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FLORIDA POLITICAL CHRONICLE

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Campaign Strategies and Campaign Effects in the Sunshine State

Eunjung Choi and Seth C. McKee

Abstract: Due to its size and its enduring status as a swing state, Florida is one of the most coveted states to win in contemporary presidential elections. In this article we evaluate presidential campaign strategies and their effects in the Sunshine State in 2000 and 2004. The study proceeds as follows. We present a brief overview of the political history of Florida, assess the resource allocation strategies of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates in 2000 and 2004, and then evaluate the effect of resource allocation on county-level turnout and vote choice. It is apparent from the analyses that campaign strategies show considerable variability depending on the party of the candidate. In addition, there is evidence that at the county-level, advertising and candidate appearances affect turnout and vote returns. Examining the impact of presidential campaigns in a highly competitive state provides new insight on strategic behavior and its effects on election outcomes.

Campaign Strategies and Campaign Effects in the Sunshine State

In recent presidential contests no state has loomed larger in electoral significance than the state of Florida. Remarkably close contests have made the Sunshine State a coveted battleground. Given its unique combination of competitiveness and size (fourth most populous state), Florida could hardly be more important to presidential contenders. Florida has of course received its share of attention from the media and scholars alike, but popular and academic studies have focused most of their interest on the details of the 2000 debacle (e.g., deHaven-Smith, 2005; Sabato, 2002; Wand et al., 2001). The saliency of the 2000 contest was tied to

Florida's status in deciding who would be the next president and yet what scholars up to this point have overlooked (but see MacManus, 2004, 2005; Shaw, 2006) is the opportunity the Sunshine State provides for assessing campaign strategies and their effects on election outcomes.

Until recently, the major impediment to examining campaign strategies and their effects was the dearth of accessible data. Thanks to recent improvements in data acquisition and data measurement it is now possible to empirically investigate candidate strategies and whether the efforts of presidential nominees shape voting behavior. In order to evaluate presidential campaign strategies in Florida, this study relies heavily on the 2000 and 2004 data provided by Daron R. Shaw in his work *The Race to 270* (2006). Starting with the simple premise that campaigns make plans and that these plans are expected to influence voting behavior, we examine resource allocation strategies in terms of TV ads and candidate visits.

As made clear by Shaw (1999, 2006), in presidential campaigns the fundamental political boundaries within states are Designated Market Areas (DMAs)—county aggregations that delineate the parameters of television advertising and coverage of candidate visits. Thus, it is within DMAs that campaigns must decide how to allocate their finite political resources. With this in mind, county-level analyses that account for variation in resource allocation across DMAs reveal campaign strategies and their effects on turnout and vote returns in the 2000 and 2004 Florida presidential contests.

Florida Politics: A Competitive Microcosm of the United States

The contemporary presidential competitiveness of Florida indicates a departure from its more recent past as a state fairly representative of its southern neighbors (Lamis, 1999). To be sure, even when V. O. Key analyzed Florida in his classic *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949), Florida was distinct with regard to its abnormally large percentage of non-native residents—a trend that persists (see Black & Black, 1987; Colburn & deHaven-Smith, 2002). But culturally, Florida was very much a southern state (Peirce, 1974), especially to the extent that the larger native and southern population in the northern part of the state was able to maintain its grip on politics through its numerical superiority and control of the state legislature. This one-party Democratic status quo, however, eventually relented under the weight of electoral reform (reapportionment of state and federal legislative districts on the basis of equal population wrested control from the rural legislators known as the "Pork Chop Gang"), the civil rights movement, and the continuing in-migration of residents from outside the region and outside the country (Colburn, 2007).

The remarkable transformation of the state's population has reshaped Florida's politics. An erstwhile prominently southern one-party Democratic state, now looks more like a microcosm of the entire nation, both demographically and politically (Carver & Fiedler, 1999). With the exception of having an unusually large percentage of older residents and foreign immigrants, the racial and ethnic composition of the state is close to the national average (MacManus, 2005). And like the nation at large, Florida is politically split down the middle (Barone, Cohen, & Ujifusa, 2001, 2005). In political terms, the Republican realignment in the "Old South" northern reaches of the state (Black & Black, 1992, 2002) and the growing strength of the Democratic Party

in South Florida (see Gimpel & Schuknecht, 2004) testifies to the common refrain that the farther north you go the more southern it gets.

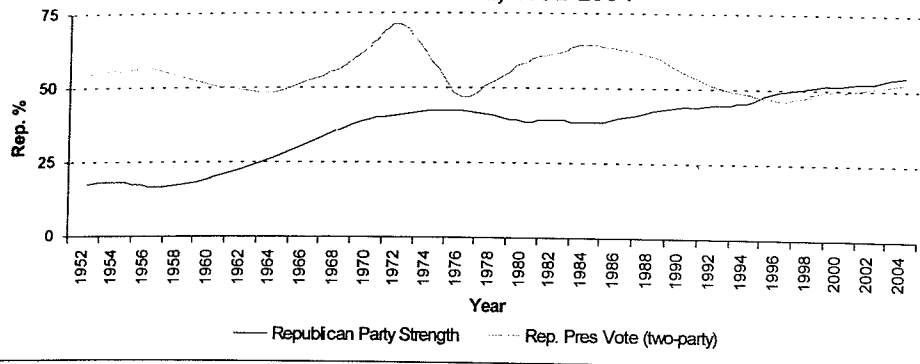
At least politically, perhaps more than any other division (and there are many), the geographic distinction between north and south explains the close split in presidential politics (Craig, 1998; deHaven-Smith, 1995). With a markedly larger percentage of natives, conservative Christians, and rural residents, North Florida remains a present day reminder of the state's political past (although partisan allegiances have flipped). By contrast, as one heads south from around Ocala, a very different political present and future manifests itself. Southern drawls are replaced by sharp Midwestern accents on the West coast, harsh Northeastern tongues on the East coast (especially New Yorkers and New Jerseyites), and various Spanish dialects in Central and South Florida. And although Pinellas County, hugging the western border of Tampa Bay, was the original outpost for the Republican Party (Colburn, 2007; Polsby, 2004), within this broad middle section of the state, roughly following the I-4 corridor west to east, resides an electoral battleground.

The striking political parity in recent Florida presidential contests is due to a combination of three geographically distinguishable parts: (1) a heavily Republican population in North Florida (2) an evenly divided population in the central part of the state (the I-4 corridor) and (3) a Democratic leaning population in South Florida. It just so happens that the unique mixture of partisan affiliations and differences in population size in these three parts of the state amount to a hyper-competitive brand of presidential politics. This is readily apparent in Figure 1, which charts a composite index of (Republican) Party Strength known as David's Index (see David, 1972), and the Republican share of the presidential vote from 1952

to 2004. First, it is apparent from the Republican index that the GOP has steadily increased its influence to the point of surpassing the Democratic Party by a slight margin from the mid 1990s to

the present. By 1992 the Republican presidential vote and the Republican index merge together, indicating the presence of a new, highly competitive electoral equilibrium.

Figure 1: Republican Party Strength and the Republican Presidential Vote in Florida, 1952-2004



NOTE: Republican Party Strength is the David's Index in Composite B form (an average of the combined returns for the U.S. House, U.S. Senate, and gubernatorial elections) smoothed with a five election moving average. We thank M. V. Hood III for providing us with these data. Presidential vote data are calculated as the Republican percentage of the two-party vote with the previous and following presidential votes averaged for midterm years. Presidential vote data are from CQ Press (2005).

Before the 1990s, the Reagan and Bush years showed strong Republican support in Florida presidential elections. The average presidential vote in Florida for the GOP from 1980-1988 was 62%. The 1992-2004 elections provide a stark contrast to the 1980s, with the Florida Republican presidential vote averaging out to 50.4%. It is no surprise that closer elections have spawned presidential candidates' heightened interest in the Sunshine State. Whereas in 1988 neither party's presidential nominee campaigned in Florida, their combined number of visits grew from 8 in 1992 to 16 in 1996 to 23 in 2000 and up to 43 in 2004 (Shaw, 1999, 2006). Similarly, the average number of campaign ads a Floridian saw in 1988 was 15. In subsequent elections the number of ads viewed by the typical Floridian soared; 65 in 1992, 100 in 1996, to over 200 campaign commercials witnessed in both 2000 (N = 243) and 2004 (N = 217). Not surprisingly, as the nation's largest swing state, Florida has been inundated with

presidential campaign activity. The question we investigate in this study is: How do the presidential campaigns allocate their resources (TV ads and candidate visits) and what electoral effects do these efforts have on the goal of winning the most coveted battleground in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections?

Data and Methods

The primary unit of analysis for this study is the county. In addition, for summary statistics on resource allocation, the Designated Market Area (DMA) is used. DMAs are simply an aggregation of several counties. For instance, in the 2000 and 2004 elections Florida's 67 counties are separated into 10 media markets or DMAs. See Appendix B for a list of all the counties in the 10 DMAs. It is critical to account for DMAs because these are the territories in the state where the candidates decide how to allocate TV ads and campaign

appearances. Thus, by evaluating resource allocation patterns within DMAs it is possible to glean insight on campaign strategies.

As noted previously, our data on TV ads and candidate visits come from Shaw (2006). In addition, we supplement these data with election returns from *America Votes* (Congressional Quarterly [CQ], 1992, 1996; McGillivray et al., 2001, 2005). Our control variables in the county-level turnout and vote choice models consist of data from three sources: (1) the U.S. Census Bureau (2) the Florida Department of State Division of Elections and (3) the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA). The census data consist of several demographic variables: percent Black voting-age population (Black VAP), percent born in Florida or another southern state (South), percent rural (Rural), percent 65 years old or higher (Age 65+), median family income in the county (Income), and the rate of county population growth (Population Growth). The state of Florida provides county-level registration by party and these data are current at the time of the registration deadline before each election. The registration variables include the percent Republican registered voters (Rep. Registration) and the percent unaffiliated with a party or affiliated with a minor party (Nonparty Affiliates). The ARDA provides a variable for the county-level percentage of Evangelical Protestants (Evangelical Protestants). Finally, because the data for 2000 and 2004 are pooled (in addition to analyzed separately), we include a dummy for the 2000 election (Year 2000).

All multivariate county-level analyses of resource allocation, turnout, and vote choice are done using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. For the resource allocation models the dependent variable is either the number of Gross Rating Points

(GRPs) or the number of candidate visits. As explained by Shaw (2006), "GRPs provide an estimate of audience reach, with one hundred GRPs representing a TV ad buy that would be seen, on average, one time by every person in the market" (p. 76). Candidate appearances include visits by both the presidential nominees and their vice presidential running mates. For the turnout models the dependent variable is the total number of presidential votes divided by the registered county population. Lastly, the dependent variable for vote choice is the Republican two-party percentage of the county-level vote return.

Campaign Strategy and Resource Allocation

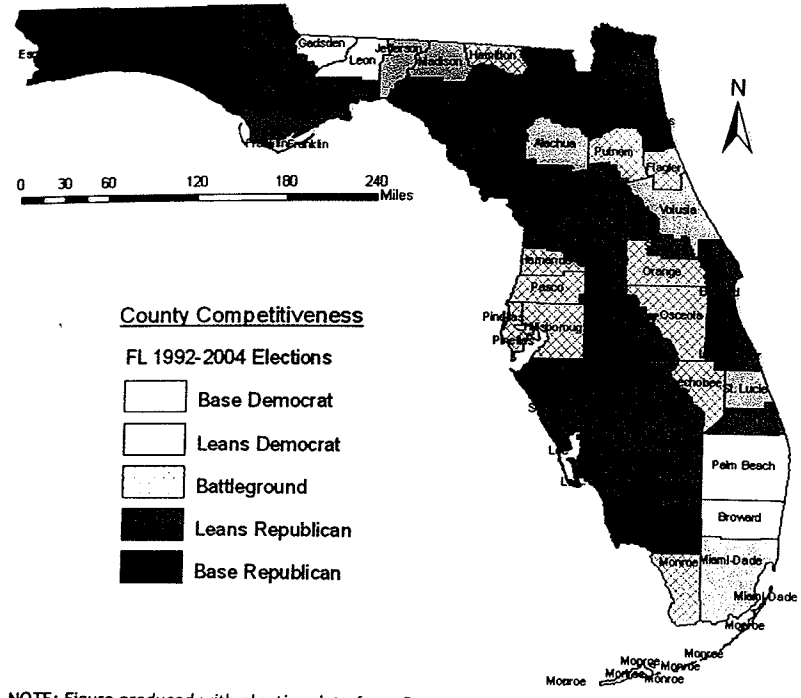
Figure 2 presents a map of Florida counties according to presidential competitiveness on the basis of the Republican vote averaged over the 1992 to 2004 elections. Counties are classified according to five categories of the Republican vote: (1) Base Democrat - Republican vote is less than 40% (2) Leans Democrat - 40 to 48% Republican (3) Battleground - 48 to 52% Republican (4) Leans Republican - 52 to 60% Republican and (5) Base Republican - over 60% Republican vote. According to this classification there are 4 Base Democrat, 6 Lean Democrat, 11 Battleground, 27 Lean Republican, and 19 Base Republican counties. At least spatially, at the county-level the GOP has an electoral advantage with respect to the number of counties that vote Republican in presidential elections. This is important because in presidential campaigns what really matters is the partisan composition of Designated Market Areas, which are county aggregations that segment states according to the boundaries of media advertising and media coverage.

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a map of Florida to presidential he basis of the ed over the 1992 ities are classified ategories of the Base Democrat - ss than 40% (2) o 48% Republican o 52% Republican - 52 to 60% ase Republican - te. According to re are 4 Base Democrat, 11 Republican, and unties. At least ty-level the GOP age with respect unties that vote ial elections. This in presidential matters is the of Designated h are county segment states idaries of media overage.

Figure 2: The Competitiveness of Florida Counties in the 1992-2004 Presidential Elections



County Competitiveness

- FL 1992-2004 Elections
- Base Democrat
 - Leans Democrat
 - Battleground
 - Leans Republican
 - Base Republican

NOTE: Figure produced with election data from Congressional Quarterly's America Votes series (Volumes 20, 22, 24, and 26) and a county shapefile from the U.S. Census Bureau. Republican two-party vote percentage at the county level is an average of the 1992-2004 presidential elections. Base Democrat is <40% Republican vote; Leans Democrat is 40-48% Republican; Battleground is 48-52% Republican; Leans Republican is 52-60% Republican; Base Republican is >60% Republican.

As mentioned above, Florida consists of ten DMAs. These media markets are what matter to presidential candidates with respect to how they allocate TV ads and campaign appearances (Shaw, 2006). Specifically, an ad run in DMA X can only be viewed by those individuals who reside in DMA X. Likewise, but not quite as clear cut, a candidate who visits DMA X is likely to receive media coverage confined to the counties comprising DMA X. Therefore, presidential campaign strategies are calibrated to media markets. Of foremost concern to the candidates is the partisan composition of a DMA. Similar to the competitiveness measure in Figure 2, campaigns want to know the partisan distribution of the vote in any given media market.

Tables 1 and 2 rank Florida's ten DMAs on the basis of Republican presidential strength. This is done by evaluating the mean Republican vote in the DMA over time (1992-1996 for the 2000 ranking and 1992-2000 for the 2004 ranking), the county-level Republican average in the DMA, and the county-level median Republican vote in the DMA. After computing these three estimates of the Republican share of the presidential vote, we then created an index of Republican strength at the DMA-level. The index is weighted so that 50 percent is assigned to the mean Republican vote in the DMA, 25 percent for the county-level average Republican vote in the DMA, and 25 percent for the county-level median Republican vote in the DMA. Based on this analysis, Tables 1 and 2

display the most-to-least Republican DMAs in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. For example, in 2000 and 2004 the *Mobile-Pensacola* DMA was the most Republican and the *Miami-Fort Lauderdale* media market was the least Republican.

Notice that the Republican DMA ranking changes in 2004, with *Panama City* and *Jacksonville-Brunswick* changing places. Nonetheless, what does not change between 2000 and 2004 is the general pattern of DMA competitiveness. With a slight alteration to the five category classification in Figure 2, *Mobile-Pensacola* is a Base Republican DMA, *Panama City*, *Jacksonville-Brunswick*, and *Fort Myers-Naples* are Lean Republican DMAs, *Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne* and *Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota* are Battleground DMAs, *West Palm Beach-Fort Pierce*, *Tallahassee-Thomasville*, and *Gainesville* are Lean Democrat DMAs, and *Miami-Fort Lauderdale* is a Base Democrat DMA.¹

Table 1 presents TV ad allocations in Gross Rating Points (GRPs) according to party and election.² In addition, the ranking of allocations for each party is displayed along with a spending ratio: Republican GRPs versus Democratic GRPs allocated in each DMA. In 2000, it is evident that the Republican GRPs were generally highest in the most Republican DMAs, whereas Democratic GRPs are highest in the Battleground DMAs with *Mobile-Pensacola* constituting a curious outlier. It is interesting that *Mobile-Pensacola* received the most GRPs for both the Republican and Democratic campaigns since it is a Base Republican DMA. Perhaps

the Bush campaign saw a need to target its core constituents and this in turn induced a response by the Gore campaign in an effort to mitigate the overwhelmingly Republican support in the far west corner of the state.

In 2000 the Bush campaign had considerably more money to spend than the Gore campaign and this was reflected in Florida advertising expenditures (\$16,670,690 vs. \$8,218,090) (Shaw, 2006, p. 79). Putting *Mobile-Pensacola* aside, the spending ratios are closest in the Battleground and Lean Democrat DMAs—a consequence of relatively greater Republican allocation in Lean and Base Republican DMAs and greater Democratic spending in the Battleground and Lean Democrat DMAs.

¹ The weighted Republican vote index for each DMA in 2000 and 2004 will be made available by the authors upon request. According to the weighted Republican vote index, the DMA classification of competitiveness is: Base Democrat - 42% Republican or less, Lean Democrat - 42-47% Republican, Battleground - 47-55% Republican, Lean Republican - 55-60% Republican, and Base Republican - over 60% Republican.

² These data include combined expenditures by the candidates and their national party committees (see Shaw, 2006).

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Table 1: Republican and Democratic Resource Allocation by Gross Rating Points in Designated Market Areas, 2000 and 2004

<i>Designated Market Areas (DMAs) 2000 Republican Ranking</i>	<i>Rep. TV (GRPs)</i>	<i>Rep. Ranking</i>	<i>Dem. TV (GRPs)</i>	<i>Dem. Ranking</i>	<i>GRPs Ratio</i>
1. Mobile, AL—Pensacola	26,465	1	12,595	1	2.1
2. Panama City	20,996	2	7,520	7	2.8
3. Jacksonville—Brunswick, GA	16,145	5	2,177	10	7.4
4. Fort Myers—Naples	19,124	3	2,375	9	8.1
5. Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne	18,175	4	10,668	2	1.7
6. Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota	14,749	8	10,410	3	1.4
7. West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce	15,159	7	9,695	5	1.6
8. Tallahassee—Thomasville, GA	11,532	10	9,986	4	1.2
9. Gainesville	16,103	6	7,613	6	2.1
10. Miami—Fort Lauderdale	13,785	9	5,846	8	2.4
Statewide Average	16,096		8,249		2.0
<i>Designated Market Areas (DMAs) 2004 Republican Ranking</i>	<i>Rep. TV (GRPs)</i>	<i>Rep. Ranking</i>	<i>Dem. TV (GRPs)</i>	<i>Dem. Ranking</i>	<i>GRPs Ratio</i>
1. Mobile, AL—Pensacola	9,686	10	2,025	10	4.8
2. Jacksonville—Brunswick, GA	13,193	4	7,600	4	1.7
3. Panama City	11,816	7	3,600	9	3.3
4. Fort Myers—Naples	12,988	5	7,250	6	1.8
5. Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne	13,427	3	10,875	2	1.2
6. Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota	13,530	2	11,750	1	1.2
7. West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce	13,814	1	9,920	3	1.4
8. Tallahassee—Thomasville, GA	12,965	6	7,500	5	1.7
9. Gainesville	11,808	8	5,250	8	2.2
10. Miami—Fort Lauderdale	10,770	9	7,225	7	1.5
Statewide Average	12,646		9,045		1.4

NOTE: Data are from Shaw (2006). DMAs are ranked from most Republican (1) to least Republican (10) according to a weighted average consisting of the mean Republican share of the two-party presidential vote in the DMA (the DMA average from 1992-1996 for the 2000 election and 1992-2000 for the 2004 election), the county-level Republican average in the DMA, and the Republican median in the DMA.

We see a very different TV allocation pattern by the Bush campaign in 2004. With the exception of the Jacksonville—Brunswick DMA, Republican GRPs are highest in the most competitive DMAs (West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce, Tampa—

St. Petersburg—Sarasota, and Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne). In fact, on the basis of GRPs, the allocation patterns for the Republican and Democratic campaigns are roughly reflective of each other. The top three DMAs on the basis

of total GRPs are the same for both parties and now *Mobile—Pensacola* is dead last in the number of GRPs purchased by the Republican and Democratic campaigns. With the exception of *Jacksonville—Brunswick*, where both campaigns place it fourth based on their TV advertising, the Democratic pattern in 2004 is very similar to the 2000 pattern—Battleground and Lean Democrat DMAs receive allocation priority with respect to GRPs. And though the Bush campaign again had a favorable GRPs ratio,³ the ratio was smallest in the case of Florida's two DMA Battlegrounds: *Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne* and *Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota*.

We can turn to a similar analysis of resource allocation patterns with data on candidate visits in Table 2. Unlike the GRPs comparison, the candidates are much more evenly matched in the number of Florida visits. Democratic candidates have a slight edge in total appearances in both elections (+5 in 2000 and +8 in 2004). Republican visits in 2000 are scattered across the DMAs, showing a very broad distribution of campaign appearances with respect to competitiveness. On the other hand, Democratic visits are targeted in Battleground and Lean Democrat DMAs and *Miami—Fort Lauderdale*. In fact, in 2000 not a single Democratic visit took place in a Base or Lean Republican DMA.

Unlike 2000, however, the Democratic candidates do not wholly ignore Republican DMAs in 2004. Perhaps this is a function of the greater crossover appeal of John Edwards to Republican voters since he accounted for five of the six visits in the Lean and Base Republican DMAs. In both elections, *Miami—Fort Lauderdale* is the number one DMA for Democratic visits, but the bulk of 2004 visits remain in the

Battleground DMAs (n = 19). Republican visits in 2004 are again fairly evenly distributed across DMAs, but it is worth noting that the Battleground DMAs are given priority. In terms of visits ratios, the Democratic Party has the edge in Battleground DMAs (19 to 14), the GOP has the upper hand in Lean and Base Republican DMAs (11 to 6), Democrats dominate in *Miami—Fort Lauderdale* (12 to 5), and there is parity in the Lean Democrat DMAs (9 Democratic visits vs. 8 Republican visits).

³ We do not include GRPs allocation from interest groups that align with the parties, but if we did this would actually give the Kerry Campaign an advantage in four DMAs: *Miami—Fort Lauderdale*, *Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne*, *Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota*, and *West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce* (see Shaw, 2006, Appendix 1).

(n = 19). Republican visits are again fairly evenly distributed across battle-ground DMAs, but it is worth noting that battle-ground DMAs are not evenly distributed in terms of visits ratios. The GOP has the edge in 11 of the 19 DMAs (19 to 14), the Democrats in 6 (11 to 6), and parity in the remaining 2 (11 to 6). Democratic visits vs. 8

Table 2: Republican and Democratic Resource Allocation by Candidate Visits in Designated Market Areas, 2000 and 2004

Designated Market Areas (DMAs) 2000 Republican Ranking	Rep. Visits	Rep. Ranking	Dem. Visits	Dem. Ranking	Visits Ratio
1. Mobile, AL—Pensacola	1	5	0	5	1/0
2. Panama City	0	6	0	5	0/0
3. Jacksonville—Brunswick, GA	2	4	0	5	2/0
4. Fort Myers—Naples	1	5	0	5	1/0
5. Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne	3	3	7	2	3/7
6. Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota	5	1	7	2	5/7
7. West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce	4	2	3	3	4/3
8. Tallahassee—Thomasville, GA	1	5	1	4	1/1
9. Gainesville	0	6	0	5	0/0
10. Miami—Fort Lauderdale	4	2	8	1	4/8
Total	21		26		21/26

Designated Market Areas (DMAs) 2004 Republican Ranking	Rep. Visits	Rep. Ranking	Dem. Visits	Dem. Ranking	Visits Ratio
1. Mobile, AL—Pensacola	3	5	1	7	3/1
2. Jacksonville—Brunswick, GA	4	4	3	5	4/3
3. Panama City	1	6	0	8	1/0
4. Fort Myers—Naples	3	5	2	6	3/2
5. Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne	6	2	11	2	6/11
6. Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota	8	1	8	3	8/8
7. West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce	4	4	7	4	4/7
8. Tallahassee—Thomasville, GA	1	6	1	7	1/1
9. Gainesville	3	5	1	7	3/1
10. Miami—Fort Lauderdale	5	3	12	1	5/12
Total	38		46		38/46

NOTE: Data are from Shaw (2006). DMAs are ranked from most Republican (1) to least Republican (10) according to a weighted average consisting of the mean Republican share of the two-party presidential vote in the DMA (the DMA average from 1992-1996 for the 2000 election and 1992-2000 for the 2004 election), the county-level Republican average in the DMA, and the Republican median in the DMA.

Finally, we can turn to multivariate analysis to assess what factors influence resource allocation strategies in DMAs. A key explanatory factor with respect to resource allocation is competitiveness (see Hill & McKee 2005). Although the Bush campaign may not have made this the most important priority, as reflected in their resource allocation patterns in Tables 1 and 2, this is much more evidently the case for the Democratic campaigns in 2000 and 2004. In addition to competitiveness, other factors that may impinge on resource allocation include

DMA cost per 100 GRPs, DMA size (registered DMA population as a percentage of the state total), and DMA turnout (total presidential votes divided by registered DMA population). See Appendix A for detailed information on these variables.

In order to assess the influence of competitiveness on resource allocation, Florida's ten DMAs have been collapsed into four dummy variables, with "Battleground DMA" serving as the omitted category. Thus, the four competitiveness dummy variables are

estimated against the most competitive media markets in 2000 and 2004: *Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota* and *Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne*. The four dummy variables are: "Dem Base DMA" = 1 if *Miami—Fort Lauderdale*, 0 = otherwise; "Dem Lean DMA" = 1 if *West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce, Tallahassee—Thomasville, and Gainesville*, 0 = otherwise; "Rep Lean DMA" = 1 if *Panama City, Jacksonville—Brunswick, and Fort Myers—Naples*, 0 = otherwise; "Rep Base DMA" = 1 if *Mobile—Pensacola*, 0 = otherwise.⁴ The respective dependent variables are TV ads (measured in total GRPs) and total candidate visits, separated by party for each election year. Each dependent variable is regressed on competitiveness (DMA classification), "Cost of DMA", "Size of DMA", and "Turnout in DMA." The results of the analyses that follow are county-level, so that each county is assigned the appropriate values that correspond to the DMA it belongs to.

Table 3 presents the results of the resource allocation regressions by party (Republican or Democrat) and presidential election. Starting with the Republican Party, we see strong evidence in 2000 for a base strategy as the "Rep Base DMA" variable has a significant and positive effect on GRPs. The *Mobile—Pensacola* Republican stronghold receives more Republican ads compared to the Battleground DMAs. However, controlling for other factors the Bush Campaign also devoted more TV ads in the Battleground DMAs versus the Leaning DMAs (Democratic and Republican).

Likewise, in 2000 the Gore Campaign targeted its base with the *Miami—Fort Lauderdale* DMA exhibiting a positive and highly significant coefficient. This is an interesting finding because without controlling for other factors, the *Miami—Fort Lauderdale* market ranks 8 out of 10 in terms of Democratic TV ads (see Table

⁴ Based on this DMA competitiveness classification scheme, 19 out of 67 counties are Battlegrounds, 3 are Base Democrat, 18 are Lean Democrat, 24 are Lean Republican, and 3 are Base Republican.

1). And similar to the Bush Campaign, the Battleground DMAs were given priority over the Leaning DMAs (Democratic and Republican). After controlling for other factors, in the 2000 election both campaigns made their base DMAs the number one priority for advertising. There was not a statistically significant difference in GRPs allocation for the opposing party's base DMA vis-à-vis Battleground DMAs.

In the case of Republican visits in 2000, we see further evidence of a base strategy. With the exception of the *Miami—Fort Lauderdale* "Dem Base DMA" (no significant difference), the Bush Campaign was more likely to make appearances in the DMAs that favored one of the parties. Indeed, the Republican candidates were much more likely to visit Leaning Democratic DMAs than Battleground DMAs. In addition, Battleground DMAs were given less priority than Lean Republican and Base Republican DMAs. Unlike the TV ads pattern, the visits allocation strategies for the Bush and Gore Campaigns are very different. For the Gore Campaign its Base DMA and the Battleground DMAs are given priority over the Leaning (Democratic and Republican) and Base Republican DMAs. The Democratic candidates focused heavily on visiting the most competitive DMAs whereas the Republican candidates targeted their base voters and made appearances in counties that leaned Democratic.

In 2004, we again find evidence of strategic symmetry with respect to TV ad allocation. The Bush and Kerry Campaigns were both significantly less likely to run ads in their respective Base DMAs. And opposite the pattern in 2000, both campaigns were now more likely to expend GRPs in Leaning DMAs versus the Battleground DMAs. Both campaigns considered the "Dem Lean DMAs" to be slightly more worthy of TV ads than "Rep Lean DMAs." The Bush Campaign was significantly less likely to run ads in the *Miami—Fort Lauderdale* DMA versus the

Battleground DMAs. But there is no significant difference in the TV ad allocation for the Kerry Campaign in the *Mobile-Pensacola* Base Republican market versus the Battleground DMAs.

The visits allocation strategies in 2004 show considerable divergence. The Bush Campaign was much less likely to visit the *Miami-Fort Lauderdale* DMA vis-à-vis the Battleground DMAs. And again we find that compared to the Battleground DMAs, the Republicans were much more likely to make appearances in the Leaning

(Democratic and Republican) and Base Republican markets. The Democratic candidates, on the other hand, are much more likely to visit the most competitive DMAs as opposed to their Base DMA (*Miami-Fort Lauderdale*). Unlike in 2000, in 2004 it is consistently the case that two control variables uniformly impact resource allocation strategies: DMA cost and DMA turnout both positively affect the number of TV ads and visits.

Table 3: Effects on Resource Allocation in Florida Counties for the 2000 and 2004 Presidential Elections

Variable	2000				2004			
	Rep. TV (GRPs)	Dem. TV (GRPs)	Rep. Visits	Dem. Visits	Rep. TV (GRPs)	Dem. TV (GRPs)	Rep. Visits	Dem. Visits
Dem Base DMA	3012.51 (3498.13)	13061.44*** (1918.95)	-.928 (.520)	1.630 (1.100)	-5343.98*** (758.44)	-11843.67*** (1567.10)	-8.513*** (.973)	-8.030* (3.537)
Dem Lean DMA	-8335.74*** (1229.10)	-5800.80*** (674.53)	3.391*** (.183)	-3.981*** (.387)	2148.82*** (270.52)	4462.50*** (558.96)	2.193*** (.347)	.145 (1.261)
Rep Lean DMA	-4644.34*** (1247.54)	-10450.40*** (684.85)	2.673*** (.186)	-5.392*** (.393)	1885.08*** (278.74)	3028.28*** (575.93)	2.723*** (.358)	-.391 (1.300)
Rep Base DMA	3114.85* (1514.17)	-1080.57 (830.97)	3.030*** (.225)	-5.217*** (.477)	-1117.45*** (330.10)	-1147.34 (682.06)	2.944*** (.424)	-1.772 (1.539)
Cost of DMA	-.352 (.225)	-1.239*** (.124)	.00007* (.00003)	-.00003 (.00007)	.194*** (.055)	.564*** (.114)	.0005*** (.0001)	.0008** (.0003)
Size of DMA	-9639.54 (18536.56)	89631.41*** (10721.58)	27.728*** (2.906)	12.926* (6.148)	-2693.26 (5020.98)	-7046.51 (10374.40)	-5.786 (6.442)	-38.236 (23.414)
Turnout in DMA	35028.15** (11018.18)	-43725.58*** (6046.72)	-.793 (1.640)	1.982 (3.467)	5114.06* (2268.77)	20389.00*** (4687.76)	16.753*** (2.911)	29.671** (10.580)
Constant	2850.34 (6958.94)	45308.95*** (3819.04)	-3.013** (1.036)	3.585 (2.190)	6496.08*** (1677.56)	-13027.37*** (3466.19)	-13.355*** (2.152)	-19.776* (7.823)
Adjusted R ²	.80	.93	.98	.98	.90	.95	.97	.87
N	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67

NOTE: Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS) with standard errors in parentheses. ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05 (two-tailed).

County-Level Mobilization and Vote Choice

This section investigates the effect of campaigns on voter mobilization and aggregate distribution of voter preferences by relying on an empirical analysis of county-level data in the 2000 and 2004 presidential election. We first analyze each election and then pool the elections in order to examine any difference between the two contests. The main variables considered in the mobilization and vote choice models are Republican and Democratic television ads measured in Gross Rating Points (GRPs) and presidential candidate visits. In addition to the campaign variables, we also include partisan and demographic variables that characterize each county and influence voter turnout and voter preferences. We expect that the proportion of Republican registrants, Evangelical Protestants, Black voting-age population, people born in Florida and from other southern states, and people older than 65 significantly influence both turnout and candidate preferences in Florida counties. Three additional variables are added to the mobilization models: competitiveness (0 = Base DMAs, 1 = Lean DMAs, and 2 = Battleground DMAs), the proportion of unaffiliated and minor party registered voters, and population growth in each county. We expect that these variables increase voter turnout because these factors indicate competitiveness, and parties tend to

allocate more resources in more competitive areas.

Table 4 presents the effects of TV advertising and candidate visits on voter turnout. In 2000, the only significant campaign variable is Democratic candidate visits. One more appearance by the Democratic candidate increased turnout by 1%. On the other hand, neither Republican TV ads nor visits substantially affected voter mobilization in 2000. In 2004, Republican TV ads had a negative effect on voter turnout. An increase of 1,000 GRPs mobilized .03% less voters. Voters tended to turn out when they were exposed to Democratic visits in 2000 but were demobilized by Republican commercials in 2004. The pooled data also show that Republican candidate visits lowered voter turnout, while Democratic candidate appearances boosted turnout. This disparity can be explained by different resource allocation strategies by the Democratic and Republican candidates. While the Democratic campaigns focused more on competitive DMAs, the Republican campaigns tended to target base and lean DMAs. Furthermore, the competitiveness of DMAs is statistically significant only in 2004. The more competitive DMAs had a higher turnout. As the dummy for the year 2000 indicates, turnout was smaller in 2000 than in 2004. The average turnout was 65.43% in 2000 and 73.67% in 2004. Both registration and actual turnout were higher in 2004 than in 2000.

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Table 4: Turnout Models for the 2000 and 2004 Presidential Elections in Florida

Variables	Pooled	2000	2004
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Coefficient (S.E.)	Coefficient (S.E.)
Rep. TV (GRPs)	.156×10 ⁻⁵ (.000)	.302×10 ⁻⁵ (.000)	-.267×10 ⁻⁴ * (.000)
Dem. TV (GRPs)	-.108×10 ⁻⁵ (.000)	-.495×10 ⁻⁷ (.000)	.599×10 ⁻⁵ (.000)
Rep. Visits	-.009** (.004)	-.011 (.010)	-.007 (.005)
Dem. Visits	.006** (.002)	.010* (.006)	.002 (.003)
Competitiveness	.023** (.010)	.008 (.017)	.038** (.015)
Rep. Registration	.106 (.064)	.004 (.123)	-.017 (.074)
Nonparty Affiliates	.326 (.215)	.529 (.391)	.280 (.236)
Evangelical Protestants	.050 (.069)	.073 (.115)	-.009 (.075)
Black VAP	.083 (.070)	.057 (.120)	.052 (.083)
South	.065 (.092)	.032 (.166)	.240** (.106)
Rural	.108*** (.032)	.121** (.058)	.074** (.036)
Age 65+	.311*** (.116)	.346* (.204)	.524*** (.127)
Income	.563×10 ⁻⁵ *** (.000)	.647×10 ⁻⁵ *** (.000)	.677×10 ⁻⁵ *** (.000)
Population Growth	-.206*** (.063)	-.184* (.103)	-.073 (.085)
Year 2000	-.077*** (.012)	- (.126)	- (.419**)
Constant	.247** (.096)	(.169)	(.177)
Adjusted R ²	.596	.417	.469
N	134	67	67

NOTE: Dependent variable is total presidential votes divided by the registered county population. ***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10

Contrary to the variability of campaign effects across elections, several demographic variables have been reliable factors that explain voter turnout not only in the U.S. in general, but also in Florida in particular. The higher proportion of rural residents and the county percentage of people older than 65 significantly increased turnout. Also, higher median income counties had higher turnouts.

However, even though population growth did not significantly affect voter mobilization in 2004, it negatively influenced voter turnout in 2000. This could be due to the negative effect of lower residential stability on participation and population influx from foreign countries or minorities who do (or can) not vote. In short, Democratic candidate visits in 2000 and Republican

commercials in 2004 did matter in voter mobilization. Interestingly, however, Democratic visits mobilized voters, while Republican TV ads hindered voter turnout. The pooled data also show a mobilization effect of Democratic candidate visits and a demobilization effect of Republican candidate appearances.

Table 5 presents the county-level vote choice models. The dependent variable is the Republican Party vote share in each Florida county. The only significant campaign variable in 2000 was Democratic TV ads. Democratic TV ads slightly damaged Republican vote shares (an increase of 1,000 Democratic GRPs equated to a .005% decline in the Republican vote). In 2004 Republican TV ads and candidate visits both increased

Republican vote shares, while Democratic TV ads decreased Republican vote shares. An increase of 1,000 Republican GRPs enhanced Republican vote shares by .05% and the same amount of Democratic GRPs decreased Republican vote shares by .03%. One more Republican candidate visit boosted Republican vote shares by 1%. Once we pooled the data, all campaign variables are statistically significant with the expected signs. Particularly, when we compare the effects of TV ads on mobilization and vote choice, TV ads had much stronger effects on aggregate vote choice than on mobilization. By contrast, candidate visits had a slightly larger effect on mobilization than on vote choice.

Table 5: Vote Choice Models for the 2000 and 2004 Presidential Elections in Florida

Variables	Pooled	2000	2004
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Coefficient (S.E.)	Coefficient (S.E.)
Rep. TV (GRPs)	.391×10 ⁻⁵ ** (.000)	.369×10 ⁻⁵ (.000)	.528×10 ⁻⁴ *** (.000)
Dem. TV (GRPs)	-.502×10 ⁻⁵ *** (.000)	-.543×10 ⁻⁵ ** (.000)	-.315×10 ⁻⁴ *** (.000)
Rep. Visits	.008* (.004)	.008 (.008)	.014** (.007)
Dem. Visits	-.004* (.002)	-.005 (.004)	.002 (.004)
Rep. Registration	.472*** (.060)	.547*** (.092)	.445*** (.089)
Evangelical Protestants	.351*** (.068)	.371*** (.091)	.406*** (.101)
Black VAP	-.496*** (.070)	-.373*** (.095)	-.514*** (.112)
South	.215*** (.073)	.206** (.102)	.125 (.114)
Rural	.058** (.029)	.077* (.043)	.054 (.042)
Age 65+	-.222** (.099)	-.228* (.135)	-.290* (.152)
Income	-.189×10 ⁻⁵ ** (.000)	-.193×10 ⁻⁵ (.000)	-.244×10 ⁻⁵ (.000)
Year 2000	-.038*** (.011)	- (.000)	- (.000)
Constant	.410*** (.090)	.299*** (.103)	-.007 (.193)
Adjusted R ²	.805	.794	.813
N	134	67	67

NOTE: Dependent variable is the Republican share of the two-party county-level presidential vote.
 ***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10

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In addition to campaign variables, in both elections, large populations of Evangelical Protestants and Republican registrants significantly increased the county-level Republican vote share. On the other hand, large proportions of African-American voters and people older than 65 lowered Republican vote shares. The higher population of Florida natives and people born in other southern states, as well as rural residents, helped Republican vote shares in 2000 but not in 2004. Contrary to national evidence, in the pooled model, higher median income counties in Florida had lower Republican vote shares, even though the effect was very small ($-.189 \times 10^{-5}$). Finally, considering the dummy for the year 2000, George W. Bush got more votes in 2004 than in 2000. This is not a surprise, since Bush was the incumbent in the 2004 race.

The empirical analyses in this section present two interesting findings. First, there are partisan differences in campaign effects. Republican campaigns reduced turnout, while Democratic campaigns increased turnout. Second, campaign strategies exhibit differential effects on mobilization and voter preferences. Considering the pooled models, TV ads showed stronger effects on voter preferences than on mobilization. On the other hand, candidate visits were more effective with regard to voter mobilization.

Conclusion

This study of presidential campaign strategies and campaign effects in the 2000 and 2004 Florida presidential contests shows substantial variation in partisan resource allocation patterns and their attendant effects on voting behavior. First, with regard to resource allocation, in the 2000 election it is apparent that the Republican and Democratic strategies were to devote TV ads to their base markets and the most competitive DMAs. As for visits, only the Gore Campaign's allocation of candidate appearances was done on the basis of competitiveness. By

contrast, the Bush campaign was more likely to visit its base market (*Mobile-Pensacola*) and leaning DMAs. The same pattern for Republican visits is evident in 2004, whereas the Kerry Campaign was more likely to visit the Battleground DMAs versus their base market of *Miami-Fort Lauderdale*. In 2004 the Republican and Democratic strategies for TV ads switched to an emphasis on targeting voters in the battleground media markets instead of their base markets. However, now the leaning DMAs received more attention than the battleground markets.

The allocation strategies of the Democratic and Republican campaigns in Florida are illuminating. First, in the case of TV ads, there appears to be a high degree of symmetry (see Table 3). Similar to the broader pattern uncovered by Shaw (2006), campaigns are reluctant to let their opponents run ads without matching them—at least in terms of the proportion of GRPs devoted to each type of market (based on competitiveness). In Florida this symmetry is especially evident in 2004 (see Table 1). It is, however, more difficult to decipher which campaign is leading and which is following in the game of resource allocation. By contrast, as shown in the multivariate analyses, candidate visits do not exhibit much partisan congruence. In 2000 and 2004 the Bush Campaign shunned the battleground and base Democratic markets in favor of their base market and the leaning DMAs. The Gore Campaign focused its appearances in the Battleground DMAs and their base market of *Miami-Fort Lauderdale*, whereas the Kerry Campaign was much more likely to visit the battleground DMAs as opposed to their base market.

Perhaps what is most intriguing about this analysis of resource allocation strategies is that it is somewhat counterintuitive. There is a strong assumption that presidential campaigns place the lion's share of their resources in geographically competitive areas. To

be sure, there is ample evidence for this at the state-level (Hill & McKee, 2005; Shaw, 1999, 2006). But we have found that within a battleground state, resource allocation strategies do not necessarily hew to a competitiveness metric. For example, it appears that their overwhelming advantage in base Republican DMAs in 2000, prompted the Bush Campaign to concentrate advertising in these markets as opposed to battleground markets. Further, campaigning appears to be quite dynamic since in 2004 the Bush and Kerry Campaigns devoted more GRPs to the battleground DMAs as opposed to their base markets. Finally, as is apparent from the visits analyses, candidate appearances do not necessarily track TV ad allocations and they are not symmetric across campaigns.

The implications of these different campaign strategies show up with respect to their effects on turnout and vote choice. For instance, because the Democratic strategy (in 2000 and 2004) showed a much stronger bias for resource

allocation in the most competitive markets, Democratic resource allocation of visits and advertising showed positive mobilization effects (visits in 2000 and visits for the pooled model). By contrast, Republican resource allocation reveals demobilization effects (TV ads in 2004 and visits in the pooled model). Finally, in the case of vote choice, it is worth noting the consistent finding that the efforts of both party's campaigns with regard to advertising and appearances have the expected payoff in terms of increasing county-level vote support. With the vote choice models we clearly see how resource allocation moves the vote in the direction of the party making the expenditures and thus why it is so important to counter the opposition with commensurate efforts. As the most coveted battleground state in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, this study sheds considerable light on campaign strategies and their electoral consequences in the Sunshine State.

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Appendix A

Designated Market Area (DMA)	2000					2004			
	DMA Size (%)	Size Ranking	Turnout (%)	Turnout Ranking	\$ Cost Per 100 GRPs	DMA Size (%)	Size Ranking	Turnout (%)	Turnout Ranking
Fort Myers—Naples	6	6	70.7	1	5,000	6	6	70.6	2
Gainesville	2	10	64.8	7	3,100	2	10	69.1	3
Jacksonville—Brunswick, GA	8	5	64.8	6	9,100	8	5	63.8	10
Miami—Fort Lauderdale	21	2	64.2	8	35,000	23	2	67.3	5
Mobile, AL—Pensacola	4	7	65.5	4	5,300	4	7	66.0	7
Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne	18	3	65.5	5	18,400	19	3	70.9	1
Panama City	2	9	63.7	9	1,700	2	9	64.2	9
Tallahassee—Thomasville, GA	3	8	62.9	10	3,500	3	8	66.0	8
Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota	25	1	66.3	3	22,600	24	1	69.1	4
West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce	11	4	66.6	2	9,900	11	4	66.6	6

NOTE: Data for DMA cost per 100 GRPs were provided by Daron R. Shaw. DMA size is based on the percent registered voters in the counties comprising each DMA. Turnout is calculated as the total number of presidential votes divided by the number of registered voters at the time of the election.

Appendix B

<i>Counties in each Designated Market Area</i>	<i>Counties in each Designated Market Area</i>
<p>1. Fort Myers—Naples (N=6)</p> <p>Charlotte Collier De Soto Glades Hendry Lee</p> <p>2. Gainesville (N=4)</p> <p>Alachua Dixie Gilchrist Levy</p> <p>3. Jacksonville—Brunswick, GA (N=9)</p> <p>Baker Bradford Clay Columbia Duval Nassau Putnam St. Johns Union</p> <p>4. Miami—Fort Lauderdale (N=3)</p> <p>Broward Miami-Dade Monroe</p> <p>5. Mobile, AL—Pensacola (N=3)</p> <p>Escambia Okaloosa Santa Rosa</p> <p>6. Orlando—Daytona Beach—Melbourne (N=9)</p> <p>Brevard Flagler Lake Marion Orange Osceola Seminole Sumter Volusia</p>	<p>7. Panama City (N=9)</p> <p>Bay Calhoun Franklin Gulf Holmes Jackson Liberty Walton Washington</p> <p>8. Tallahassee—Thomasville, GA (N=9)</p> <p>Gadsden Hamilton Jefferson Lafayette Leon Madison Suwannee Taylor Wakulla</p> <p>9. Tampa—St. Petersburg—Sarasota (N=10)</p> <p>Citrus Hardee Hernando Highlands Hillsborough Manatee Pasco Pinellas Polk Sarasota</p> <p>10. West Palm Beach—Fort Pierce (N=5)</p> <p>Indian River Martin Okeechobee Palm Beach St. Lucie</p>

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Fool Me Once: Voter Confidence in Florida

Dario Moreno
Maria Ilcheva
Vanessa Brito

Over the past decade Florida has become the epicenter of electoral controversy and razor-thin winning margins. Flaws in the state election system during the 2000 Election created a thirty-five day national crisis concerning the true victor in the presidential race. Two years later, elections in the Sunshine State's two largest counties descended into chaos as hundreds of newly purchased touch-screen voting machines failed. Public attention was again drawn to the State in 2006 after the accusation that officials had mismanaged the recount between Christine Jennings and Vern Buchanan in Florida's thirteenth Congressional District. In 2007, hoping to avoid further election controversy, newly elected Governor Charlie Crist convinced the legislature to abandon touch-screen voting machines in favor of optical scanners.

Given the State's history of election controversy, voter confidence in the electoral process should be very low. However, public opinion surveys conducted by the Collins Center for Public Policy produced counterintuitive results: *Florida voters actually still retain a significant level of confidence in the electoral process.* The data seems to show that voters have a great deal of patience and that despite major errors and public uproars, they are willing to accept a "margin of error" in elections.

While statewide polls show that the confidence of Florida voters has been restored and that voters are tolerant towards election glitches, survey data from South Florida and in the heavily African-Americans and Hispanic regions,

shows that voters share considerable concern regarding the fairness of the electoral process. This is significant given the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' principal finding on the 2000 Election of "widespread" and "intentional" disenfranchisement of minority voters in Florida. In turn, Survey data confirms that a large percentage of African-American voters and a significant number of Hispanic voters in South Florida have lost confidence in the State's electoral process.

Despite the notably different views on the electoral process shared by minority voters, the overall resiliency of statewide voter confidence is remarkable given the public relations thrashing that the state's electoral system took in the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election. Florida became a national laughing-stock as pundits questioned the fairness of elections officials in a state governed by the Republican nominee's younger brother, Jeb Bush. Secretary of State Katherine Harris, the state's top electoral official, was portrayed as a political Cruella De Vil arbitrarily denying Democrats any redress to their grievances. Meanwhile, late night television comedians made all the irregularities and mistakes that plagued the election - butterfly ballots, hanging and dimpled chads - materials for their routines.

The integrity of Florida's electoral system was questioned by a far more credible source than political pundits and late-night comedians when the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued a report entitled "Voting

Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election claiming that Florida's officials systematically and intentionally disenfranchised African-Americans and other minority voters during the 2000 presidential election. The Commission made accusations that led inexorably to the conclusion that the state administration, headed by President Bush's brother, Governor Jeb Bush, made decisions before and on Election Day ensuring that a high percentage of likely Democratic voters would either be blocked from voting, or prevented from having their votes counted. In mostly white Leon County, each voting booth was equipped with its own optical scanner, with which voters could check their own ballots. This was not the case for many black counties such as Gadsden, the only majority black County in Florida, which did not have optical scanners for voters to trace their votes. In 2000, one in eight votes in Gadsden County, was spoiled and void.¹

The principal finding of the Civil Rights Commission was that "widespread voter disenfranchisement, not the dead-heat contest—was the extraordinary feature of the Florida election."² The Commission based this conclusion on statistical data reinforced by anecdotal evidence. The report pointed to a series of statistical anomalies to make the case that "the disenfranchisement of Florida's voters fell most harshly on the shoulders of black voters."³ The Commission's statistical analysis focused on the 180,000 spoiled (votes cast but not counted) ballots cast by Florida voters in the 2000 Presidential election. The Commission found that African-Americans were far more likely than non-African-Americans to have their ballots rejected in the 2000 Florida Presidential election. Estimates indicate that approximately 14.4% of Florida's black voters cast ballots that were deemed spoiled. This compares with approximately 1.6% percent of non-black Florida voters who did not have their presidential votes count. The Commission

claimed that there was a strong positive correlation between the percentage of registered African-American voters in a particular county and the percentage of rejected ballots in the same. The linear correlation between the percentage of ballots rejected in the presidential election and the percentage of African-American voters is .50, with a squared correlation of (R^2) of .25. This means that when one looks at the variation in the ballot rejection rates for each county in Florida, about one-quarter of that variation can be explained solely by knowing the percentage of African-Americans who were registered to vote in that county. This relationship is statistically significant at levels far beyond the conventional standards used in social science.⁴

In addition to statistical evidence on spoiled ballots and voter purge lists that point to problems in Florida's 2000 election, the Commission also gathered evidence from witnesses regarding the magnitude of the disenfranchisement. The Commission found that "countless voters were denied the opportunity to vote because their names did not appear on the lists of registered voters."⁵ When poll workers attempted to call the supervisors of elections offices to verify voter registration status, they were often greeted by with continuous busy signals or no answer.⁶ In accordance with their training, most poll workers refused to permit persons whose names did not appear on the rolls at their precinct to vote. Thus, numerous Floridians were turned away from the polls on Election Day without being allowed to vote and with no opportunity to appeal the poll workers' refusal. The Commission singled out the inability of poll workers to contact the election supervisor's offices as one of the main culprits in the disenfranchisement of voters.

The controversy over the 2000 Presidential election led to wholesale reforms of both national and Florida election laws. Congress passed the *Help*

America Vote Act of 2002 that created federal mandates regarding voting procedures, such as provisional ballots, the use of punch cards, and providing monies to the states to upgrade their voting equipment. Meanwhile, Florida totally revamped its voting machine technology, outlawed the use of punch cards and paper ballots, overhauled its voter education and poll worker training program, and instituted alternative voting methods like early voting and provisional voting. Fifteen Florida counties bought 33,000 touch-screen voting machines and 26 counties opted for optical scanners. The State also spent \$6 million to better educate poll workers and voters. Florida became one of a handful states that has fully complied with the new federal election standards spelled out in the *Help America Vote Act*.

Despite these reforms, Election Day mayhem struck again during the primaries for the 2002 midterm election. Elections in Broward and Miami-Dade counties were marred by long lines, malfunctioning voting machines and delays in opening the voting places. Election officials struggled with expensive new touch-screen voting machines bought, ironically, to reduce voter error and confusion. Aside from technological glitches, other demobilizing factors contributed to the deterrence of voters on Election Day. Katosh and Traugott report that polls which are open shorter hours have lower voter turnout. In Broward and Miami-Dade counties, voting places opened late as dozens of poll workers failed to show up and those that did could not properly program the touch-screen machines. A total of 23 Broward voting stations failed to open on time. Poll workers' inability to program the new machines in Miami's predominately black Liberty City neighborhood resulted in the precinct opening five hours late. At the same time, in the Broward City of Miramar, voters waited more than three hours to vote. In 2000, André Blais estimated that increasing the time it takes to vote from 15-30 minutes to 45 minutes

would result in lower voter turnout. If, for example, a voter goes to a polling place experiencing 45 minute delays, the voter becomes less likely to wait to cast a vote. Some machines were inoperable in at least 60 precincts across Miami-Dade and Broward counties. Moreover, 32 polling sites in Broward did not heed the governor's order to remain open an extra two hours to compensate for the late start. In turn, Florida's counties were plagued by a combination of demobilization factors directly associated with low voter-turnout, inevitably affecting minority groups throughout the state.

Eventually, the election supervisors in Broward and Miami-Dade lost their jobs. Governor Bush suspended Broward's Supervisor of Elections, Miriam Oliphant, for "neglect of duty, incompetence, and misfeasance." Subsequently, she lost her bid for reelection to Dr. Brenda Snipes, another African-American woman. In Miami-Dade, election supervisor David Leahy quietly retired after the 2002 fiasco, even after acknowledging that a problem possibly remained with paper ballots. Tracy Campbell recaps Leahy's concerns during his tenure as Elections Supervisor: "If a voter did not clearly punch through the hole indicated, it might prove a problem in the event of a recount." His replacement, Constance Kaplan, was also forced to resign after it was revealed that her department failed to count over a thousand ballots in a March 2005 Special Election. Kaplan was swiftly replaced by Lester Sola who proposed replacing touch-screen with optical-scan voting, arguing that switching to optical-scan ballots would boost voter confidence and save money. In a report dated May 27, 2005, Sola argued that "voters remain uneasy about the lack of a paper record that is independent of the equipment on which the votes are cast." In neighboring Broward County, elections officials defended the use of the paperless voting machines although

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admitting to "a lot more work and resources" being spent on the maintenance and operation of the equipment.

The integrity of Florida's election system was most recently called into question in the contested congressional election in District 13. Republican Vern Buchanan defeated Democrat Christine Jennings by 369 votes in the November 7, 2006, General Election. Democrats questioned the validity of the results contending that a touch-screen voting machine malfunction led to 18,000 votes not being tallied in the race in Sarasota County. The under-vote rate on Sarasota's touch-screen machines was nearly six times the rate of the under-vote compared to the other four counties in the district - and compared to the paper absentee ballots within Sarasota County. Most of the 18,000 disputed (non-recorded) votes in the House race did, however, record a vote for U.S. Senate seats, which appeared immediately before the House race, and for Governor, which came just after. While there were only 124,119 votes cast in the congressional race in Sarasota County, over 142,000 votes were cast in the Governor's race and in the U.S. Senate race. Democrats expressed concerns about the reliability of the iVotronic voting machine, the same touch-screen machines that failed in Broward and Miami-Dade in September of 2002. Florida's Secretary of State Kurt Browning ordered an audit of both the voting machines and their software to determine whether faulty equipment was responsible for the undercount. The audit found that voter error, not equipment failure, was responsible for the larger than expected undercount. Indeed, the local Supervisor of Elections, Kathy Dent, had sent notices to her poll workers to warn

voters that the District 13 race was easy to miss as they scrolled through their touch-screens to vote. Browning's report concluded: "Finally, in light of the national attention garnered by the events surrounding the Sarasota County undercount vote rate in the U.S. Congressional District 13 race, and the momentum for further state and federal election reform, the audit team strongly recommends that human factor in the voting process and the interaction between voters and voting systems not be underestimated." Jennings went to court requesting the source code of the voting machines and when her attempt proved futile, she decided to pursue her case in Congress. The U.S. Government Accountability Office is looking at Jennings' claims but has refused to issue a timetable for completing the investigation.

Statewide voter confidence in the election process has not been shaken despite this wealth of errors. The predicted backlash against Governor Jeb Bush in 2002 and George W. Bush in 2004 by angry Democratic voters never materialized. In a series of statewide polls conducted by Susan MacManus and the Collins Center for Public Policy, Florida voters gave remarkably high marks "to their local election supervisors, poll workers, and the new voting technology that has been put in place in statewide." The Collins Center conducted statewide voter confidence surveys in every election cycle since the disputed 2000 Presidential election. The findings of these surveys show that Florida voters have consistently articulated a high-level of confidence in the state's voting system. Table I shows the comparison of three election cycles.

Table 1: Florida Voter Confidence in Electoral System

	Excellent-Good			Fair-Poor			N/A		
	2002	2004	2006	2002	2004	2006	2002	2004	2006
Ease of using voting machine	85%	83%	91%	5%	4%	6%	13%	13%	3%
Ease of understanding ballot	90%	87%	90%	9%	9%	9%	1%	4%	1%
Confidence your vote will count	88%	85%	83%	9%	9%	16%	3%	7%	1%
Absentee or early voting procedure	56%	63%	81%	14%	11%	12%	30%	26%	7%
Rating Supervisor of Election	86%	86%	88%	12%	9%	11%	3%	5%	1%

Source: The Collins Center for Public Policy, Tallahassee, Florida; N=801 (2002), N=800 (2004), N=801 (2006)

In the 1980s Dade County's Supervisor of Elections, David Leahy, recognized that political campaigns had begun using absentee ballots as a "tool" in the electoral process while also admitting that once these ballots are sent in, "[they] lose control of it." Since then, some reforms have been implemented in Miami-Dade County's absentee ballot distribution and collection processes to minimize the possibility of fraud. As absentee ballots became more popular, especially for the 2008 Election, "the criteria for voting absentee grew more lax, as 'convenience' replaced strict adherence to residency of Election Day," relays Campbell. Despite claims for lack of regulation in the absentee voting process, the method has remained increasingly popular in the last three election cycles.

The only significant change that occurred during these three election cycles was a significant increase in the number of voters who ranked the absentee and early voting procedures as "excellent" or "good". The shift in opinion came at the expense of voters who refused to rank the absentee or early voting procedures. It seems that as more voters became familiar with these procedures, their approval increased.

Collins Center Executive Vice President Mark Prickett said, "We saw an interesting trend in where people voted. Over the last three elections, we see more people voting early or absentee voting than at the polling place."

In 2004 and 2006 Florida International University's (FIU) Metropolitan Center tested the Collins Center's conclusion that voter confidence has been restored by using a variety of methodological techniques. Similar to the first precinct accessibility study after the 2000 Election, in Los Angeles, the FIU Metropolitan Center research team set out to investigate some of the costs potential voters experience at their polling place and how these costs may be distributed across precincts. First, we focused our research efforts on Southeast Florida as the epicenter of electoral controversies in 2000 and 2002. Focusing on Broward and Miami-Dade Counties allowed us to explore the effects of these electoral glitches with the voters most directly impacted by errors. Second, both Broward and Miami-Dade have a higher percentage of Hispanic and African-American voters than the rest of the state. This is significant because the

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United States Commission on Civil Rights Report on the 2000 Presidential election accused the State of disenfranchising Black and Hispanic voters. Combined, Broward and Miami-Dade counties have 58% of all the Hispanic voters in Florida and 32% of all the African-American voters. This heavy concentration of minority voters allows us to explore more in depth the opinion of minority voters regarding their confidence in the electoral process. Finally, the two voter-confidence telephone surveys in Broward and Miami-Dade were combined with a precinct quality field study of all voting precincts in Miami-Dade County along with an exit poll of Hispanic voters in Broward County. The additional data provided a far more comprehensive picture of voter attitudes and voting conditions.

The Metropolitan Center findings show that voters in South Florida have considerably less confidence in the electoral process than voters in the rest of the state. This became exceedingly clear

when voters in Miami-Dade and Broward were asked about the perceived likelihood that there would be serious problems with voting equipment. A significant percentage of voters in both counties thought that mechanical glitches in voting machines were likely during the next election cycle (see Table II). Over 45% of the voters in Broward County believed that it was "very" or "somewhat likely" that there could be serious problems with the voting equipment. In contrast, only 37% of the Broward respondents expected the next election to be devoid of serious mechanical issues. This finding should not be surprising given that Broward was at the center of voting controversies both in 2000 and 2002. Miami-Dade County voters were almost equally divided, 37.2% thought that it was "very" or "somewhat likely" that there will be serious problems with voting equipment on Election Day, while 37% thought that there would be no serious problems.

Table 2: Broward and Miami-Dade Voter Confidence in Electoral System

	Excellent-Good		Fair-Poor		N/A	
	Broward	Miami-Dade	Broward	Miami-Dade	Broward	Miami-Dade
Ease of using voting machine	81.2%	75.3%	12.2%	6.3%	2.6%	18.3%
Ease of understanding ballot	75.5%	NA	18.4%	NA	6.0%	NA
Avoid Serious Problems	42.1%	37.0%	45.1%	37.2%	12.7%	25.8%
Confidence your vote will count	55.7%	54.8%	33.6%	30.5%	12.1%	14.7%
Absentee or early voting procedure	72.7%	58.0%	19.7%	8.4%	7.6%	33.6%
Rating Supervisor of Election	76.4%	75.3%	17.0%	9.9%	6.6%	14.8%

Source: FIU Metropolitan Center, N=812 (Broward, November 2005), N=1347 (Miami-Dade, May 2006)

South Florida voters also expressed serious concerns about the accuracy of vote accountability. While an overwhelming 83% of Florida voters expressed confidence in that their vote would be counted, only 55.7% in Broward

and 54.8% in Miami-Dade said they trusted their vote would be accurately recorded (see Table II). South Florida voters also ranked other aspects of the electoral process significantly lower than voters in the rest of the State. For

example, while 81% of statewide voters ranked the absentee and early voting procedures as "good" or "excellent," only 58% gave a similar rating in Miami-Dade and 76.4% in Broward. Voters in Miami-Dade and Broward found their touch-screen voting machines more difficult to operate than voters in the rest of the State. Statewide, 91% of voters found their voting machines (both touch-screen and optical scanners) easy to use; this can be compared to 75.3% in Miami-Dade and 81.2% in Broward.

African-American voters in the two southeastern counties are particularly

concerned with the electoral process. Only 44% of African-American voters in Miami-Dade have confidence that their vote will count. African-Americans in Broward, at 51.7%, have slightly higher confidence in the voting process. Moreover, 44% of the African-American voters in Broward and 41.1% in Miami-Dade expected serious malfunctions at the polling places. Black voters gave significantly lower marks to the absentee and early voting process than non-Latin whites.

Table 3: African-American Voter Confidence in Electoral System

	Excellent-Good		Fair-Poor		N/A	
	Broward	Miami-Dade	Broward	Miami-Dade	Broward	Miami-Dade
Ease of using voting machine	77.6%	73.2%	17.2%	8.6%	5.2%	18.2%
Ease of understanding ballot	77.6%	NA	18.1%	NA	4.3%	NA
Avoid Serious Problems	41.4%	31.6%	44.0%	41.1%	14.7%	27.3%
Confidence your vote will count	51.7%	44.0%	36.2%	38.7%	12.1%	17.2%
Absentee or early voting procedure	72.1%	59.3%	17.4%	8.6%	10.4%	30.2%
Rating Supervisor of Election	79.1%	69.4%	12.1%	8.6%	8.7%	22.0%

Source: FIU Metropolitan Center, N=116 (Broward, November 2005), N=209 (Miami-Dade, May 2006)

Hispanic voters also expressed serious concerns about the electoral process in the two southeastern counties but not to the same extent as African-Americans. Only 55.8% of the Hispanics in Miami-Dade and 53.2% in Broward had confidence that their votes will be counted properly. Also, 38.3% of the Hispanic voters in

Broward and 31% in Miami-Dade felt that there would be serious glitches with the touch-screen voting machines. Moreover, in both Broward and Miami-Dade only about 56% of the voters expressed satisfaction with the absentee and early voting procedures.

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Table 4: Hispanic Voter Confidence in Electoral System

	Excellent-Good		Fair-Poor		N/A	
	Broward	Miami-Dade	Broward	Miami-Dade	Broward	Miami-Dade
Ease of using voting machine	80.9%	71.9%	12.8%	7.2%	6.4%	21.0%
Ease of understanding ballot	68.1%	NA	21.3%	NA	10.6%	NA
Avoid Serious Problems	48.9%	39.6%	38.3%	31.0%	14.7%	29.5%
Confidence your vote will count	53.2%	55.8%	42.6%	28.0%	4.3%	16.3%
Absentee or early voting procedure	56.5%	55.5%	32.6%	8.7%	10.9%	35.8%
Rating Supervisor of Election	68.2%	76.8%	25.0%	8.0%	6.8%	15.4%

Source: FIU Metropolitan Center, N=47 (Broward, November 2005), N=645 (Miami-Dade, May 2006)

The lack of confidence in the electoral process by a large number of minority voters in South Florida highlights the importance of polling place accessibility. According to Gimpel and Schuknecht, "some precinct locations are more accessible than others, and for the less accessible ones, at least some people will feel that the costs to get there outweigh any benefit." Interestingly, one of the complaints made by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and other critics of the 2000 Presidential election was that precinct quality in minority areas was low. According to the *New York Times*, many voters were unable to find their precinct or turned away once they arrived. A *New York Times* headline in November 2000 proclaimed "Arriving at Some Florida Voting Places, Some Blacks Found Frustration," and the story concluded that they encountered problems such as inadequate parking, change in precinct locations, and uninformed poll workers. In the end, thousands of potential voters may have been deterred from voting on Election Day due to "low quality" and inaccessible precincts. While many anecdotal stories surfaced in 2000 regarding polling place irregularities, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights also

claimed that systematic evidence existed showing that voters were disenfranchised because of poorly trained poll-workers and hard to find precincts. As posed by Campbell, unlike earlier forms of disenfranchisement, the demobilizing factors affecting minority voters was just as effective. While approximately eleven percent of the Florida electorate was African-American, a whopping 54 percent of the spoiled ballots were from predominantly African-American precincts. The chances of having one's vote "spoiled," therefore, increased tenfold in Florida if one were African-American.

However, many observers have taken issue with the Commission's claims. They argue that there is absolutely no evidence that any voters were disenfranchised in 2000. Peter Kirsanow, a member of the Commission on Civil Rights, disputed many of its findings in the conservative *National Review*. He wrote, "The six month investigation of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found absolutely no evidence of systematic disenfranchisement of black voters. The investigation by the Civil Rights Department of the U.S. Department of Justice also found no

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credible evidence that any Floridian was intentionally denied the right to vote in the 2000 election." He went on to write, "Many Florida voters, irrespective of race, spoiled their ballots by mistake. But error is not the same thing as disenfranchisement." In sharp contrast, Campbell writes that "simply applying 'voter error' to the events in Florida ignores the fact that over 175,000 citizens who went to the polls had their choices invalidated...The fact remained that low-income African-Americans having their votes invalidated were significantly higher than for affluent whites."

To investigate this issue, the Metropolitan Center conducted a precinct accessibility study in August 2004 in Miami-Dade County. After designing a checklist of polling place characteristics, appearance and quality, student research teams were sent to randomly selected precincts throughout the County to record information about each one on Election Day. The election included the hotly contested Democratic Senatorial campaign, Republican Senatorial campaign, and the County Mayor campaign. Voter turnout in the election was 294,840 voters (32% of eligible voters). Out of Miami-Dade's 749 precincts, 146 (19%) were selected for analysis based on high previous minority turnout. The selected precincts included the 10 largest non-Latin White precincts, the 15 largest African-American precincts, and the 20 largest Hispanic precincts. The selected 146 polling places represented the voter demographics of Miami-Dade County in a primary election: 51% Hispanic, 27% Anglo, and 18% African-American.

The findings from the precinct survey indicated that the August 2004, election was free of the problems that plagued the 2000 and 2002 elections. First, most of the polling places were highly visible to voters. An overwhelming number of precincts (86.1%) were easy to find with only 15% of the voting precincts not being visible from the street. Most of the

precincts (84.1%) had signs and/or banners outside. Over half of the polling places (60.7%) were next to or adjacent to major streets/intersections. Almost all (98.6%) had the correct address. However, about 15% had poorly marked addresses that were not visible.

In sharp contrast to the 2002 primary election, there were no serious problems with the touch-screen voting machines or staffing in the 2004 election. Almost all the precincts (93.6%) were adequately staffed, with four or more poll workers assisting voters. While 17.7% of the precincts reported having trouble with one of its machines, only a single polling place surveyed reported more than one machine malfunction. The 2004 election in Miami-Dade did not suffer from the staffing problems experienced in 2000 and 2002. All but a handful of the precincts (5.2%) had all their machines working properly by 7:00 am. All precincts surveyed had all their machines working by 7:40 am and all but 9.5% of the precincts had more than five touch-screen machines.

The precinct quality study conducted in Miami-Dade County in 2004 did not find the systematic disenfranchisement of minority voters that was alleged in 2000. In contrast to the 2000 general election and the 2002 primary election, the 2004 Florida Primary in Miami-Dade County was almost flawless. There was no major breakdown of equipment or reports of people being denied access to the polls. The research team found no evidence that touch-screen machines posed a major problem on Election Day. The local Elections Supervisor was able to provide equal access to voting precincts to all three major ethnic groups and the three major linguistic groups (Creole, English, and Spanish) in Miami-Dade County. However, based on observed voting patterns, the research team found that improvements could be made in three areas: precinct address markings should be made more visible and/or discernable; that precinct

working areas should provide more adequate space for both workers and voters; and that more handicapped-friendly areas were necessary.

Similarly, the precinct accessibility and exit poll study conducted in Broward County on November 7, 2006, contradicted claims of disenfranchisement of minority voters, specifically Hispanics. Although the Broward County Supervisor of Elections Office provided bilingual assistance on Election Day, linguistic differences are not as pronounced in Broward as in Miami-Dade County. Hispanic voters in Broward County showed sufficient English proficiency with over 70% saying they voted in English rather than Spanish. Just like the almost flawless functioning of touch screen machines in Miami-Dade's 2004 Election, Broward County's voting machines were easy to use and worked properly for almost all Hispanics who voted on November 7, 2006. Broward could also benefit from improvements in some areas related to precinct quality. The research team discovered that in Broward County increasing signage as well as visibility of address markings would improve the quality of these polling places.

Despite noticeable improvements in the functioning of touch-screen technology in Florida's two largest counties, the touch screen machines continued to be under fire for alleged technical glitches and, more importantly, for the lack of a paper trail. U.S. Congressman Robert Wexler, Democrat representing parts of Palm Beach and Broward counties, has led the effort to replace touch screen machines with optical scans since the 2002 fiasco. Election supervisors in the counties using touch-screen voting had mixed reactions. Arthur Anderson, the Palm Beach County Elections Supervisor elected in 2004, campaigned with the promise that he would switch to optical scanners once elected. Anderson's bid was supported by Congressman Wexler. In 2005, Miami-Dade County's newly appointed elections

supervisor, Lester Sola, made replacing touch-screen machines one of his priorities. In other counties, however, elections supervisor gave positive reviews of the touch-screens' performance in the elections. Other elections chiefs who use the same type of Elections Systems & Software machines as Miami-Dade said they see no reason to switch. Pasco County Elections Supervisor Kurt Browning, Martin County Elections Supervisor Vicki Davis, and Broward County Deputy Elections Supervisor Gisela Salas were all content with the touch-screen voting in their constituencies.

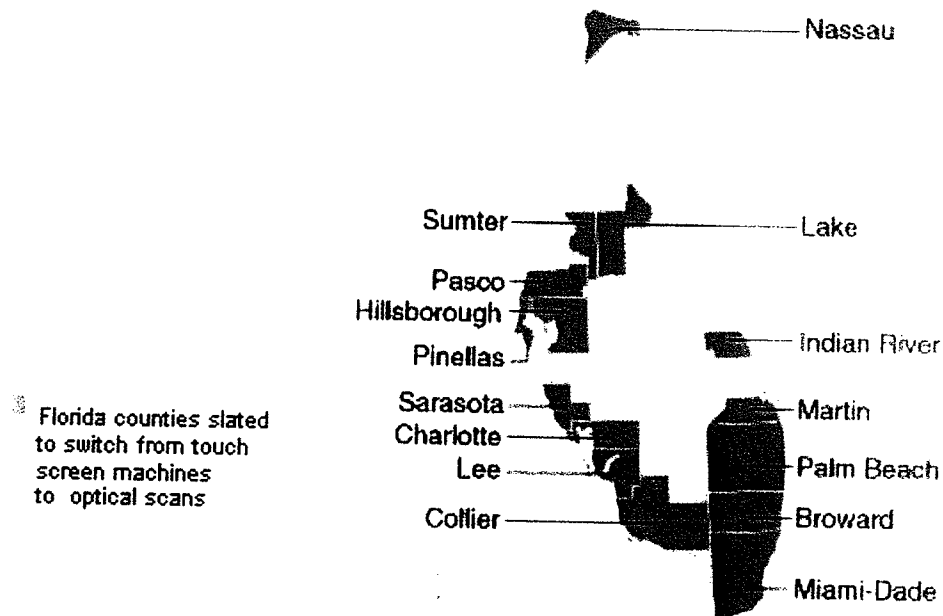
Despite the mixed attitudes towards the touch-screen machines, the newly elected Florida Governor Charlie Crist renounced them only a month after he replaced Jeb Bush. With the vocal support of some Democrats such as U.S. Congressman Robert Wexler, Crist argued that having a record of the vote was "common sense." On March 23, 2007, in a testimony before Florida's Subcommittee on Elections, Governor Crist stated that using optical scan voting will ensure that "when one of our citizens casts a ballot in an election at any level—local, state or federal—they can leave the polling place with the confidence that their vote has been counted, recorded and can be verified." Boosting voter confidence in the elections process, following the spotty record of performance of touch screens, including the contentious 13th Congressional District election in 2006, apparently was one of the driving forces behind the Governor's decision to sign legislation creating paper trail for Florida voters in May 2007. On May 21, 2007, Crist signed House Bill 537 which moved the Florida Presidential Primary to January 29 and outlawed vote-counting machines with no paper trail. Interestingly, the bill carries the same number as the votes cast for George W. Bush which won him the 2000 Presidential election. Moreover, Crist

signed the bill at the Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections' Office in the company of a bipartisan group comprised of the bill sponsors, Representatives David Rivera (R-Miami) and Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange), as well as Senators Lee Constantine (R-Altamonte Springs) and Jeremy Ring (D-Margate), Palm Beach's Elections Supervisor and U.S. Congressman Robert Wexler.

The law requires that optical scanners replace touch-screen voting machines in the 15 counties which use them. The 15 counties account for 54% of Florida's 10.4

registered voters. In addition, the law provides for "ballot on demand" which a citizen at any early voting site would receive. The custom ballot each early voter will receive will match the voter's residence, language and party affiliation. Voters would mark their choices on the ballot by filling in an oval next to each ballot question and the ballot will then be scanned optically. The law requires that all counties move to optical scan voting by the Fall 2008 elections and provides for funding to those counties that need to replace their equipment.

Figure 1: Florida Electoral Map by Counties Switching to Optical Scans



Source: The New York Times, 2007.

The required change to optical scan ballots and the ballot-on-demand system has accumulated growing criticism. Palm Beach County's Elections Supervisor warned of the high costs of the change and offered estimates almost double the funding to be released by the State. The County's Commissioners threatened to ignore the new law and continue with the touch-screen machines until the State

agreed to cover the remaining costs. The scandal dissipated once it became clear the Elections Supervisor had substantially inflated the estimates. Other criticisms have focused on the process itself and an argument surfaced that the ballot-on-demand system may have negative consequences for voter confidence. In an April letter to Governor Crist, 12 elections supervisors argued that a ballot

on demand system relies on poll workers feeding multiple pages into ballot printers, and getting each ballot to the right voter fast, to keep the lines moving. Voter dissatisfaction will definitely increase if these limitations make voting times longer. Based on high early voter turnout during recent election cycles, this is almost guaranteed, "the 12 supervisors wrote.

Conclusion

Since the 2000 Presidential Election, Florida has been earmarked by the national and local media as a harbor for election glitches and controversy. This notion was exacerbated by the failures during the 2002 election with touch-screen machine failures and poor accessibility at the voting places. Since then, the State has become the "looking glass" for pundits, media, comedians, and politicians to expect discrepancies in future elections. With the changes in the election process undertaken by the Governor, it is expected that Florida will remain under a tight reign of all these groups as it approaches the 2008

Presidential Primary in January 2008. The Primary election will establish a benchmark for analysts and researchers to prepare for the Presidential Election in November. The Governor's successful push on the legislature to approve the implementation of optical-scanners in 15 counties, including Miami-Dade and Broward, will also be under the radar, especially if these counties experience significant glitches or problems with the new voting technology.

However, with the installation of optical scanners in Miami-Dade and Broward, where voter-confidence is lower than in the rest of the state, this new technology providing voters with a "paper trail" of their votes will have a direct impact on voter-confidence. Even with its proactive attempts to avoid election errors as in the past, the key for Florida will be to successfully make it through 2008 almost flawlessly with the new technology. Otherwise, Governor and state elections officials will be burdened by the legacy of reinforcing Florida's reputation as the elections-handicapped state.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Gregory Palas, "Another Florida," Harper's Magazine, New York, New York: November, 2004.
- ² United States Commission on Civil Rights, Voter Irregularities in Florida during the 2000 Presidential Election., Washington D.C.: June, 2001.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ The commission used an ecological regression analysis by Professor Alan Lichtman to determine these correlations.
- ⁵ Numerous complaints received by the Attorney General's office and the Florida Democratic Party confirm that voters were turned away from their precincts. See "Complaints Received by Attorney General's Office," Bates Nos. 0008948, 0009170, 0009173, 0009279.
- ⁶ Ava Zamites of Tampa waited for one and a half hours but could not get through to the supervisor of elections office. "Complaint Received by Attorney General's Office," Bates No. 0009277. In another instance, when Lynette Johnson was told that her name was not on the voter list, poll workers attempted to call the supervisor of elections office. When they could not get through for an hour, she had to return to work. She continued to call on her own with no success. "Complaint Received by Attorney General's Office," Bates No. 0009882.

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Florida Elections and Hurricanes

David K. Twigg

Abstract: Election outcomes can be affected by natural disasters. This article explores whether the busy 2004 hurricane season impacted on elections in Florida, building on a previous study of elections after Hurricane Andrew devastated south Florida in 1992. Incumbent elected officials are usually, but not always, able to use the disaster situation to their advantage in seeking reelection—although their actions are typically not intended for any electoral effect. Incumbents who are not seen as actively trying to address the disaster situation are less likely to be reelected.

Florida's extensive coastline provides miles of beautiful beaches, an important tourist magnet that benefits state and local economies. Florida is also subject to hurricanes, a reality somewhat less highlighted in chamber of commerce brochures. Hurricanes have been studied extensively, but the nexus between hurricanes and elections is rarely the subject of investigation. Anecdotal evidence indicates potential impacts of hurricanes, and the response of elected officials to them, on elections. One study determined that incumbents were minimally impacted at the polls after Hurricane Andrew, a category 5 storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale, the most severe category (Twigg 2004).

Andrew's winds devastated a wide swath of south Florida in 1992, the initial governmental response was seen as slow and ineffective, the population was deeply scarred and the recovery took years, yet the scant evidence of effects from the storm on municipal, state legislative and statewide incumbents showed that the normal incumbent advantage was bolstered, not weakened. Elected officials shouldered their responsibilities, took

active and public roles to alleviate the suffering of their constituents and helped out where they could—and were nearly all returned to office when they stood for reelection. Incumbents of constituencies that were less impacted by the storm directed their efforts and their constituents' concerns to helping the less fortunate—the victims from the hardest hit cities and neighborhoods.

Primary elections for the state legislature were to be held on 1 September 1992, eight days after Andrew hit on Monday, 24 August. After debate and legal action, the elections were moved back one week in Dade County. Incumbents cancelled most of their normal campaign activities, dumped already printed campaign literature in the mail (not knowing whether it would be delivered) and turned their attention to helping victims and participating in meetings and relief efforts without regard to whether victims lived in their districts. Subsequent elections were held in less stressful physical circumstances and campaigning returned to normal, although in the most devastated cities, Homestead and Florida City, recovery and the return to normal campaigning—and normal campaign issues—was significantly slower.

Potentials

Anecdotal evidence and news reports indicate that there are three clear potentials for elected officials after a disaster. One possibility is that a hurricane or other disaster would be a shock to the political system and officials would be held accountable by voters through efforts to remove them from office. Elected officials could be voted

out of office or at least experience new or stronger opposition. New individuals or groups might seek office or just seek to punish the elected official by electing someone else.

The idea that a disaster could be disastrous for elected officials is not new. As far back as 1925 John Barnhart tied another natural phenomenon, severe drought, to the rise of the Progressive Party during the late 1800s: David Truman later identified "disturbances" causing "disruption of the established patterns of behavior" (1951, p. 106).

Thomas Mann (1987) advised incumbents to maintain their reputation, "discourage the strongest potential opponent . . . and avoid mistakes" (pp. 265-266). Hurricanes may create new issues and can cause at least a perception of "mistakes" by incumbents (Olson, 2000). A major disaster could cause feelings toward an incumbent to sour, weakening any incumbent advantage, encouraging challenges. Louisiana's governor was perceived to be weak and ineffective after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Never able to recover from the impact of the disaster on her reputation, she chose not to seek reelection.

In the first election after 2005's Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin had 21 challengers in his reelection bid, in all likelihood more than he would have had under more normal circumstances. Many interpreted Nagin's actions in preparation for and in response to Katrina to be full of errors, if not blunders. Nagin was seen as vulnerable, challengers were abundant, and voters were scattered. The Times-Picayune recommended challenger Ron Forman and endorsements for the incumbent were "hard to come by" (Russell, Krupa, & Perlstein 2006).

Many donors who had supported Nagin in his 2002 campaign gave money to his rivals instead in 2006 (Donze & Meitrodt 2006). In fact Nagin had difficulty raising money in 2006, although he had previously built a sizeable campaign account and

collected the third largest amount among the candidates. Of course the rebuilding of New Orleans was front and center in campaign issues in 2006 (Krupa & Donze 2006).

Nagin received 38% of the vote in April's general election, coming in first and making the runoff the following month (Secretary of State 27 August 2006). Also making the runoff was Mitch Landrieu, who finished with 29%. The Landrieu name was well known in New Orleans, and indeed throughout Louisiana. Mitch Landrieu's father was a former mayor of New Orleans, his sister was reelected to her seat in the U.S. Senate in 2004, and Mitch Landrieu had been successful in his own right, elected as the state's Lieutenant Governor. Landrieu was well known, had campaign experience, and held public office—an extremely strong challenger in the aftermath of the disaster.

The Times-Picayune had extensive campaign coverage; recovery and rebuilding issues were key parts of the debates that raged in the time leading up to the final balloting. Both candidates were well known. But the incumbent mayor was the incumbent mayor. Thus, his name appeared in the headlines as campaigner and as official representative—and defender—of the city and its recovery: e.g., "Nagin Unveils Partner Deal with Microsoft" (19 May—the day before the election, p. B-1, local "New Orleans" section), "City Secures Line of Credit: Nagin: Bankruptcy Option Laid to Rest" (16 May, p. A-1), "Nagin, Blanco at Odds on Delay in Aid: He Calls State Lethargic; She Points to Congress" (16 May, p. A-1). Just as after Andrew, the official duties added to the visibility of the incumbent and reminded voters who was there doing the job. Although Landrieu was able to attract nearly six times the financial support for the runoff as Nagin, he lost, the incumbent garnering 52% of the vote. Landrieu's attempts to portray

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As this example shows, a negative
perception is not guaranteed. The
opposite potential is that a disaster would
result in "positive effects" for
incumbents. The incumbent could take
advantage of the changed circumstances.
Public officials might show they are great
leaders, that they care about their
constituents, are willing to "tackle tough,
difficult problems," and successfully
provide casework and deliver needed
resources to help victims (and voters)
(Schneider, 1995, p. 16). Peter May (1985)
showed a correlation between incumbent
visibility after disasters and relative
election success (margin of
increase/decrease) for incumbents in
congressional seats, governors, and the
president, demonstrating a possibility of
increased incumbent advantage (see Table
1).

A third potential also exists. Abney and
Hill (1966) examined the 1965 mayoral
election in New Orleans after Hurricane
Betsy. They found no hurricane effects for
some interesting reasons. First, people
could not assign clear responsibility for
hurricane protection, so they did not know
who to blame or punish after Betsy struck
(the negative effects theory may not be
applicable in such a case). Second,
tending toward consistency in their view
of public officials, voters saw the
incumbent as competent before the
disaster and the mayor's relief and
recovery efforts were also seen positively,
inflating or at least maintaining the
perception.

Third Abney and Hill found that New
Orleanians saw the hurricane as an act of
God, something mere man could not
protect against and therefore not "a
legitimate political issue" in the 1965
election (pp. 979-980). This is yet a third
potential: Disasters have no political
effects. Incumbent advantage is neither
eroded nor enhanced due to a disaster.
Along the same lines but through a

different line of logic, both positive and
negative effects can be experienced.

Although Nagin's performance after
Katrina was not above reproach there
was plenty of blame to go around for the
governor and the state response, FEMA,
the Department of Homeland Security,
and the president. Similar to the 1965
case, Ray Nagin was first elected in
2002, when he was a political novice—a
successful businessman who vowed to
clean up a corrupt governmental system.
He had largely followed through on that
pledge and before Katrina was expected
to handily be reelected. Perceived
vulnerability because of Katrina brought
out numerous challengers and severely
eroded his ability to raise funds for the
campaign, but when all was said and
done, he won.

Florida's 2004 Storm Season: Multiple Hits, Multiple Elections

Tropical Storm Bonnie struck Florida
at approximately 2:00 P.M., Thursday, 12
August 2004. The center of the storm
made landfall near the mouth of the
Aucilla River, near Apalachicola, in the
Big Bend area of Florida's Gulf Coast
(Exhibit 1), and moved in a northeasterly
direction into Georgia (Avila 2004;
Florida Emergency Management 2004,
11). Sustained winds at landfall were
clocked at merely 40 M.P.H. around the
center of the storm. However, even the
relatively "gentle" winds of a Tropical
Storm can generate severe rain bands
and squalls, heavy rains and associated
flooding. Tropical Storm Bonnie spawned
tornadoes near Jacksonville, about 130
miles to the east.

Bonnie turned out to be the gentle
warm-up for Florida's gigantic 2004
hurricane season. The next day, Friday
the 13th, Hurricane Charley swept across
Florida, leaving many counties reeling
with substantial structural damage, loss
of electricity and telephones, and
general disruption of normal life
activities (Vasquez, Rabin, & Merzer
2004; De Vise & Long 2004; Buckley

2004a; Hanks & Fields 2004; Peterson & Smith 2004; Tribune Staff, Sarasota Herald-Tribune & Associated Press 2004).

Landfall was in the vicinity of the city of Punta Gorda, on the southern Gulf of Mexico; Charley's northeasterly track (Exhibit 2) took the storm from Lee and Charlotte counties on the southwestern coast out into the Atlantic Ocean near Daytona Beach (Volusia and Flagler counties), about 200 miles away on the northeastern coast—leaving a "swath of destruction" 10 miles wide (Emergency Management Department 2004, 15). Damage near the coast was reminiscent of Hurricane Andrew 12 years earlier. In fact Hurricane Charley was a Category 4 hurricane: the most powerful storm to hit Florida since Andrew. Note that descriptions of paths frequently depict a line along which the center of the storm passed, but is more accurately perceived as a disk with the "center" as an eye several miles in diameter.

Hurricane Charley swept through parts of Lee, Sarasota, DeSoto, Hardee, Polk, Highlands, Osceola, Lake, Orange, Seminole, Flagler and Volusia Counties, the second most costly hurricane (prior to 2005's Hurricane Katrina) to hit the United States (Pasch, Brown, & Blake 2004, 5; Rabin, Simon, & Driscoll 2004; Simon, Long, & Merzer 2004; Delgado 2004; Balgemann 2004a, 2004b; Schmidt 2004a, 2004b; Allen 2004a). Much of the affected area was rural; the largest city affected was Orlando, in Orange County.

Winds and other effects of the hurricane were felt in at least 30 counties, including the 13 listed, causing numerous deaths in Florida, nine of which occurred during the actual storm (Pasch, Brown, & Blake 2004, 5), leaving approximately 2 million people without power (Peterson & Smith 2004), widespread telephone outages, and substantial property damage. Charley's area of damage was larger but less densely populated than Andrew; moreover, Charley was a "tag-team" destroyer.

Less than three weeks later, on 1 September 2004, Hurricane Frances slammed into the Bahamas as a strong Category 4 storm, with sustained winds of 140 miles per hour. Frances pummeled the Bahamas for nearly four days, and then edged into Florida as a Category 2 storm with winds of 105 miles per hour (Beven II 2004; Florida Emergency Management 2004, 20). Unlike Charley, which crossed Florida from southwest to northeast, Frances moved from southeast to northwest (Exhibit 3). Less intense than Charley, Frances's eye was 50 miles wide and hurricane-force winds extended out nearly 85 miles from the eye. Each of Florida's 67 counties was buffeted by at least tropical storm-force winds, and business closures were widespread throughout the east coast of Florida during the normally busy Labor Day weekend (Walker & Wee 2004).

Hurricane-force winds struck parts of 10 counties in central Florida, including Orange, Polk, Highlands and Osceola counties, which had been affected by Hurricane Charley only three weeks before (Merzer, Buckley, Chang, & DeMarzo 2004). Frances made landfall near Stuart (see Exhibit 4) about midnight on September 5, and exited the Panhandle on September 6, meandering through the state, dropping significant amounts of rain—creating substantial flooding and knocking out power for some 5 million people (Icardi 2004; Helgeson, Sager, & Krause 2004; Sloan & Hammett 2004; Barrs & Kinsler 2004; Hammett 2004; Pera 2004a; Breed 2004a, 2004b; Allen & Palmer 2004; Arnold 2004c).

Ten days later Hurricane Ivan, after having smashed the island nation of Grenada, tore into eastern Alabama with 130 M.P.H. winds at about 3:00 A.M. on September 16, bringing deaths and destruction (Florida Emergency Management 2004, 24; Allen 2004c). The eye was 40-50 nautical miles in diameter and the eye wall extended into the Florida Panhandle (see Exhibit 5),

including Pensacola, and nearly 30 tornadoes spawned by Ivan touched down in Florida's Panhandle, Florida's Big Bend area, as well as in southern Georgia (Stewart 2005; Florida Emergency Management 2004, 24; Fineout & Merzer 2004; Caputo 2004b; Fineout, Caputo, & Tasker 2004; Mitchell 2004; Arrillaga 2004). Then came the icing on Florida's cake—Hurricane Jeanne.

Tropical Storm Jeanne soaked the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean Sea, and then passed over Hispaniola—causing severe flooding in Haiti (which resulted in at least 3,000 deaths)—and across the southeastern Bahamas (Lawrence & Cobb 2004, 2, 4). Jeanne looped around and passed over the Bahamas again, strengthening into a powerful hurricane and then powered into Martin County (where Frances had made landfall less than a month before) in the early hours of September 26, with 120 mile-per-hour winds (Florida Emergency Management 2004, 29; Lawrence & Cobb 2004, 2; Bolstad, Long, & Merzer 2004).

Jeanne followed a path similar to Frances's across the Florida Peninsula (Exhibit 5; see also Exhibit 6), but unlike Frances, which had moved into the Gulf of Mexico before striking the Panhandle, Jeanne stayed over land for a day and a half, moving northward over the western portions of peninsular Florida before exiting into Georgia (Buckley 2004b; Rabin, Bolstad, & Merzer 2004; Perez 2004).

Flooding was again a major problem, along with heavy to moderate wind damage, but in many areas wind damage occurred on top of wind damage, leaving widespread destruction (Saenz 2004; Pera 2004b). In a little over six weeks Florida had been affected by five tropical systems: one tropical storm and four hurricanes (one Category 2, two Category 3s, and one Category 4). Table 2 displays the most severely affected areas. A total of 106 deaths were reported across 34 of Florida's 67 counties, including 36 from Frances and 34 from Charley, both

unusually deadly (Tasker 2004). Over 10% of Florida's housing stock was destroyed or damaged (Royse 2005).

Election Season 2004

Reminiscent of Hurricane Andrew, Charley hit just before the 31 August 2004 primary elections; the others struck as the November general elections drew closer. It may be expected that the damage affected citizens' participation—especially those areas hard hit by Hurricane Charley. In fact the turnout in Charlotte County was only 18.04% in the August primary, considerably lower than turnouts reported in 2000 or 2002 (see Table 3).

Charley hit only 18 days before the primary, and candidates in Charlotte County found it necessary to adjust tactics just as candidates in Dade County had in 1992. Ads in print media and radio were used—and television advertising dropped—as officials worked to restore electricity and cable service in the weeks leading up to the election (Gonzalez 2004a). Elections officials searched to find sites where people could vote because many normal precinct voting sites were unusable, also reminiscent of Andrew (Arnold 2004a; Farrington 2004).

Some candidates replaced campaign signs that Charley removed. Others did not, like the candidate for the office of Elections Supervisor quoted in the *Charlotte Sun*: "Not again. I think it's just wrong with all the devastation to put more things out. . . . They don't want to see political signs" (Arnold 2004a). Candidates also adjusted their activities and were seen providing assistance in various ways if their official duties allowed (Arnold 2004a; Gonzalez 2004b). The two local incumbents challenged in the primaries successfully staved off their challengers on August 31 (Arnold 2004b; Gonzalez 2004b).

Much of Florida was affected and disruptions were widespread in 2004, but the turnout in the November general

election increased by 4.1% over 2000, a year when severe weather did not affect voting (see Table 4). Turnout was not uniform over Florida's 67 counties, ranging from 57.3% in Hendry County (rural south-central Florida, east of Fort Myers) to 81.9% in Flagler County, on the Atlantic coast north of Daytona Beach (Division of Elections 16 November 2004). State political party organizations were well aware of the importance of turnout, especially after the razor-close results of the 2000 presidential contest, and worked to counteract Nature's obstacles—one result of which was increased demand for absentee ballots (Farrington 2004). Charlotte County, where the strongest of the 2004 storms made landfall, was one of only four Florida counties in which the percentage turnouts in the 2004 general election were lower than four years before.

Voter turnout is typically weakest among lower-income people; individuals higher on the socioeconomic scale have more incentive and availability to participate in the political process. By the same token, people on the bottom economic rungs are typically hardest-hit from hurricanes and other natural disasters, and have the most difficult time recovering (Driscoll & Fields 2004). The poor are more likely to rent, have no or limited insurance, and have no resources to pay for repairs while waiting for insurance checks or government aid. Charlotte County, however, is not a particularly poor area (see Table 5), and with a large retired population the voter turnout there is normally high. The hurricane effect is a likely explanation for lower turnout in 2004.

In the wake of 1992's Hurricane Andrew some political conflict was reported between the governor, Democrat Lawton Chiles, and Republican President George H. W. Bush. The president requested emergency funds from Congress and the governor immediately announced the request was insufficient. The president visited the area at least twice,

but was in and out quickly and somewhat officiously, with little contact with area residents. Bush may have suffered from the perception of a slow and sloppy response, and the insertion of Ross Perot's personal money into the disaster recovery equation may have helped to erode the president's support in the south Dade area.

There was no political rift between governor and president in 2004. Republican President George W. Bush came to Florida after each hurricane and had no conflict or disagreement with the Republican governor—his brother John Ellis (Jeb) Bush—that year (Caputo 2004a; Defede 2004; Nesmith, Long, & Merzer 2004). Jeb Bush and his brother visited hurricane victims, emergency responders, and the National Hurricane Center; Jeb was conspicuously absent from the National Republican Convention and some campaign rallies in Florida because as governor he was dealing with emergency conditions, relief, and recovery (Clark 2004c; Merzer & Long 2004; Dunkelberger 2004). FEMA and state and local officials in Florida had learned from the Andrew debacle and adjusted planning and emergency procedures, leading to a more rapid, comparatively impressive relief response to the 2004 disasters (Fechter 2004).

George W. Bush learned lessons from his father's experience. There was an initial 90-minute visit in Hurricane Charley's wake (Clark 2004b). Later, however, rather than flying in and out for a quick official visit, President George W. Bush came to Florida, rolled up his sleeves, and handed out cases of water and bags of ice to residents in the affected areas, assuring people that help was here and more was on the way (Merzer & Long 2004). Pictures of this presidential activity were in the news and also rather quickly made it into campaign advertisements mailed out to Florida voters by the state Republican Party (Clark 2004e).

Democratic congressmen quickly criticized the fact that the Bush Administration did not accept the entire House Appropriations Committee recommendation for emergency relief for the various states affected by the numerous 2004 disasters (Florida was not alone). The same day the Republican-led House of Representatives approved \$10.9 billion in relief funds on a 412-0 vote, Representative Robert Wexler, Democrat from Palm Beach, Florida complained that the president's several visits to hurricane impact areas were nothing more than "photo ops" and that real help for hurricane victims in Florida was lacking (Davies 2004a). The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Republican Bill Young of St. Petersburg, Florida, quickly quieted the criticism by putting together a supplemental \$1.6 billion bill that included offsetting reductions in funding for other federal programs to alleviate concerns from the Office of Management and Budget and congressional fiscal conservatives. After negotiations, the OMB and Representative Young agreed on the additional package, reduced to \$887 million (Davies 2004b).

With no viable minor party candidate like Ross Perot in 1992 in the picture, the Democratic challenger, Senator John Kerry—a wealthy man in his own right—chose to stay away and avoid the appearance of politicizing disaster. Kerry visited southwest Florida a week after Charley hit but his campaign also cancelled rallies featuring the presidential and vice presidential candidates, and supporting groups cancelled high-profile fundraisers (Clark 2004a). As was the case after Hurricane Andrew, the incumbent elected official—in this case the president—was visible doing his official duties, a surrogate campaign, whereas the 2004 challenger actually removed himself from the potential politics of the situation, a noble but politically questionable gesture (Goodnough 2004; Bair 2004).

The first of the three presidential debates of the 2004 election season, scheduled before the annual hurricane season, was held at the University of Miami, in Coral Gables, bringing both candidates into the state (Clark 2004d). The day of the debate President George W. Bush consoled hurricane victims in Stuart, where Frances and Jeanne had made landfall; during the following two days Kerry made campaign stops in Tampa, Kissimmee, and Orlando—any remaining moratorium on politicking in Florida, with its 27 electoral votes, was off (Long 2004). The incumbent did not fare well in that first debate, a fact blamed on the fact he was tired from his activities earlier in the day—presidential job-related duties effectively framed as surrogate campaign activities.

Bush fared better in his reelection contest in Florida, widening his narrow and controversial 537-vote winning margin of 2000 to a margin of nearly 381,000 in 2004. Issues besides hurricanes certainly figured in that success, but Bush's response to the hurricanes resulted in little criticism from either Florida officials or opposition candidates, although some dissatisfaction was reported after President Bush's first 90-minute visit in southwest Florida (Clark 2004b). Bush's vote percentages went up in 64 of 67 counties between 2000 and 2004, including those noted as having had special impact.

Delving Deeper

The presidential election, of course, incorporates broad national issues. Bush's reelection campaign focused on the War on Terror. An examination of other elections following the 2004 hurricane season provides a broader picture of the nexus between the hurricane events and the elections.

No incumbent U.S. senator from Florida was seeking reelection in 2004 (with Connie Mack's retirement there was an open seat contest), but 23

members of the U.S. House of Representatives were (Division of Elections 16 November 2004). All won reelection, three unopposed (one Democrat and two Republicans). The incumbents' share of their districts' votes ranged from 55.3 to 85.8%—except for four who received over 99% of the votes against write-in candidates. Although Republicans dominated among these incumbents (18 to 5) in a state dominated by Republicans, there was no discernable difference in the results based on party or on proximity to the worst hurricane damage.

Half of the 40-member Florida Senate, members with odd-numbered seats, was up for reelection, and one special election was held to fill the vacancy created by a state senator's congressional bid. (Florida's state senators serve staggered 4-year terms.) Ten incumbents were unopposed; the 10 with competition all won handily, with over 60% of the vote going to the incumbent in each race. All 120 seats of the Florida House of Representatives were up for election. Of the 49 incumbents seeking to retain their seats who had competition—and therefore elections—all were successful. Thirty-eight (78%) of these victors were elected with at least 60% of the votes, and only two (4%) received less than 55% of the vote.

As in 1992, the decision to enter the race was made before any hurricane hit, so the disaster events would not have affected most candidates' decisions to run or to stay out of the race. Jonathan Torres, challenger in the state House District 66 (central Florida) race withdrew in early October due to a lack of money for his campaign, not an unusual problem for a candidate challenging an incumbent (Schottlekotte 2004a). The incumbent in that race, Baxter Troutman, said the reason most of his campaign contributions came from corporations, many from out of the area, was that he "didn't have the heart to go to those people who had tarps on their roofs and were worried about the

future of their businesses and ask them for a \$20 contribution" (Schottlekotte 2004b).

Incumbent Marty Bowen, of Polk County (House District 65), acknowledged she had not been able to campaign as much as desired because of her hurricane-related activities, "[f]rom touring storm-ravaged neighborhoods to working at ice and water distribution centers to helping constituents with insurance claims and disaster relief..." (Green 2004). Incumbents were not the only candidates who adjusted campaigns due to the hurricane. Paige Kreegal, a first-time candidate running for a state House seat, did not replace his signs "out of respect for people trying to rebuild their lives" and noted that the hurricane had strained his primary campaign, as well as adjusting his priorities should he prevail in November (Martin 2004b). William Duckett, a write-in opponent of Kreegal, had thought about becoming a serious candidate until Hurricane Charley, which caused him to become too busy (Martin 2004e).

Not only did the hurricane cause physical (and emotional) disruption to campaigns, it became an item of attention in campaign rhetoric. Incumbent State Senator Lisa Carlton (Republican, District 23) sought reelection and hoped to be reappointed chair of the Education Appropriations Committee, although she expected that job to be more difficult after the four hurricanes increased the need for local school funding and eliminated classrooms, at a time when the legislature was trying to meet a voter approved constitutional amendment limiting the number of students in classrooms. She also saw a need to review the 2004 storm experience to determine what strengthening was still needed for the statewide building code (Martin 2004d).

Her opponent, Libertarian Charles Manhart, suggested that counties were inflating damage claims, even suggesting

that some of Charlotte County's estimates were "like insurance fraud" (Martin 2004d). With her more positive approach, Senator Carlton won 78% of the vote (Division of Elections 16 November 2004). Even without the 2004 storm experience, an incumbent facing a political novice running as a third party candidate might have done just as well but there is no evidence that the disaster hurt Carlton's chances. Kreegel also opined that obtaining funds for local hurricane recovery would be challenging, because four hurricanes meant most counties were seeking assistance from Tallahassee (Martin 2004d), a different scenario from 1992, when state legislative leaders allowed Dade lawmakers to take the lead in fashioning a fair relief and recovery plan.

Michael Grant admitted he was worn out after campaigning in the primaries for the District 71 House seat and relocating his family because of the hurricane; newly created rebuilding needs also adjusted his priorities as a candidate (Martin 2004a). In the general election campaign for the open seat, Grant, a Republican, and his Democratic opponent Shaneen Wahl both noted their efforts after Hurricane Charley (Martin 2004c). But although both also saw hurricane recovery as a new priority for the state legislature, Grant, who had been forced to relocate due to damage to his own home, also had experience as a member of the Charlotte County Airport Authority and a member and chairman of Enterprise Charlotte, a business-oriented advisory body for the county commission. Grant, successful in November, campaigned on specific hurricane-related issues he wanted to pursue in office, including an increased state contribution to the required local match to FEMA assistance funds and a legal assurance that a state limit on increasing tax assessments on personal residences would be applied to homes whose value increased after storm-related rebuilding.

County commission seats were also on the block in most counties, although

staggered terms meant that not all seats went before voters in 2004. The focus here is on the two counties with arguably the most impact, Charlotte and Polk counties.

Charlotte County Keeps On Ticking

Charlotte County, the coastal area around Port Charlotte and the city of Punta Gorda, received the brunt of Charley's fury at landfall, and Charley packed the strongest winds of all the 2004 storms. The area is home to many retirees and has numerous mobile home communities. The proportion of the population 65 years old and older, according to the 2000 Census, was 34.7%, substantially higher than the 17.6% average for Florida as a whole.

Incumbent work to help secure aid for the county and to help displaced constituents was noted by one Charlotte County commissioner seeking reelection in 2004, whereas his challenger could only say he wanted to join the effort (Gonzalez 2004c, 2004d). The incumbent touted his constituency service—including after the hurricane—as the reason for his November victory (Haughey 2004). Recovery efforts were noted in a forum for candidates in Charlotte County on 19 October 2004, just over two months post-Charley, but the discussion was not controversial and took place in front of an audience of only 35 people, perhaps a reflection of hurricane-related reality (Overbey 2004).

The city of Punta Gorda held municipal elections in February 2005, nearly six months after Charley's visit. Incumbent city councilman John Murphy was challenged by Dave Phelen, an officer of several local community organizations and a former local elected official in Pennsylvania. Murphy emphasized hurricane-related constituent service before other development issues, according to reports in the Charlotte Sun, whereas Phelen addressed leadership and the need for a

master plan for development (Reilly 2005a, 2005b, 2005e).

Another Punta Gorda incumbent, John Land, faced former councilman Larry Friedman, who Land had defeated two years before. Friedman wanted to be an independent voice on the council and roll back tax rates—a goal he acknowledged might be impossible because Hurricane Charley increased the financial needs of the city (Reilly 2005c). Incumbent Land saw the hurricane as providing new opportunities for development in the city, especially through the FEMA planning process (Reilly 2005d).

As the campaign season wore on the candidates' platforms evolved into similar positions, largely perhaps because citizens expressed the same concerns to the candidates (Reilly 2005f). The voters' attention increasingly turned to the city's vacant city manager position—two different candidates selected by the city council turned down the job in the midst of hurricane rebuilding and recovery efforts. The Charlotte Sun endorsed Larry Friedman over incumbent Land because of Land's gentlemanly demeanor and "get-along philosophy" because it was perceived that a "more aggressive, even perhaps contentious, effort is required. Now is not the time for a vision that wants to rebuild Punta Gorda the way it was" (Friedman, Land in Rematch for City Council, 2005, 4 February).

What was needed was not incumbent Land's custodial effort, in the terminology of Abney and Hill, but a more activist approach embodied by Friedman's "vision to rebuild Punta Gorda from the hurricane's destruction and move it forward with a swift kick in the pants" (Friedman, 2005, 4 February). The Sun in fact endorsed both challengers, painting the contests as a "clash between the status quo and the need for a new vision and change" (Phelen, Friedman have earned Sun's recommendation, 2005, 8 February). Coincidentally, two negative campaign fliers were distributed to Punta Gorda residents the weekend before the

election—apparently not generated by any campaign organization—blasting both incumbents. The incumbents lost on 8 February with only 27% and 18% of the vote, respectively (Reilly 2005g, 2005h). The victors saw their successes as mandates for change for the city.

Polk County: In the Crosshairs

Polk County, roughly in the center of the state, had the dubious distinction of having three hurricanes pass through in a short period of time, and experienced substantial flooding and serious wind damage. Polk's voter turnout for the 2004 primary election was 26.1%, lower than in 2002 but surpassing the primaries in 1998 and 2000 (Rousos 2004). Two county commissioners sought reelection in Polk County's partisan commission races. One was defeated in the August primary after being seriously outspent by the challenger, \$84,373 to \$15,388 (Palmer 2004a, 2004b). The second incumbent did not face a primary challenge, but was reelected in November (Palmer 2004c). A candidate for an open commission seat who was endorsed by a retiring commissioner—the incumbent passing the baton—was successful in his primary (Allen 2004b).

Hurricane Charley entered Polk County on 13 August with sustained winds of about 115 m.p.h. (and some stronger gusts), a Category 3 level (Allen 2004d). It left six dead and destroyed or severely damaged over 3,500 homes, businesses, and apartment buildings (Allen 2004a). The primaries followed, then Frances and Jeanne passed through before the general elections, with 90 mile-per-hour (Category 1) and 100 mile-per-hour (Category 2) sustained winds, respectively, within the county (Allen 2004d). Candidates in the general election campaign were reaching out to a population reeling from three hurricanes in one season. The combined damage to Polk County from these storms included over 7,700 buildings destroyed or damaged (Chambliss 2004).

The League of Women Voters of Polk County sponsored a series of candidate forums in 2004, before both the primary and general elections (Allen 2004e). The audience at the October 5 forum was unusually small, with only about 50 people in attendance. The forum moderator assumed televising the event had had an impact on attendance, but also noted that people were recovering from three hurricanes. One incumbent took strong exception to a suggestion by another candidate during the forum that the county commission was a part-time operation, "particularly after the long hours the commission has put in dealing with hurricanes and the 1.6 million cubic yards of debris the storms left behind" (Allen 2004e). Yet the response of the commission to the disaster events did not seem to be an issue of contention.

The hurricanes were a reference point for some campaigns, with candidates noting what the county population had been through and promising to make sure things continued to improve (Rufty 2004a; Geary 2004). However the real issues for all campaigns were existing topics from before the hurricanes, which were interruptions to people's lives but not fodder for political controversy. In Polk County every incumbent in the November general election was successful, including the president, U.S. congresspersons, state legislators, and the county commissioner (Rufty 2004b).

On 5 April 2005 nine Polk County municipalities held elections (some four and a half months after Charlie) in which a total of 14 incumbents ran for reelection as mayor or commissioner. Eight of those incumbents (57%) won their contests. The defeats do not appear to be related to any hurricane effects, however. In Lake Wales a controversy had arisen over a city commission decision to forego a state grant to convert an abandoned railway right-of-way into a multiple-use trail (Bair 2005). The commission had previously approved the project, and a grant for nearly \$700,000 was awarded by the city,

but people who lived near the right-of-way objected, fearing increased crime and traffic. The commission rescinded its approval and other city residents objected. With a turnout of over 30% at the polls in a municipal election, a referendum on the trail project won with 58% of the votes, and the two commissioners seeking reelection, both of whom had opposed the trail project, were defeated with only 36% and 32% of the votes.

Two other incumbents were defeated in the city of Mulberry, a municipality under state scrutiny because of a financial emergency. The election was seen as "a referendum about citizen satisfaction with the way Mulberry is being run" in general; not weather emergencies (Palmer 2005). The only incumbent running for reelection in the city of Bartow was 82 years old and had served two terms on the city council (Schottlekote 2005). The successful challenger in that race credited his win to getting his supporters out to vote—only 11% of city voters bothered to go to the polls for this single ballot issue. The sixth defeated incumbent was in the small city of Eagle Lake, where one of two incumbents on the ballot was defeated (Townsend 2005). The race had been close, with a final vote tally of 187-170 (the other incumbent won by a mere 6 votes).

Finally, Lakeland, Polk County's largest city, held elections for mayor and for county commissioner seats on 1 November 2005. The incumbent mayor was elected with 64% of the vote against two challengers; both incumbent commissioners seeking reelection were returned to office with 72% and 56% of the vote (Rousos 2005; Rufty 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Voters Not Shocked by Electric Rates, 2005, 3 November). The biggest issues in these races centered on high electric rates, arguably the result, at least in part, of high repair costs and lost revenues after the 2004 hurricanes, but also involving fuel price increases,

management decisions, and challenger proposals to fix perceived problems, including the possibly unrealistic fast-track construction of a nuclear electric generating facility. These electric rate issues apparently did not negatively affect incumbent success, disaster-related or not.

More of the Same

The initial results of the electoral aftermath of the 2004 hurricane season look similar to the experience after Hurricane Andrew 12 years before. Most incumbents won reelection. Campaigns were disrupted and adjusted, at least for a while. Hurricane(s) quickly became one of many issues, but usually not dominant in campaigns. For Charlotte County and Punta Gorda, as with Florida City and Homestead, the severity and extent of the damage caused Hurricane Charley to have a greater and longer lasting impact.

Incumbents responded to the disaster in their official capacities, which typically trumped the actual campaigns by being "out there" as the one in office to whom citizens—and voters—could turn for help. The apparently different cases where Punta Gorda incumbents were defeated may be different in the incumbents' responses to the disaster rather than in the actions of voters. These defeated councilmen allowed the city administrators to direct the response. Successful incumbents demonstrated more leadership and a different vision. As an individual closely related to an incumbent campaigning for reelection after Hurricane Andrew noted, "bureaucrats don't do anything that isn't in a straight line. That's why they elect citizens that are willing to go a little bit off campus." Punta Gorda voters sought an "off-campus" attitude that they did not find in their existing officials.

State and local leaders "took the bull by the horns" after Andrew and had visible accomplishments. The disaster was not something they had desired, but the event became a rare opportunity. The elected leader in times of such a crisis does not try to replace what was, but to build something better. Opponents could not compete with success, even when that success was an ambitious plan not yet realized. In Punta Gorda after Charley, opponents could fault the more placid, custodial approach. The ambitious plan, the vision for a better community, was the rare opportunity that the challengers took advantage of.

Recovery from disaster is a lengthy process for many victims, fraught with stress and anxiety. Tropical Storm Arlene hit the Pensacola area on June 4, 2005, a part of Florida where many residents were still rebuilding, living in temporary housing or under blue tarp-covered roofs. Arlene was just a tropical storm—but as it approached many wondered whether the tarps would withstand the storm. The county commissioner representing Pensacola Beach and surrounding areas was out of town on business and unavailable for several days. Some fellow commissioners were upset by his absence, as were some voters, according to one news report. "[H]e's one of the people that should have been here," one constituent stated (Norman 2005). This political *faux pas* was neither forgotten nor forgiven. In 2005 it was suggested that the commissioner "will have to answer for his absence" (Norman 2005). He was defeated with only 38.1% of the vote in September, 2006 (EscambiaVotes.com, Accessed June 16, 2008).

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Table 1: Visibility and Vote Change
Involvement Mean Vote Change

Highly Visible	+5.1 %
Moderately Visible	+3.0 %
Less Visible	+0.3 %

Source: Twigg 2004, page 46, from May 1985, Table 6.4, pages 119-120

Table 2: Areas of Impact, 2004 Florida Hurricanes

A. Initial Impact (Landfall)			
Category	Hurricane	County	City
4	Charley	Charlotte Lee	Punta Gorda Sanibel
3	Ivan Jeanne	Escambia Martin	Pensacola Stuart
2	Frances	Martin	Stuart
B. Triple Hit Area*:		Polk Bartow Fort Meade	Lake Wales

*Paths of Charley, Frances and Jeanne crossed within a small triangle between Wauchula (Hardee County), Bartow (Polk County) and Lake Wales (Polk County). Fort Meade is a small municipality between Wauchula and Bartow.

Table 3: Primary Election Turnout, Charlotte County, Florida, 2000, 2002, 2004

Date	Turnout (% of Registered Voters)
September 5, 2000	23.80
September 1, 2002	25.63
August 31, 2004	18.04

Source: Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections Web Site
<http://www.charlottevotes.com/Elections/Results/htm> Accessed 9 December 2004

Table 4: Change in Voter Turnout, 2000-2004 General Elections, Selected Florida Counties

County	2000			2004			Change
	Registered	Voter Turnout	%	Registered	Voter Turnout	%	
Charlotte	98,898	70,100	70.9	113,808	80,196	70.5	-0.4
Lee	252,918	188,978	74.7	304,937	241,663	79.3	4.6
Escambia	171,004	121,141	70.8	189,833	143,849	75.8	5.0
Martin	86,514	62,570	72.3	98,857	72,736	73.6	1.3
Polk	247,807	169,582	68.4	295,742	211,399	71.5	3.1
Florida	8,752,717	6,138,765	70.1	10,301,290	7,640,319	74.2	4.1

Source: Division of Elections, Florida Department of State Web Site, <http://www.dos.state.fl.us>, accessed 16 November 2004.

Table 5: Economic Indicators, Selected Florida Counties

County	1999 Median Household Income	1999 Persons Below Poverty
Charlotte	\$36,379	8.2%
Escambia	\$35,234	15.4%
Lee	\$40,319	9.7%
Martin	\$43,083	8.8%
Polk	\$36,036	12.9%
Florida	\$38,819	12.5%

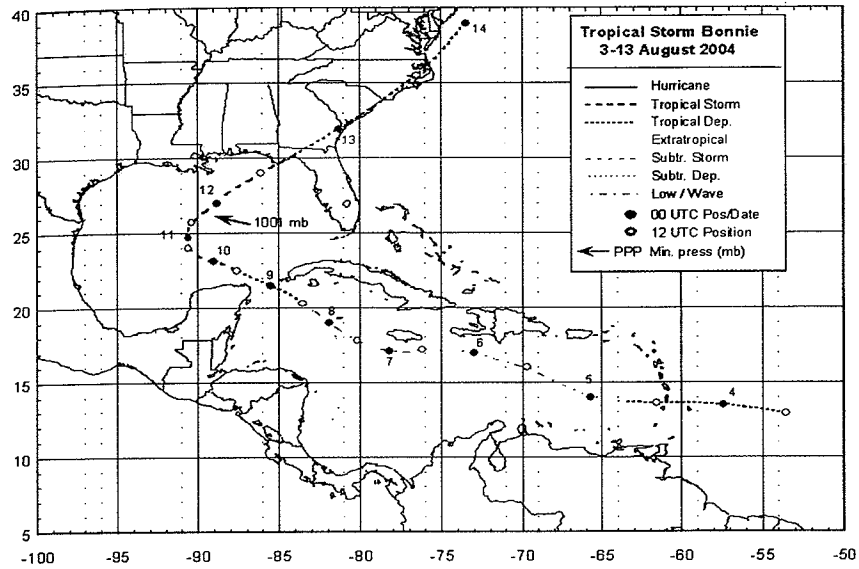
Source U.S. Census Bureau Web Site, <http://quickfacts.census.gov> accessed 8 June 2005.

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	Change
5	-0.4
3	4.6
8	5.0
6	1.3
5	3.1
2	4.1

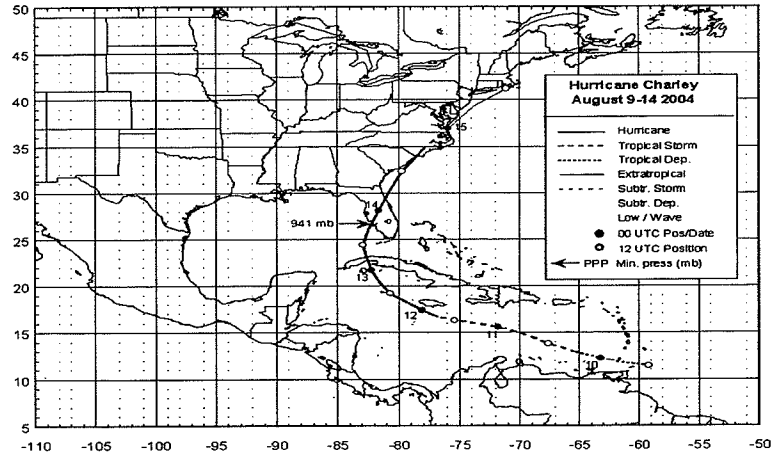
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Exhibit 1: Storm Track, Tropical Storm Bonnie, 2004



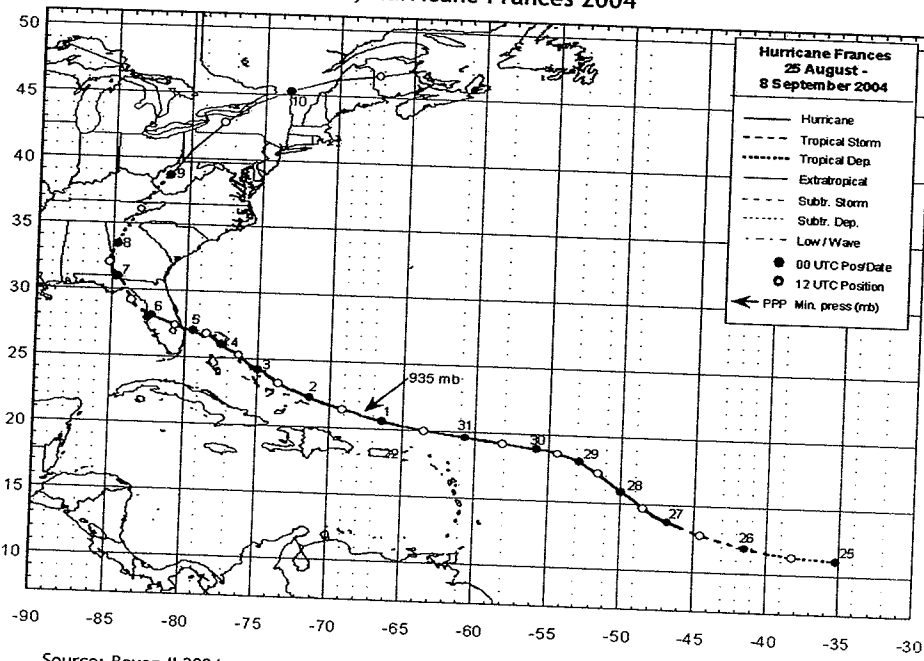
Source: Avila 2004.

Exhibit 2: Storm Track, Hurricane Charley, 2004



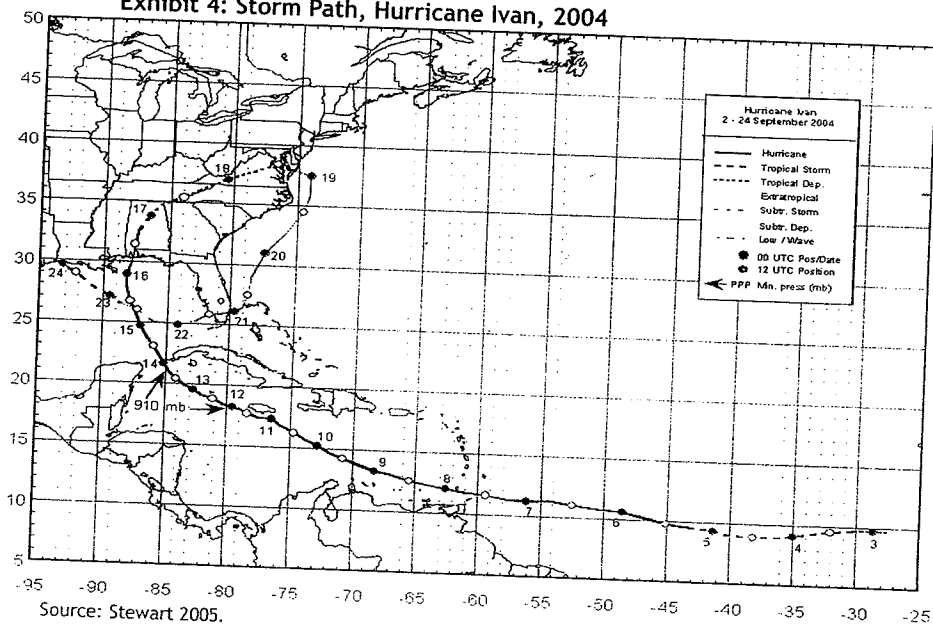
Source: Pasch, Brown and Blake 2004.

Exhibit 3: Storm Path, Hurricane Frances 2004



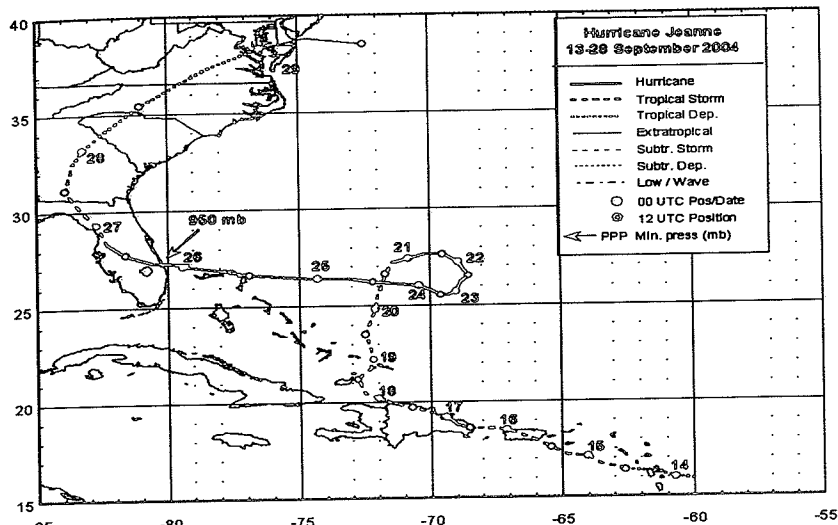
Source: Beven II 2004.

Exhibit 4: Storm Path, Hurricane Ivan, 2004



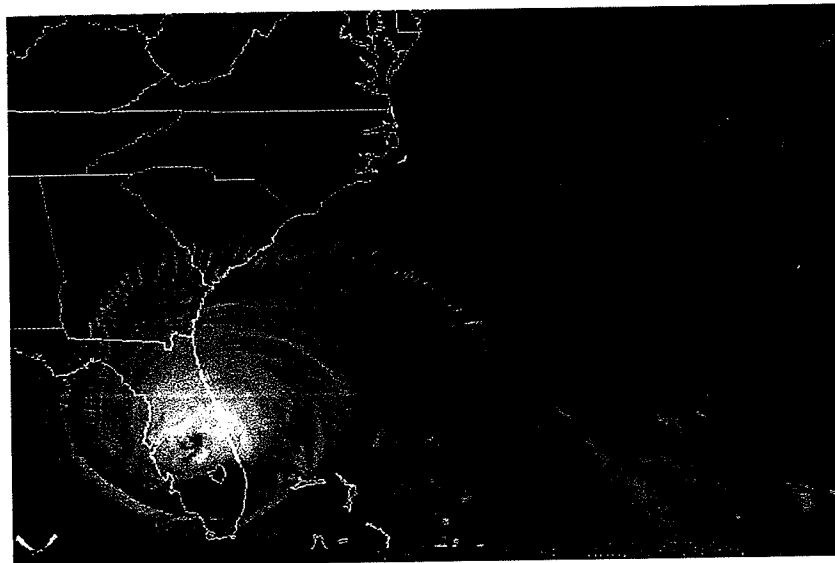
Source: Stewart 2005.

Exhibit 5: Storm Path, Hurricane Jeanne, 2004



Source: Lawrence and Cobb 2004.

Exhibit 6: Jeanne over Sebring, Florida, September 26, 2004



Source: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Web Site, <http://www.goes.noaa.gov>, accessed 26 September 2004.

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