



Winners, Losers, and Election Context: Voter Responses to the 2000 Presidential Election

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Elections are sometimes seen as legitimizing institutions, promoting system-level support among citizens by allowing them to have input into the political process. However, prior research has found that this is less true among supporters of losing candidates, who often exhibit lower levels of political trust and satisfaction with democracy. We analyze NES survey data from 1964 to 2004, as well as surveys from Florida and the nation following the controversial presidential election of 2000, and find that (1) losers exhibit lower levels of political trust, satisfaction with democracy, confidence that government is responsive to citizens, and in early 2001 were less inclined to extend legitimacy to the newly elected president; (2) losers also are more likely to endorse “rationalizations” as explanations of the election outcome, to be less satisfied with the choice of candidates offered in the election, and to perceive the electoral process as unfair; and (3) voter interpretations of the election mediate the relationships between winning/losing on the one hand, and trust, responsiveness, and satisfaction with democracy on the other. These findings suggest that the so-called legitimizing function of elections is far from a universal phenomenon.

Elections are at the core of democratic politics. At least in principle if not always in fact, they provide citizens with a chance to express their policy views and priorities, to participate directly in the political process, and to hold elected leaders accountable for their actions (Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Katz 1997); as a result, elections are seen as legitimizing institutions that protect the system by generating popular support and by helping to “confine mass political action to routine, peaceful channels” (Ginsberg 1982: 7). There is, however, an important catch to the argument being made here: According to Ginsberg, “[t]he formal opportunity to participate in elections serves to convince citizens *that the government is responsive to their needs and wishes*” (7) (emphasis added; also see Rahn, Brehm, and Carlson 1999).

The catch, of course, is that this probably does not happen as often as one might hope. In particular, it seems unlikely that voters who support the loser(s) in an election will be as quick as those backing the winner(s) to agree that their voices have been heard. This should be especially true whenever, for example, candidates obscure the real issues by opting for either general platitudes or negative attacks, voters are unhappy with the electoral choices available to them, or doubts exist about whether the election itself was conducted in a fair and honest fashion. Indeed, prior research indicates that winners and losers do not always

respond with equal enthusiasm either to the election outcome, or to the institutions and processes through which that outcome was rendered. Across a variety of settings in advanced industrial democracies, supporters of winning candidates tend to have higher levels of system support than do those who support the losing candidates (Ginsberg and Weissberg 1978; Clarke and Acock 1989; Nadeau and Blais 1993; Anderson and Guillory 1997; Norris 1999; Nadeau et al. 2000; Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Anderson and LoTempio 2002; Anderson et al. 2005; but also see Rahn, Brehm, and Carlson 1999).¹

Moreover, it seems that political institutions help to shape the magnitude of differences between winners’ and losers’ levels of support. In inclusive systems, where governmental power is shared through federalism, coalition formation, or separation of powers, for example, losers apparently take some solace from the fact that their partisan representatives have real (though limited) influence in policymaking. In contrast, exclusive systems customarily produce much wider gaps in support between winners and losers, as the latter are effectively shut out of meaningful governmental influence at least until the next election occurs (Anderson et al. 2005: 120-40; Anderson and Guillory 1997).

Little progress has been made, however, in identifying the individual-level processes that account for these patterns. Demographic variables and political predispositions, including partisanship, extremist ideology, and attitudes toward salient issues (Anderson et al. 2005: 73-89; Nadeau and Blais 1993) have only moderate influences on the relationships between election outcome and system support,

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¹ The analysis by Anderson and Guillory suggests that this relationship will vary across contexts, for example, depending upon the degree to which a political system is majoritarian or consensual (Lijphart 1984; also see Norris 1999; Anderson and Tverdova 2001).

and therefore are of limited utility in explaining how winners and losers might come to think differently about the electoral process. In the present study, we consider whether feelings of system support are shaped by citizens' attitudes and beliefs about three salient aspects of the electoral experience. Specifically, we propose that winners' support and losers' despondency might be explained, in part, by their (1) satisfaction with the *choice of candidates* presented to voters, (2) *interpretations* of the election outcome, and (3) assessments of procedural *fairness*. We seek to determine whether any or all of these attitudes have a direct and meaningful impact on people's attitudes about the political system and its leaders (including their feelings of trust, beliefs about governmental responsiveness, satisfaction with democracy, and legitimacy accorded to the newly elected president); and also whether they mediate the relationship between candidate preference and political support, thereby helping to explain why winners and losers tend to respond differently after the ballots have been counted and a victor declared. We test these hypotheses using data from several opinion surveys, both national and statewide in scope, conducted over a number of elections (with a particular focus on the controversial presidential race in 2000). Our findings affirm the oft-noted contrast between winners and losers, and suggest some of the thought processes that underlay those differences. Although not all aspects of the election context examined here carry equal weight in shaping citizens' reactions to election outcomes, it is clear that certain elements do matter—and that the impact of elections on political support is not invariably a positive one.

WINNING, LOSING, AND ELECTION CONTEXT

Perhaps it is true that by effectively “co-opting” citizens, elections can “help to increase popular support for political leaders and for the regime itself” (Ginsberg 1982: 7). At the level of individual behavior, it appears that orientations such as trust, efficacy, and satisfaction with democracy tend to be at least somewhat more positive among those who vote or otherwise participate in the political process (Ginsberg and Weissberg 1978; Finkel 1985, 1987; Nadeau and Blais 1993; Rahn, Brehm, and Carlson 1999; Joslyn and Cigler 2001; also see Cigler and Getter 1977).² Yet election campaigns are, in many instances, extremely competitive and hard-fought contests that produce winners, losers, and hard feelings on both sides.

One would expect hard feelings to be especially acute among those who end up on the short end of the stick; accordingly, insofar as the generation of political support is concerned, it is the

losers' reactions [that] are absolutely crucial. Winners are likely to be overwhelmingly satisfied with a process through which the party or candidate they voted for gets elected. Losers' support is less obvious. That support

requires the recognition of the legitimacy of a procedure that has produced an outcome deemed to be undesirable (Nadeau and Blais 1993: 553).

Just as the hard test of political tolerance is “the willingness to permit the expression of those ideas and interests [that] one opposes” (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1979: 784), a crucial aspect of legitimacy has to do with losers' acceptance of the election outcome as valid, and their willingness to consent to the winners' rightful authority to instigate policies to which losers may be strongly opposed. In a broader sense, the persistence of democratic institutions would seem to depend on the acknowledgement by winners and losers alike that the people are capable of casting their ballots in a wise and thoughtful manner, i.e., that the decisions rendered at the polls are not frivolous, and that the idea of democracy itself is not a sham. We believe that the likelihood of voters (especially losers) reaching that conclusion depends in part on the meaning they attach to the election outcome, their satisfaction with the choice alternatives, and their belief that the election was conducted fairly.

Interpretations of the Election

Prior research has found that an election can produce multiple interpretations that vary by source and evolve over time. Kingdon (1966: 23-34), for example, discovered a *congratulation-rationalization* effect among winning and losing candidates: The former were much more likely than the latter to believe that voters were at least reasonably well informed, and that they usually made the right decision at the polls for the right reasons (especially in terms of voting for the better candidate rather than the party label). Winners were thus inclined to congratulate the electorate—and, indirectly, themselves—for its good judgment, while losers rationalized their defeat by assuming that voters had failed to meet their responsibilities as democratic citizens. Candidates are not the only ones who interpret the meaning of elections, of course. The media, political activists, and other opinion leaders sift through the cacophony of campaigns in search of the real message that (they believe) the electorate intended to convey, throwing out a good deal of wheat with the chaff along the way (Hershey 1992; Thomas and Baas 1996).

In the present study, we will look for evidence of *congratulation-rationalization* at the mass level; that is, we will examine in some detail the meaning attached to election outcomes by voters themselves. Why, for example, was George W. Bush elected president of the United States in 2000? Was it because people responded favorably to his conservative policy agenda, his personal character, and his promise to end the partisan conflict that had characterized relations between Congress and the White House during the Clinton era? Or did Bush benefit more from the support of special interests, the gullibility of voters who were deceived into supporting someone who was more ideologically extreme than he claimed to be, and the failure of state and local officials to ensure an honest vote tally on election day? Following Kingdon (1966), we anticipate that there are

² For a different perspective, see Clarke and Acock (1989) and Freie (1997).

systematic differences in how winners and losers construe the meaning of an election, and that those interpretations will affect the legitimacy accorded by voters to the victorious candidate, as well as their feelings of trust in government and in the political process.

Choice Satisfaction

It is also our expectation that political support will vary according to the degree of satisfaction that people feel with the choice of candidates offered to them in a given campaign—and that such satisfaction, like *congratulation-rationalization*, is a mediating factor helping to explain the divergent responses of winners and losers. The importance of both quantity and quality of options on satisfaction with choice has been established outside the political realm,³ but there is little evidence to suggest that perception of choice has much effect on such orientations as partisan strength (Craig and Martinez 1989) or trust in government (Miller and Listhaug 1990).

Even so, and even in an era of increasing polarization between party elites (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Hetherington 2001), we believe that choice matters to some voters, though its salience may have less to do with issues and ideology (e.g., those in the political center being unable to find expression for their views at the ballot box; see Hibbing and Smith 2004; or, conversely, those with more extreme preferences feeling unhappy with parties that stress accommodation and coalition-building over ideological clarity) than traditional representational models envision. It also may have to do less with choice per se than with the belief that, in any given election, voters are presented with at least one candidate who is deemed to be acceptable in terms of policy direction, leadership style, personal character, and/or some other factor or combination of factors thought to be appropriate for the rightful and effective exercise of political authority. Whatever its source,⁴ we suspect that the level of voters' satisfaction with the choices presented to them on the ballot will affect their support for the political regime.

Procedural Fairness

Finally, there is considerable evidence showing that Americans care about decision-making processes as well as

outcomes and, specifically, that they will more readily accept “unpalatable binding decisions” made by others if they perceive that those decisions were made in an appropriate manner (Hibbing and Alford 2004: 62; also see Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002).⁵ Our approach here is rooted in the concept of procedural justice, as elegantly described by Lind and Tyler (1988). The idea is that people's evaluations of institutions are shaped not only by the rewards or outcomes they receive, but also by their perceptions of the manner in which those outcomes are allocated. Thus, a number of factors might affect subjective procedural fairness, including prior expectations, beliefs about whether people were afforded the opportunity to have their say, participants' level of control, the perceived neutrality of decisionmakers, and overall assessments regarding the fairness of the decision-making process. In short, procedural justice theory posits that citizens' evaluations of an institution's procedures affect the level of trust and legitimacy accorded to that institution, independent of the substantive outcomes of the process. While much of the empirical research that emanates from this theory has centered on litigants' evaluations of courts and alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms (see Lind and Tyler 1988: chap. 4-5), there also is mounting evidence that perceptions of fairness affect general support for political leaders and the political system as a whole (Tyler, Rasinski, and McGraw 1985; Tyler, Casper, and Fisher 1989; Rasinski and Tyler 1988; Tyler 1994; Mutz and Mondak 1997).

Accordingly, we propose that the levels of political trust and support expressed by winners and especially losers are shaped in part by their general beliefs about the fairness of the electoral process. It is relatively easy, for example, for winners to believe that the competition was fair, that the outcome was an accurate reflection of public preferences, and that the institutions headed by those who have recently been elected will govern wisely, well, and in the best interests of all citizens. But what about the losers, especially on those occasions when many on the losing side conclude that the selection process was tainted and that, had the votes been counted accurately, their candidate would have emerged victorious? In sum, we hypothesize the following:

H₁: Citizens who support winning candidates are more likely than those who support losers to have a sense of trust in government, to believe that the system is responsive to people like themselves, to be satisfied with the democratic process as a whole, and to regard the election outcome as a legitimate expression of the public's will.

H₂: The relationship between winning/losing and political evaluations is mediated by citizens' beliefs about whether or not the election outcome represented a true mandate.

³ For example, Botti and Iyengar (2004) discovered that the act of choosing from among appealing flavors of yogurt increased subjects' overall satisfaction with the selection, but that the act of choosing from a set of unappealing flavors (sage, chili powder, tarragon, celery seeds) led to decreased satisfaction. With regard to quantity, there is growing evidence that while people often think that they would prefer more choices, too many alternatives in a choice set may actually produce greater anxiety and, hence, less overall satisfaction, e.g., see Schwartz (2004).

⁴ As a purely practical matter, our measure of choice satisfaction captures only the *degree* of satisfaction—not the reasoning behind it. We include it in our analysis in the belief that (1) some people in any election cast a ballot for what they regard as the lesser of two evils; (2) losers are more likely than winners to do so; and (3) when that happens, it will tend to reduce the level of support for government and the electoral process.

⁵ What constitutes “appropriate” may vary from one situation to the next, but within an electoral setting we take it to mean that, for example, there was an open and honest exchange of views during the campaign, that all sides had an opportunity to be heard, that debate centered more on policy than on personality, and that an accurate vote count was taken on election day (cf. Katz 1997).

H₃: *The relationship between winning/losing and political evaluations is mediated by citizens' satisfaction with the choice (or selection) of candidates offered in the election.*

H₄: *The relationship between winning/losing and political evaluations is mediated by perceptions of electoral fairness.*

While interpretations, choice satisfaction, and perceived fairness are probably correlated, we expect that the origins of these orientations are somewhat different and, as a result, that each has different implications for system support. First, to the extent that interpretations affect support, opinion leaders who help to shape those interpretations (Thomas and Baas 1996) may play an important role in either enhancing or mitigating the legitimizing function of elections as institutions. In an era of sharply polarized elites fighting for swing voters in close elections (Fiorina 2005), the prospect that interpretations of election outcomes by losing candidates and their followers will contribute to high levels of system support appears bleak—though the evolution of consensual accounts in the media (Hershey 1992) may sometimes provide a push in that direction. Second, in extraordinary circumstances, perceptions of fairness might also be impaired by partisan conflict among elites, but should be affected as well by (1) the public's understanding of how the electoral process works and (2) the degree to which citizens believe that every vote has been counted fairly (with the media likely to have an impact here as well). Finally, although satisfaction with electoral choices may wax and wane in response to changes in candidate recruitment patterns, we suspect that this variable will be less susceptible than interpretations of the election to elite manipulation.

DATA AND MEASURES

We use a number of datasets to test these propositions: National Election Study surveys from 1964–2004 allow us to examine, over a period of 40 years, the effects of presidential candidate preference on political support⁶; that review is supplemented with evidence from a national, cross-sectional telephone survey conducted from May 17 through June 1, 2001, by the Florida Voter polling organization.⁷ Our core analyses are based on a statewide, cross-sectional telephone poll (also done by Florida Voter from

March 24–April 5, 2001) that contains the most complete set of measures of citizens' attitudes toward the electoral process.⁸ Finally, a 1998 survey of registered voters in Florida provides an opportunity to test part of our argument with data from a gubernatorial election.⁹

The principal dependent variables examined in our analyses are as follows (see Appendix A for complete question wordings in the 2001 Florida survey¹⁰):

Political Trust: (1) how often those who run government can be trusted to do the right thing; (2) is government run by a few big interests or for benefit of all the people?

Responsiveness of Government: (1) how much attention government pays to what people think; (2) how much elections make government pay attention.

Satisfaction with Democracy: respondent's satisfaction with how democracy works in the United States.

⁸ Respondents were chosen randomly from a list of registered voters in Florida, with up to four callbacks attempted on all working numbers and initial refusals. This yielded a total of 604 interviews, and our analyses are based on responses from 535 voters who indicated that they had voted for either George W. Bush or Al Gore. There were no substantive differences in the results of the analyses in Tables 4–6 using a replication that included both voters and respondents who failed to vote but had a preference for one of those candidates (total n = 559). Our sampling frame for this survey (a list of registered voters) does not technically fit the AAPOR 2004 standards for random-digit dialing, household, or mail surveys. After removing bad numbers, non-registrants, and others who fell outside the target population from our calculations, the overall response rate was 45.5 percent, which is lower than we might have hoped. Based on our experience and conversations with various commercial pollsters, however, we believe that Florida tends to have a somewhat higher refusal rate than most other states. The margin of error for the survey is plus or minus four percentage points.

⁹ This statewide, cross-sectional survey was conducted from November 10–22, 1998, by Florida Voter. Respondents were chosen randomly from a list of registered voters; only those whose names were chosen from the list were actually interviewed, and up to four callbacks were attempted on all working numbers and initial refusals. This procedure yielded 613 respondents, and a margin of error of plus or minus four percentage points. Analyses are based on 502 actual voters for governor. Results of the multivariate analysis in Table 8 are similar using a dataset based on responses from 570 voters and non-voting supporters. Additional information about any of the Florida Voter surveys can be obtained by contacting the Graduate Program in Political Campaigning in the Political Science Department at the University of Florida.

For multivariate analyses using the two statewide Florida Voter surveys and 2004 NES, we addressed potential bias in missing data by using the multiple imputation using chained equations (MICE) routine. MICE and similar algorithms operate by replacing missing values with a random draw from a distribution estimated from a maximum likelihood function based on other variables in the dataset. (King et al. 2001 provide a general discussion of multiple imputation, and the MICE package is explained in detail by Van Buuren and Oudshoorn 1999.) We drew five imputed values for each missing value which, when combined with the observed non-missing data, form five replicate datasets. Results presented here are pooled estimates based on separate analyses of those datasets.

¹⁰ Each of these measures was rescaled so that scores ranged from 0 to 1, with the latter signifying more positive feelings. There were slight variations in question wordings across the NES and Florida Voter surveys. The codebook for the latter is in Appendix D. Source code for our data analysis is in Appendix E.

⁶ See www.umich.edu/~nes. The 1964–2002 data are taken from the NES Cumulative File 1948–2002, while 2004 data are from the 2000–2004 NES Panel Study and the 2004 NES. Neither the NES nor its principal investigators bear any responsibility for our analyses or interpretations.

⁷ The sample for our national survey (N = 1000) was obtained by random-digit dialing, with up to eleven callbacks on all working numbers and initial refusals being attempted before an alternate number was selected. Upon reaching a working residential number, interviewers asked to speak to “the youngest male resident of your household, 18 years of age or older, and a U. S. citizen, who is now at home.” If no male was at home, interviewers asked to speak “with the oldest female, 18 years or older, and a U. S. citizen, who is now at home.” The overall response rate was 53 percent (AAPOR Standard Definitions). Our analysis is based on 704 respondents who indicated that they had voted for either George W. Bush or Al Gore in the 2000 presidential election.

Bush Legitimacy: whether respondent sees George W. Bush as legitimate president of the United States.

The central independent (dummy) variable is operationalized in terms of a respondent's support for the winning candidate; those who supported Bush received a score of 1, those who supported Gore a score of 0.

In the 2001 state survey, congratulation-rationalization is measured by respondents' assessment of how well several statements (see Appendix A) applied to the election outcome. High scores on this variable indicate an acceptance that the electorate's choice conveyed a genuine preference for the winner in one or more key areas: a belief that voters chose Bush because of his commitment to smaller government and taxes, his desire to improve the working relationship between White House and Capitol Hill, his ability to handle the nation's important problems, and the expectation that he would be honest and not embarrass the office of the presidency as had his predecessor. Individuals with low scores were more likely to reject those explanations, and to believe instead that the Republican nominee won because of his backing from special interests, voters' lack of intelligence, their failure to reward the Democrats properly for a strong economic performance during the Clinton years, and Bush's ability to fool people into thinking he was less right-wing than he actually was. The index, which is rescaled to range from 0 to 1, has a Cronbach's α of 0.79 and a mean correlation of .31.

We gauge choice satisfaction with a single item asking respondents to evaluate the choice of candidates in 2000 in comparison with past presidential elections. Finally, our measure of *procedural fairness* is similar to an item asked in NES (and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems) surveys since 1996, though we asked respondents how fair "elections in the United States" are; in contrast, the NES versions refer to "the last election in the United States" (1996) or "the presidential election we've just had" (2004). Each of these variables is rescaled from zero to one.

RESULTS

Our first hypothesis states that citizens who favor winners are more likely than those who prefer losers to express positive orientations toward the government, its leaders, and the political system in general. As shown in Table 1, NES post-presidential-election surveys from 1964-2004 provide mixed support for this proposition, a finding consistent with that reported by Anderson and his colleagues (2005: 66-67). Individuals who voted for Johnson in 1964, Nixon in 1972, Reagan in 1984, Bush "41" in 1988, Clinton in 1996, and Bush "43" in 2004 were indeed significantly more trusting and more likely to describe the political system as responsive than were those who voted for their principal challengers. Similarly, Bush "43" voters in 2004 were more satisfied with democracy than were Kerry voters. However, a first glance at results from the remaining elections in the time series casts doubt on the generalizability of

the overall argument. Supporters of successful challengers to incumbent presidents or vice-presidents (Nixon in 1968, Carter in 1976, Reagan in 1980, Clinton in 1992, and Bush "43" in 2000) were generally no more trusting nor more likely to perceive a high degree of responsiveness than were those who had voted for the status quo.¹¹

While Anderson et al. (2005: 67) speculated that the peculiarities of divided government and relatively frequent changes in control of the executive might account for the lack of a clear pattern across U.S. elections, it is also possible that attitudes about the political system are in flux during the post-election period before a new administration takes office (which is precisely when NES interviewers are talking with respondents). During that period, some people may base their answers to the trust and responsiveness questions on assessments of the previous four years, while others look ahead. If this is the case, H_1 would lead us to expect sharp differences in the levels of political support between the new president's supporters and those who favored his opponent only after the former has taken office.

That is precisely the pattern evident in Table 2, which shows scores for political trust, responsiveness, and satisfaction with democracy in NES midterm surveys from 1966-2002. Two years into each president's term, citizens who recalled voting for the winner consistently reported higher levels of trust and perceived responsiveness than did those who had backed the defeated candidate. In almost every midterm from 1966-2002, respondents who recalled voting for the incumbent president exhibited consistently higher levels of political support than those who had supported the defeated candidate; the sole exception is 1998, when Clinton and Dole supporters had equal levels of responsiveness.¹² The changes we observe from presidential-election years to midterm years are largely consistent with those reported by Anderson et al. (2005: 82-83), and imply that a causal arrow runs from candidate preference to political support, notwithstanding the possibility of a recursive relationship in presidential election years (Hetherington 1998).

While the 2000 NES Study shows that between election night and the new president's inauguration, Bush supporters were no more likely than Gore supporters to be satisfied with the government's trustworthiness, responsiveness, or the way democracy works, our own surveys in 2001 suggest that differences between supporters of winning and losing candidates become apparent very early in a new president's term. Results from the statewide Florida survey in late March/early April 2001 (top portion of Table 3), as well as

¹¹ Not surprisingly, supporters of the more successful third-party candidates (Wallace in 1968, Anderson in 1980, and Perot in 1992 and 1996) had notably lower scores on trust and responsiveness than major-party voters (see Hetherington 1999). Perot voters in 1992-96 also were less satisfied with democracy than their Democratic or Republican counterparts.

¹² In our analysis of NES midterm surveys, we rely on respondents' recall of their vote for president two years earlier. The basic findings for 2002 reported in Table 2 are the same using either the 2002 recall measure or the 2000 vote report for panel respondents.

≡ TABLE 1
CANDIDATE CHOICE AND POLITICAL EVALUATIONS (PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEARS)

Year	Political Trust (2 item scale)			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
1964	0.45	0.65	0.20	9.30	0.00
1968	0.54	0.45	-0.08	-3.49	0.00
1972	0.25	0.44	0.20	11.11	0.00
1976	0.30	0.16	-0.14	-8.60	0.00
1980	0.24	0.16	-0.08	-4.02	0.00
1984	0.24	0.40	0.16	9.04	0.00
1988	0.21	0.37	0.16	8.87	0.00
1992	0.21	0.18	-0.04	-2.32	0.02
1996	0.19	0.28	0.09	4.46	0.00
2000	0.32	0.31	-0.01	-0.37	0.71
2004	0.22	0.47	0.25	11.37	0.00

Year	Responsiveness 2 item scale)			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
1964	0.60	0.73	0.13	6.87	0.00
1968	0.66	0.66	0.00	-0.21	0.83
1972	0.56	0.67	0.11	8.10	0.00
1976	0.58	0.57	-0.01	-1.17	0.24
1980	0.53	0.54	0.01	0.77	0.44
1984	0.52	0.56	0.04	2.72	0.01
1988	0.49	0.60	0.11	7.09	0.00
1992	0.56	0.59	0.03	1.95	0.05
1996	0.55	0.62	0.06	3.53	0.00
2000	0.62	0.59	-0.03	-1.66	0.10
2004	0.57	0.68	0.11	6.49	0.00

Year	Satisfaction with Democracy			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
1996	0.71	0.72	0.02	1.10	0.27
2000	0.73	0.72	0.00	-0.13	0.90
2004	0.55	0.77	0.22	12.73	0.00

Note: Data on trust and responsiveness from 1964 to 2000 are from the NES Cumulative File. Data on satisfaction with democracy are from respective NES time-series studies. Data from 2004 are from the 2004 NES. Entries indicate the scores (rescaled from 0 to 1) for voters for the winning major-party candidate and for the losing major-party candidate. The t-test reports the significance of the difference between the supporters of the winning major-party candidate and losing major-party candidate. Pairwise deletion of missing data.

from our national survey from May/June 2001 (bottom portion of Table 3), are consistent with the NES midterm results. In both instances, voters who preferred George W. Bush for president were significantly more trustful, more likely to believe that government is responsive, more satisfied with the way democracy is working in the United States, and more likely to accept Bush as legitimate even in light of the ongoing controversy over the Florida vote count. Overall, then, H_1 is handsomely confirmed.

Data from the NES and our Florida survey (presented in the top portion of Table 4) also show that winners and losers offer different assessments of the electoral process. In 1996, when the NES began asking respondents to assess the fairness of the most recent national election, a majority of voters gave the most positive rating possible on a five-point scale; as expected, however, those who supported President Clin-

ton's reelection gave a slightly stronger endorsement of the process than did supporters of his defeated challenger. During and shortly after the legal dispute surrounding the 2000 presidential election, NES respondents of all stripes were noticeably less sanguine—and yet, once again in line with our hypothesis, Bush supporters were significantly more likely than Gore supporters to describe the election as having been fair.¹³ Perceptions of procedural fairness were higher in 2004, but the differences between Bush and Kerry voters were actually more pronounced than those between Bush and Gore supporters in 2000. Finally, in the Florida survey conducted shortly after the new president took office

¹³ Results over time are similar despite the evolution in NES question wording (and format) noted earlier.

≡ TABLE 2
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CHOICE AND POLITICAL EVALUATIONS (MIDTERM ELECTION YEARS)

Year	Political Trust (2 item scale)			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
1966	0.50	0.67	0.17	7.01	0.00
1970	0.48	0.53	0.05	2.43	0.02
1982	0.36	0.41	0.05	2.38	0.02
1990	0.28	0.36	0.07	4.92	0.00
1994	0.30	0.35	0.05	2.98	0.00
1998	0.37	0.42	0.05	2.34	0.02
2002	0.35	0.47	0.12	4.76	0.00

Year	Responsiveness (2 item scale)			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
1970	0.61	0.67	0.06	2.43	0.02
1998	0.59	0.59	0.00	0.13	0.90
2002	0.73	0.78	0.04	2.01	0.04

Year	Satisfaction with Democracy			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
2002	0.67	0.77	0.10	5.34	0.00

Note: Data on trust and responsiveness from 1966 to 1998 are from the NES Cumulative File. Data from 2002 are from the 2002 NES. Entries indicate the scores (rescaled from 0 to 1) for voters for the winning major-party candidate and for the losing major-party candidate. The t-test reports the significance of the difference between the supporters of the winning major-party candidate and losing major-party candidate. Pairwise deletion of missing data.

in early 2001, Bush supporters were substantially more likely than Gore supporters to endorse the general statement that “elections in the United States” are conducted fairly.

Floridians who backed the winner also were more positive in their evaluations of other aspects of the electoral process. Bush supporters, for example, were more satisfied than Gore supporters with the choice alternatives presented to voters in 2000, relative to previous elections. Further, Gore supporters tended to believe that the presidential election had turned on such factors as the influence of special interests and the shortcomings of ordinary voters (not giving Democrats enough credit for a strong economy, letting themselves be misled about Bush’s ideological leanings, and their failure to understand the issues), and less inclined to believe that Bush won because of his conservative policies, perceived competence, honesty, and pledge to work more effectively with Congress. Each of these differences is in the expected direction, of considerable magnitude, and statistically significant (see the second and third sets of entries in Table 4, ft. 14).

Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 suggest, of course, not only that supporters of winning and losing candidates tend to view the outcome in different ways, but that interpretations of what the election means, choice satisfaction, and perceptions of electoral fairness serve to mediate the relationship between winning/losing and political evaluations such as trust, governmental responsiveness (which is conceptually very close to the concept of external efficacy, see Craig, Niemi, and Silver 1990), satisfaction with democracy, and legitimacy. This argument requires evidence that the mediating variables are related to orientations toward govern-

ment and the electoral process, and that the relationship between winning/losing and system-level orientations is obviated, or at least significantly weakened, in multivariate models that include the mediating variables. Entries in the correlation matrix shown in Table 5 indicate support for the first condition; that is, people who attributed Bush’s win to the voters’ wisdom rather than their ignorance, who were relatively satisfied with the choice of candidates in 2000, and who believed that the election was fairly decided generally exhibited higher levels of support on all four dimensions that we measured.

Our test of the second condition is presented in Table 6, where we estimate 12 ordered-logit regressions that show the effects of election-attitude variables on political-support variables, controlling for candidate preference. These separate estimates reveal which, if any, of the former mediate the relationship between candidate preference and the latter (dependent) variables (since the mediating effects of any particular variable might have been masked by the multicollinearity in a multivariate model that included all three election-attitude variables and candidate preference, as suggested by the correlations in Table 5). In the first column of equations in Table 6, estimating political trust, we see that congratulation-rationalization plays a mediating role in that it is a significant predictor of trust and, moreover, its presence changes the effect of candidate preference on trust: the magnitude of the latter coefficient is weak, and not significantly discernible from zero. The two other equations show that election fairness and choice satisfaction also are significant predictors of trust, though neither obviates the effect of candidate preference.

≡ TABLE 3
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CHOICE AND POLITICAL EVALUATIONS IN 2001

	Florida Survey (March–April 2001)			t	sig (t)
	Gore	Bush	Difference		
Political Trust	0.28	0.49	0.21	9.05	0.00
Responsiveness	0.48	0.63	0.15	5.54	0.00
Satisfaction with Democracy	0.70	0.77	0.08	3.36	0.00
Bush Legitimacy	0.50	0.97	0.47	18.86	0.00
	National Survey (May–June 2001)			t	sig (t)
	Gore	Bush	Difference		
Political Trust	0.36	0.47	0.11	5.73	0.00
Responsiveness	0.52	0.63	0.11	3.59	0.00
Satisfaction with Democracy	0.69	0.80	0.10	4.82	0.00
Bush Legitimacy	0.48	0.97	0.50	20.93	0.00

Note: Data are from the 2001 Florida Voter survey of registered voters in Florida, and from its national survey in 2001. Entries indicate the scores (rescaled from 0 to 1) of voters for the winning major-party candidate and for the losing major-party candidate. The t-test reports the significance of the difference between supporters of the winning major-party candidate and losing major-party candidate. Pairwise deletion of missing data.

As with political trust, perceptions of responsiveness are higher among Floridians who endorsed a mandate interpretation of the election, were satisfied with the choice of candidates, and believed that the election was fairly run; however, results in the second column of Table 6 show that only congratulation-rationalization mediated the relationship between candidate preference and responsiveness. In the multivariate model with congratulation-rationalization, the coefficient for winning/losing is very small and not significant at conventional levels. Once again, however, the equations with choice satisfaction and perceptions of fairness show that while these variables have significant effects of their own, neither significantly mediates the relationship between candidate preference and perceived responsiveness.

The findings for satisfaction with democracy are slightly different. On its face, this question seems to be tapping

broad regime-level orientations rather than attitudes about specific governmental leaders and institutions, though it is positively correlated with both winning/losing and each of the three indicators of election context (also see Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001). Consistent with what we have observed thus far, the coefficient for congratulation-rationalization is positive and significant, controlling for candidate preference, and the latter's effect fades when controlling for congratulation-rationalization. In this case, perceptions of fairness also have a mediating effect: When we control for beliefs about whether the election was conducted fairly, Bush supporters and Gore supporters appear equally satisfied with American democracy. As before, choice satisfaction is a significant predictor of satisfaction with democracy, but it does not alter the latter's relationship with candidate preference.

≡ TABLE 4
EVALUATIONS OF ELECTION PROCESSES BY CANDIDATE CHOICE

Data Source	Election Fairness			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
1996 NES (V961460)	0.78	0.85	0.07	4.14	0.00
2000 NES (V001291)	0.51	0.69	0.18	8.40	0.00
2004 NES (V045042)	0.65	0.91	0.26	14.62	0.00
2001 Florida Survey	0.63	0.85	0.21	9.22	0.00
Data Source	Satisfaction with Choice			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
2001 Florida Survey	0.59	0.75	0.16	7.03	0.00
Data Source	Congratulation-Rationalization			t	sig (t)
	Loser	Winner	Difference		
2001 Florida Survey	0.37	0.75	0.38	27.19	0.00

Note: Entries indicate the scores (rescaled from 0 to 1) of voters for the winning major-party candidate and for the losing major-party candidate. The t-test reports the significance of the difference between supporters of the winning major-party candidate and losing major-party candidate. Pairwise deletion of missing data.

≡ TABLE 5
CORRELATIONS OF POLITICAL SUPPORT AND ATTITUDES TOWARD ELECTION

	Political Trust	Responsiveness	Satisfaction with Democracy	Bush Legitimacy	Satisfaction with Choice	Congratulation-Rationalization	Election Fairness
Political Trust	1.00	0.36	0.37	0.40	0.34	0.44	0.36
Responsiveness	0.36	1.00	0.23	0.28	0.24	0.29	0.27
Satisfaction with Democracy	0.37	0.23	1.00	0.24	0.18	0.20	0.38
Bush Legitimacy	0.40	0.28	0.24	1.00	0.19	0.63	0.46
Satisfaction with Choice	0.34	0.24	0.18	0.19	1.00	0.33	0.21
Congratulation-Rationalization	0.44	0.29	0.20	0.63	0.33	1.00	0.43
Election Fairness	0.36	0.27	0.38	0.46	0.21	0.43	1.00

Note: Data are from the 2001 Florida Voter survey of registered voters. Table entries are correlation coefficients (missing data imputed). High scores indicate greater political trust, perception of responsiveness, satisfaction with democracy, perception of Bush legitimacy, satisfaction with the choice of candidates, greater perceived fairness, and a greater degree of congratulation (believing that the election outcome reflected a positive vote for the winner, his policies, and his leadership abilities) and less rationalization (believing that the election turned more on the support of special interests and the inadequacy of voters).

Perceptions of President Bush's legitimacy immediately following the disputed 2000 election follow a different pattern. Bush supporters were predictably more inclined than Gore supporters to accord legitimacy to the new president and, unlike what we saw previously, the coefficient for winning/losing remains positive and significant in our multivariate models. As for the impact of election context, both congratulation-rationalization and electoral fairness have significant independent effects in the multivariate models as well; that is, legitimacy was highest among people who thought the election was fairly run and believed that the outcome reflected voters' conscious choices rather than their inability to understand or appreciate important issues. Attitudes about the election do not, however, mediate the preference-legitimacy relationship as they did with trust, responsiveness, and satisfaction with democracy; in fact, choice satisfaction appears to have a trivial independent effect on Bush legitimacy.

The distinctive findings in our analysis of the legitimacy variable are understandable in that this measure probably captures respondents' attitudes toward the new president more than their evaluations of the office of the presidency or the government in general. Our survey questions relating to trust, responsiveness, and satisfaction with democracy ask people to think about their regime—the government and the way democracy works—while the item on presidential legitimacy refers to a particular incumbent who had only recently taken office following a protracted and controversial post-election legal battle. Attitudes about the electoral process (specifically, congratulation-rationalization and perceptions of electoral fairness) may have influenced assessments of this incumbent's legitimacy, but they did not significantly undermine the basic direct effect of candidate preference (winning or losing).

In contrast, the positive correlation between Bush preference and other political support variables disappears in multivariate models that include congratulation-rationaliza-

tion, providing support for H_2 . Those who preferred Gore rationalized the election outcome more than did Bush supporters, of course, but individuals who acknowledged the voters' competence or discounted Gore's difficulties in communicating his message displayed higher levels of trust, responsiveness, and satisfaction with American democracy, regardless of which candidate they preferred, than might otherwise have been the case.

On the other hand, the limited effects of election fairness are especially notable considering the context of our survey; that is, one might expect that if concerns about fairness would ever have effects on political support, it would be among Floridians shortly after the 2000 presidential controversy. In fact, support for H_3 was weak, as perceptions of fairness were related to political support and mediated the relationship between candidate preference and satisfaction with democracy—but did not do so with respect to trust or responsiveness. Finally, choice satisfaction was a significant predictor of trust, responsiveness, and satisfaction with democracy, but also did not mediate the relationship between those variables and candidate preference as predicted by H_4 . By and large, these findings suggest that among citizen attitudes about the election process, it is congratulation-rationalization that plays the preeminent role in

¹⁴ See Appendix A for question wordings and response codes. In order to verify that the relationships between candidate choice and attitudes about the election context in our 2001 statewide survey are not simply a function of partisanship, we estimated a multivariate logit model of each variable as a function of winning/losing, party identification, and general interest in politics. As shown in Appendix B, Table B1, support for the winner is strongly and positively correlated with congratulation-rationalization, choice satisfaction, and perceptions of fairness, even with the effects of other variables taken into account. Although partisanship is significant in each instance (with Republicans leaning more heavily toward a mandate explanation, and scoring higher on both choice satisfaction and electoral fairness), the importance of winning/losing remains clear.

≡ TABLE 6
MULTIVARIATE MODELS OF POLITICAL SUPPORT

	Political Trust			Responsiveness			Satisfaction with Democracy			Bush Legitimacy		
	Coeff.	std err	sig.	Coeff.	std err	sig.	Coeff.	std err	sig.	Coeff.	std err	sig.
Vote Preference	0.20	0.26	0.43	-0.01	0.25	0.98	-0.13	0.26	0.61	2.43	0.37	0.00
Congratulation- Rationalization	3.27	0.56	0.00	2.33	0.54	0.00	1.69	0.56	0.00	4.56	0.76	0.00
-2 log likelihood	2006.79			1643.70			1193.26			942.59		
Pseudo R ²	0.20			0.09			0.04			0.55		
Vote Preference	1.08	0.18	0.00	0.57	0.17	0.00	-0.00	0.18	0.99	3.60	0.31	0.00
Election Fairness	2.15	0.33	0.00	1.49	0.31	0.00	2.58	0.33	0.00	2.47	0.39	0.00
-2 log likelihood	2006.79			1643.70			1193.26			942.59		
Pseudo R ²	0.21			0.10			0.15			0.56		
Vote Preference	1.14	0.18	0.00	0.66	0.17	0.00	0.35	0.17	0.05	3.83	0.31	0.00
Satisfaction with Choice	2.07	0.33	0.00	1.33	0.30	0.00	0.97	0.32	0.00	0.16	0.38	0.68
-2 log likelihood	2006.79			1643.70			1193.26			942.59		
Pseudo R ²	0.21			0.09			0.04			0.50		

Note: Data are from the 2001 Florida Voter survey of registered voters. Table entries are ordered logit coefficients and associated standard errors (missing data imputed; threshold levels not shown). High scores indicate support for the winning candidate (including Bush voters and non-voters who indicated that they preferred Bush), Republican identification, greater interest, greater satisfaction with the choice of candidates, greater perceived fairness, and a greater degree of congratulation (believing that the election outcome reflected a positive vote for the winner, his policies, and his leadership abilities) and less rationalization (believing that the election turned more on the support of special interests and the inadequacy of voters).

mediating the bivariate relationship between candidate support and political support observed in Table 3.¹⁵

The typical concerns one might have about the generalizability of relationships observed in any specific cross-sectional survey are exacerbated in this case, given the extraordinary circumstances in which the winner of the popular vote nationally ended up losing the electoral college and the presidency itself after a protracted legal dispute. However, data from both the 2004 NES and the survey done follow-

ing the 1998 Florida gubernatorial election provide additional support for some of our key findings. In Table 7, we present estimates of ordered-logit regressions of our political support variables on candidate preference and perceptions of fairness using data from the 2004 American National Election Study. On balance, the findings here have more similarities than differences with the statewide patterns evident in Table 6. As was true in Florida, all three national-level regressions indicate that respondents who regarded the election as fair exhibited higher levels of political support, controlling for candidate preference. As was also seen for two of the three regressions in the second row of Table 6, however, perceptions of fairness did *not* obviate the relationships between candidate preference and political support: Bush supporters had higher levels of trust and perceived responsiveness even after controlling for their greater tendency to regard the 2004 election as fair. These results overall suggest that perceptions of fairness are related to support, but do not consistently mediate the relationship between candidate preference and broader attitudes about government and the political system as indicated in H₃.

Neither NES nor any other national omnibus surveys of which we are aware have asked respondents to assess explanations of electoral outcomes. Fortunately, the 1998 Florida data enable us to examine relationships between candidate preference, congratulation-rationalization, and political support in the context of a closely fought and contentious gubernatorial election which occurred two years before recounts of ballots with hanging chads put the state's electoral

¹⁵ We also did some empirical diagnostics to assess the possibility of reciprocal effects in the models reported in Table 6, using two-stage least squares (2SLS) on one imputed dataset. Our first-stage estimates were linear combinations of party identification, political interest, education, age, age squared, black, Hispanic, male, and response to a question about whether the respondent's vote was more for the lesser of the evils or a positive vote for the preferred candidate. As we report in Appendix B, Table B2, the 2SLS results show that congratulation-rationalization has significant, positive, and independent effects on trust, responsiveness, and satisfaction with democracy, and the effect of vote preference on those variables either falls to zero (within confidence bounds) or changes sign. In other words, our basic findings are robust when we use a 2SLS model to control for reciprocal effects of support on congratulation-rationalization. Ideally, we would have preferred a two-stage ordered logit model with a correction for the uncertainty introduced by using an instrumental variable, but we are unaware of any routine in standard statistical packages (including R) that makes such a correction. However, results from two-stage ordered logit models without corrected standard errors are substantively identical to the 2SLS results (and are available upon request). The robustness of our results across methods helps allay concerns about violations of assumptions in any particular estimation.

≡ TABLE 7
MULTIVARIATE MODELS OF POLITICAL SUPPORT

	Political Trust			Responsiveness			Satisfaction with Democracy		
	Coeff.	std err	sig.	Coeff.	std err	sig.	Coeff.	std err	sig.
Vote Preference	1.10	0.15	0.00	0.38	0.15	0.01	1.26	0.17	0.00
Election Fairness	1.57	0.30	0.00	1.90	0.27	0.00	2.20	0.29	0.00
-2 log likelihood	2256.16			2239.52			1843.71		
Pseudo R ²	0.18			0.12			0.25		

Note: Data are from the 2004 NES. Table entries are ordered logit coefficients and associated standard errors (missing data are imputed; threshold levels not shown). High scores indicate support for the winning candidate (including Bush voters and non-voters who indicated that they preferred Bush) and greater perceived fairness.

system in the national spotlight. Our measure of congratulation-rationalization in this survey reflects the particular themes of the 1998 campaign and post-election analyses. Specifically, people with low scores believed that Republican businessman Jeb Bush defeated Democratic Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay because of his famous name, disarray among the Democrats, help from special interests, and voter ignorance; they tended to reject the notion that Bush's victory was attributable either to his conservative philosophy or to voters' beliefs that he was better able than his opponent to deal with the state's problems. Those who scored high on this index felt the outcome hinged on Bush's charisma, his reaching out to minorities, his post-1994 movement toward the ideological center, and his opponent's unrelenting negativism.¹⁶

In the 1998 survey, those who had voted for the new governor-elect scored significantly higher on our measure of political trust (.392 to .321, $t = 2.658$, $p < .01$). However, they also scored significantly higher on congratulation-rationalization variable (.734 to .371, $t = 19.87$, $p < .01$) and, as we saw in the aftermath of the 2000 presidential contest, winning/losing in the 1998 gubernatorial election was statistically unrelated to political trust when we controlled for explanations of the outcome (see Table 8). Once again, then, H_2 is supported.

CONCLUSION

Elections, even controversial ones (Price and Romantan 2004), are often characterized as legitimating institutions, especially for citizens who supported the losing candidate and whose willingness to accept the final verdict is supposedly enhanced by the sense that their views have been given a fair and proper hearing during the course of the campaign. Yet, consistent with prior research, our analyses uncovered some fairly substantial differences between winners and losers. On the whole, the latter tend to be less trustful, less certain of the responsiveness of government to

popular concerns, less satisfied with the way democracy is working in the United States, and, at least in the 2000 presidential election, less inclined to extend legitimacy to the victorious candidate.

In this article, we have suggested that citizens' attitudes and beliefs about the election context help to explain the differential response of winners and losers. Our results indicate, for example, that even when controlling for the effects of party identification, supporters of George W. Bush were more likely than those who backed Al Gore to (1) believe that the election outcome represented a genuine mandate from voters, (2) express satisfaction with the choice of candidates presented to voters in the presidential race, and (3) offer more generous assessments of whether the end result was achieved fairly. More importantly, we found that one of these attitudes, the interpretation of the election, served as a link between candidate preference and feelings of political support. In other words, we read our results as evidence that Bush supporters exhibited higher levels of support *because* of their understanding of why their candidate was victorious.

Perhaps it is not surprising that supporters of the winning candidate would echo his or her campaign themes and self-congratulatory explanations of the election outcome, nor that those who supported the defeated opponent would fault the campaign, media coverage, voters' lack of intelligence, or just the dumb luck of intruding events. Nevertheless, Bennett (1980) reminded us that we should not mistake the banality of political accounts for ineffectiveness. No matter how trite, elites' situationally appropriate explanations of political behavior can be powerful in helping to forge a bond between them and their supporters. Our results suggest that much the same is true with regard to voters' explanations of mass electoral behavior: Simple, even simplistic, understandings of *why* a preferred candidate lost can depress citizens' support for the political system.

The problem is that elections are supposed to help legitimize government primarily in the eyes of citizens who supported the *losing* candidate. While elections may still be able to serve that function if losers are persuaded that the outcome was a true reflection of voter preferences, that did not happen very often among our respondents. If we are reading the data correctly, it seems likely that losing candidates

¹⁶ Our 1998 measure of congratulation-rationalization used the same question wording and response format as our 2001 measure. See Appendix C.

≡ TABLE 8
MULTIVARIATE MODELS OF POLITICAL SUPPORT

	Political Trust			External Efficacy		
	Coeff.	std err	Sig.	Coeff.	std err	sig.
Vote Preference	-0.13	0.25	0.60	-0.03	0.22	0.89
Congratulation-Rationalization	1.48	0.52	0.01	0.72	0.45	0.11
-2 log likelihood	1450.30			2446.00		
Pseudo R ²	0.03			0.01		

Note: Data are from the 1998 Florida Voter survey of registered voters. Table entries are ordered logit coefficients and associated standard errors (missing data imputed; threshold levels not shown). High scores indicate support for the winning candidate (including Bush voters and non-voters who indicated that they preferred Bush) and a greater degree of congratulation (believing that the election outcome reflected a positive vote for the winner, his policies, and his leadership abilities) and less rationalization (believing that the election turned more on the support of special interests and the inadequacy of voters).

and other opinion leaders contribute to the maintenance of widespread political cynicism in America by encouraging some citizens to view elections (at least the ones they don't win) in a very different light than that imagined by democratic theorists. We maintain that the media's usual focus on campaign strategy (see Fallows 1996; Cappella and Jamieson 1997), and especially on the horserace, encourages voters to view the competition through a similar lens—and thereby makes it more difficult for them to recognize the existence of any fit between election outcomes and either mass policy preferences or assessments of candidate qualities. Likewise, losing candidates and their co-partisan apologists are sometimes disinclined (Kingdon 1966), perhaps even more so today than in the past (Fiorina 2005), to concede that such fits exist and help to explain why elections turn out the way they do. Rationalizations may provide a psychological salve that helps losers to justify the expenditure of time, effort, and money in their own minds, but we suspect that they do little to instill public faith in the institutions of government.

It is, we would suggest, no accident that self-identified Republicans and Democrats alike (as well as Independents) express more negative orientations toward government, and toward the political process generally, than used to be the case.¹⁷ Part of this shift may be a function of polarized elites repeatedly alternating between self-congratulatory proclamations of popular mandates and dismissive interpretations of electoral setbacks. If so, a little more humility on both sides might go a long way to reconciling the two camps.

APPENDICES

The following appendices are available at <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/martinez/prq06/>

Appendix A: Question Wording and Response Codes, 2001 Florida State Survey.

Appendix B Table B1: Explaining Attitudes about Electoral Context.

Appendix B: Table B2: Two-Stage Least Squares Models of Political Support.

Appendix C: *Congratulation-Rationalization* index for 1998 Gubernatorial Survey.

Appendix D: Codebook for the March 2001 Florida Voter survey.

Appendix E: Source code for analyses.

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¹⁷ See Alford (2001: 39-41), Craig (1993: 39-41), and American National Election Studies (2005).

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