



**New York City Mayoral Election Study:
First General Election Poll
A Pace University Study
In Cooperation With
THE NEW YORK OBSERVER, WCBS 2 NEWS, AND WNYC RADIO**

October 26, 2005

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I. INTRODUCTION

In cooperation with *The New York Observer*, WCBS, and WNYC, The Pace Poll initiated this multi-survey study of the 2005 New York City mayoral election. This report is based upon the third poll in the study and was fielded via telephone among 538 randomly-selected, but likely General Election voters between October 14 and October 19, 2005.

An election enables the public to say what sort of city they have and what sort of city they want. This Study seeks to ensure that the public's sentiments on those topics are heard and understood. As we shall see below, the results call into doubt many of the perceived wisdoms of New York City politics.

II. DEFINITIONS

For convenience, we will use the following shorthand to refer to certain demographic and psycho-demographic groups.

Income cohorts

"The Working Poor" refers to voters living in families earning less than \$20,000 a year.

"The Working Class" refers to voters living in families earning between \$20,000 and \$30,000 a year.

“The Middle Class” refers to voters living in families earning between \$30,000 and \$50,000 a year.

“The Upper Middle Class” refers to voters living in families earning between \$50,000 and \$75,000 a year.

“The Prosperous” refers to voters living in families earning more than \$75,000 a year.

Miscellaneous

“Some College” refers to voters with some college experience, but no college diploma.

“Public School Parents” refers to voters who have at least one child in a New York City public school.

“Tories” refers to voters who are registered as anything other than Democrats and Republicans

“Rent Control Tenants” refers to voters living in an apartment subject to rent control or rent stabilization laws.

Age cohorts

“The Young” refers to voters under the age of 34.

“Thirty-Somethings” refers to voters between the ages of 35 and 44.

“Middle Aged” refers to voters between the ages of 45 and 54.

“Junior Seniors” refers to voters between the ages of 54 and 65.

“Seniors” refers to voters over the age of 65.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mayor Michael Bloomberg is poised to trounce his Democratic challenger, former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, in this year's mayoral election. At the moment, he is leading by a margin of more than 2 to 1 (58% to 27%). Bloomberg leads Ferrer in every demographic group, save one (The Young – or voters under the age of 34). He's even leading among Latinos (53% to 35%), Bronx Residents (52% to 36%), The Working Poor (50% to 37%), and Blacks (44% to 29%). Ferrer may well be correct when he says there are two New Yorks, but they both want to vote for Bloomberg.

The Pace Poll modeled several turnout scenarios, depending on the number of voters who actually make it to their polling places come Election Day, and we found the Mayor's performance improves as turnout declines; in a high-turnout election, Bloomberg wins 56% to 27%; in a moderate turnout election, he wins 63% to 28%, and in a low-turnout election, he wins 67% to 21%.

Ferrer's collapse and the concomitant lack of suspense surrounding the race's outcome might keep enough minority voters at home to prevent 2005 from becoming the first mayoral election in which minorities cast a majority of the votes.

Although identity politics has always been a central fact of city politics, Ferrer's chance to become the first Latino mayor of New York generates only mild excitement among voters: 20% consider it either a strong (12%) or somewhat strong (8%) reason to vote for him while just 4% admit to thinking it is a reason to vote against him. Strikingly, three in four voters (75%) think Ferrer's chance to become the first Latino mayor makes no difference to their vote. Of course, this variable is more important to Latinos, 28% of whom describe it as a reason to vote for him. But if one wants to truly appreciate the utter lack of interest in Ferrer's bid to become New York's first Latino mayor, one needs look no further than this fact: two-thirds (66%) of Latinos say his ethnicity makes no difference in their vote.

Generally speaking, these numbers call into question that fundamental assumption of local politics: the potential for a Black-Brown coalition. It's difficult to imagine a Black-Brown coalition succeeding when half of that potential partnership doesn't care one way or the other.

Voters are generally content with the status quo; two-thirds (66%) say New York City is headed in the right direction compared to just 17% who think the city is off on the wrong track. Despite that general optimism, only 15% think jobs are plentiful while 60% think jobs are difficult to find. Likewise, only 19% think the jobs that are available are either "excellent" (3%) or "good" (16%) in terms of their hours, pay, and benefits, while 67% rate those jobs either "poor" (26%) or "only fair" (41%). In addition, only 23% of voters think the public schools are either "excellent" (4%) or "good" (19%) while 67% think they are either "poor" (25%) or "only fair" (42%).

In terms of the issues that matter most to voters, protecting New York City from another terrorist attack (70%) and improving the public schools (70%) generate the most perfect 5s of the issues we tested on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is not important at all and 5 is extremely important. In addition, improving the New York City public schools achieves the highest average mean score (4.50) of any issue tested. Improving public schools is also the only issue that scored more than one standard deviation above a hypothetical average issue's mean score.

The dog that didn't bark proved to be rebuilding The World Trade Center Site, which achieved the lowest percentage of perfect 5s (26%) and the lowest mean (3.25) score on our scale of 1 to 5. The issue also has the dubious honor of being the only one that scored more than one standard deviation *below* a hypothetical average issue's mean.

Voters are favorably inclined towards all public figures who aren't named Al Sharpton. Remarkably, more than 3 in 4 voters (78%) hold a favorable opinion of the Mayor, while just 19% hold an unfavorable opinion of him. Fernando Ferrer enjoys 54% favorables¹ while suffering only 17% unfavorables. Governor George Pataki's numbers are 52% and 43%, respectively, while Attorney General Eliot Spitzers' are 57% and 18%, respectively. Among former Mayors, Ed Koch enjoys the best numbers, 64% and 25%, respectively. Rudy Giuliani checks in at 62% and 33% while his former rival David Dinkins lags only slightly behind at 53% and 34%. Rev. Sharpton is the only public figure we tested who has higher unfavorables (54%) than favorables (38%).

In terms of voters' perceptions of key campaign events and candidate attributes, this study has some surprises. As mentioned already, Ferrer's bid to become the city's first Latino mayor did not excite anyone; three fourths (75%) of all voters, including two thirds (66%) of Latino voters, think this particular dynamic is irrelevant. Bloomberg's wealth and party affiliation also proved to be toothless hounds; 72% consider his wealth irrelevant while 63% think his party affiliation doesn't matter. While slightly more voters consider Bloomberg's financial support to GOP candidates to be problematic, a majority (51%) thinks it doesn't matter, and 14% consider it to be a reason to vote for him. If Bloomberg has any weakness at this point, perhaps it's his decision to raise property taxes despite his 2001 campaign pledge to the contrary, which 42% consider either a strong (26%) or somewhat strong (16%) reason to vote against him.

The plan to build an arena and mixed-use towers in Central Brooklyn enjoys public support; 39% support the proposal either strongly (21%) or somewhat (18%) compared to 23% who oppose it either strongly (16%) or somewhat (7%). After exposing voters to the best arguments for and against the proposal, support rises to 46% and opposition rises to 30%. And after exposing voters to a different set of arguments pro and con for the City's and State's investment of tax dollars in the project, 46% support the project either strongly (28%) or somewhat (18%), while 36% oppose it either strongly (24%) or somewhat (12%).

¹ As used in this report, the term "favorables" refers to the percentage of voters who say they have either a strongly or somewhat favorable opinion of the person tested while the term "unfavorables" refers to the percentage of voters who say they have either a somewhat or strongly unfavorable opinion of that person.

IV. ANALYSIS

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Re-election is Virtually Assured

Like other local university-based polling institutes,² we find that Mayor Bloomberg is pummeling his challenger by a margin of more than 2 to 1 (58% to 27%). In statistical terms, there's only a 1.25% chance that all 3 polls have substantially mis-judged the race, which means there's only a 1.25% chance that Ferrer is actually ahead, or substantially closer, or even farther behind than we found him to be in our surveys. Of course, all 3 scenarios are equally likely (or, perhaps more accurately, equally unlikely). That is to say, it's just as likely that Ferrer is actually farther behind as it is that he's actually much closer. Boiling those statistics down to lay terms, you can be almost 100% confident that Ferrer is far behind Bloomberg, and any doubts about Ferrer's current position are essentially fanciful.

Of course, as they say on Wall Street, past performance is no guarantee of future results. Consequently, Ferrer might be able to stage what would be a historic comeback despite his current poor performance. But think about what that historic comeback would look like. Assume every undecided voter (13%) and every person who refused to state their current allegiance (2%) and every person leaning towards Bloomberg (3%) went for Ferrer on Election Day. Obviously, it's hard to imagine a much bigger comeback than this. Even in this scenario, though, Bloomberg still wins big.

How badly is Bloomberg beating Ferrer? If only Latinos voted, Bloomberg would win 53% to 35%. He's leading among Blacks, 44% to 29%. He's leading in The Bronx, 52% to 36%. He's leading among The Working Poor (50% to 37%). Ferrer may well be correct when he says there are two New Yorks, but they both want to vote for Bloomberg.

In sum, Bloomberg leads in every demographic category except The Young, where he trails Ferrer 38% to 46%. If this election were a prize fight, the referee might stop it now.

So how is an amateur Republican politician beating a professional Democratic politician in overwhelmingly Democratic New York City, and how is he beating his foe so spectacularly? To be sure, money and incumbency play their part. But the degree of Ferrer's deficit reveals far more significant and potentially permanent forces at work.

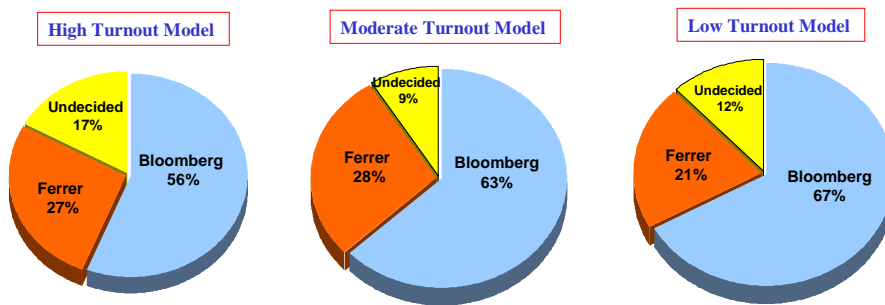
² More specifically, The Quinnipiac Polling Institute at Quinnipiac University and The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion at Marist College. *See, e.g.*, the October 12, 2005 poll by Quinnipiac Polling Institute at Quinnipiac University, available at <http://www.quinnipiac.edu>, showing Bloomberg with a 28-point lead, *and see* the poll by Marist College Institute for Public Opinion at Marist College, available at <http://maristpoll.marist.edu>, showing Bloomberg with a 27-point lead.

The Lower the Turnout, the Bigger the Mayor's Margin

As the following chart indicates, Ferrer should hope voters turnout on Election Day, because the Mayor's performance improves as turnout declines. The Mayor wins a high-turnout election 56% to 27%, a moderate turnout election 63% to 28%, and a low-turnout election 67% to 21%.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg is winning in any hypothetical turnout scenario.

Question 27: If the November election for New York City Mayor were held today and the candidates were (ROTATE) Democrat Fernando Ferrer and Republican and Independence Party candidate Michael Bloomberg, for whom would you vote?



New York City Mayoral Study by Pace University in Cooperation with The Observer, WCBS 2 News, & WNYC Radio

Chart 1

Ferrer draws disproportionate support from groups that are less habitual about voting than the groups that tend to back the Mayor; thus, Ferrer's voters are more apt to stay home if turnout declines. In fact, Ferrer's collapse and the concomitant lack of suspense regarding the outcome might keep enough minority voters home to prevent 2005 from becoming the first mayoral election in which minorities cast a majority of the votes.

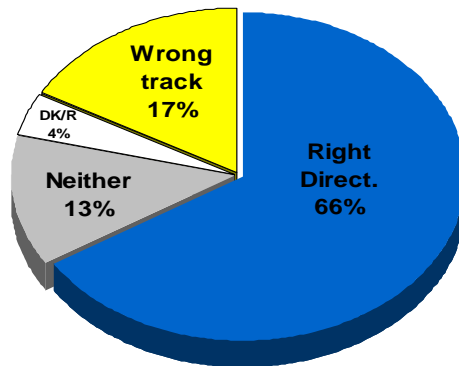
The demographic groups most likely to say they are "extremely likely" to vote are The Upper Middle Class (83%), Black men (80%), Tories (78%), Catholic men (78%), and Seniors (77%); the groups least likely to be "extremely likely" to vote are Republicans (63%), Some College (59%), and The Working Poor (58%). These findings are interesting for several reasons. First, these demographic groups' forecasts of their own propensity to vote generally align with historical voting patterns, which suggests these forecasts are meaningful. Second, Republicans' exceptional lack of interest combined with Tories' unusually high interest suggests that Mayor Bloomberg has succeeded in positioning himself as something other than a true Republican; after all, one would expect that Republicans would be eager to re-elect a GOP mayor, so their lack of interest in his re-election suggests that even Republicans do not consider Bloomberg to be true kin. Third, the unusually high level of mobilization among Black men combined with Ferrer's

unusually poor performance on our ballot question provides further evidence for the thesis that the Democratic Party’s mobilization efforts have reached the point of diminishing marginal returns. To put it another way, the Party needs to persuade additional non-Democratic voters to vote Democratic because the Party is unlikely to improve its performance solely by turning out additional Democratic voters (e.g., Black men).

Two-thirds of voters (66%) say things in New York City are headed in the right direction compared to just 17% who think things are off on the wrong track.

Voters are satisfied with the general direction of things in New York City.

Question 5: In general, would you say that things in New York City are headed in the right direction or are things off on the wrong track?



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Chart 2

The demographic group most likely to be optimists is Manhattan residents (77%); the demographic groups most likely to be pessimists are Ferrer Supporters (37%), The Young (30%), Public School Parents (27%), Bronx residents (26%), The Middle Class (23%), and The Thirty-Somethings (23%). Obviously, it is difficult to defeat an incumbent – particularly an incumbent ready, willing, and able to spend \$100 million³ on his campaign – when the vast majority of voters are satisfied with the status quo. So to some extent one could argue that Fernando Ferrer confronts an impossible task.

Despite his Goliath-like magnitude, Bloomberg has a few soft spots in his support. For one thing, voters regard the economy with melancholy. Only 15% think jobs are plentiful while 60% think jobs are difficult to find. Only 19% think the available jobs are either “excellent” (3%) or “good” (16%) in terms of their hours, pay, and benefits; in contrast, 67% think those jobs are either “poor” (26%) or “only fair” (41%).

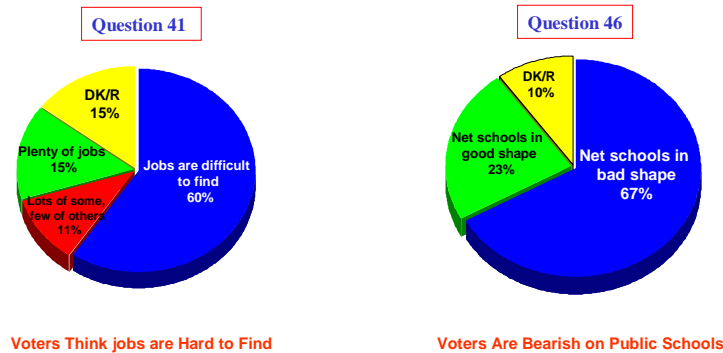
³ To be fair, even if Ferrer were to have played a perfect game of political chess over the entire course of the campaign, let’s not forget that his opponent is playing monopoly.

Likewise, voters are not overly sanguine about the current state of the city’s public schools. Twenty-three percent think the schools are either “excellent” (4%) or “good” (19%) while 67% think they are either “poor” (25%) or “only fair” (42%). Voters’ assessments of the public schools they know best (those their own children attend or those closest to them) are mixed; 39% think the public school they know best is either “excellent” (12%) or “good” (27%) while 42% think this school is either “poor” (14%) or “only fair” (28%). In short, voters give low marks to both the public schools generally and the public school they know best, so Ferrer is looking at a political landscape with some discontentment on which he could build a campaign. In theory, these concerns and the abovementioned economic worries should be the foundation of an effective campaign against an incumbent.

All is not perfect with the New York City economy and public schools.

Question 41: Thinking now about job opportunities in New York City, would you say there are plenty of jobs available in your community or that jobs are difficult to find?

Question 46: Thinking about the public schools in New York City, would you say the public schools in the city are excellent, good, only fair, or poor?



New York City Mayoral Study by Pace University in Cooperation with The Observer, WCBS 2 News, & WNYC Radio
Chart 3

Yet, Ferrer might not be the right candidate to exploit the Mayor’s vulnerabilities. For example, half (50%) of New York City voters support the concepts underlying school vouchers (at least when the explosive phrase “vouchers” is not attached to the proposal) while 42% say they don’t, but it’s difficult to imagine Ferrer running on school vouchers.⁴ As we shall see below, the Mayor might be vulnerable on taxes, but – again – Ferrer is not a credible anti-tax warrior. And Ferrer’s opposition to the West Side Stadium and all the highly paid union jobs that went with it scarcely seems likely to help him make the case against Bloomberg on jobs. (Furthermore, Ferrer’s plans for boosting the city’s economy revolve around his ideas for increasing economic opportunities for

⁴ Here is the precise language we used to test the policy’s appeal: “Suppose New York City created a program that paid for poor children from the City’s worst public schools to go to private schools with the City paying some or all of their tuition; would you support or oppose such a program?”

small businesses;⁵ whatever the policy merits of his emphasis on small businesses, small businesses are not well-known for producing high wage jobs with great benefits, if only because few small businesses can afford health insurance for their employees.)

Voters' Issue Agendas

So what issues matter to voters? To find out, we examined their impromptu agendas by asking them for their top priority for their next mayor. In response to this question, voters are most likely to volunteer schools⁶ (29%), housing (19%) and economic concerns (14%) [a category that combines jobs (7%) and the economy (7%)]. As one can see in the table below, these three issues tower over any other.

Table I: Voters' Impromptu Issue Agendas

Rank	Issue	Percent Naming Issue
1	Schools/education	29%
2	Housing/affordable housing	19%
3	Economy generally	7%
3	Jobs/unemployment	7%
3	Security/Terrorism/Safety	7%
6	Crime and Drugs	5%
6	Taxes	5%
8	Overdevelopment	2%
8	Health care/hospitals	2%
8	Traffic/transportation	2%
8	Values/Ethics/Morals	2%

Impromptu agendas tend to be dominated by perennial concerns, like housing and schools; from time to time, however, an issue leaps to the top of these agendas, as car insurance did in New Jersey in 1997. When an issue skyrockets towards the top of voters' impromptu agendas, it's a fair bet that a political shocker (like Jim McGreevey's near defeat of Christine Todd Whitman in 1997) could follow. Unfortunately for Ferrer, New York City voters' impromptu agendas offer no such surprises.

To further investigate voters' priorities, we asked voters to rate various issues on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 equaled an issue that was not important at all to them and 5 meant an extremely important issue. The results from these questions allow us to rate the issues on several criteria.

⁵ See, e.g., <http://www.ferrer2005.com>.

⁶ Because this was an open-ended question, respondents may have used slightly different words to describe the same issue, and – for the purposes of our analysis - those similar, but slightly different responses were combined into one category. For example, responses such as “schools,” or “education”, or “public schools” were combined into “schools.”

The first criterion, the percentage of voters rating each issue a perfect 5, identifies the issues most likely to determine the outcome of this election. To illustrate this idea using a sports analogy, it's important to win every aspect of the game, but every good football coach knows that turnovers and field position have the greatest impact on the final score. By similar logic, our poll reveals that terrorism and schools are the keys to this election. [This does not mean that winning these issues will translate into an electoral victory, and it does not mean that one has to win these issues to win this election; rather, it means that these issues will shape the final outcome in much the same way that field position and turnovers affect the final score of a football game.] Although some might wonder if a mayor can really do very much about terrorism, New York City voters are confident he or she can: a majority (52%) says a mayor can do a great deal about terrorism while only 37% say he or she cannot.

Table II: Voters Priorities (Ranked by % of Perfect 5's)

Rank	Issue	Percent of Perfect 5s
1	Protecting New York City from another terrorist attack	70
1	Improving the public schools	70
3	Building more affordable housing	62
4	Making sure New York City's poor, sick, and vulnerable residents get the help they need from City government.	60
5	Creating new jobs	58
6	Reducing crime	55
7	Reducing racial and ethnic tensions	48
8	Balancing the City's budget	47
9	Preventing fare hikes for subways and buses and fixing the problems with delays	44
10	Fixing the City's garbage problems in an environmentally-friendly way	35
11	Rebuilding Ground Zero, the site of the terrorist attack on September 11 th	26

The second criterion, the issues' mean ratings, provides a good sense of voters' probable ranking of issues. That is, voters probably think that all of the issues we tested are important, but which ones do they think are really important, particularly in comparison to other important issues? By that criterion, improving the schools wins, and protecting New York City from another terrorist attack and creating new jobs are almost tied.

Table III: Voters Priorities (Ranked by Mean)

Rank	Issue	Mean
1	Improving the public schools	4.50
2	Protecting New York City from another terrorist attack	4.36
3	Creating new jobs	4.33
4	Building more affordable housing	4.27
5	Making sure New York City's poor, sick, and vulnerable residents get the help they need from City government.	4.25
6	Reducing crime	4.16
7	Balancing the City's budget	4.11
8	Preventing fare hikes for subways and buses and fixing the problems with delays	3.98
9	Reducing racial and ethnic tensions	3.96
10	Fixing the City's garbage problems in an environmentally-friendly way	3.78
11	Rebuilding Ground Zero, the site of the terrorist attack on September 11 th	3.25

In addition, calculating the mean for each issue allows us to calculate the mean of a hypothetical average issue (approximately 4.09). From that calculation, we can calculate the standard deviation (approximately 0.35), allowing us to identify issues that are much more important ($4.09 + 0.35$ or 4.44) and much less important ($4.09 - 0.35$ or 3.74) than the hypothetical average issue. By that standard, only improving the public schools is much more important and only rebuilding Ground Zero is much less important than a hypothetical average issue.

The last point reminds us (to borrow a line from Sherlock Holmes) of the dog that didn't bark: rebuilding Ground Zero. It's difficult to imagine how this issue could have fared more poorly than it did; almost no one volunteers it as their top priority for the next mayor; it is the issue least likely to receive a perfect 5, and it has the lowest mean rating of any issue tested – scoring more than one full standard deviation below a hypothetical average issue. Only 43% of New Yorker voters think it is an important issue; 17% give it a 4, and 26% give it a 5. By comparison, fixing the garbage problem is the next lowest ranked issue, but a majority (56%) say fixing the garbage problem was important, which means that voters are 30% more likely to say our garbage problems are important than they are to say rebuilding Ground Zero is important. During the West Side Stadium fight, critics accused the Mayor of worrying too much about the Stadium and not enough about Ground Zero; if true, his choice of priorities was politically astute. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to name a New York City politician who got into trouble for failing to build something while it's relatively easy to name local politicians who got into trouble for supporting a project; consequently, it's not clear that rebuilding Ground Zero will ever be a politically-wise idea if only because the project's immediate neighbors are

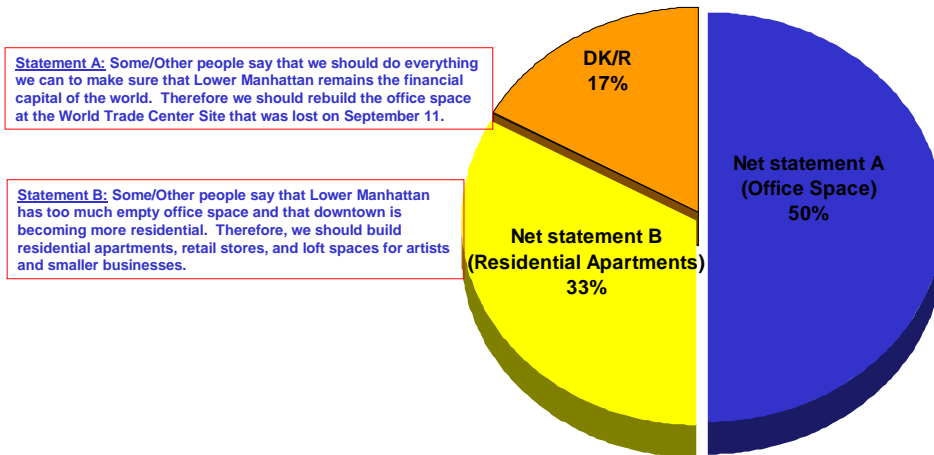
likely to resent any large-scale development project and its attendant inconveniences while everyone else is unlikely to care.⁷

For Ground Zero to lose out to garbage in a poll of New Yorkers is surprising. As human beings, we do not wish to offend either the victims of 9/11 or their loved ones by seeming to minimize the significance of their loss. Yet, as social scientists, we have to wonder what this issue's disappearance from the public's consciousness implies about the historical significance of those horrific events. In the end, 9/11 may turn out to have been the Titanic of our day. The sad and inalterable fact of history is that the enormity of human suffering caused by an event bears little relationship to that event's ultimate historical significance. After the Titanic, we got stronger ships. And while it is far too early to predict the ultimately legacy of 9/11, it is not too early to begin wondering whether the legacy might just be stronger skyscrapers.

To the extent that citywide voters care about rebuilding, they want to keep Lower Manhattan as a financial center by replacing the offices lost on 9/11 rather than rebuild The World Trade Center Site as a more residential area. Half (50%) either strongly (34%) or somewhat (16%) want to rebuild the lost offices while a third (33%) either strongly (16%) or somewhat (17%) want to rebuild the Site as a more residential area.

Voters are inclined to think that rebuilding the commercial space lost on 9/11 is more important than building new residential space.

Question 50: Which statement do you agree with more? [Rotate Statements]



New York City Mayoral Study by Pace University in Cooperation with The Observer, WCBS 2 News, & WNYC Radio
Chart 4

⁷ And that, dear reader, is a political recipe for inaction, if ever there was one.

Does that mean that a savvy politician would support the city electorate's call for rebuilt offices rather than Lower Manhattan residents' call for new homes at The World Trade Center Site?⁸ Not necessarily, because – as we mentioned above – voters just don't care about this issue very much. Politically, it might make better sense to cater to a vocal local minority that opposes office buildings rather than attempting to appeal to an apathetic majority that won't change its vote based on the issue. In other words, rebuilding appears to have become just another development issue of minimal concern to anyone outside its immediate vicinity, so the astute politician may be well advised to cater to local demands regardless of the general public's opinions on the issue.

Do all of these findings on voters' issue preferences suggest that Ferrer made the right decision to devote so much of his campaign to schools, housing, and jobs? To some extent, this question misses the point of political communications: it is not always enough to talk about issues people care about; one also has to say something about these issues that voters agree with and that one's opponent does not agree with. As a result, the problem with Ferrer's message on schools, housing, and jobs, perhaps, is that he had precious little to say with which (1) voters concurred and (2) Mayor Bloomberg did not.

In the end, Ferrer's campaign slogan – “It's a great City. We could do better” – says it all. To paraphrase another slogan entirely, Ferrer's motto might as well have been, “I want to be like Mike, only better.” But as a logical proposition, the rational voter does not like to trade a known quantity, like an incumbent, for an unknown quantity, like a challenger, in order to get an improved version of the incumbent.⁹ Ferrer's message, even if it was universally heard and believed, offered little reason for voters to swing to his camp.

Voters' Assessments of Leading Public Figures

Voters' favorability ratings of leading public figures offer both good news and bad news for Ferrer and his supporters. The good news is that a majority (54%) of voters have either a strongly favorable (17%) or somewhat favorable (37%) impression of Ferrer.

The bad news for Ferrer is that more than 3 in 4 voters (78%) have either a strongly favorable (45%) or somewhat favorable (33%) impression of his rival, Mayor Bloomberg. To understand Ferrer's predicament, it's a little like being Scottie Pippen when Michael Jordan's on the team: no matter how well you do, the other guy is going to do better.

⁸ See the October 12, 2005 survey by The Pace Poll, “The Rebuilding of Lower Manhattan: Now is the Winter of Lower Manhattan's Discontent?”, available at www.pace.edu/PacePoll, showing downtown residents in favor of more residential housing over rebuilt commercial space.

⁹ c.f., New Coke

In fact, voters appear to be favorably inclined towards all incumbents. Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's favorables and unfavorables are 57% and 18%, respectively. Governor George Pataki enjoys favorable ratings from 52% of New York City voters, but 43% give him unfavorable ratings.

Meanwhile, Ed Koch wins the battle of former mayors. His favorables and unfavorables are 64% and 25%, respectively. By comparison, Rudy "America's Mayor" Giuliani clocks in at 62% and 33%, while David Dinkins lags slightly at 53% and 34%.

Although he is not an elected official, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly probably could be – 58% hold either strongly favorable (22%) or somewhat favorable (36%) opinions of him while only 15% hold either somewhat unfavorable (10%) or strongly unfavorable (5%) opinions.

On the other hand, Al Sharpton is not likely to win an election anytime soon; while 38% hold either a strongly (9%) or somewhat favorable (29%) impression of him, a majority (54%) holds either a somewhat (20%) or strongly unfavorable (34%) impression. Whites (65%) are unusually likely to hold unfavorable opinions of Rev. Al while Blacks (62%) are unusually likely to hold favorable opinions. Interestingly, Latinos (32%) are less likely than average voters (38%) to hold a favorable opinion of Sharpton, but they are also much less likely (31%) to hold an unfavorable opinion of him than average voters (54%). Sharpton does well with Rent Control Tenants, 47% of whom hold him dear compared to 38% of voters generally. Jewish men (79%) dislike him more than most, but Protestants (57%) like him more than most. (One suspects the latter result is driven by the fact that Blacks make up a lion's share of New York City's Protestants.)

Sharpton's ratings point to a larger issue for the Democratic Party. It's tough to imagine a Democratic candidate succeeding without his support (53% of Ferrer Supporters hold a favorable impression of him). Yet, it's equally difficult to imagine a Democratic candidate succeeding with his support, since he alienates so many white voters. Food for thought: how many Democratic candidates have won an election for mayor in New York City since Al Sharpton burst onto the scene? None of this is meant to lay all the blame for recent Democratic futility on Rev. Sharpton; rather, it is simply to point out that his politics are a dead-end for the Democratic Party. The ultimate problem with Sharpton's identity politics is twofold: 1) no one group can win on its own, and 2) the very tactics that mobilize one group tend to enrage and, thus, counter-mobilize another.

One way to rank these figures is to rank them according to their favorability; that is, who has the most fans? By that standard, Bloomberg wins hands down.

Table IV: Most Popular Public Figure (Favorables)

Rank	Name	Favorables
1	Michael Bloomberg	78
2	Ed Koch	64
3	Rudy Giuliani	62
4	Ray Kelly	58
5	Eliot Spitzer	57
6	Fernando Ferrer	54
7	David Dinkins	53
8	George Pataki	52
9	Al Sharpton	39

Alternatively, another way to rank these public figures is net favorability, which is the difference between their favorables and unfavorables. This criterion allows us to take into account the fact that some public figures are more divisive than others. In addition, this criterion allows us to consider the fact that some public figures are less well known and, thus, they have lower favorables, but they tend to be more popular among those who know them than more-widely known figures with a smaller spread between their fans and detractors. Again, Michael Bloomberg wins hands down, but we see that Al Sharpton achieves the dubious distinction of being the only tested public figure with more foes than friends.

Table V: Most Popular Public Figure (Net Favorables)

Rank	Name	Net Favorables
1	Michael Bloomberg	+59
2	Ray Kelly	+43
3	Ed Koch	+39
3	Eliot Spitzer	+39
5	Rudy Giuliani	+29
6	Fernando Ferrer	+19
6	David Dinkins	+19
8	George Pataki	+9
9	Al Sharpton	-15

Voters' Perceptions of Key Campaign Events and Facts

To assess the potential effects of various critical campaign events and facts on voters' decision-making, we asked voters whether these variables were reasons to vote for or against the candidate at issue. Because we did not test voters' awareness of these variables before asking voters to assess their impact, we cannot say how much of a role these variables played in the current state of the race. Yet, we can use the results from these questions to test how much potential these variables have to move voters and in what direction these variables are likely to move them.

Although identity politics has always been a central fact of city politics, Ferrer's chance to become the first Latino mayor of New York generates only mild excitement among voters: 20% consider it either a strong (12%) or somewhat strong (8%) reason to vote for him while just 4% admit to thinking it is a reason to vote against him. Strikingly, three in four voters (75%) think Ferrer's chance to become the first Latino mayor makes no difference to their vote. Of course, this variable is more important to Latinos, 28% of whom describe it as a reason to vote for him. But if one wants to truly appreciate the utter lack of interest in Ferrer's bid to become New York's first Latino mayor, one needs look no further than this fact: two-thirds (66%) of Latinos say his ethnicity makes no difference in their vote. From Ferrer's perspective, these numbers are discomfiting. But from a larger perspective, they call into question that fundamental assumption of local politics: the potential for a Black-Brown coalition. It's difficult to imagine a Black-Brown coalition succeeding when half of that potential partnership doesn't care one way or the other.

Interestingly, raising taxes to boost social spending might be a popular idea in New York City, and Ferrer's plan to tax stock sales to provide additional funds for the public schools is more likely to win voters than lose them; 38% think it is either a strong (22%) or somewhat strong (16%) to vote for him while 20% think it is either a strong (12%) or somewhat strong (8%) reason to vote against him. The groups most attracted to this idea are Public School Parents (51% of whom consider it a reason to vote for him), women under 45 (49%), The Young (47%), Black women (47%), Jewish voters (46%), Thirty-Somethings (46%), and Blacks (46%). The groups most repelled by this idea are white men (37% of whom consider it a reason to vote against him), Catholic men (35%), College Educated men (34%), and The Prosperous (31%).

More than a quarter (28%) of voters think Ferrer's endorsement by The Working Families' Party is either a strong (17%) or somewhat strong (11%) reason to vote for him; only 8% think it is a reason to vote against him. It is a particularly persuasive reason to vote for Ferrer among Public School Parents (40%), Black women (39%), Jewish men (38%), The Middle Aged (36%), women under 45 (35%), and Protestants (35%). Similarly, his support from 1199 SEIU is either a strong (13%) or somewhat strong (11%) reason to vote for him. In other words, voters are three times more likely to see SEIU's support as a reason to vote for Ferrer (24%) than they are to see it as a reason to vote against him (7%). There is one anomaly in the data – SEIU's endorsement is very unpopular among Jewish men, 25% of whom consider it a reason to vote against Ferrer.

In contrast, almost half of voters (47%) think Ferrer's statements about the police shooting of Amadou Diallo are either a strong (30%) or somewhat strong (17%) reason to vote *against* him; only 6% think they are a reason to vote for him. His statements are unusually damaging among Blacks (57% of whom say it is a reason to vote against him), college educated women (56%), Public School Parents (56%) women under 45 (56%), Latino women (54%), and Thirty-Somethings (54%).

Likewise, Ferrer’s erroneous claim that he had been educated primarily in the city’s public schools rather than the Catholic church’s private schools has the potential to damage his candidacy: 37% think it is either a strong (22%) or somewhat strong (15%) reason to vote against him while only 6% think it is a reason to vote for him. Ferrer’s mis-statement is most damaging among white men (46% of whom consider it a reason to vote against him), The Working Class (45%), whites (43%), Protestant men (43%), and Manhattan Residents (42%).

To compare these variables, we ranked them on several criteria. First, we considered the percentage of voters who rate each variable as a reason to vote for Ferrer to get a sense of his best potential positive variables.

Table VI: Ferrer’s Best Variables (Biggest Positives)

Rank	Issue	Positive
1	His proposal to tax on stock sales to raise additional money for our public schools	38%
2	Working Families Party support	28%
3	1199 SEIU support	24%
4	That he would be the first Latino Mayor	20%
5	That his website claimed he went mostly to public schools	6%
5	Statements regarding police shooting of Amadou Diallo	6%

Second, we considered the net benefit – the difference between those who said it was a reason to vote for him and those who said it was a reason to vote against him – from each variable to get a sense of the price Ferrer must pay to exploit each positive variable and the net loss he might incur as a result of each negative variable.

Table VII: Ferrer’s Cheapest Variables (Biggest Net Benefits)

Rank	Issue	Positive
1	Working Families Party support	+20
2	His proposal to tax on stock sales to raise additional money for our public schools	+18
3	1199 SEIU support	+17
4	That he would be the first Latino Mayor	+16
5	That his website claimed he went mostly to public schools	-31
6	Statements regarding police shooting of Amadou Diallo	-41

The surprise here is the importance of the Working Families Party, which appears to be Ferrer’s best weapon.

For Bloomberg, his wealth does not have the potential to be the massive liability some commentators believed it would be. Seventy-two percent think his wealth makes no difference; 16% see his wealth as either a strong (10%) or somewhat strong (6%) reason to vote for him while only 10% think it is a reason to vote against him. In a finding that can only bring a smile to one's face, Republicans are unusually likely to think the Mayor's wealth is a reason to vote for him; in fact, 24% say his wealth is a plus.

Apparently, voters aren't smokers and vice versa because a majority (52%) thinks the Mayor's role in banning smoking in bars and restaurants is either a strong (39%) or somewhat strong (13%) reason to vote for him while just 9% (!) think it is a reason to vote against him. In fact, The Working Class (62%) is unusually likely to consider the Mayor's smoking ban to be a reason to vote for him; perhaps their support is evidence that the Mayor really did look out for the interests of restaurant workers.

Bloomberg's affiliation with the Republican Party is slightly more harmful than his wealth, but it is by no means a grave threat. A large majority (63%) thinks his allegiance to the GOP makes no difference; 16% think it is a reason to vote for him while – statistically speaking – an equal number (20%) think it is a reason to vote against him. The Mayor's Party hurts him among Black men (33% of whom consider it a reason to vote against him), Jewish women (32%) Thirty-Somethings (30%), and The Young (28%); yet, it helps among Queens Residents (24% of whom consider it a reason to vote for him), white men (26%), and Catholics (25%).

Nevertheless, Bloomberg's financial support for GOP candidates constitutes a much more dangerous threat to his candidacy. Almost a third (32%) see it as either a strong (18%) or somewhat strong (14%) reason to vote against him while only 14% think it is a reason to vote for him. Of course, one should not exaggerate the magnitude of this threat – a majority (51%) thinks it makes no difference.

The Mayor's role in the Jets proposed West Side Stadium constitutes another small threat; 36% think it is either a strong (23%) or somewhat strong (13%) reason to vote against him while 21% think it is a reason to vote for him. About 4 in 10 (42%) think it makes no difference. Who liked the Stadium? Surprisingly enough, white men (31% of whom consider the Mayor's support for it to be a reason to vote for him), Black men (31%), and Latino men (29%).

If made widely known, the Mayor's decision to skip the Harlem debate might cost him; 27% think it is either a strong (14%) or somewhat strong (13%) to vote against him while just 8% consider it a reason to vote for him. Not surprisingly, Blacks (38%) are unusually disposed to see the Mayor's absence as a reason to vote against him, but Queens Residents (19%) and Catholics (15%) are unusually likely to think it is a reason to vote for him.

The biggest potential problem for the Mayor, however, is his decision to raise property taxes despite his campaign promises to the contrary; 42% think his decision to break his “no new taxes” pledge is either a strong (26%) or somewhat strong (16%) reason to vote against him while 9% think it is a reason to vote for him. At the moment, however, the Mayor’s broken promise on taxes isn’t as well known as one might think – 31% believe he actually kept his word not to raise taxes while 43% say he broke it. The groups most likely to consider the Mayor’s tax hike to be a reason to vote against him are Black women (53% of whom consider it a reason to vote against him), Union Households (50%), The Middle Class (48%), The Upper Middle Class (48%), and The Prosperous (49%).

Next, we analyzed Bloomberg’s variables using the same criteria we used for Ferrer’s.

Table VIII: Bloomberg’s Best Variables (Biggest Positives)

Rank	Issue	Positive
1	Banning smoking in bars and restaurants	52%
2	Supporting the West Side Stadium	21%
3	Bloomberg’s wealth	16%
3	Being a Republican	16%
5	Donating money to Republicans	14%
6	Breaking his “no new taxes” pledge	9%
7	Skipping the debate in Harlem	8%

And just as we did for Ferrer, we considered the net benefit – the difference between those who said it was a reason to vote for him and those who said it was a reason to vote against him – from each variable to get a sense of the price Bloomberg must pay to exploit each positive variable and the net loss he might incur as a result of each negative variable.

Table IX: Bloomberg’s Cheapest Variables (Biggest Net Benefits)

Rank	Issue	Positive
1	Banning smoking in bars and restaurants	+43
2	Bloomberg’s wealth	+6
3	Being a Republican	-4
4	Supporting the West Side Stadium	-15
5	Donating money to Republicans	-18
6	Skipping the debate in Harlem	-19
7	Breaking his “no new taxes” pledge	-33

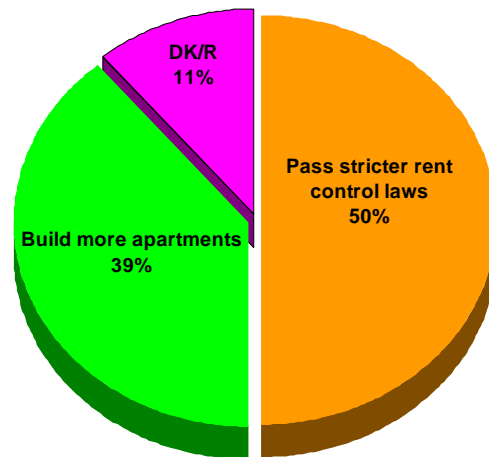
Although these results suggest some vulnerabilities in the Mayor’s support, it’s not clear that Ferrer can overcome the Mayor’s lead by attacking him on taxes, or on promising to debate in Harlem, or by opposing a stadium that won’t be built anyway. In fact, these issues seem more like the petty irritants in the ongoing affair between the Mayor and his constituents than significant rifts that might enable Ferrer to play Iago to the electorate’s Othello.

Voters' Policy Preferences

Half (50%) of New York City voters believe that stricter rent control laws are the best way to lower rents in New York City while only 39% believe that building more apartments is the best way to address the city's housing crisis. Moreover, voters are split regarding the need to strengthen the city's rules limiting high-density development to protect the city's neighborhoods (44%) or loosening those same rules to make new housing cheaper (45%).

Voters are committed to rent control as a method for keeping New York City rents affordable.

Question 43: What do you think is the best way to lower rents in New York City – building more apartments or passing stricter rent control and rent stabilization laws?



New York City Mayoral Study by Pace University in Cooperation with The Observer, WCBS 2 News, & WNYC Radio

Chart 5

Logically, supporting both low-density development and affordable housing is like wanting to eat the cake and have it too – a desirable, but ultimately frivolous position that cannot be reconciled to reality because nothing that everyone wants can be both scarce and cheap. To put it another way, we can make housing cheap if we make the entire city look like the Upper East Side, but few zoning or preservation laws would survive; or we can make the entire city look like Douglaston, but very few people will be able to afford to live here. Of course, New Yorkers want both low-density development and affordable housing for much the same reason voters want government spending without taxes – everyone likes a free lunch. For politicians, therefore, both the promise and the peril of the housing issue lie in deciding which mutually exclusive priority to support.

Atlantic Yards

We asked voters to assess Forest City Ratner's¹⁰ plan to develop an arena for the Nets and 16 mixed-use towers in central Brooklyn. Based solely on what they know now and without providing any new information, 39% of voters support the proposal either strongly (21%) or somewhat (18%). In contrast, 23% oppose the proposal either strongly (16%) or somewhat (7%). Nevertheless, more than a third (36%) have not made up their minds about the project. At the moment, the groups most likely to support the Atlantic Yards project are Black men (59%), Brooklyn Residents (50%), and men (49%).

Although some have suggested that opposition to the project will grow as people learn more about it, we found that providing voters with additional information has mixed results. Splitting voters into two groups, we presented one group of voters with some of the best arguments both for and against the project. Specifically, here are the arguments pro and con that this first group of voters heard:

Statement A: *Some/Other people say that the proposal to bring the Nets to central Brooklyn will create thousands of new jobs and raise Brooklyn's civic spirit. These people also say that the 16 residential and commercial towers that are part of the proposal will add more than 2,000 new affordable apartments to the area. And they say the project will create new public spaces, like a new community center.*

Statement B: *Some/Other people say the proposal to bring the Nets to central Brooklyn will waste \$200 million dollars in taxpayer money on a sports stadium. These people also say that the 16 new mixed-use hi-rises that are part of the proposal will overwhelm our already overcrowded schools, subways, buses, and neighborhoods. And they say that the project can't be built without evicting current residents.*

What we found is that learning more about the project from both of the above arguments increases support for the plan from 39% to 46% while opposition grows from 23% to 30%. That is, after we presented voters with arguments both for and against the project, 46% support the proposal either strongly (25%) or somewhat (21%) and 30% oppose it either strongly (17%) or somewhat (13%). Most relevant, a majority of Brooklyn Residents (56%) support the project, only 35% oppose it.

¹⁰ Forest City Ratner is also a development partner for the new midtown office tower being built for *The New York Times*.

In addition, we presented the other group of voters with, specifically, the best arguments both for and against the City's and State's proposed investment in the project. Here are the arguments this second group of voters heard:

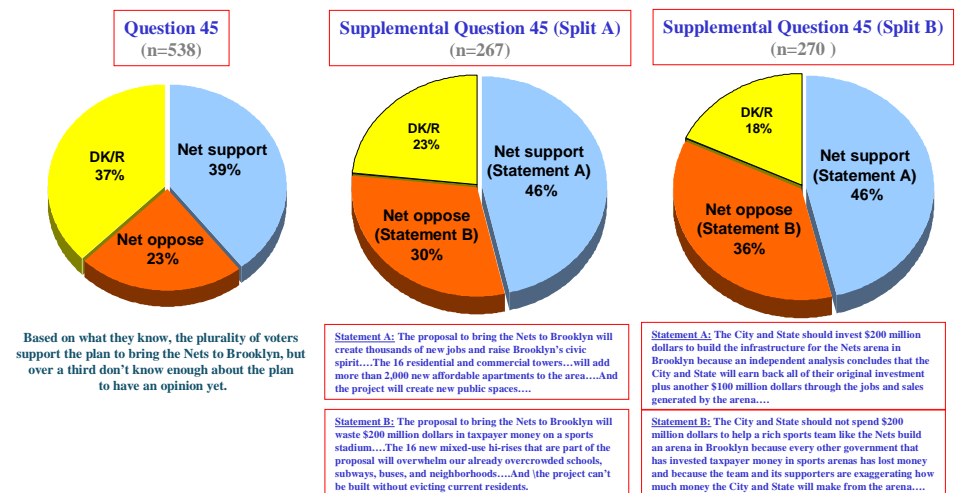
Statement A: *Some/Other people say that the City and State should invest \$200 million dollars to build the infrastructure for the Nets arena in Brooklyn because an independent analysis concludes that the City and State will earn back all of their original investment plus another \$100 million dollars through the jobs and sales generated by the arena. These people also say that the government's \$100 million dollar profit on their investment can help the City and State pay for schools, police, and other vital services.*

Statement B: *Some/Other people say that the City and State should not spend \$200 million dollars to help a rich sports team like the Nets build an arena in Brooklyn because every other government that has invested taxpayer money in sports arenas has lost money and because the team and its supporters are exaggerating how much money the City and State will make from the arena. And they say it would be better to spend the \$200 million dollars on schools, police, and other vital services.*

After hearing this different set of both pro and con arguments, voters also support the project and the proposed City and State investment: 46% support it either strongly (28%) or somewhat (18%), while 36% oppose it either strongly (24%) or somewhat (12%). Again, most relevant, the majority of Brooklyn Residents (52%) support the City's and State's investment in the project, only 31% oppose it.

Voters support the plan to bring the Nets to Central Brooklyn based on what they know and based on the best arguments pro and con.

*Question 45: Based on what you know about the plan to bring the Nets to central Brooklyn, do you support or oppose the plan?
Supplemental Question 45 (Split A):? Which statement do you agree with more?
Supplemental Question 45 (Split B):? Which statement do you agree with more?*



New York City Mayoral Study by Pace University in Cooperation with The Observer, WCBS 2 News, & WNYC Radio **Chart 6**

V. CONCLUSION

Even if Bloomberg's lead can be chalked up to the power of incumbency and unlimited self-financing, the sheer magnitude of his victory should provoke intense soul-searching among local Democrats. Ferrer losing the Bronx? And Hispanics? And Blacks? And The Working Poor?¹¹

Many will attempt to explain away these findings by attributing them to Bloomberg's unique strengths and/or Ferrer's particular weaknesses. But attributing these results to these candidates' personal characteristics alone is unsatisfactory. New York City's voters – the bluest of the blue – are about to reject a Democratic mayoral candidate *for the fourth straight time* and in overwhelming numbers. If Idaho elected the Democratic candidate in four straight gubernatorial elections, you can bet Karl Rove would be on the next plane to Boise. Perhaps it's time that high-ranking Democrats get the message New York City voters are sending: their Party is not functioning when it comes to electing a mayor.

From the social scientist's perspective, the fact that becoming Republican is the key to Gracie Mansion suggests that something profound is happening in this otherwise Democratic city.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This survey is based on citywide phone interviews of 538 General Election voters between October 14 and October 19, 2005. In addition, The Pace Poll surveyed an added number of new registrants not included in the 538 sample. The findings of the survey are statistically significant within a $\pm 4\%$ margin of error at a 95% level of confidence. Though The Pace Poll adheres to strict methodological standards, the practical elements of fielding any survey can introduce additional sources of error.

Respondents were randomly selected from a list of New York City registered voters who 1) have voted in municipal General Elections in the past and plan on voting in this year's mayoral election, or 2) are "New Registrants," defined – for the purposes of this study – as people who registered after the 2001 New York City mayoral election and who plan on voting in this year's mayoral election.

¹¹ It's not clear that Ferrer would win if the electorate were limited to elected Democratic officials.