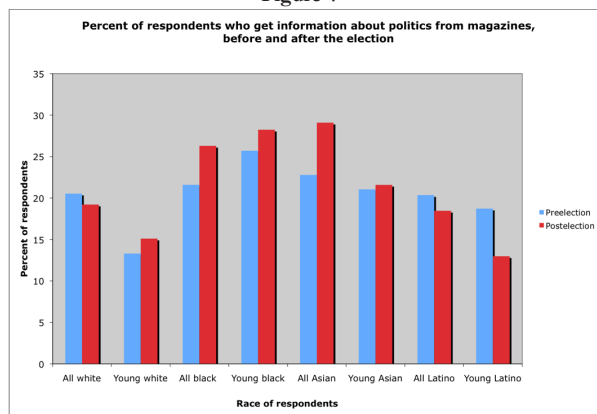


Table 4: Magazines as a source of political information, before and after the election

Respondents, by age group and race, %								
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	20.53	13.3	21.59	25.7	22.78	21.04	20.35	18.72
Post-election	19.21	15.1	26.29	28.23	29.08	21.58	18.46	12.98

percent after the election. For Latinos (as among all Latino respondents) magazine reading decreased from 19 to 13 percent. (See Figure 4 and Table 4 above.)

MAIL

Among all racial groups, young people got less information about politics through the mail than the general population. For all racial and ethnic groups, the volume of political mail consumed decreased after the election. Before the election, 25 percent of white, 26 percent of black, 25 percent of Asian, and 18 percent of Latino respondents got political information from mail. After the election these numbers were 16 percent (whites), 23 percent (blacks), 15 percent (Asians), and 10 percent (Latinos). Young white (12 percent), black (19 percent), Asian (16 percent), and Latino (13 percent)



Figure 5

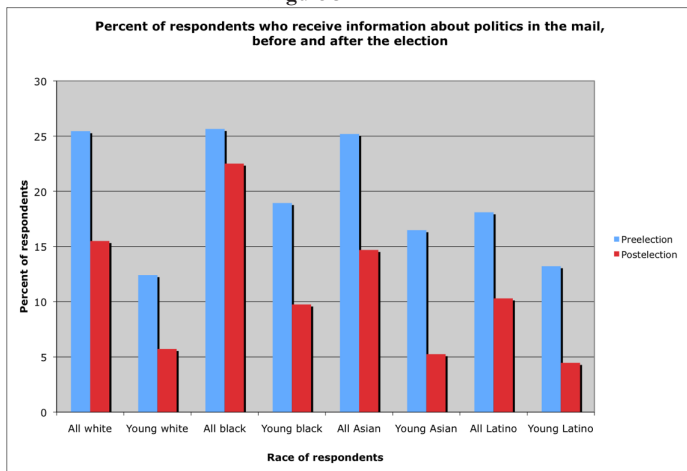


Table 5: Mail as a source of political information, before and after the election

	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Preelection	25.45	12.41	25.65	18.94	25.19	16.48	18.1	13.22
Postelection	15.50	5.72	22.51	9.75	14.69	5.25	10.30	4.46

respondents received less political mail before the election, and these figures decreased further to 6 percent (whites), 10 percent (blacks), 5 percent (Asians), and 4 percent (Latinos) after the election. Thus, blacks received the most political information by mail, both before and after the election. This was true for the general population as well as for the young respondents. (See Figure 5 and Table 5 Above)

RADIO

About half of all white (46 percent), black (46 percent), and Latino (49 percent) respondents indicated that they got information about politics from the radio before the election, while this figure was 30 percent among Asians. After the election, 43 percent of white, 49 percent of black, 35 percent of Asian, and 46 percent of Latinos listened to the

Figure 6a

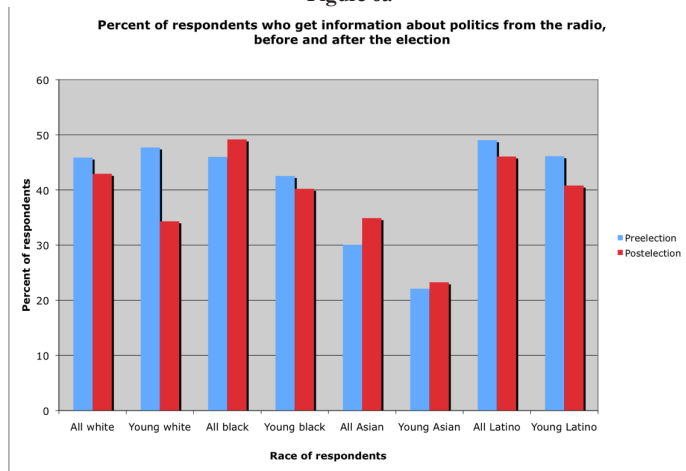


Table 6a: Radio as a source of political information, before and after the election

	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	45.87	47.71	46.00	42.54	30.06	22.09	49.03	46.12
Post-election	42.93	34.31	49.17	40.21	34.90	23.26	46.06	40.80

radio for political information. Among young whites, blacks, Asians, and Latinos, before the election 48, 43, 22, and 46 percent, respectively, used the radio. After the election, these figures were 34, 40, 23, and 41 percent, respectively. (See Figure 6a and Table 6a Above)

CAMPAIGNS, CANDIDATES, AND POLITICAL PARTIES

As can be expected, the amount of people who received political information from campaigns, candidates, and political parties was higher among all age and racial groups before, compared to after, the election. Before the election, 24 percent of white, 21 percent of black, 11 percent of Asian, and 15 percent of Latino respondents received political information from these sources. These figures indicate that information from campaigns, candidates, and political



Figure 6b

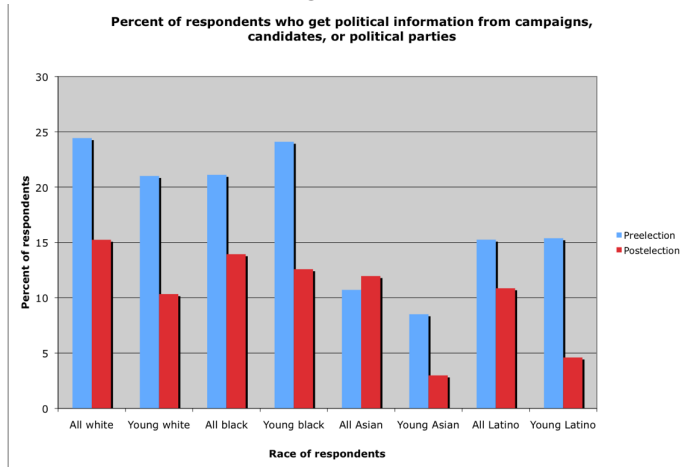


Table 6b: Campaigns, candidates, and political parties as sources of political information

	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Preelection	24.43	21.01	21.11	24.1	10.71	8.51	15.25	15.38
Post-election	15.24	10.33	13.94	12.58	11.96	2.98	10.86	4.60

parties reached white and black citizens more than Asian and Latino citizens. After the election, 15 (white), 14 (black), 12 (Asian), and 11 (Latino) percent of these groups received information from these sources. Among young white, black, Asian, and Latino respondents before the election, the percent who got political information from these sources were 21, 24, 9, and 15, respectively. After the election these numbers dropped to 10 (white), 13 (black), 3 (Asian), and 11 percent (Latino) percent. (See Figure 6b and Table 6b above)

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Friends and family appear to be relatively large sources of political information. Among all respondents, 56 percent of whites, 49 percent of blacks, 41 percent of Asians, and 49 percent Latinos indicated

Figure 7

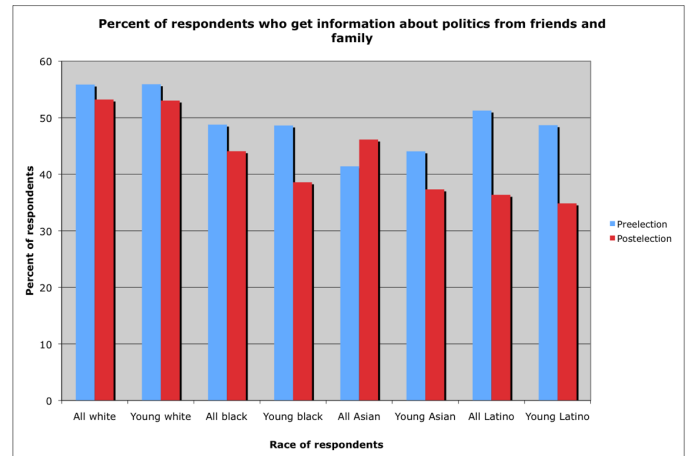


Table 7: Friends and family as sources of political information

	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	55.87	55.92	48.78	48.63	41.41	44.06	51.27	48.68
Post-election	53.22	53.04	44.08	38.58	46.14	37.33	36.37	34.85

that they got political information from friends and family before the election. After the election, these figures remained roughly similar for whites (53 percent), blacks (44 percent), and Asians (46 percent), but dropped nearly 15 percent for Latinos (to 36 percent). Among young people, the figures were similar to the general population before the election, with 56 percent of young white, 49 percent of black, 44 percent of Asian, and 49 percent of Latino respondents getting political information from friends and family. After the election, these percentages were 53 (white), 39 (black), 37 (Asian), and 35 (Latino). Thus, only the young white group continued to use friends and family as political information sources at roughly the same rate, while this decreased among all other young groups. (See Figure 7 and Table 7 above)



Figure 8

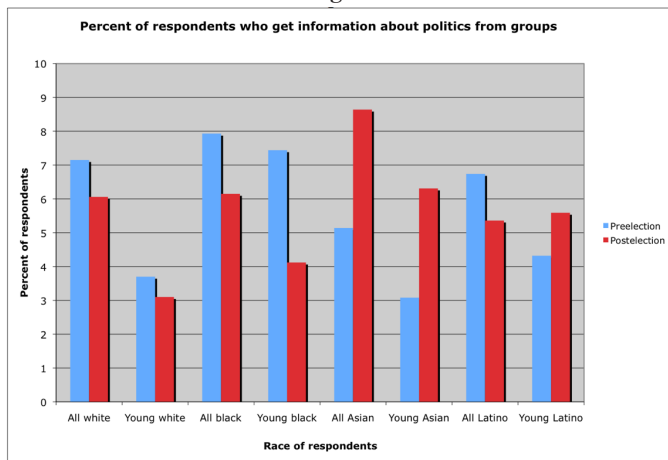


Table 8: Groups as a source of political information

	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	7.15	3.70	7.93	7.44	5.14	3.08	6.74	4.32
Post-election	6.06	3.10	6.15	4.12	8.64	6.31	5.36	5.59

GROUPS

Relatively few respondents received political information from groups that they belong to. Before the election, the 7 percent of white, 8 percent of black, 5 percent of Asian, and 7 percent of Latino respondents received information from groups. After the election, these numbers dropped for whites (6 percent), blacks (6 percent), and Latinos (5 percent), and rose for Asians (to 9 percent). Among young white, black, Asian, and Latino respondents before the election, 4, 7, 3, and 4 percent, respectively, received information from groups they belonged to. After the election, as with the general population, these numbers dropped for young whites (to 3 percent) and blacks (to 4 percent), but increased for young Asians (to 6 percent) and young Latinos (to 6 percent). However, all these increases and decreases are relatively small. (See Figure 8 and Table 8 above.)

PLACE OF WORSHIP

Respondents' places of worship, like groups, were not a very large source of political information. However, the percentage of all black and young black respondents who received information from their place of worship is greater than for all other groups. Among all respondents, 5 percent of whites, 12 percent of blacks, 3 percent of Asians, and 5 percent of Latinos received information from this source before the election. After the election, these figures increased to 6 percent for whites and 5 percent for Asians. For blacks and Latinos numbers stayed basically the same, decreasing slightly to 11 percent and 4 percent, respectively. Among young white, black, Asian, and Latino groups, 3, 8, 1, and 3 percent, respectively, said they got political information from their place of worship before the election. After the election, these figures increased to 4 percent for young whites, stayed about the same for young blacks (7 percent), increased to 3 percent for young Asians, and decreased to 1 percent for young Latinos. As with information from groups, these changes are all relatively small. (See Figure 9 and Table 9)

INTERNET

The percent of respondents who got information about politics from the Internet remained relatively stable after

Figure 9

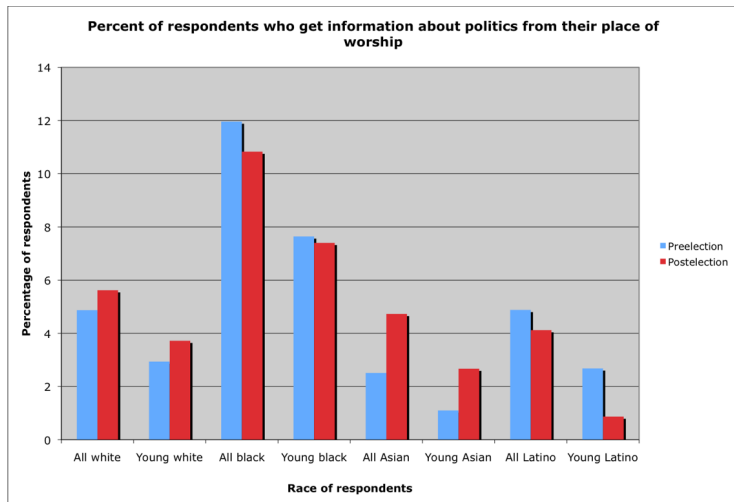


Table 9: Place of worship as a source of political information

	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	4.87	2.94	11.96	7.64	2.51	1.1	4.88	2.68
Post-election	5.62	3.72	10.83	7.4	4.73	2.67	4.12	0.87

the election for all groups except Asians, for whom Internet use increased. Before the election, the percentage of white (49 percent) and Asian (50 percent) respondents using the Internet was roughly the same, followed by black (40 percent) and Latino (34 percent) respondents. After the election, these figures were 49 percent (white), 40 percent (black), 65 percent (Asian), and 32 percent (Latino). The percent of young people using the Internet was higher among all racial groups. Roughly the same percentage of young white (59 percent), black (57 percent), and Asian (56 percent) respondents used the Internet for political information before the election, compared with 40 percent of young Latino respondents. After the election, 58 percent (white), 56 percent (black), 78 percent (Asian), and 36 percent (Latino) of these groups used the Internet to get information about politics.

INTERNET USE COMPARED TO MORE TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Before and after the election, all respondents got political information from newspapers at higher rates than they did from the Internet. This holds true after the election for all groups except Asians. Among all Asians, 56 percent used newspapers for political information after the election, while 65 percent said they used the Internet. Looking at just the young population within each racial group reveals that, in contrast to their groups as a whole, young white, black, and Asian respondents all used the Internet more than newspapers, both before and after the election. Young Latinos, however, like the rest of their racial group, used newspapers more than the Internet. These results also indicate that Latino youth might have differential access to the Internet than their peers of other races.



Figure 10

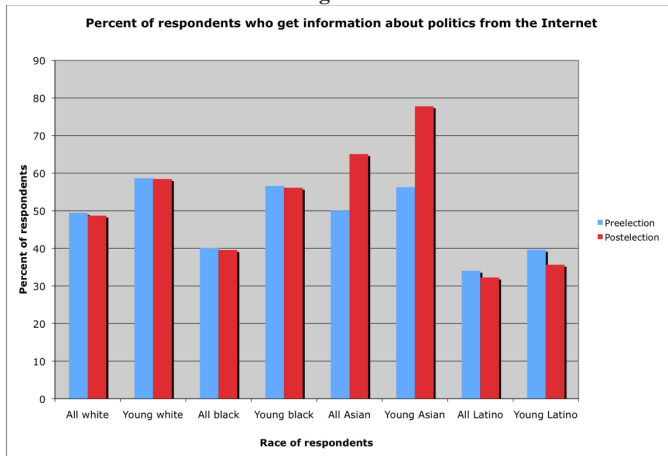


Table 10: The Internet as a source of political information

	Respondents, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Pre-election	49.44	58.69	40.05	56.62	50.02	56.29	34.03	39.63
Post-election	48.71	58.44	39.56	56.13	65.08	77.80	32.24	35.64

Figure 11

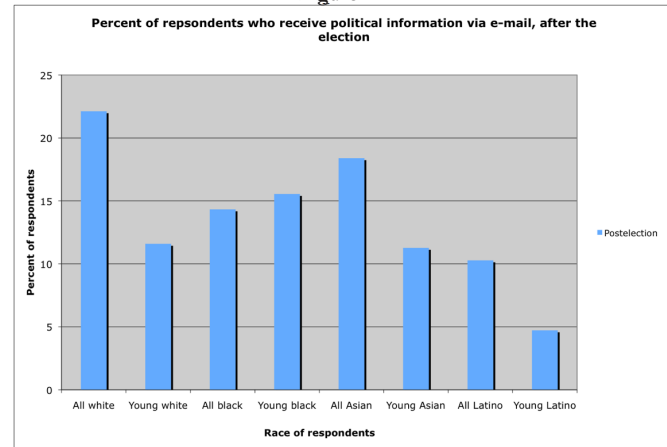


Table 11: E-mail as a source of political information (wave 3 only)

	Respondent, by age group and race, %							
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Post-election	22.12	11.59	14.33	15.55	18.39	11.27	10.28	4.72

Television remained the most common source of information across all racial and age groups: all groups said that they watched television for political information at higher rates than they used the Internet, both before and after the election. Thus, while more young people (except Latinos) use the Internet than they read newspapers, both young and old use television more than either the newspapers or the Internet. (See Figure 10 and Table 10 above.)

E-MAIL

Survey data is available for the percentage of people who received political information in e-mails after, but not before, the election. Among respondents, 22 percent of whites, 14 percent of blacks, 18 percent of Asians, and 10 percent of Latinos said that they received information about politics via e-mail after the election. Young white (12 percent), Asian (11 percent), and

Latino (5 percent) respondents almost all used e-mail less for political information than the general population. Young black people, however, at 16 percent, used e-mail slightly more than the general black population. Thus, while young people are more likely than the general population to use the Internet to seek out political information, they are less likely to use e-mail for political communication than the general population. It appears that young people look for and consume information on the Internet, while older people get their information from other sources but use e-mail to share their political information or opinions. (See Figure 11 and Table 11 above.)

TEXT MESSAGING

As with e-mail, data regarding the percentage of people who receive political information via text message are only available from the survey carried out after

Figure 12

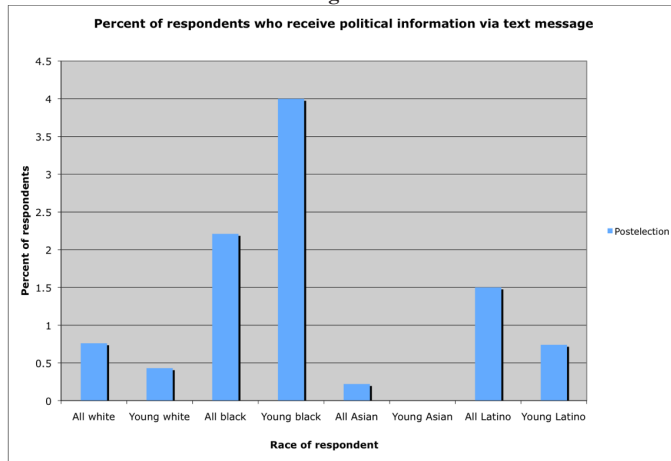


Table 12: Text messages as a source of political information (wave 3 only)

Respondents, by age group and race, %								
	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Post-election	0.76	0.43	2.21	4.00	0.22	0.00	10.28	1.50

the election (wave 3). Text messages were the least-used medium for dissemination of political information among sources in the survey, with 1 percent of whites, 2 percent of blacks, 0 percent of Asians, and 2 percent of Latinos saying they received political information from this source. Among young whites, blacks, Asians, and Latinos, these figures were 0, 4, 0, and 1, respectively. (See Figure 12 and Table 12 above)

TRUST IN INFORMATION SOURCES

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they trust the sources of political information that they use. The results are summarized in the tables below. The number of people expressing trust in information sources reflects the number of people who use these sources—so, for example,

Table 13a: Trust in information sources, before the election
Respondents, by age group and race, %

	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Newspapers	8.76	5.57	7.59	8.20	15.49	20.60	8.69	5.75
Magazines	1.49	1.39	0.69	0.95	0.26	--	0.46	--
Television	20.03	17.7	35.22	28.96	26.43	19.37	48.87	52.54
Mail	0.34	--	1.27	--	0.87	--	0.39	0.43
Internet	8.67	17.13	6.18	10.77	14.54	34.35	5.74	8.79
Radio	9.93	11.98	3.43	2.13	6.55	3.59	2.58	1.73
Campaigns	2.12	1.58	6.28	9.99	0.33	--	2.29	3.30
Friends/family	15.61	18.91	10.32	8.31	7.71	11.61	6.66	6.44
Groups	0.75	0.20	1.08	0.36	0.73	--	0.68	0.64
Worship	2.15	1.33	3.15	0.09	0.48	0.38	1.50	0.53
Don't trust any	30.1	24.21	24.22	29.82	26.43	20.11	21.58	19.62

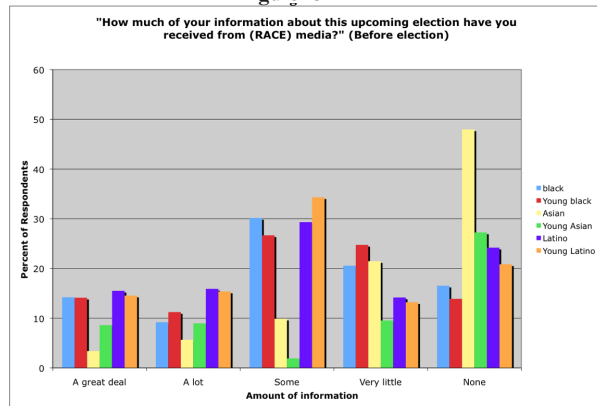
Table 13b: Trust in information sources, after the election
Respondents, by age group and race, %

	All white	Young white	All black	Young black	All Asian	Young Asian	All Latino	Young Latino
Newspapers	10.08	9.67	10.35	9.01	16.10	15.25	10.23	6.34
Magazines	2.50	1.68	0.87	0.74	1.33	0.61	0.33	0.25
Television	19.98	17.43	32.14	35.59	19.40	20.31	47.25	52.45
Mail	0.44	--	0.98	1.07	0.26	--	0.60	--
Internet	8.95	13.98	5.55	11.32	17.26	30.29	5.30	7.37
E-mail	0.82	0.14	0.49	0.70	0.57	0.53	0.34	0.77
Radio	9.63	8.22	2.95	3.15	5.58	3.15	1.79	0.68
Campaigns	0.51	0.98	0.93	0.79	--	--	1.14	--
Friends/family	12.22	15.41	8.05	6.96	10.98	11.25	5.67	3.89
Groups	0.43	0.28	1.58	0.75	0.53	--	1.44	2.15
Worship	1.34	0.94	3.12	2.84	0.75	0.69	1.06	--
Don't trust any	32.88	31.26	32.53	29.85	27.24	17.92	23.66	24.54

relatively few people trust information from mail, magazines, radio, campaigns, groups, or their place of worship, but few people use these sources in the first place. Relatively more people trust the newspaper, the Internet, and friends and family, because these sources are generally used more among all groups.

A full comparison can be done by examining the percentages in Tables 13a and 13b (see above), but some of the main results are summarized here. Looking at the more popular and trusted information sources, trust in newspapers, television, and the Internet generally stayed the same for all age groups before and after the election. However, young Asian people's trust in television decreased several percentage points, from 21 to 15 percent, and the trust of

Figure 13



all Asians in television decreased from 26 percent to 19 percent. All groups’ trust in family and friends as sources of political information decreased slightly, perhaps because discussions about politics with friends and family also decreased after the election.

The number of people who said that they “don’t trust any information” is relatively high: before the election, 30 percent of whites (33 percent postelection), 24 percent of blacks (33 percent postelection), 26 percent of Asians (27 percent postelection), and 22 percent of Latinos (24 percent postelection) said they didn’t trust any political information sources. Among young white people before the election, 24 percent said they didn’t trust any information (compared to 31 percent after); these figures were 30 percent among young blacks (and 30 percent after), 20 percent among young Asians (and 18 percent after), and 20 percent among young Latinos (and 25 percent after). Thus, the biggest changes were

Table 14a: Race-specific media as a source of political information, before the election

Amount of information	Respondent, by age group and race, %					
	Black	Young black	Asian	Young Asian	Latino	Young Latino
A great deal	14.21	14.12	3.39	8.97	15.51	14.55
A lot	9.20	11.23	5.66	1.92	15.90	15.38
Some	30.16	26.67	9.89	9.53	29.32	34.32
Very little	20.57	24.75	21.47	27.25	14.17	13.22
None	16.54	13.90	47.97	43.73	24.19	20.85

Table 14b: Race-specific media as a source of political information, after the election

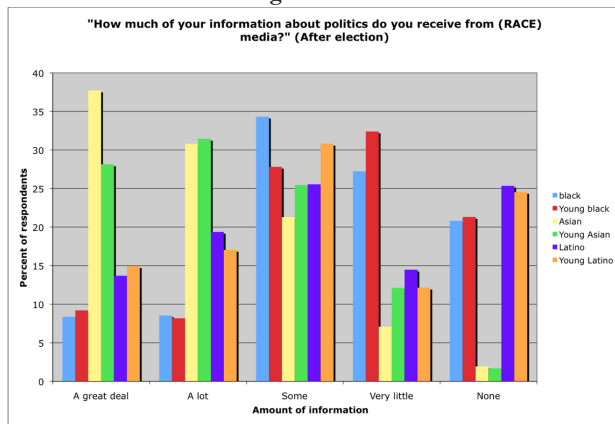
Amount of information	Respondent, by age group and race, %					
	Black	Young black	Asian	Young Asian	Latino	Young Latino
A great deal	8.37	9.20	37.71	28.14	13.69	14.93
A lot	8.54	8.18	30.79	31.45	19.38	17.04
Some	34.31	27.82	21.29	25.46	25.55	30.80
Very little	27.24	32.40	7.09	12.09	14.47	12.14
None	20.82	21.32	1.93	1.67	25.35	24.55

the decrease in all trust among the young white population and the general black population between the time before and after the election.

RACE-SPECIFIC MEDIA

Respondents were asked how much political information they received from media sources targeted specifically at people of their race. Before the election, 14 percent of black, 3 percent of Asian, and 16 percent of Latino respondents claimed to use these sources of information “a great deal.” The percent of black respondents who got political information from media targeted at a black audience dropped to 8 percent after the election. Latinos using information intended specifically for a Latino audience dropped less dramatically, to 14 percent after the election. In contrast to the other groups, this number rose dramatically for Asians, increasing to 38 percent. The same general trends occur among young black, Asian, and Latino populations: before the election, 14, 9, and 15

Figure 14



percent, respectively, got information from these sources, while after the election these numbers were 9, 28, and 15 percent, respectively. For both the general and young populations, use of these information sources decreased after the election for blacks, while for Latinos there was not much change and for Asians the use of these sources increased impressively. (See Figures 13 and 14, and Tables 14a and 14b)

LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL INFORMATION SOURCES

The great majority of respondents who said that their political information is in a language other than English are Latinos, whose information sources are in Spanish or who use both English and Spanish information. Young Latinos tend to use information sources in Spanish at slightly higher rates than the general Latino population. Before the election, 51 percent of all Latino respondents said that their trusted information sources were in Spanish and 43 percent said their

Table 15: Language of political information among Latinos

Language	Respondents, by age group, %			
	Latino (Before election)	Latino (After election)	Young Latino (Before election)	Young Latino (After election)
English	42.77	41.86	37.88	36.49
Spanish	50.57	53.26	54.19	58.95

political information was in English. For young Latinos before the election, 54 percent used information in Spanish and 38 percent used information in English. After the election, there was not much change in the percentage of Latinos using English information, but the amount using Spanish information rose to 53 percent for the general Latino population and to 59 percent for the young Latino population. This might indicate that there was a slight increase in the Spanish-speaking Latino population that paid attention to news about politics after the election. (See Table 15.)

CONCLUSION

In an ideal democracy, all sectors of the public would have access to information about politics; exposure to information—through one’s parents, the media, elections, and civic education—shapes a person’s political ideology and their opinions on political issues.³ While formal political outcomes like voter turnout

³J. M. McLeod, W. P. Eveland Jr., and E. M. Horowitz, “Going Beyond Adults and Voter Turnout: Evaluating a Socialization Program Involving School, Family, and Media,” in *Engaging the Public: How Government and the Media Can Reinstantiate American Democracy*, ed. T.J. Johnson, C.E. Hays, & S.P. Hays (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 217–34.



can indicate who participates in politics, informal processes—such as how one consumes on political information—are also necessary for civic participation.⁴ This study indicates that there are some race- and age-based differences in who pays attention to political information, where they get information from, and how much they trust these different information sources. Although much civic excitement surrounded the 2008 presidential election, there appears to have been a general decrease in the

amount of attention people pay to politics since then. By identifying where discrepancies in political information sources exist between groups, and which demographic groups prefer and trust different information sources, it should be possible to heighten access to political information where it is needed. Taking such measures should also sustain and elevate political information consumption in the times between momentous political events or elections.

⁴J. M. McLeod, “Media and Civic Socialization of Youth,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 27(Suppl) (2000): 45–51.