



# Barack Obama, Post-Racialism, and the New Politics of Triangulation

*Terry Smith*

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## **Barack Obama, Post-Racialism, and the New Politics of Triangulation** Terry Smith

Barack Obama, Post-Racialism, and the New Politics of Triangulation examines black voters' relationship to the political process and to the first black president in a prematurely post-racial America. Using interviews with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, empirical data, news accounts, academic literature and case law, Professor Terry Smith argues that the price of black electoral success outside of traditional majority-minority settings has become the triangulation of the post-racial black politician's African-American constituency. The book is broad-ranging in its examination of how black politics has become so susceptible to marginalization even in a nation governed by its first black president. Among other contributing factors, the book examines how money in politics curtails black voter choice and autonomy, the attempt by black conservatives to fracture black voter cohesion, and the tenuous alliance of Latino and black voters. It then turns its attention to the electoral calibration that post-racial black politicians such as Obama must perform between identifying with black-centric concerns and retaining the support of white voters who are averse to race talk, even when it is in the name of racial equality. While observing that the balance struck by Obama has at times amounted to the triangulation of black voters, the author ultimately observes that black voters are sophisticated enough to channel disappointment into a redoubling of their engagement with the political process to demand that it work in their interests.

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