Geography, Partisanship, and the Politics of Group Threat

By

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For Eli and Jesse.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
LIST OF TABLES x
LIST OF FIGURES xi
ABSTRACT xii
CHAPTER 1 - Introduction 1
CHAPTER 2 - Political Threat and the Partisan Worldview: Lessons from Political Campaign Consultants 6
  Abstract 6
  Introduction 7
  Existing Research 10
  Methodology 14
  Polarization 17
  Worldview and Threat 21
  Campaign Tactics 31
  Conclusion 36
CHAPTER 3 – The Impact of Racial Context on Prejudice in the Urban Environment 40
  Abstract 40
  Introduction 41
  Racial Contact and Group Threat 43
  Urban Migration 48
  Unifying Theories of Racial Context 53
  Data 55
  Results 57
  Conclusion 71
CHAPTER 4 - Playing with Prejudice: How Political Geography Affects Campaign Strategies to Invoke Social Group Animosity 74
  Abstract 74

  Introduction 75
  Group Threat 81
  Hypotheses 83
  Ad Data 86
  Results 92
  Conclusion 101

CHAPTER 5 - Conclusion 103

Appendix 107

Bibliography 111

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Racial Context at the Zip Code Level, with Metro Area Dummy Variables, 1994-2008 59

Table 3.2: Racial Context at the Zip Code Level, with Continuous Metro Area Variable, 1994-2008 60

Table 3.3: Racial Context Model in CCAP Data, 2008 63

Table 3.4: Racial Context Model with 2008 Election Dependent Variables 65

Table 3.5: White Racial Resentment by Type of County in Metro Area 66

Table 3.6: Core Models Estimated on Non-Migrating Sample 70

Table 4.1: Examples of Ads about Welfare, Crime, Drugs and Social Security 88

Table 4.2: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Presidential Ad Mentioning each Policy 99

Table 4.3: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Senate Ad Mentioning each Policy 100

Table A.1: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Presidential Ad Mentioning each Policy (by Media Market) 107

Table A.2: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Senate Ad Mentioning each Policy (by Media Market) 109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Percent Black and Racial Resentment in St. Louis, MO 51

Figure 3.2: Percent Black and Racial Resentment in Washington DC/Philadelphia/New York City 52

Figure 3.3: White Resentment in Urban and Suburban Counties 67

Figure 4.1: An Image From the Infamous Willie Horton Ad 75

Figure 4.2: Ad Frequencies for Racial Issues in U.S. Presidential Races 93

Figure 4.3: Ad Frequencies for Racial Issues in U.S. Senate Race............................ 94

Figure 4.4: Maps 97

ABSTRACT

This dissertation project engages three broad themes in the political behavior literature. First, it addresses the question of political geography, and how the physical arrangement of individuals affects their political attitudes and behavior. Interest in spatial consideration has been growing among political scientists in recent years. Technical advancements have allowed scholars to measure the impact of spatial variables at different geographic levels, but we still have only a limited theoretical understanding of the ways in which different spatial or geographical units become politically meaningful to individuals. I address this issue through an analysis of the impact that physical proximity can have between different racial groups. A second theme this project addresses is the change in the strength and salience of individual attitudes, given those spatial arrangements. In particular, I look at the ways in which spatial arrangements structure and define competition and conflict between groups, and the resulting impact we can observe in group-based antagonisms. Finally, I look at the ways in which the previous two factors combine to shape elite campaign strategy. Given that political campaigns are waged in unique geographic areas, and that group attitudes are powerful influencers on vote choice, I examine the tools that elites will use to manipulate group-based attitudes for political gain. This dissertation addresses these themes through three stand-alone empirical chapters. The data I use consist of elite interviews, national surveys, content analysis of real campaign ads, and spatial demographic data from the U.S. Census. The findings from this project contribute to the racial priming literature, the group threat and racial contact traditions, and the work of scholars who seek to identify and measure campaign effects.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

In one of the earliest works on public opinion, Walter Lippmann expressed concern about the potentially anti-democratic consequences that could result from ambitious and charismatic politicians gaining control of public attention through the mass media. He cautioned that "the opportunities for manipulation [are] open to anyone who understands the process," noting that political propaganda was a newly-permanent feature of the communications landscape (1922). In the decades following Lippmann's warning, social scientists have contributed to a robust academic debate about the nature and strength of media effects on the mass public, and the extent of elite influence over public opinion (e.g. Cantril 1940; Hovland 1959; Klapper 1960; Sears and Freedman 1967; Patterson and McClure 1976; Zaller 1992).

This literature on media effects has focused primarily on the electorate, developing sophisticated tools for understanding how voters respond to political communication. This work has identified the cognitive processes voters use to evaluate new information (e.g. Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Lupia; 1994; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991), and also outlines the emotional, attitudinal and behavioral reactions that political messages can evoke (e.g. Brader 2005; Bartels 2002; Zaller 1992; Krasno and Green 2008). Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the other side of this coin, which is the strategic process through which elites generate media messages. Although several studies have examined the raw messages and materials produced by campaigns (Druckman, Jacobs, and Ostermeier 2004; Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009), we have little understanding of the tools elites might use to manipulate public opinion, and the conditions under which those tools are used.

The three papers that make up this dissertation wade into that void, putting strategic elite communication under scrutiny. These papers address questions such as: what are the conditions under which voters are most vulnerable to elite manipulation? What tools do politicians use to influence voter behavior, and when do they use them? In answering these questions, I address the most normatively troubling aspect of elite manipulation: the use of political threat, and the exploitation of voter fears for political gain.

Perhaps the easiest type of threat to conceive of is in the arena of national security, where voters hold politically powerful fears associated with foreign attacks on their physical or national security. The threat of war or terrorist attack, and the accompanying "rally around the flag" effect, are among the most powerful movers of American public opinion, if only for temporary periods of time (Gadarian 2010; Hetherington and Nelson 2003; Wlezien 2001; Lupia and Menning 2009).

The same concept of threat applies to conflicts between social groups at sub-national levels as well. Classic thinkers in political science have defined politics as the contestation for power among different groups in society (Truman 1951; Dahl 1961; Schattschneider 1960). Because social groups provide individuals with important social attachments and identity – and because group-based divisions correspond to real material inequalities – the threats posed by members of an out-group can be individually powerful and politically consequential (Sherif et al 1961; Tajfel 1982; Lazarsfeld et al 1944; Campbell et al 1966; Bobo and Hutchings 1996).

As Herbert Blumer argues, political threat is fundamentally connected to relative social group position. He argues that feelings of threat can be particularly acute among members of dominant social groups who fear attempts by subordinate groups to challenge the status-quo hierarchy (1958). Political threat, as I define it in this dissertation, is a political force that is based on voter fears about the possibility of rival social groups gaining political power, and thereby threatening the moral, social, or economic position of that voter.

For some voters, political threat is not a particularly salient force in shaping their political views. However, in many places, threat is made constantly salient for voters by the particular configuration of groups in a geographic area. American settlement patterns are characterized by isolated clusters of like-minded racial, ethnic, economic and religious groups (Bishop 2008; Gimpel 1999). These discrete groups often find themselves in competition with each other over resources in a politically meaningful area, such as a neighborhood or a city. Identifying these areas where threat is salient requires awareness of the way in which voters are situated in physical space, and the ways in which elites validate and politicize inter-group conflict in that area.

In this dissertation, I examine race as particularly prominent example of group-based antagonism in American politics. Race is a politically powerful social division, rooted in material and historic inequality. Disparities between white and black Americans are stark, and attitudes about race among members of each racial group are substantially different, and, for both groups, politically influential (Kinder and Sanders 1996; White 2007; Massey and Denton 1998). One need not look further than recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, to see an example of the ways in which racial inequalities are rooted in extreme physical segregation, and how the white monopoly over legal force enables the dominant group to define the unequal status quo as “peace” and rebellion against that structure as “violence” (Coates 2014).

The group pluralism approach I use in this project is useful for understanding threat among voters, but it also useful for understanding strategic elite behavior. American political elites are embedded within the national party structure, which represents the most superordinate group-based division in American politics (Schattschneider 1960; Dahl 1961). The two political parties are built upon real or perceived associations with almost all of the politically relevant sub-groups in society. As elites seek to manipulate public sentiment, they are constrained by voter loyalties to these sub-groups, and the connection those groups have to the two political parties.

This dissertation unfolds with three stand-alone, but conceptually related, chapters. In Chapter 2, I report on the qualitative interviews I conducted with political consultants who shape campaign ads. The results from these open-ended conversations suggest that political operatives believe that voter decision-making is guided by a partisan worldview, which is a bundle of associations about political groups, stereotypes about political parties, and evaluations of national conditions. Voters in different regions of the country have different worldviews, and the national environment will dictate when a consultant feels comfortable using threat as a tactic to mobilize their base by suggesting that an opposing candidate will represent the interests of an opposing worldview.

In Chapter 3, I look at the ways in which voters’ predispositions are affected by their physical environment. Specifically, I address disparate findings between the racial contact and group threat literature. The contact literature argues that inter-personal dialogue and contact between whites and blacks can reduce the amount of prejudice that each side feels toward the opposing group. The threat literature, however, suggests that the presence of a sizable minority population in an area can exacerbate white prejudice through increased feelings of racial threat and competition. I suggest that the use of appropriate geographic measures of proximity, understood within the broader context of urban racial politics, can help us understand how both of these theories can co-exist.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I look at a specific application of campaign strategy: the use of racialized language in campaign ads as a tool for influencing the power of racial attitudes among voters in an election. The racial priming literature has evaluated the micro-processes through which racialized ads can affect voters. But the failure to examine these ads in the field has led to a limited understanding of their strategic use. By pairing real ads with demographic data from the areas in which they are aired, I find evidence that ads seek to change the applicability of racial attitudes in voting decisions, rather than the accessibility of those predispositions, as the priming literature had argued.

In Chapter 5, I offer concluding thoughts about these findings, and their broader theoretical significance for American democracy and governance.

CHAPTER 2 - Political Threat and the Partisan Worldview: Lessons from Political Campaign Consultants

Abstract

In the modern campaign system, political consultants play a central role in shaping how candidates communicate with voters during an election. Given the importance of consultants in shaping elite-mass communication dynamics, it is surprising that political scientists have not studied them more closely. I argue in this paper that taking up a study of campaign consultants will enrich political science theories about campaigns and voting behavior, giving us new perspective on long-standing debates such as whether the mass electorate is polarized, and whether voting decisions are guided more by social cleavage issues or self-interest. I interviewed senior consultants for Democratic and Republican campaigns to learn more about what they believe motivates voters, and how those beliefs affect the strategies they use to persuade and mobilize voters. The results of the interviews suggest that consultants believe voters are clearly divided into two partisan camps, with a shrinking middle of truly Independent voters. They also believe that voters view politics through a partisan worldview which is shaped by economic concerns, but is also deeply connected to social issues and concerns about relative inequality and social group position. Under certain conditions, consultants will pursue a campaign strategy of manipulating voter concerns about threats to their worldview.

Introduction

In the past 30 years, American political culture has become more toxic and gridlocked than at any point in recent memory (Poole and Rosenthal 2007; Mann and Ornstein 2013). Policy-makers are as polarized and unpopular as ever, with a record low number of bills being passed and public approval of U.S. Congress at the lowest point in recorded history (Thomsen 2014; Gallup 2014). Media sources have become fragmented, broadcasting narrow partisan perspectives to self-selecting audiences (Stroud 2011). And the rise of the tea party movement has led to new and impassioned levels of opposition to a sitting President from members of the American public (Parker and Barreto 2013; Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

In spite of all this tension and acrimony in American politics, political scientists are still puzzled about what effect this elite polarization has had on political opinions among average voters. There is agreement that Members of Congress are polarized into two distant partisan camps, but there is less clarity about the nature of this trend in the masses. Has the fractured and tense dialogue among elites led average Americans to adopt these same polarized attitudes? Or has it resulted in a growing trend of voters feeling turned off by the two political parties, and joining the ranks of moderate Independent voters? Research in political science is inconclusive (Levendusky 2009; Abramowitz 2010; McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006; Levendusky and Pope 2011).

A related question that has divided political scientists has to do with the impact of social or cultural issues as influences on voter decisions. Thomas Frank's provocative book *What's the Matter with Kansas?* argued that the Republican Party in recent elections has captured the votes of low-income rural voters by focusing on social and moral wedge issues, distracting voters from realizing that their economic interests would be better represented by the Democratic Party (2004). Frank's work prompted several rejoinders from the academic community, some of which argue that economic concerns still dominate voting decisions (Bartels 2006), while others acknowledge that moral and social issues have become increasingly important over the past 20 years (Gelman 2007; Ansolabehere et al. 2006).

The debate over polarization and the impact of social issues taps into a deeper question about the role of rational self-interest in motivating political behavior, as opposed to the competing effects of emotional "hot" processes. The founders of the American political system had little faith in the ability of the masses to make rational decisions, so they designed a political system in which elites would be expected to "refine and enlarge" mass sentiment into rational debate (Madison 1787). And yet, we find ourselves in the current landscape, where political elites are more clearly polarized and captured by partisan loyalties than the mass public. According to Frank, political elites are not only failing to uphold the rational ideal, they are manipulating voters into making decisions that run against their self-interest.

Interestingly, most of the political science work that has responded to Frank has focused on whether voters are making their decisions on cultural or rational grounds. The other part of Frank's claim – that elites are using cultural threats to manipulate voters – has gone un-explored. This reflects a broader deficiency in the field of political science when it comes to examining elite strategy in the realm of behavioral politics. We should be asking not just "how do voters respond to these messages?" but also "what are elites trying to achieve with these messages?" Our inquiries into questions like polarization and voter self-interest are enriched by knowing more about what elites think of voters, and how that guides their strategic decision-making.

In particular, I suggest that we should examine political campaign ads and the strategies that go into making those ads. Political campaign ads are at the center of the elite-mass relationship. Every two years, politicians spend millions of dollars to communicate directly with voters about their policy positions and issue priorities. The ads that are crafted for these campaigns represent a direct message from politician to voter, unfiltered by journalists or members of the news media. Because campaign ads contain the bulk of the direct communication between voters and politicians, they provide a rich resource for understanding the ways in which politicians view the electorate and what issues they feel are important enough to communicate to voters.

The people who craft those ads are political consultants. An understudied group of political actors, consultants have great power in deciding how politicians talk about political issues. In this paper, I report on a series of elite interviews that I conducted with people who are in senior roles in shaping campaign strategy. In particular, I am interested in answering this question: when do political ads make use of threatening language or images that are designed to get voters concerned about core social or cultural issues?

In the next section, I discuss who these consultants are and how they make decisions about campaign strategy. In the following section, I get to the heart of the matter in reporting on the results of my interviews. I find that campaign operatives employ threat tactics on social and cultural issues when the political conditions favor such a strategy. The rationale behind this strategy has implications for the political science debate on polarization and voting motivations, which I discus in the concluding section.

Existing Research

Political consultants—people who are paid to give advice and provide professional services to candidates—are a "near necessity in modern congressional elections" (Dulio 2004). Over the past century, political parties have faded in importance and voter communication technology has become more sophisticated (Aldrich 1995). These changes led candidates to increasingly rely on professional campaign consultants to help them navigate the intricacies of running for office. Consultants provide a range of services including fundraising, conducting surveys of voters, conducting digital outreach, and filming and producing television ads (Johnson 2000 and 2001).

Given their importance, it is surprising that research on political consultants and campaign operatives is so scarce. In his assessment of the state of research on consultants, James Thurber concludes that most of this research is "atheoretical" in nature and that the study of consultants is "a subfield in search of a theory" (1998). In general, political science research about consultants has focused on descriptive matters such as who political consultants are, what their responsibilities are on campaigns, and how they fit in to the larger structure of political parties (Herrnson 2009; Dulio 2004, Nyhan and Montgomery 2014; Cain 2011).

Part of the difficulty facing scholars who wish to study consultants is that there is not a theoretical infrastructure for studying strategic elite behavior within the broader field of political behavior. Even though the field of political psychology is built upon the premise that elites can shape public opinion through the messages that they disseminate (Zaller 1992: Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Chong and Druckman 2007), very few scholars have looked at the ways in which elites view the electorate and how that can affect the creation of political communication.

Looking at what we do know about consultants, it is clear that these political actors are connected to the two political parties both ideologically and professionally. Many individuals shift between working on campaigns, working for the party, and working as consultants. The continual movement of these individuals between various parts of their party's campaign apparatus means that the people who guide campaign strategy share the same professional norms and networks as other members of their same party (Johnson 2001; Kolodny and Logan 1998; Nyhan and Montgomery 2014).[1]

In a demographic profile of consultants, Dulio finds that these political operatives are predominately male, wealthier than the average American, more educated, and younger than the Members of Congress they help elect. The average annual income for a political consultant was $102,000 when Dulio conducted his survey in 1999 (2004). Dennis Johnson estimated that there were an estimated 3,000 political consulting firms with an average of ten or fewer staffers. He estimated that the consulting business generated approximately $50 million a year in 2001, a figure that has surely grown since then (2001).

While some scholars and journalists have claimed that consultants are primarily motivated by their desire to make money (e.g. Glasser 2000; Sabato 1981), Dulio and

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[1] For the sake of simplicity, I use the term "consultant" to describe all of the political elites who are involved in crafting campaign strategy.

Nelson find that consultants are idealists who are committed to their partisan principals. For example, in their survey of people who work as consultants, they find that nearly half of the respondents became involved in politics for ideological reasons. And roughly half of the respondents expressed regret about having helped elect a candidate to office, with the primary reason being that the candidate then failed to follow through on campaign promises (2006).

Part of the importance behind studying political consultants has to do with the power of these individuals in shaping campaign messages, and associated concerns about the impact of the negative advertising that they produce. Political scientists have debated whether these negative ads have a demobilizing effect on the electorate, or perhaps are causing more voters to turn off of identifying with either party in favor of aligning with independents (e.g. Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Lau et al. 1999). For their part, consultants are unapologetic about negative campaign strategy, suggesting simply that “it works” and, in some cases, claiming the use of negative messages as a badge of honor, showing their willingness to get their hands dirty in the pursuit of electing candidates from their party (Johnson 2001; Dulio 2004).

Other research has shown that the stereotype of the consultant as a cynical puppet master for unwitting campaigns is off the mark. Francia and Herrnson conducted a survey of political candidates and found that the strategic environment had more of an impact in convincing candidates to use negative attacks than political consultants. Candidates who ran the most competitive races were more likely to use this strategy than so-called “amateur” campaigners (2007).

While many studies in political science are concerned with consultant strategy, they limit themselves to observing the outcomes of campaign actions and assume equivalence between strategic intentions and these observed outcomes (see, for example, Druckman et al 2009; Petrocik et al 2003; Mendelberg 2001; Jacobson and Kernel 1983). Other studies have explored strategic decisions through the use of formal models (Lupia and Menning 2009; Bartels 1985). In an observational study of campaign strategy, Daron Shaw worked as a consultant for the Bush/Cheney campaign during the 2000 and 2004 elections. His book provides useful insight on the alignment between campaign strategy, campaign behavior, and campaign effects (2006).

The existing literature on political consultants provides us with evidence that these political actors are powerful players in the contemporary campaign environment. However, very little research actually connects consultants to the strategies that get employed in campaigns. Many questions remain about these political actors as strategic thinkers. What decisions do they make? What are their rules of thumb for evaluating elections and messages? What assumptions do consultants make about public opinion and elections, and would those assumptions be surprising or informative to political scientists?

My claim in this paper is that the strategic decisions of political consultants warrant closer scrutiny. As a methodological matter, I also suggest that talking with consultants directly about their strategy is just as important as observing the outcomes of those strategic decisions. If we only look at campaign materials produced by campaigns, which is the approach that has guided work in this area so far, we will be truncating our analysis to only include ideas that were acted upon. We would fail to see the ideas that get left on the cutting room floor. In the next section, I describe the methodology I used to speak with consultants about their views of the electorate and their strategic decision-making process.

Methodology

I conducted 18 open-ended interviews with political operatives over the course of two months between January and February of 2012. Most of the interviews were conducted in Washington DC, with some interviews taking place by phone in order to reach respondents who are not based in DC. The interview subjects serve in various senior functions related to campaign consulting. They work as campaign consultants for media, mail, internet advertising, and opposition research firms, and they serve as senior operatives with congressional party committees. One respondent was a former consultant who was running for office himself (he was successful, and is now a member of Congress).

I used a modified snowball sampling approach to target individuals to interview. In the classic snowball approach, I would start with a few "seed" contacts and then solicit additional contacts from each person I interviewed, with the hope of gaining an ever-expanding pool of potential subjects. Because my personal network (which provided the seeds for my sample) is based in Democratic politics, I had more respondents from the Democratic Party and thus conducted more intensive outreach to connect with Republicans.[2] In a testament to elite polarization in Washington, almost none of my

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[2] In total, 7 of my interview subjects were personal acquaintances. The other 11 subjects came from referrals, blind email solicitations, or from connections to the University of Michigan alumni network.

Democratic contacts even knew a Republican, in spite of the fact that they work in the same field but for opposite parties. In total, 4 of the 18 respondents were Republican, which means my sample is biased toward the Democratic perspective. However, the Republican responses did not deviate in any meaningful way from those of their Democratic counterparts, creating a high level of agreement on the issues I discuss in this paper. Like the Democrats, the Republicans with whom I spoke are very well-connected in Washington DC, appearing on "who's who" types of lists in national politics.

The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one hour. Five of the interviews were conducted over the phone; the rest were conducted in-person. With each respondent, I made assurances in my request to interview them and at the start of our conversation that their identity would be kept confidential. I then opened each interview by telling the respondent that I was trying to understand how campaign strategy varies in different parts of the country. I would ask each respondent to tell me, in their experience, how campaign "messages" are developed out of the raw research and polling material gathered at the beginning of a campaign. While most answers to this question were similar, it was a helpful way to break the ice and get the respondent talking. I would then ask a variety of open-ended follow-up questions, often using something they said in their first response as a bridge to transition to another topic.

I took notes on my laptop during each interview. Because the notes were often incomplete, I would read through and fill in gaps after the interview, while it was still fresh in my memory. This process was completed the same day I conducted the interview.

The average respondent in my sample has worked in politics for 14 years. The sample is predominately male (88%), which is in line with the prior survey of campaign consultants where 81% of respondents were male (Dulio 2004).

One problem with the approach of directly asking consultants about their campaign strategies is that some of the tactics consultants use on campaigns might be subconscious, or the respondents might conceal the truth about their strategies because of social desirability concerns. I found this to be true with a few of my respondents (1 Republican and 3 Democrats). These respondents were guarded in their responses and did not seem to feel comfortable providing their own opinions or thoughts about campaign strategy, focusing instead on descriptions of basic campaign procedures.[3]

With the remaining respondents, I was surprised at the candor I got from their responses. They were willing to philosophize about voters and what motivates them, even if in some cases their musings were somewhat incomplete or disjointed. By referencing conversations they had had with other consultants, or lessons they had gotten from political mentors, they conveyed an ongoing desire to understand voters and the forces that govern elections. They often provided specific examples of past campaigns where the strategies we were discussing played out. Many of the respondents seemed to enjoy sharing these old stories since their behind-the-scenes work often goes unnoticed.

In analyzing the interviews, my task was to identify common themes that ran through my various discussions, and to tie those themes into a more complete view of campaigns and elections than I could have gotten from any one respondent. One theme that continually recurred in these interviews was the concept of threat and threat management. Consultants spoke about the challenge of making their candidate as "non-threatening" as possible to voters from the other party, especially in light of attempts by consultants from the opposing party to portray their candidate in an extreme or threatening light.

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[3] Not surprisingly, the respondent who was running for Congress fell into this category.

Having identified this theme, I then went back and combed through all the interview notes with the goal of uncovering a broader narrative about how consultants view the electorate, and determining how the threat strategy fits within that narrative. In the next sections, I discuss my findings, paying particular attention to the ways in which these insights intersect or can inform political science research on polarization, voting motivations, or campaign strategy more broadly.

Polarization

In the introduction to this paper, I discussed the inconclusive findings scholars in political science have found when it comes to two questions: is the electorate polarized? And, do voters primarily make their decisions based on economic self-interest, or based on social and cultural values? In this section, I take up the question of polarization, seeking to understand how consultants view partisan divisions in the electorate. The short answer to this question is that the consultants view the electorate as highly polarized. My interview subjects overwhelmingly agreed that there is no longer a significant "middle" to the American electorate. Both Democrats and Republicans agreed that the "Independent" label adopted by some voters actually belies fairly consistent partisan attitudes. As one Republican said:

> "Personally, I think the Independent voter is kind of a myth. If the electorate is 40% Independent, it's probably only 5-7% who are actually Independent … if you listen to someone who is Independent, they always tend to have a partisan perspective on the issues."

Several Democrats echoed this skepticism about the Independent label and, as one consultant said, "most people who say they are Independents are pretty partisan in their behavior."

While "Independent" was viewed as a fairly meaningless label, the consultants I spoke with did acknowledge that there are some voters who are not fully aligned with one party. In my interviews I used the term "swing voter" to identify people who actually changed their vote choice from one election to the next. Although the consultants acknowledged that these swing voters exist, they also indicated that they believe they are an endangered species. Swing voters were viewed as a "tiny fraction of the electorate." One respondent said that in a Senate race he was working on at the time, "we are fighting for 8% of the vote." In general, respondents agreed that swing voters represent less than 10% of all voters.

So if the electorate is so polarized into partisan camps, as these respondents suggest, then why are elections so volatile? In the 2008 election, there was a Democratic sweep, with Democrats picking up the Presidency, 21 seats in the U.S. House and 8 seats in the U.S. Senate. Then – just two years later, in 2010 – we saw a GOP landslide, with Republicans picking up a historic 63 seats in the House and 6 seats in the Senate. How could election results swing so wildly without having a broad middle of the electorate that is changing their vote between the parties? The consensus from my interviews was that elections are primarily decided by partisan turnout, which is affected by a complex interplay of national conditions and partisan enthusiasm.

The impact of national conditions on election outcomes is nothing new to political scientists who have made an art of forecasting presidential elections based on such factors as economic performance, the presence of a war, and general popularity of the incumbent and his party (for a summary, see Wlezien 2001). But the way in which national conditions interact with partisanship to create electoral swings has been the source of some debate. Bartels claims that partisan voters are biased by their loyalty to their party, and so their interpretation of the national environment is filtered by their own partisan beliefs (2002). Green, Palmquist, and Shickler, on the other hand, argue that even strong partisans can make clear-eyed performance evaluations of their own party (2002). These evaluations are only short-term assessments, and the most likely impact they will have is to encourage casual partisans of the unpopular party to stay home, and empower the same group in the popular party to go to the polls.

The theory sketched out by the respondents in my interviews most closely reflects the perspective of Green, Palmquist, and Schickler. My respondents believe that national conditions do matter, and that they primarily matter by dampening enthusiasm among weak and leaning partisans from the party that is unpopular. As a Republican respondent said:

> "In wave elections, like 2008 and 2010, the Independent voter who identifies with the party on the bad side of the wave typically does not show up. The true Independent voters break against the party doing poorly 2:1. That means that there is a swath of Independent voters that are going 70% to 30% for the party benefiting from the wave."

The implication here is that national conditions affect weak partisans (those who may call themselves Independent but regularly align with one party) by making them feel ambivalent about going to the polls when their favored party is doing poorly. The psychological mechanism behind this demobilization process has been explored in previous political science research; Yanna Krupnikov finds that negative political information can reduce turnout among voters by creating ambivalence about the vote choices available to them (2011).

Ambivalence is not the only force at work in determining the balance of partisan turnout in an election, according to my respondents. While it is common for voters of all stripes to blame poor economic performance or policy failure on the party in office, partisans who do not align with the party in office will experience feelings of anger or exasperation about the direction in which the country is going. The emotional reaction then prompts a higher level of motivation to go the polls. This is the opposite trend from the demobilizing effect of one's own party doing poorly. As a Democratic respondent said, "2006 was an angry electorate, but it leaned Democrat. 2010 was angry too, but it's just different people who were angry."[4]

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[4] The conversations in my interviews primarily focused on circumstances surrounding poor national performance, since that was the reality in the most recent elections. As a result, a topic that did not come up in my interviews was the expected level of enthusiasm for voting among either party's voters under positive national conditions. A few consultants noted that there was some reason to believe that social issues would play more of a role in elections that take place during good national conditions. As one Republican said, "When the economy is good, people tend to start going crazy over things like immigration and gay marriage. It's 'Now that we have money, we have time to think about things like this.'" Similarly, a Democrat said, "when the economy is bad, wedge issues go the way of the dodo bird. When the economy was good during the 90's, we talked about guns and abortion." As I will highlight in the next section, I believe these conclusions are somewhat short-sighted. The consultants would later confirm that social issues like abortion and gay marriage were still prominent as a theme in campaign ads during times of poor economic performance; they just might not be mentioned as prominently as economic issues.

The combination of demobilization among weak partisans associated with a poorly-performing party, and the mobilization of strong partisans on the opposite side, can lead to wave-like conditions. In the example of the 2008 and 2010 election, the transfer of power from Bush to Obama in 2008 changed the presumed responsibility for the weak national conditions that persisted through 2010. Thus, the environment was created for two back-to-back wave elections that went in opposite directions.

While the knowledge that consultants believe the electorate is polarized may not resolve the debate among political scientists on this issue, it is an important finding because of the way it can guide consultants' decisions about how they communicate with voters. What this means in practice requires an understanding of the types of things consultants believe motivate partisan voters. In the next section, I explore that question, with results that address the second unsettled point of debate for political scientists: whether voters make decisions based upon economic self-interest, or based on their beliefs about divisive cultural issues. I also discuss the ways in which consultants use threat to persuade or mobilize voters along those themes to support their candidate or issue.

Worldview and Threat

The consultants I spoke with believe voters of both parties have strong and consuming worldviews that are imbued with group loyalties, value judgments, beliefs about inequality, and connections to physical places. What is a worldview? According to Kristin Luker, a worldview is a combination of self-interest and values, bound together by a person's life choices and experiences. Rather than being at odds with each other, as many political scientists have suggested, Luker argues that social and economic issues become intertwined as a person fulfills a life course in which values and economic self-interest become self-reinforcing. In the example of the abortion debate that is the center of Luker's inquiry, she finds that pro-choice activists were at odds with conservative gender roles because they felt those attitudes constrained their right to pursue professional equality and success in the workforce. They believed that reproductive choice would allow them to have control over their role as child-bearers, allowing for the pursuit of other economic and social identities as well. On the other side, women who were pro-life felt that their primary vocation was to bear children and to care for their families from inside the home. Pro-life women felt threatened by the concept of family planning and the associated assumption that their work inside the home would be of less value than pursuing professional skills out in the workforce. For both sides, the debate over abortion reflected deep investments in economic position, life choice, and values. The worldviews of these women were fundamentally at odds with each other, and the other side's position represented a threat that was not just based on values, but also on economic self-interest (1984).

While Luker's framework was developed to address the particular issue of abortion, the concept of a zero-sum worldview also fits with the portrait that interview respondents painted of partisan voters. These consultants believe that most voters view political events through the lens of their particular worldview, and that these partisan worldviews are characterized by three main dimensions. First, the voter worldview contains beliefs about political inequality and zero-sum group membership that correspond to partisan cleavages. Second, these worldviews are distributed across geographic space, making some cleavages inextricably tied up with regional or place-based identities. Third, the voter worldview encompasses a variety of issues and values, including beliefs about economic fairness and cleavage issues like religion and gun control.

The first of these dimensions came to light as I asked consultants what kinds of qualities they would most like to maximize in their candidate. I gave respondents a list of attributes and asked them to indicate which qualities they think voters care most about in a politician.[5] While some respondents selected “strong leader,” the vast majority said that “cares about people like me” was the most important quality for voters to see in a candidate.[6] As a Republican said, “At some very basic level, that’s what [voters] are gut-checking: ‘that guy’s fighting for me, or he isn’t.’” Another respondent, this one a Democrat, used almost identical language, “I feel that voters tend to just have a gut feeling about the candidate in the ‘people like me’ category.”[7]

As I discussed this concept with consultants further, it became clear that the definition of “people like me” corresponds to group-based identities and values, and that social or cultural issues often provide a heuristic that helps voters determine whether or not a candidate cares about people like them. For example, one Republican said about gun policy, “For rural Americans, that is a litmus test for whether you are one of us or not.”

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[5] The list of candidate attributes included: moral, provides strong leadership, really cares about people like me, knowledgeable, intelligent, approve of handling of his/her job in Washington (for an incumbent), agrees with me on the issues, overall favorable opinion

[6] Respondents who selected “strong leader” explained that this quality was most important in a President, especially during a time of war.

[7] Karl Rove, the key architect of George W. Bush’s victories was quoted in a news article as saying that a consultant’s job is to make it so that voters can say “yes” to all three of these questions about their candidate: “Is he a strong leader? Can I trust him? And does he care about people like me?” (Kettle 2006).

Religion was also mentioned as a powerful determinant of shared cultural values. One Democrat said:

> "If you're a Democrat running in a conservative, rural or southern state, faith is more important to voters than if you're in the Northeast or the West coast, or blue states. Democratic voters tend to be suspicious [of religious people]. But for Republican voters, conservative Democrats and rural voters, it is a cue to them that you share their values."

This same consultant continued, providing a specific example of a race in which the campaign was testing the impact of informing voters that a Democratic candidate in a Southern state had a background as a Christian missionary. He said:

> "The focus groups were fascinating. We went through [the candidate's] issue positions and people said that he sounded like a liberal. When we added the missionary stuff, he was viewed as a conservative. It is one of the most effective tools, and I hate to call it a tool, to convince conservative voters that someone is A) not a liberal, or B) shares their values."

A Republican based in Washington state echoed the importance of religion, but from the opposite perspective:

> "We are a bunch of secular pagans out here. That's huge. The base of the Republican Party right now is talk radio and these big evangelical protestant churches. There are some of those in Washington, but not nearly as many as in Mississippi … In the South, ads literally have people wrapped in a flag and holding the bible. If you did that here, the *Seattle Times* would destroy you. People here are actively hostile to religion. They think religion is oppressive, if you believe in religion you're a climate-change denier."

This latter point – that information about a candidate's religion would indicate something about his or her position on climate change – speaks to the belief consultants have about how various issues are tangled together in the broader partisan worldview. The inter-connectedness of these issues is reinforced by stereotypes about the two political parties, and the various coalitions that the parties represent. Political scientists have long-established the group-centric nature of partisan identity (Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002), but there has also been important work that reinforces the role that partisanship can play as a heuristic or stereotype that voters use to draw inferences between a candidate and beliefs about who that candidate is "for." Democrats are seen as the party of unions, environmentalists, and African-Americans while Republicans are the party of businesspeople, evangelicals and military families (Abramowitz 2010). Voters also hold stereotypes about the strengths and weaknesses of each party on particular issues (Petrocik et al. 2003; Winter 2010; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994), and even associate character traits with candidates based on their partisanship. For example, Democrats are perceived as being compassionate and supportive of domestic issues like education and health care. Republicans, on the other hand, are seen as tough, having strengths in defense and foreign policy (Hayes 2005).

Importantly, many of the constituencies of the two political parties are perceived as being in zero-sum competition and, thus, on either side of hot-button issues like abortion, immigration, and economic distribution. The binary nature of these identities is reflected in the belief of consultants that the definition of "people like me" is dichotomous. The question of "who are you for?" can very easily be flipped to "who are you against?" As one Republican noted, on the issue of gay marriage, "there is no middle ground." And, as the Republican consultant from Washington State noted about the Democratic stronghold of the Northwest, "people in Seattle hate Republicans. Hate, hate, hate."

According to political scientist Kathy Cramer, some of this antagonism comes from beliefs about relative inequality. In interviews with rural voters in Wisconsin, she finds that these voters' perceptions of the political world are highly rooted in their feelings about deprivation relative to voters in urban areas (2012). The resentment about this deprivation corresponds to long-standing beliefs about fairness and hard-work, encapsulated in the American creed. This is the belief that everyone should get ahead on their own, with a corresponding suspicion that out-groups are getting special favors that they don't deserve (Dahl 1961). As one Democratic consultant said:

> "People really resent unfair advantages. You can see that on both sides with the Democrats and Republicans. Democrats think that big business gets an unfair advantage. Republicans think that immigrants and gays and lesbians get unfair advantages . . . It's the same ideology on both sides, but you can substitute the different groups."

So voters from both parties harbor a deep skepticism of candidates from the rival party. Not only do they believe that the candidate will work for groups that the voter doesn't identify with, they believe that the candidate will actively work against their own interest, and the values of people like them.

A second, core feature of the voter worldview is the connection that it can have to physical space. In early research on political geography, Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues found that Ohio voters in the 1940 presidential election were influenced heavily by social group pressures, including those exerted by neighbors. They write that "people who work or live or play together are likely to vote for the same candidates" (1944). Not only do people vote like the people they see most often, but social groups in Erie County, Ohio, tended to be both distinct and homogenous along demographic and ideological lines.

More recent research by political geographers has shown that American settlement patterns continue to be characterized by isolated clusters of like-minded racial, ethnic, economic and religious groups (Bishop 2008; Gimpel 1999). Returning to Cramer, her interviews in rural Wisconsin demonstrated the strong connection between the rural physical environment and associated perceptions of inequality (2012). Gimpel and Karnes have also found a strong partisan divide between rural and urban America, with a corresponding gap between political beliefs and values for voters in those areas (2006).

According to political consultants, the urban/rural divide is just one of several ways that voters' worldviews vary by region. As one Democrat said "there is a spirit in each region. You need to connect with the Mountain West character, the Industrial Midwest character." Each region of the country is defined by particular economic concerns, but also by unique values and culture. One Republican reflected this point in his comparison of Senator Alan Simpson, a Republican from Wyoming, and Senator Ted Kennedy, a Democrat from Massachusetts.

> "Two guys, very different states, very different personal politics, very close friends … You look at Massachusetts, and what they're looking for in a politician is very different. People in Wyoming want someone tough and rugged with that frontier spirit. People in Massachusetts want a spirited person but with a level of sophistication, because they have a respect for the office of a Senator. I think it's definitely a western thing that you really get dinged for if you've 'gone Washington.' If you said that to someone from Rhode Island, they would say 'well he's a Senator, jackass, of course he's gone Washington.'"

Not surprisingly, the South was mentioned several times as an area with a unique regional identity. Democrats, in particular, discussed strategies they had used in campaigns to reassure Southern voters that their candidates were not going to pose a threat to dominant political and cultural values. Abortion and religiosity are major concerns for Democrats, as is an enduring concern about racial group loyalties. As one

Democrat said, “In the South, Democrat is basically a racial epithet.” Accordingly, Democrats must walk a particularly fine line in presenting themselves in a counter-stereotypic fashion in the South, working to ensure conservative white voters that they will not pursue a racialized political agenda on behalf of African-Americans, a traditionally Democratic constituency. One strategy to achieve this aim is to take a conservative stand on racialized issues like welfare or crime (Dale-Riddle 2014).

Interestingly, a few consultants said that there was one area in the country where it is still possible to “beat partisanship,” or get a candidate elected in an area that leans heavily toward the other party, and that is the Mountain West. The 2008 election encapsulated this trend, with one Democratic consultant saying, “The Mountain West was striking because it flipped from Republican to Democrat. It’s kind of libertarian, kind of liberal, multi-ethnic, and [Obama] just kind of connected with that on a gut level.” Another Democrat said that candidates from his party were winning tough races in the Mountain West because they had a “likability quality.” He said, “These are the people who have these big personalities. They are overcoming partisanship not based on issues, but based on likability. Tester, Schweitzer, Richardson, Herseth, Hickenlooper.” The consultants provided specific examples of the tactics candidates used to harness a particular regional spirit, and I outline those strategies in a later section.

The third dimension of the voter worldview – the connection between economic and social issues – was made most apparent when the interview respondents talked about the Midwest. People who live in the post-industrial Rust Belt areas of the Midwest have experienced significant economic loss in the last several decades as jobs shifted away from cities like Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland (Feyrer et al. 2007). The worldview of the blue-collar voters in Rust Belt areas is strongly rooted in economic concerns, but it is not a strict rational calculation of self-interest. A Republican respondent described what he saw in the 2010 election:

> "In 2010, Republicans did well among white, union, less well-educated voters. We did well in West Virginia, upper Wisconsin, western Pennsylvania, Ohio, anywhere in the Rust Belt, we did particularly well. We were doing well among this lunch-bucket type of Democrat in areas where the economy was badly hit. They were put off by Obama because he was exotic to them. His liberalism isn't the sort of FDR lunch bucket liberalism that they support. *(My question: do you think this is motivated by race?)* Some of it is probably racially motivated. But that's not the only thing. If that was the case, Obama wouldn't have won in 2008. Now it's also the bad economy, and the feeling that he's advocating policies they don't support like cap and trade. It leaves them feeling that this guy is assaulting our way of life."

Phrases like "assaulting our way of life" reflect the kind of language that consultants used to describe the way voters feel when they are concerned that a candidate poses a threat to their worldview. It points to a deep gut reaction that a voter has about whether a candidate cares about people like him.

The "cap and trade" policy that this respondent mentions was invoked a couple of other times as a galvanizing issue for these "lunch bucket" voters. Democrats have advocated for policies that would reduce carbon emissions, which is something voters in industrial regions see as an attack on their livelihood, and an affront to their way of life. One consultant described an ad in West Virginia where a Democratic candidate needed to make a strong point that he would not fall in line with national Democrats on this issue:

> "[The candidate] had to separate himself from Obama and Harry Reid. He had to prove that he wasn't going to be their lackey. He needed to do something bold to make the point to voters that he would remain independent. So the campaign did an ad where he took a shotgun and shot the cap and trade bill."

The use of the shotgun in the ad shows that the consultants wanted to address a concern that goes beyond a rational self-interest calculation concerning the cap-and-trade bill. Rather, they wanted to show that the candidate is a part of the culture and way of life for voters in West Virginia.

I asked one Democratic respondent directly about Frank's hypothesis in *What's the Matter with Kansas*?, that Republicans were winning votes from people whose economic self-interest is better represented by Democrats. He said:

> "When you listen to the Tea Party say things like 'we need to take our country back,' who do you think they are talking about? [Obama] won the election fair and square. These people are losing their market share in this country. The country is becoming darker, economic inequality is becoming starker. They are voting out of desperation. They see the Democratic Party as the home for all of the people they don't like, Latinos, professional women . . . It used to be the welfare queen driving the Cadillac was the symbol of what was wrong with politics, now it's elites . . . It's more economic insecurity. Their dad went to the factories every day, and their mom stayed home, and they did ok. That life is gone, those jobs are gone, and I don't see it coming back . . . That's what phrases like "we're going to take our country back" get at. They're talking about the 1950's. You see it on the Democratic side too, talking about outsourcing. It all goes back to economic insecurity."

The quote from this respondent suggests that economic insecurity is the foundation of a worldview that also contains elements of anxiety about race, gender, and ethnicity. Just like Luker found in her analysis of activists on the abortion issue, these consultants believe that voters exhibit a worldview that has roots in economic security, but is also wrapped up in concerns about social inequality, who will get ahead, and which party will best represent the concerns of people like them.

Campaign Tactics

Because political consultants believe that voters are uniformly aligned into two partisan camps, and that voters view politics through a group-centric worldview, campaign ads are created with a goal of aligning a candidate with the dominant worldview of voters in a given area. The easiest shorthand for identifying that worldview, according to the consultants, is to look at the past partisan performance of a district or state. As one Democratic consultant said, “bet strictly on Democratic performance if you want to know who’s going to win.” Partisan performance tells the consultant who the dominant party is in a district, and that signifies – along with unique regional qualities – what the dominant worldview will be for voters in that area. Consultants want to know not just what the worldview is in an area, but how dominant that worldview is. Knowing how pervasive a partisan worldview is helps the consultants to determine the assumptions they can make in their campaign ads.

When a consultant is running a campaign where their party is in the majority, they will create ads suggesting that the opposing candidate is an extreme threat to the dominant worldview of that area. As a Republican operative said about campaigns in Washington State:

> “Democrats have basically taken these voters who should be Republicans, and made them moderates because they accuse Republican candidates of being extremists. They turn Republican [candidates] into Pat Robertson, and then you’re done. For a Republican candidate, you can be as conservative as you want on no new taxes, but you have to convince them that you don’t have a right wing social agenda, and that you care about the environment.”

The use of the threat tactic is part of a broader toolkit for running negative campaigns, and consultants were willing to discuss this approach quite openly. As one Democrat said, negative campaigns are often a tool to conceal flaws in your own candidate: “Negative ads are about making someone an unacceptable option. They say ‘You might hate our guy, but you can’t even fathom the alternative.’” Another Democrat, elaborating on the use of negative themes in campaign ads, said:

> “Campaigns are not rational. They are emotional things, which is why negative works, because fear and anger are very powerful emotions. It gets voters to do something. It pushes them one way or the other.”

Another tactic used be campaigns to invoke fear is to blame particular groups for bad economic outcomes. One Democratic respondent said that campaigns will be selective in who they blame for economic failure. Republicans are likely to implicate unions as the culprit for a weak economy, leading to a recent trend of several Republican state governors in Rust Belt states passing “right to work” laws as a proposed solution to unemployment woes. On the other side, Democrats demonize tax policies that benefit corporations or the rich. Both arguments rest on claims about fairness, and use threats to suggest that the opposing candidate will favor a group that does not align with the majority in a particular area.

The flip side of this threatening tactic used by the party in the majority is a strategy of threat-mitigation used by the minority candidate. The strategy for reducing the perceived threat that a candidate poses to voters of an opposing party is to pre-empt voters’ worldview fears by being as non-threatening as possible. As one consultant said:

> “As a Democrat in a red area, you have to show that you respect the culture. You don’t have to show that it is your culture, but you have to show that

> you’re going to respect it. People can’t perceive you as a threat to their cultural values … I have spent most of my time working on turf that would not be considered hospitable for Democrats. And the candidates who were successful almost universally ended up taking a message along the lines of respecting the culture and then pivoting to job creation and quality of life.”

A key component of the threat-management strategy is for a candidate to create distance between themselves and the national political leaders of their party, especially when that party is unpopular. It is common for political ads to connect local candidates with national figures who are politically divisive – Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama for Democrats, and George W. Bush or Dick Cheney for Republican. For strong partisans, those political figures represent all that is wrong with the other party. Respondents in my interviews talked about how Democratic candidates dealt with associations to those political figures in 2010. One consultant said that he worked with a Democratic House incumbent who won because he “woke up every morning thinking about how he could separate himself from Nancy Pelosi.” A Republican consultant agreed, “In 2010, you saw democratic candidates running ads saying that they would stand up to Obama and Pelosi. That was purely reactionary to the national conditions at the time. If those conditions change, then how people campaign is going to be different as well.”

Candidates who are running against partisanship may also need to take bold stands to define “who they are for” in a counter-stereotypic fashion. For example, it can be effective for a Democrat in the South to express conservative racial views, or for a Republican in New England to support abortion rights (Sides 2006; Hayes 2005).[8] As a Republican consultant said, “We recruited a lot of pro-choice candidates for suburban districts, as a big gesture for Democratic voters. But you have to get someone who can survive a primary." A Democrat who has experience in southern politics said: "If you're a Democrat running in the South, it helps to make a single issue that your campaign can be about. That gets people off of voting strictly along partisan lines."

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[8] Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994) find that counter-stereotypical strategies are not particularly effective, though they do not explore this in the domain of group-oriented attitudes.

A final strategy for candidates who want to align themselves with voters from another party is to maintain a persona that is in line with the culture and values of the state or district. This includes an authentic physical appearance and manner of speaking (Fenno 1978). As one Republican with roots in politics in the West said:

> "If you're good, and you're around for a long time, you really do shadow the people back home. You are a mirror image of the way people dress, the way people talk. If that's inconsistent, people will question whether 'he's for me.'"

A Democratic consultant echoed this sentiment by referencing two Democratic candidates from the West, only one of whom was reelected in 2010. The candidate who was reelected "was still wearing his dungarees" and maintaining his image as "the guy next door." The candidate who lost her reelection had lost her authenticity while in Washington DC. She "didn't look like a farmer anymore. She wore pearls and expensive clothes . . . she wasn't like the voters in her district anymore."

The images that are used in an ad can also address concerns about worldview. One consultant said the following, in reference to a Democratic candidate running for Governor in a red state:

> "We never had him trumpet his honesty overtly. Instead, there was a lot of subtext in our ads that made people believe that he was trustworthy . . . We had third party validators talk about how he was there for them. We had him do an ad with his wife in a small town where he grew up, talking about being

> the son and grandson of preachers. We had him talk directly to the camera. It all reminds people of why they trust him."

The importance of images, in general, was emphasized by multiple respondents in my interviews. As one Democrat said, "The value stuff is the easiest thing to communicate through music and images, the stuff people are getting peripherally."

These tactics all pertain to races in areas where one party has a relatively clear majority. There are, of course, some races that are truly "toss-up." Voters in these areas might be more independent overall, or they might be partisan but evenly distributed against each other. Either way, candidates from both parties will take a more cautious approach, being careful not to assume that voters in that area have a shared political worldview. Several consultants suggested that the suburbs, in any part of the country, would be the most likely place for elections to take place that focus strictly on performance issues. One Republican consultant said that elections in these areas are simply a "job interview" and focus more on which candidate is more qualified. Another Democratic consultant said that voters in the suburbs prioritize parochial issues that matter most to them, like education, transit, and crime.

In these areas where there is no clear partisan cleavage to appeal to, candidates will most likely focus on candidate competence or valance issues, upon which everyone can agree. For example, one Democrat said that it is common to appeal to swing voters by saying things like "we're fighting for the middle class." The same consultant noted that this rhetoric is somewhat empty because, "nobody is fighting against the middle class."

To summarize, consultants will use negative campaign tactics to paint opposing candidates as a threat to the dominant political values in an area. A candidates who is running in an area where their party is a minority will need to appear as non-threatening as possible, adopting an image and style that closely reflects the majority of voters in that area.

An interesting caveat to this strategic scenario comes from the quotes of two consultants who expressed the belief that hope can be a far more powerful mechanism than fear in persuading or mobilizing voters. They said hope is much less commonly used in campaigns because it is harder to harness. As a Democrat said:

> "The most powerful human emotion is always hope. It's really hard to run a campaign on hope because hope takes trust and nobody trusts politicians. In 2008 it worked for Obama, but he danced on a head of a pin, and now he could be in trouble. When you get into these inspirational values, it resonates because it's hopeful. Madison Avenue ads totally touch into that."

A Republican also commented on what he saw as the unnerving power of the 2008 Obama campaign:

> "I used to say to my Democratic friends that Obama terrified me because [Republicans] have no answer to that politically. We can't fill a stadium and make people cry. That guy or gal cannot be made for us. That was terrifying from a political standpoint. That's not a candidate, that's a movement … that campaign was masterful. People were tired of being scared in 2008, going through the airport, getting prodded, worrying about bombs, worrying about the economy. So Obama said 'let's quit being scared, let's stop giving everything to all of the rich people.' People thought 'He's for me.'"

The consultants say that hopeful campaigns rarely work because people don't trust politicians. Ironically, consultants have the largest role in promoting the use of negative strategies in politics, which likely contributes to voters expecting the worst from politicians and their campaigns.

Conclusion

Political consultants believe that American voters are polarized into two partisan camps, with very few voters who are truly Independent. They view partisanship as a powerful force that not only structures voting decisions, but also affects enthusiasm for turning out to vote. More importantly, they also believe that partisanship provides the foundation for a unique worldview that affects how voters understand the political world. The partisan worldview is characterized by group loyalty and competition, perceptions of inequality, political values, and economic security. The consultants work to manipulate the images of candidates with the goal of making opposing candidates appear threatening to the worldview of their own voters, and to make their own candidates appear non-threatening to opposing voters. The existence of the worldview is a given to these consultants, and the challenge in any given election is to manage how powerful the worldview is in mobilizing voters, given prevailing national conditions.

This is what consultants believe, but are they right? Consultants are on the front lines of deciding campaign strategy, so the lessons they have learned from trying to persuade and mobilize voters are rooted in real experience. However, the beliefs consultants have about voters may be colored by their own ideological extremism, such that they ascribe their own political views to the voters they seek to influence.

The debate over polarization in political science provides two conflicting perspectives about whether political elites are in line or out of touch with the American electorate. On the one hand, scholars like Fiorina and Levendusky find no evidence of mass polarization and claim that political elites have lost touch with a more moderate electorate. They say, “While systematic evidence indicates that American politics as conducted by the political class is increasingly polarized, the evidence also suggests that this development is not simply a reflection of an increasingly polarized electorate. The result is a disconnect between the American people and those who purport to represent them" (2006). On the other side of this debate, scholars like Abramowitz find clear evidence of mass polarization. He says, "there is no disconnect between the political elite and the American people. Polarization in Washington reflects polarization within the public" (Abramowitz 2010).

Rather than trying to settle this debate, I have argued in this paper that it is useful to look more carefully at how political elites strategize their communication with voters. Knowing that consultants believe in this polarized partisan worldview, we can look more closely for these themes in campaign ads, with a goal of teasing out the effects these ads have in the electorate. Political psychologists who create ads to use in the laboratory should make note of these themes that are present in campaign ads – the images and sounds that try to evoke worldview consistency or threat. Scholars of mass communication may also find it useful to look for media effects in different areas. For example, how do campaigns affect the voter's feeling that a candidate "cares about" people like him? Does that feeling have any real bearing on vote choice?

One factor that I did not consider in this paper, but likely has bearing on campaign strategy related to worldview threat, is whether a given election is an open-seat or a challenger-incumbent scenario. In their analysis of campaign website content, Druckman, Kifer and Parkin find that challengers are more likely to accentuate partisan themes, even when they are running in districts where a majority of voters aligns with the other party. Incumbents are less likely to produce campaign content that uses partisan themes (2009).

This effect may be influenced by the wide range of quality and seriousness of the candidacies of challengers.

Another area that is ripe for exploration is whether the goal of worldview threat is mobilization or persuasion. The answer to that question could pertain to another debate in political science, which is whether or not negative ads increase or decrease turnout (see, e.g. Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Freedman and Goldstein 1999).

One of my interview respondents told me that "campaigns aren't about candidates, they're about the voters." She was suggesting that candidates sometimes need to be reminded to listen to where voters are, and communicate with them at that level. My goal with this paper has been to deliver the opposite message to scholars of political behavior – sometimes it's not just about the voters, and we need to look more closely at the political elites who work strategically to influence public opinion. In this paper, I have shown that looking at consultant strategy, and even interviewing consultants directly, is possible and can provide a rich area for understanding more about key debates in political science. Consultants should attract more inquiry from political scientists who want to gain more theoretical traction on voter behavior, campaigns, and elections.

CHAPTER 3 – The Impact of Racial Context on Prejudice in the Urban Environment

Abstract

Racial segregation in the United States is one of the most entrenched policy problems of the 20th Century. Social scientists who study the effects of segregation on racial prejudice have divided into two camps, offering conflicting theories about how out-group proximity affects the racial attitudes of white and black Americans. Scholars who approach this question from the racial contact perspective claim that inter-personal interactions between members of disparate racial groups can ameliorate the effects of prejudice. Scholars in the group threat tradition, however, argue that the presence of sizable minority groups in an area threatens members of the dominant group, thereby increasing racial tensions. In this paper, I use insights from urban migration and settlement patterns of the last half-century to provide a theoretical understanding for how different geographic levels can be meaningful to individuals who live in metro areas. I find that whites who live in racially diverse zip codes are less likely to be racially prejudiced, while whites who live in homogenous zip codes will be more prejudiced as the size of the black population in their metro area increases. Both of these results conform with expectations generated by the history of urban racial development over the past century.

Introduction

Recent research in political science has highlighted the impact that geography has in shaping political attitudes. One recent study showed that anti-immigrant sentiment in an area can harden when an influx of immigrants is accompanied by national elite politicization of the immigration issue (Hopkins 2010). Another study showed that people who live in rural areas can develop a place-based identity that is connected to their sense of economic deprivation relative to residents of neighboring cities (Cramer 2012). And I have shown in a separate paper that the interplay between voter attitudes in an area, and the unique characteristics of the area itself, can affect the ways in which elites engage and politicize certain issues (Dale-Riddle 2014).

While scholars have made advances in understanding and measuring the importance of geography as an influence on political behavior, political scientists still have very little understanding of how and why geographic places become politically meaningful to individuals. In this paper, I argue that social groups can help us understand the impact of geography on individual attitudes. The significance of social groups in shaping social life has been long-documented by social scientists. Social groups provide individuals with social attachments and identity, and provide useful informational shortcuts about how to understand the world around them (Sherif et al 1961, Tajfel 1982, Lazarsfeld et al 1944; Campbell et al 1960). Geography interacts with social groups because of the way that human settlement patterns structure and define social group interactions. Legal boundaries, infrastructure developments, and housing arrangements shape and constrain the way individuals and groups interact and contest for power in an area.

One of the most pervasive group-based geographic conflicts in the United States is racial segregation. Physical segregation between the races is rampant in cities and is partly responsible for stark inequalities between whites and blacks in income, health and educational attainment (Massey and Denton 1998). Segregation has also been a particular focal point for scholars seeking to understand how proximity to out-groups can ameliorate or exacerbate racial prejudice, which is among the most powerful forces in shaping political attitudes in American public opinion (Sears 1993; Kinder and Sanders 1996).

Scholars across the fields of political science, sociology, and psychology have sought to explain the connection between prejudice and racial-group proximity. There are two perspectives in this literature that offer conflicting evidence on the impact of racial proximity on prejudice. On the one hand, the racial contact literature suggests that constructive contact and engagement between members of different groups can have positive effects on reducing prejudice. While results on this theory have been mixed, the empirical findings generally support the positive benefits of racial group contact on reducing racial prejudice (Dixon 2006; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Sigelman et al 1996). On the other hand, the power threat or group conflict theories suggest that the presence of a sizable minority group in an area can cause feelings of tension or threat among members of the majority group. Again, a robust literature provides empirical support for this finding as it applies to race in the United States (Taylor 1998; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989).

In this paper, I suggest that we must look more closely at the geographic nuances of American cities to understand how these findings can both be true, and how both findings help to understand racial politics in the 21st Century.

Racial Contact and Group Threat

Racial contact theory emerged in the wake of World War II, and was most succinctly summarized by the theorist Gordon Allport. He argued that constructive interpersonal contact between opposing but proximate groups can have benefits in reducing prejudice. Allport specified four conditions that he believed were necessary for positive contact to occur. Those conditions are: common goals; cooperation; equal group status within the context of the interaction; and supportive rules or laws (Allport 1954).

When these conditions are met, the racial contact theory has shown that cross-racial interactions can be effective at reducing prejudice. Scholars have evaluated the racial contact theory through the use of observational data, asking respondents about the extent of their contact with members of other races, and then looking for the relationship between those contacts and corresponding levels of racial prejudice. Results from these studies suggest that friendships or acquaintanceships across racial or ethnic lines are related to a reduction of prejudice (Jackman and Crane 1986; McLaren 2003; Powers and Ellison 1995; Sigelman and Welch 1993). Generic inter-personal contact has also been shown to reduce white prejudice against blacks and Latinos (Yancey 1999; Dixon and Rosenbaum 2004).

The context for these interactions is important. Equal economic status helps to reduce white prejudice against blacks (Jackman and Crane 1986). And cooperative experiences in schools are also associated with reductions in prejudice among kids (Pettigrew 1998). Some research on contact has also shown that there may be improved power to the racial contact theory over time (Sigelman et al 1996).

The mechanism through with contact is theorized to work is based on two steps. The first is that racial proximity increases the opportunity for interaction between members of different groups. The second step is that the positive information obtained from these interactions can supplant negative associations or assumptions that an individual may have acquired through media messages or the socialization process. This second premise rests upon an assumption that the new information will be more meaningful because it is gained directly, and through personal experience (Sigelman et al. 1996).

There are two major criticisms of the racial contact literature. The first has to do with the artificiality of the contexts under which contact can produce positive benefits. It is somewhat unrealistic to expect cross-racial interaction to take place in the real world under such strict conditions of equality and cooperation.

The second criticism has to do with the self-selection process that is required for the observation of these results in the field. An individual that seeks out cross-racial friendships or interactions is likely to be less prejudicial than the average person. Similarly, individuals who do not have cross-racial interactions may be avoiding those interactions because of their higher levels of racial prejudice. Scholars have attempted to control for this problem of reverse causality through statistical methods, and also through the selection of research sites where choice for participation is limited. This has included studies of the merchant marines, police, and public housing (Pettigrew 1998).

In contrast to the racial contact theory, the “power threat” theory in sociology and the “realistic group conflict” theory in social psychology were created to explain how group conflict affects individual attitudes and real policy outcomes. Early proponents of these group conflict theories suggested that when social groups hold goals that are in conflict with each other, or are in zero-sum competition over resources, out-group hostility will become a by-product of that competition (Blumer 1958; Sherif et al 1961).

These theories see racial and ethnic groups, in particular, as “participants in ongoing competition for control of economic, political, and social structures” (Giles and Evans 1986). In his ethnography of the American South, V.O. Key applied the logic of group conflict theories to understanding patterns of white racial animosity. Key observed that whites were most hardened against racial equality in areas where the black population was the highest. Key postulated that this was because, in diverse areas, whites had the most to fear from blacks gaining political power (1949).

Dozens of studies have followed in the tradition of Key’s seminal work, with results that provide strong support for the influence of racial context in activating prejudicial attitudes and outcomes. The size of the black population in an area has been shown to increase racially prejudicial attitudes (Pettigrew 1959; Taylor 1998), feelings of threat (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989), support for racially conservative politicians (Giles and Buckner 1993), partisan registration (Giles and Hertz 1994), and racial inequality in housing, income, and education (Blalock 1956; Wilcox and Roof 1978).

While there is a strong empirical connection between racial context and white animosity and inequality, there are methodological disagreements in this literature about several factors. First, these scholars disagree about how to define group threat. Many studies use the size of the black population in an area as a measure for threat (Taylor 1998; Giles and Hertz 1994; Blalock 1956; Giles and Buckner 1993), while others treat percent black as a stimulus to group threat, which should be measured separately (Giles and Evans 1985 and 1986; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989). Scholars in this latter camp suggest that the only way out-group threat can be achieved is if an individual has a clearly defined attachment to their own group (Bobo and Hutchings 1996).

There is also some debate in this literature about the role of southern culture in moderating the effect of racial context. Some studies have argued that percent black only cues racial discrimination and inequality in the South (Blalock 1956; Pettigrew 1959; Wilcox and Roof 1978) where others have argued that it can happen anywhere (Taylor 1998; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989).

A final important disagreement in this literature pertains to the appropriate geographic level for examining the effects of racial context. This literature has used a scattered approach for identifying the most geographically-meaningful level for measuring racial context. Some studies measure the percent black at the state level (Giles and Evans 1985), some measure it at the level of metro area (Frisbie and Neidert 1977; Wilcox and Roof 1978; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989), some measure it at the county or parish level (Pettigrew 1957; Giles and Evans 1986; Giles and Buckner 1993), and other studies measure threat at the town level (Pettigrew 1959).

In spite of these quibbles about how to model and measure racial threat, the vast majority of these studies find positive effects for the impact of the minority population on white prejudice or discrimination. The one study that provides a major asterisk to these findings comes from Oliver and Mendelberg (2000). Their test of the group threat theory improves upon the literature by using nuanced and thoughtful measures for the appropriate geographic level for threat, and for quality demographic controls that might also explain variations in racial prejudice. They determine that the zip code most closely approximates an individual’s neighborhood, and is therefore the location where a person would feel most threatened by a minority presence. They also include the percent black in the metro area to control for the effects of the minority population in the surrounding area.

Using data from the 1991 National Race and Politics Study, Oliver and Mendelberg find that the effects attributed to racial context disappear when zip-code levels of education are used as a control. Because this result undermines a consistent finding in the racial context literature, the Oliver and Mendelberg study is widely cited as the major caveat to the impact of context on racialized attitudes and outcomes (Hopkins 2010; Dixon 2006; Marscshall and Stolle 2004).

Because the Oliver and Mendelberg study relies upon one dataset that was collected in just one year, and because the result stands in such contrast to other studies, their model warrants a careful replication to other datasets and years. I undertake that task in this paper, replicating the Oliver and Mendelberg model in two data sets: the American National Election Studies Cumulative Data File, and the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project survey from 2008. My analysis expands the observations from 1,476 people in 1991 in the Oliver and Mendelberg study to 6,007 in the ANES and 8,084 in the CCAP, across 7 different years.

The statistical model that Oliver and Mendelberg use is optimal in terms of making sensible decisions about measuring context at both the individual and aggregate levels.

As such, it provides a good opportunity for jointly testing the conflicting propositions outlined by the racial contact and threat literatures.

Before getting to that test, I use the next section to address the history of urban racial migration in the past several decades to establish a foundation for understanding how racial context can affect predispositions. Unlike Oliver and Mendelberg, who argue that the zip code is the location that should have the greatest effect on racial attitudes, I argue that both the metro area and the zip code can have joint impacts on racial attitudes.

Urban Migration

As of the 2010 Census, over 90% of the U.S. black population lives in urban areas (U.S. Census). If we are to understand the ways in which the geographic distribution of African Americans affects white racial attitudes, it is important to establish an understanding of urban racial migration and settlement patterns. The history of race and geography in cities is also the history of civil rights, economic growth and industrialization in the 20th Century. Over the past 60 years, several factors have converged to create the conditions for white flight to the suburbs and the formation of Republican and racially conservative communities at the outskirts of major cities.

After World War II, the baby boom began, and middle-class Americans began seeking larger homes outside of urban centers to be able to raise their growing families. During the same period, urban centers were becoming de-industrialized, and factories and corporations were moving to more spacious environs outside of the urban core. The population shift to the suburbs was substantial. As Massey and Denton note, one-third of the residents of metro areas lived in the suburbs in 1940; that increased to a majority of residents living in suburbs by 1970 (1998).

The economic motivation for moving to the suburbs was complimented by a racial motivation for middle class whites who were opposed to integration. Urban desegregation efforts were in full swing by the 1960's, following the Brown vs Board of Education decision in 1954. In his case study of white flight in Atlanta, Kevin Kruse notes that whites initially resisted urban desegregation through attempts at community solidarity and the erection of private segregated schools and institutions. White concerns about integration were rooted in fears of eroding property values and violation of their rights for "free association" (2005). As attempts at resisting integration inside of cities became more futile, whites moved to the suburbs where, as Thomas Sugrue notes:

> Suburban governments often acted as super-neighborhood associations, using their governmental powers to enforce zoning laws that relentlessly excluded low- and moderate-income 'outsiders,' disproportionately people of color. They fiercely resisted intergovernmental cooperation, staunchly defended the age old principle of local control, and relied on local taxes to fund local public works, social services, and de facto private schools (1996).

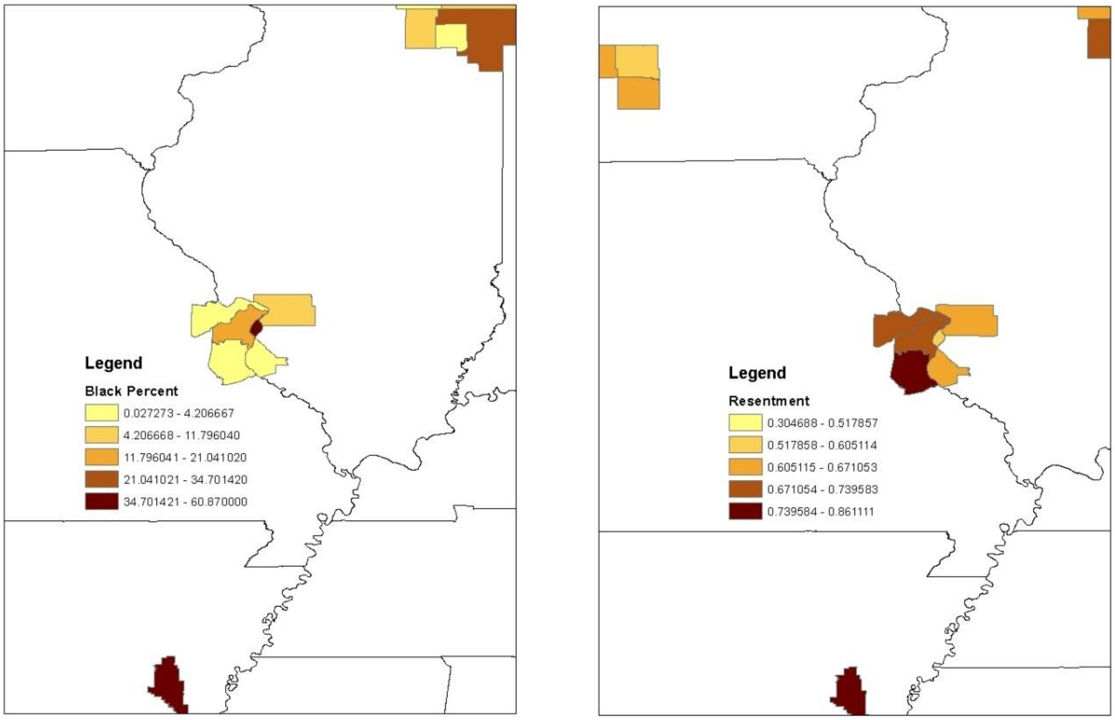
The real estate industry also played a role in reinforcing the de facto segregation that followed white flight into the suburbs. In a survey of real estate agents in the 1960's, Rose Helper found that 80% of realtors refused to sell property to blacks in white neighborhoods, and 68% would also refuse to rent them such property. She also identified dozens of tactics that realtors would use to ensure de facto segregation, including requiring higher security deposits from blacks than whites, and sometimes overtly lying about the availability of apartments that were for rent, to keep black renters out of apartments in white areas (1969).

The federal government enabled white flight through the creation of the federal interstate system in 1956. The creation of the interstate system enabled whites to keep their jobs in urban centers, while moving out to communities that were physically separated from the urban core. Clayton Nall conducts an analysis of how different communities were affected by the creation of the highway system. He uses a matching analysis to examine how counties with interstates differed from those without new highway construction. He finds that the interstates enabled white migration to the suburbs, and that political conservatism predicted which whites chose to leave the urban core (2014).

Analysis from both Kruse and Nall supports the conclusion that white flight was driven by conservative whites who wanted to leave the city. As Kruse notes, the suburban language of property rights and local control was the foundation for the Reagan revolution in the 1980s (2005). Nall concludes that white migration to suburbs resulted in a high level of political polarization within metro areas, with suburbs becoming decidedly conservative (2014).

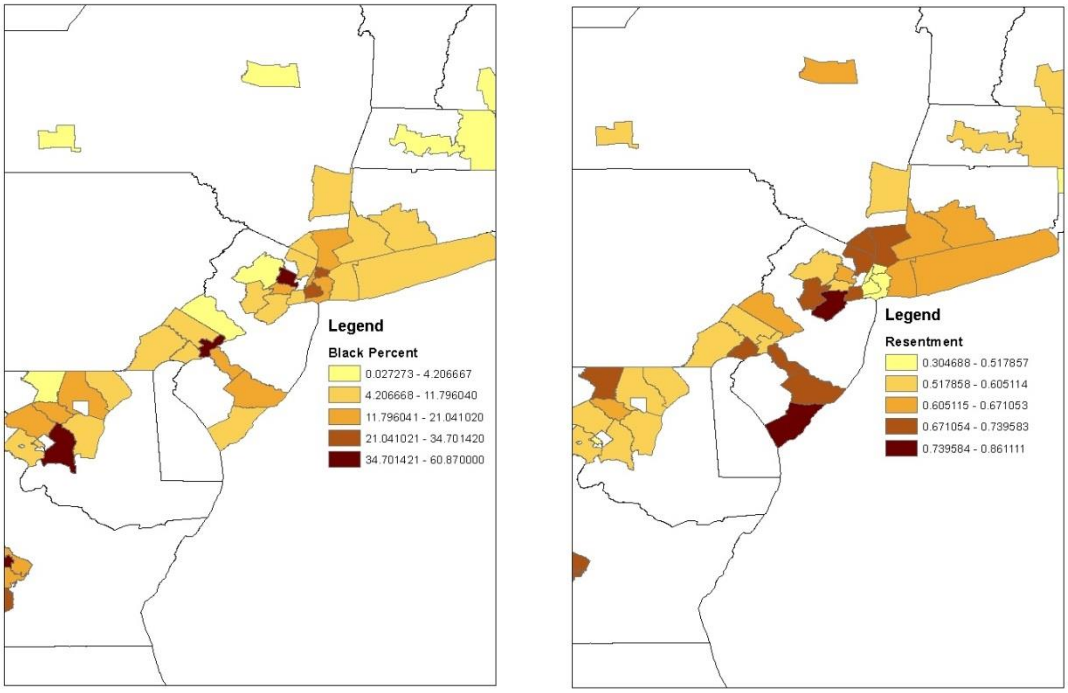
To determine how these findings apply to the distribution of racial attitudes, it is useful to consult a visual presentation of racial attitude distribution outlined by Dale-Riddle and Jardina (2014). In Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2, the image on the left shows the distribution of the black population at the county-level in four major metro areas. The dark shading in each map signifies an uncontroversial finding – that the black population is most concentrated in the urban center of each of these cities. The image on the right reinforces the general implications of white flight: the average resentment level among whites is greatest in counties that are at the outskirts of the city, farthest from the concentrated black population. The white population living in the urban centers appears comparatively racially tolerant, when compared to their suburban counterparts.

Figure 3.1: Percent Black and Racial Resentment in St. Louis, MO


Legend
Black Percent
0.027273 - 4.206667
4.206668 - 11.796040
11.796041 - 21.041020
21.041021 - 34.701420
34.701421 - 60.870000
Legend
Resentment
0.304688 - 0.517857
0.517858 - 0.605114
0.605115 - 0.671053
0.671054 - 0.739583
0.739584 - 0.861111

Source: (Dale-Riddle and Jardina 2014)

Figure 3.2: Percent Black and Racial Resentment in Washington DC/Philadelphia/New York City


Legend
Black Percent
0.027273 - 4.206667
4.206668 - 11.796040
11.796041 - 21.041020
21.041021 - 34.701420
34.701421 - 60.870000
Legend
Resentment
0.304688 - 0.517857
0.517858 - 0.605114
0.605115 - 0.671053
0.671054 - 0.739583
0.739584 - 0.861111

Source: (Dale-Riddle and Jardina 2014)

On the one hand, these images provide support for the racial contact theory: whites who live in urban centers appear to be less racially prejudiced than their peers in suburban and ex-urban areas. However, the racial conservatism of the whites living in these out-lying areas suggests that racial composition at the metro level may be affecting the strength of their racial attitudes. These respondents live in the outskirts of their cities, reflecting broader white-flight patterns. And even though their immediate racial environment is not racially diverse, it appears possible that the racial composition of the metro area still activates racial fears because they are still connected to the city culturally and economically (Avila 2004).

Unifying Theories of Racial Context

The foregoing discussion suggests the need for a unified theory about racial contact and group threat that can account for the intricacies of urban dynamics, along with the different effects attributable to different geographic levels. Racial contact suggests that people who interact with out-groups will have reduced prejudice. That seems sensible, given the maps in the previous section that suggest white people living in urban settings have relatively low levels of prejudice. However, group threat is also useful in explaining how the presence of a minority in a proximate area – one that is politically meaningful – would cause anxiety among white people, even if those white people live in a racially homogenous neighborhood.

The model developed by Oliver and Mendelberg is ideally suited to testing the joint propositions of the racial contact and group threat theories, because it includes measures of racial contact at two levels. For whites, the presence of a black population in their zip code could be associated with reduced levels of prejudice, because the proximity provides opportunities for positive cross-group contact. Based on the findings from the racial contact literature, we can expect a negative and significant relationship between the zip-code level black population and racial prejudice. At the same time, the presence of a sizable minority at the metro level can signify a political threat to whites who are concerned about competition with blacks over resources and political power in their city. The group threat literature suggests that a sizable black population at the metro level should have a positive and significant effect on racial prejudice. The inclusion of both geographic levels in one model allows for an examination of the effect of one level, while controlling for the other.

The concerns about endogeneity that have plagued the racial contact literature could pose a problem for the analysis in this project as well. The fact that some whites choose to live in diverse areas while others do not implies an earlier step than what is captured in this model: the decision about where to live. Sociologists have explored this migration and sorting process through research that seeks to understand the determinants of residential choice. At the aggregate level, scholars have found evidence for racially motivated settlement patterns, by identifying white flight from the urban core to the suburbs of cities (Denton and Massey 1991; Duncan and Duncan 1957; Lee and Wood 1991). However, the aggregate nature of these studies makes it hard to rule out alternative explanations for the demographic patterns of white people relocating out of the urban core. Some scholars have suggested that generic economic and life cycle factors explain the bulk of moving patterns, and that race only plays a minimal part in understanding urban migration, including white flight (Ellen 2000; Frey 1979; Harris 1999).

In an attempt to resolve this disagreement, Crowder and South examine individual-level determinants of white urban out-migration in a panel study from 1980-2003. They find that the size of the minority population in neighboring areas positively predicts white flight to less racially diverse areas. Further, a recent increase in the size of the minority population adds to the likelihood that race will motivate white out-migration (2008).

If we accept that white flight has played at least some role in sorting racial conservatives into suburbs and liberals into the urban core, then the challenge for scholars in the racial context literature is to produce evidence that contact has some effect above and beyond the process of residential choice.

Racial context scholars have accounted for this possibility of selection, and still find effects of racial context on political attitudes (Enos forthcoming; Nall 2014; Pettigrew 1998). I also address this problem in the analysis that follows, attempting to determine whether context matters, even when accounting for residential choice.

Data

To develop a unified theory of racial context, and to replicate the results from the Oliver and Mendelberg paper, I use two sources of data. First, I requested and received access to the American National Election Studies restricted geographic data, which provides the zip code for each individual respondent. I received this data for the years 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2008 (pooled n=6,007). While the ANES data provides temporal breadth, I also use data from the 2008 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project for depth. The larger sample for this survey (n=8,084) provides greater power to complement the models estimated across time with the ANES data.

The dependent variables in this analysis fall into three categories: racial attitudes, partisan orientations, and policy positions. The first group, racial attitudes, includes racial resentment, the difference in warmth an individual feels toward blacks versus whites and, in CCAP, the differences in stereotype evaluations of whites versus blacks.[9] The second category includes a thermometer evaluation of the Republican Party. This variable is included to test the findings from Kruse and Nall that white flight and racial settlement patterns are associated with Republicanism in suburbs.[10] Finally, I include racialized policy variables such as: the respondent's opinion about welfare, affirmative action, crime, the death penalty, and the extent to which the federal government should provide aid to black people. Dependent variables are coded on a 0 to 1 scale, with 1 being the most conservative position. I pool the models across elections from 1994-2008 to identify the policy domains where racial context is consistently salient, regardless of shifting national conditions. To control for the effects unique to each election, I include fixed effects for each election year. [11]

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[9] The warmth variable is constructed by taking the difference of white's thermometer score evaluations from their evaluations of blacks. The variable is coded between -1 and 1 where 1 signifies the largest difference in warmth for whites over blacks. The stereotype measure is constructed from questions about a respondent's belief about how lazy and smart whites and blacks are. The variable is coded between 0 and 1 were 1 signifies that a respondent rated blacks as more lazy and less smart than whites.

The Oliver and Mendelberg model for racial threat makes sensible use of both individual and aggregate variables that can affect racial attitudes, so I use their model as a baseline for determining which independent variables to include. I include two measures of racial context in an area. The first is the percent of the total population in the respondent's zip code that is black. The second measure provides the percent of the total population in the respondent's metro area that is black. Following Oliver and Mendelberg, this variable is coded into dummy variables where High Black Metro takes the value of 1 where the black population is above 16 percent and a 0 otherwise. Medium

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[10] I use racial attitudes and partisan orientations as a dependent variable with caution. Scholars have argued that that these predispositions are formed as the result of a socialization process that includes contributions from parental, demographic, and group-based forces to an attitude that is meant to understand the social world (Sears 1993; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Campbell et al 1960). Therefore, it is unlikely that this racial context model can appropriately capture the extent of factors that go into forming these attitudes. Rather, the goal here is to identify relationships between these powerful attitudes and the geographic factors influencing individual voters.

[11] In most cases, 1994 is the omitted reference year. Where data was not available for 1994, 1996 was the omitted year. Missing values for a year indicate that the survey question was not available on the ANES for that year.

Black Metro takes a value of 1 if the black population is between 7 percent and 16 percent, and 0 otherwise. The omitted reference group is Low Black Metro which consists of metro areas with less than 7 percent. The Rural dummy variable is coded to include all areas that are not part of incorporated metro areas.[12]

Other aggregate-level variables are education and region. Again following Oliver and Mendelberg, Zip-level Education is a measure of the percent of people in the respondent's zip code who have completed a college degree. The region variable is a dummy that takes on the value of 1 if a respondent lives in a southern state, and is otherwise 0. I use the Census region categories to define which states are in the South.

At the individual level, I include a second variable for education, which is a categorical variable to reflect the level of education attained by the respondent. Other individual-level variables include income level, age, gender, partisan affiliation (measured with dummy variables, and with Democrat as the omitted group), and the respondent's length of residence in their current location. These models are estimated on non-hispanic whites.

Results

The first model I estimate is a near-exact replication of the OLS model offered by Oliver and Mendelberg in their 2000 article. Their analysis, which fueled the conclusion that racial context is subordinate to demographic variables as an influence on racial attitudes, failed to find statistical significance for racial context at either the zip or metro level. Instead, they find that education at both the zip and individual level has a strong and negative effect on racial attitudes. As we see in Table 3.1, that is not the case here. Percent black in the metro area has a strong and consistently positive effect on conservative racial attitudes; as the percent black in a metro area goes up, so does the level of conservatism in racial attitudes.

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[12] Oliver and Mendelberg do not provide theoretical justification for the specific cut-points they use for defining these dummy variables. Because some research suggests that the black percent variable can be non-linear (Giles and Evans 1986), I proceed with this approach in my initial model specification.

The effect of percent black at the zip code level is somewhat more nuanced. The sign on the coefficient is negative in most cases, which is consistent with a unified theory of racial context, and in some cases that effect is statistically significant. One caveat to this finding is in the crime model. There, the effect of black percent in the zip code is positive and significant. This suggests that even though some whites can feel comfortable living with black people in their zip code, and that there are remedying effects of this contact on broader measures of racial prejudice, whites may still be fearful around safety issues and will therefore support increased spending on crime.

Table 3.1: Racial Context at the Zip Code Level, with Metro Area Dummy Variables, 1994-2008

	(1) Resentment	(2) BW Therm Diff	(3) GOP Party Therm	(4) Aid to Blacks	(5) Welfare	(6) Affirm-ative Action	(7) Crime
Black Pct Zip	-0.02	-0.02	-0.07**	0.01	0.03	-0.08**	0.07**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
High Black Metro	0.05***	0.02***	0.03***	0.03***	0.01	0.04***	0.04***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Med Black Metro	0.03***	0.02**	0.01	0.02***	0.03***	0.02**	0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education Zip	-0.32***	-0.07**	-0.13***	-0.19***	-0.21***	-0.18***	-0.10*
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Rural	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.03*	0.02	0.01	-0.06***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
South	0.04***	0.02***	0.06***	0.03***	0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education (I)	-0.18***	-0.09***	-0.03**	-0.13***	-0.01	-0.01	-0.12***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Income (I)	0.04***	-0.02**	0.10***	0.08***	0.18***	0.10***	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Age (I)	0.01	0.08***	0.04**	-0.03	0.03	-0.01	-0.07***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Residence (I)	0.05***	0.03**	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.04*	0.06***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Female (I)	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01*	-0.02***	-0.04***	0.01	0.05***
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republican (I)	0.13***	0.02***		0.15***	0.17***	0.10***	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Independent (I)	0.08***	0.01		0.06***	0.06***	0.07***	-0.03*
	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y1996	-0.02*	-0.02***	-0.03***	0.02**	0.05***	-0.00	-0.03**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y1998	0.06***	-0.06***	-0.06***	-0.04***		-0.01	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	
y2000	0.02**	-0.02**	-0.02**	0.02	-0.08***	0.01	-0.04***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y2002		0.00	0.00				
		(0.00)	(0.00)				
y2004	0.01	-0.05***	-0.02*	0.00	-0.16***	-0.02	-0.03**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y2008	0.03***	-0.03***	-0.08***	0.06***	-0.15***	0.00	-0.06***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	0.65***	0.12***	0.52***	0.63***	0.58***	0.76***	0.90***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	5,059	5,479	6,007	5,145	5,201	5,501	5,219

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; Source: National Election Studies; Census

Table 3.2: Racial Context at the Zip Code Level, with Continuous Metro Area Variable, 1994-2008

	(1) Resentment	(2) BW Therm Diff	(3) GOP Party Therm	(4) Aid to Blacks	(5) Welfare	(6) Affirm-ative Action	(7) Crime
Black Pct Zip	-0.06**	-0.05**	-0.12***	-0.04	0.00	-0.11***	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Black Pct Metro	0.31***	0.15***	0.23***	0.23***	0.13*	0.22***	0.24***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Education Zip	-0.32***	-0.08**	-0.15***	-0.19***	-0.21***	-0.18***	-0.10*
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
South	0.02***	0.02***	0.05***	0.02*	-0.01	0.00	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education (I)	-0.18***	-0.09***	-0.03**	-0.13***	-0.02	-0.01	-0.13***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Income (I)	0.04***	-0.03***	0.09***	0.07***	0.18***	0.09***	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age (I)	0.00	0.08***	0.03**	-0.04*	0.03	-0.02	-0.07***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Residence (I)	0.05***	0.03*	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.04*	0.06***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Female (I)	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02***	-0.04***	0.01	0.05***
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republican (I)	0.13***	0.03***		0.15***	0.17***	0.10***	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Independent (I)	0.08***	0.00		0.06***	0.07***	0.06***	-0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y1996	-0.02*	-0.02***	-0.03***	0.02**	0.06***	-0.00	-0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y1998	0.06***	-0.06***	-0.06***	-0.04***		-0.01	
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	
y2000	0.02*	-0.02**	-0.02**	0.02	-0.07***	0.01	-0.04***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y2002		0.00	0.00				
		(0.00)	(0.00)				
y2004	0.01	-0.06***	-0.02**	-0.00	-0.15***	-0.02	-0.03**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
y2008	0.03***	-0.03***	-0.08***	0.06***	-0.14***	0.00	-0.06***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	0.65***	0.12***	0.52***	0.63***	0.58***	0.76***	0.90***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	4,821	5,178	5,691	4,881	4,906	5,197	4,927

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: American National Election Studies; U.S. Census

There appears to be no evidence of a non-linear effect for the percent black in the metro area – the High Black Metro variables and the Medium Black Metro variables are all consistently positive. Because the cut-points for these variables appear to be defined somewhat arbitrarily by Oliver and Mendelberg, I re-estimate this model with a continuous variable for percent black in the metro area. The goal of this exercise is to see if this improves the precision of the estimates.[13] The results are presented in Table 3.2. Black percent in the metro area is clearly positive and significant in each model, which reinforces the group threat theory – the level of blacks in the metro area constitutes a threat to white respondents, even when controlling for the level of the black population in the proximate zip code area. The estimates for the effect of the black percent in the zip code do, in fact, become more precise with this new continuous measure at the metro level. We see now that zip level black percent is now more consistently negative and significant, suggesting that whites who live in more diverse neighborhoods have more racially liberal attitudes.

Table 3.3 provides the results for this same model, estimated in the CCAP data. CCAP provides two additional dependent variables that were not available in the previous analysis. One new variable is a measure of racial attitudes: the difference in evaluations of white versus black stereotypes. And one is a policy variable: support for the death penalty. The Race in Admissions variable is similar to the Affirmative Action variable in the previous analysis, but applies to the specific example of using race as a factor in college admissions. The CCAP data nearly doubles the sample in some models, improving the estimates for the coefficients.

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[13] One downside of this approach is that respondents who live in rural areas are excluded. There are not good measures of urbanity in these surveys, so the rural variable is defined by a respondent's absence from being in an incorporated metro area. It was possible to keep rural respondents in with dummy variables, but that is not possible when using percent black in the metro area. The sample lost (n=600) is worth the gain in precision from using the continuous variable.

We see the same pattern in the CCAP data as we saw with ANES: black percent in the metro area has a positive and significant effect on increasing racial conservatism. Meanwhile, just as we saw before, black percent in the zip code is associated with lower levels of racial conservatism, across all categories of dependent variables.

One interesting exception to this pattern is in the stereotypes model. Percent black in the metro area is associated with more conservative attitudes on stereotypes. But percent black in the zip code does not seem to have the same beneficial effects on reducing racial conservatism that it had with other variables. This result may be consistent with the positive coefficient for crime spending in the ANES models; individuals who elect to live in areas with a high black population may still have stereotypes about that population as being lazy, or even more prone to commit crimes. This gives us some evidence that the casual racial attitudes and stereotypes may be more stubborn to being updated by racial contact than the global feelings about racial prejudice.

Table 3.3: Racial Context Model in CCAP Data, 2008

	(1) Resentment	(2) Stereotype Difference	(3) Race in Admissions	(4) Death Penalty	(5) Welfare
Black Pct Zip	-0.13***	0.01	-0.09***	-0.23***	-0.08*
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Black Pct MSA	0.27***	0.10***	0.07*	0.20***	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Education Zip	-0.32***	-0.06***	-0.15***	-0.37***	-0.11**
	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)
South	0.02***	-0.00	0.01**	0.03***	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education (I)	-0.17***	-0.05***	-0.15***	-0.25***	-0.07***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Income (I)	0.04***	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.22***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age (I)	0.03	0.01	-0.03*	0.04	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Female (I)	-0.02***	-0.02***	0.02***	-0.04***	-0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Republican (I)	0.24***	0.03***	0.13***	0.24***	0.36***
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Independent (I)	0.10***	0.01	0.09***	0.08***	0.19***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.64***	0.58***	0.90***	0.71***	0.41***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	8,084	7,666	7,872	7,803	7,772

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Source: Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project; U.S. Census

These results from 2008 could prompt some skepticism, given that they were collected under the unique circumstances of an election where the first African-American President was elected. To ensure that these results aren't being driven by a heightened awareness of race in 2008, I exclude that year from the pooled ANES model and find that the results are substantively unchanged. The direction of the coefficients is the same, with some reduction in statistical significance that occurs, due primarily to the reduced sample that results from excluding the 2008 respondents.

To further explore the potentially unique effects associated with the 2008 election, I estimate a final set of models with two dependent variables specific to Obama from the CCAP data. The first is a binary variable that indicates whether a respondent believes that blacks will be favored by Obama. The variable is coded 1 if the respondent believes Obama will favor blacks, and 0 if not. The second variable is a binary vote variable that has a value of 1 if the respondent voted for McCain and 0 if the respondent voted for Obama.

The results of these two logit models are reported in Table 3.4. The racial context variables of black percent at the zip and metro levels do very little to explain these dependent variables. While the other control variables remain the same as they did in previous models, these context variables do not exhibit the same direction or power that they did previously.

It is somewhat puzzling why these context variables are so powerful in evaluating racial prejudice, but have no traction in explaining evaluations of Obama and voting behavior.[14] It could be because partisanship captures a lot of the variation when it comes to evaluating specific political figures. In the "funnel of causality" offered by the authors of *The American Voter*, partisanship is among the most proximate predictors of vote choice, while factors like racial context would be more distant causes of political behavior (Campbell et al. 1960). Another explanation for these results is that context might not be useful in predicting behavior, while it can be useful in predicting attitudes.

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[14] Models with vote choice as a DV that are estimated in the ANES data show similarly null results.

Table 3.4: Racial Context Model with 2008 Election Dependent Variables

	(1) Obama Favors Blacks	(2) McCain Vote
Black Pct Zip	0.05 (0.33)	-0.06 (0.53)
Black Pct MSA	0.36 (0.43)	-0.43 (0.67)
Education Zip	-0.80** (0.40)	-1.87*** (0.57)
South	0.27*** (0.08)	0.46*** (0.10)
Education (I)	-0.31** (0.14)	-0.67*** (0.22)
Income (I)	-0.12 (0.14)	-0.07 (0.18)
Age (I)	0.24 (0.21)	1.22*** (0.30)
Female (I)	-0.10 (0.07)	-0.07 (0.09)
Republican (I)	1.69*** (0.07)	4.47*** (0.11)
Independent (I)	0.36*** (0.12)	1.73*** (0.13)
Constant	-0.29* (0.15)	-1.83*** (0.21)
Observations	7,719	8,117

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Source: Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project; U.S. Census

While it seems clear that there is a consistent relationship between racial attitudes and the black percent at the zip code and metro levels, it is also useful to look at specific metro areas for an interpretation of how to understand these results. Table 3.5 lists each metro area in the dataset for which there are 15 or more respondents in both the urban and suburban parts of the city. Each metro area is split into two regions: the county that comprises the urban core of the city, and the surrounding counties that make up the rest of the metro area. The urban county is defined as the county for which each city is the county seat. For example, the urban county in Chicago is Cook County; in Seattle it is

King County. In many cities, the city limits directly correspond to the boundaries of the urban county. Values for the "suburban counties" are found by taking an average of all remaining counties that the census defines as being part of the metropolitan statistical area for that city.

Table 3.5: White Racial Resentment by Type of County in Metro Area

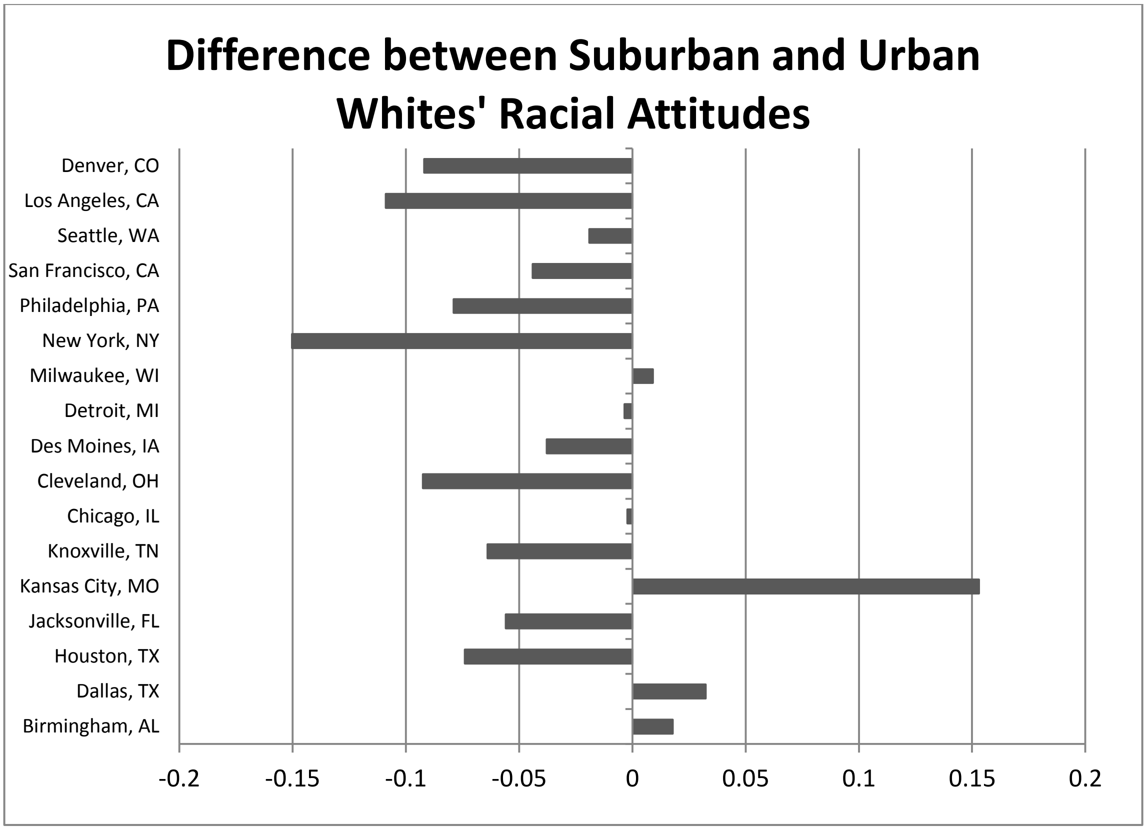
	Suburban Counties			Urban County			Urban - Suburban
	N size	% Black	Mean Resentment	N size	% Black	Mean Resentment	
Birmingham, AL	57	7.6%	0.74	26	39.4%	0.76	0.02
Dallas, TX	48	9.9%	0.64	34	20.3%	0.67	0.03
Houston, TX	37	16.2%	0.73	59	18.5%	0.66	-0.07
Jacksonville, FL	62	6.8%	0.73	68	27.8%	0.67	-0.06
Kansas City, MO	30	4.9%	0.49	25	23.3%	0.65	0.15
Knoxville, TN	24	3.1%	0.68	51	8.6%	0.62	-0.06
Chicago, IL	47	3.7%	0.63	66	26.1%	0.63	0.00
Cleveland, OH	23	2.1%	0.72	30	27.4%	0.63	-0.09
Des Moines, IA	25	0.5%	0.63	55	4.8%	0.59	-0.04
Detroit, MI	70	4.5%	0.67	44	42.2%	0.67	0.00
Milwaukee, WI	35	0.7%	0.68	105	24.6%	0.68	0.01
New York, NY	182	19.3%	0.63	15	17.4%	0.48	-0.15
Philadelphia, PA	66	11.0%	0.66	19	43.2%	0.58	-0.08
San Francisco, CA	33	9.3%	0.45	35	7.8%	0.41	-0.04
Seattle, WA	43	4.6%	0.61	84	5.4%	0.59	-0.02
Los Angeles, CA	72	1.7%	0.68	68	9.8%	0.57	-0.11
Denver, CO	84	2.5%	0.64	32	11.1%	0.55	-0.09

Source: American National Election Studies; U.S. Census

As is visible in Table 3.5, the black population is much higher in the urban counties than the average black population in the remaining counties. Nevertheless, we see that the mean level of racial resentment among white respondents in urban counties is generally much lower than it is in the outlying areas. The right-most column of the table provides the difference between the average resentment level of urban and suburban respondents. When the number is negative, it means that urban respondents are less racially conservative than suburban respondents. Positive values indicate that urban respondents are more racially conservative than their suburban counterparts.

Figure 3.3 provides a graphical representation of this measure of the difference between urban and suburban respondents. This chart shows the difference in average racial resentment levels between white people who live in the urban core and people who live in the surrounding counties. High negative values mean that the white respondents in the inner city are less racist than the suburbs. High positive values mean white respondents in the core are more racist than respondents from the suburbs.

Figure 3.3: White Resentment in Urban and Suburban Counties



Source: American National Election Studies; U.S. Census

In general, white respondents in the urban core are much less racist than respondents in the outlying counties. The racial resentment variable ranges from 0 to 1, so a difference of .1 reflects a 10 percentage point change in racial resentment. In cities like Denver, Los Angeles, and Cleveland, that means that the average white respondent in the urban core is 10 percentage points less racist than their peers in the outlying areas.

There does not appear to be any differences in this pattern between cities that are located in the Northeast, the Northern Midwest, or in the West. Cities in the South, which are situated at the bottom of the chart, appear to behave somewhat differently. The difference between urban and suburban whites is somewhat smaller than it is in other regions and in some cases urban whites are actually more racially conservative. This could be due in part to the unique history of racial divisions in the South, though these regional differences are not substantial enough to change the overall results when controlled for in the statistical analysis.

The clear outlier is Kansas City. What is unique there? Referring back to Table 3.5, it appears as though the resentment levels for the urban county are comparable with other cities. But the resentment levels in the suburban counties are much lower than they are in other cities. The two counties represented in the suburban data are Johnson County, KS, and Clay County, MO. Most of the suburban respondents (n=24) are from Johnson County, which is the most affluent county in Kansas. Perhaps more importantly when it comes to moderating racial attitudes, Johnson County boasts an education level that is far higher than the average white respondent in the ANES sample (0.76 on a 0 to 1 scale in Johnson County, compared to 0.63 for all whites nationally). While Johnson County is Republican, it is decidedly moderate, particularly on social issues.

In general, the forgoing analysis suggests that whites who live in the urban core are less racially conservative than their suburban counterparts. The fact that they live in the closest proximity to a city's black population may be an argument for the racial contact hypothesis. But it also might suggest that whites select into their physical environment based in part on their racial attitudes.

One way to evaluate the sorting vs contact question is to re-estimate the model from Table 3.2, but to split the sample so that we are looking only at people who have not moved over the course of their lifetime. The ANES asks a question about how long a respondent has lived in his or her community. I limited the sample to individuals who indicated either that they had lived in the same place for their entire life, or have not moved for the past 54 years. This ensures that the sample includes only people who have lived in the same place since 1954, which is when white flight started in earnest following the Brown vs. Board of Education decision.

The results from this analysis are reported in Table 3.6. We see that the direction of the coefficients is the same as they were in the analysis for the full sample: Black Percent Zip has a negative effect on racial conservatism, while Black Percent Metro has a positive effect. The coefficients are less reliably significant in this analysis, likely do to the much smaller sample size.

Table 3.6: Core Models Estimated on Non-Migrating Sample

	(1) Resentment	(2) BW Therm Diff	(3) GOP Party Therm	(4) Aid to Blacks	(5) Welfare	(6) Affirm-ative Action	(7) Crime
Black Pct Zip	-0.01	-0.17***	-0.16**	-0.05	-0.10	-0.19*	0.15**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.07)
Black Pct Metro	0.32***	0.13	0.13	0.22	0.24	0.30**	0.05
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.18)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Education Zip	-0.37***	-0.24**	0.08	-0.01	-0.49**	-0.26	-0.03
	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.16)
South	0.02	0.02	0.07***	0.01	-0.06*	-0.05*	-0.04
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Education (I)	-0.08**	-0.02	-0.01	-0.12***	0.01	0.05	-0.08*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Income (I)	0.04	-0.01	0.05	0.06	0.22***	0.10**	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Age (I)	0.03	0.16***	0.06*	0.01	0.09	0.01	-0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Female (I)	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03	-0.03	0.02	0.05**	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Republican (I)	0.06***	-0.01		0.10***	0.17***	0.06***	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Independent (I)	0.02	-0.01		0.00	0.06	0.00	-0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)		(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
y1996	-0.04	-0.04**	-0.04*	0.03	0.08**	-0.02	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
y1998	0.02	-0.09***	-0.08***	-0.10***		-0.08**	
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)		(0.03)	
y2000	-0.01	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	-0.06**	-0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
y2002		0.00	0.00				
		(0.00)	(0.00)				
y2004	-0.02	-0.09**	-0.06	0.05	-0.10*	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.04)
y2008	-0.01	-0.04	-0.06**	0.05	-0.07	-0.04	-0.06**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.67***	0.11***	0.52***	0.64***	0.49***	0.78***	0.88***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Observations	657	695	750	650	653	699	658

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Source: American National Election Studies; U.S. Census

This analysis suggests that racial context plays some role in shaping racial attitudes. Individuals who have not sorted themselves into living arrangements through residential choice still show signs of the main effect: higher levels of a black population in the metro area lead to more conservatism, while living amongst black people in one's own zip code leads to more racial liberalism. While not ruling out white flight as a factor that influences the geographic distribution of white racial attitudes in the aggregate, these results indicate that context also plays a role in shaping racial attitudes.

Conclusion

The conclusion we can draw from this analysis is that racial context can have a powerful, but nuanced, effect on voter attitudes. Consistent with the racial contact literature, I find that whites who live in zip codes with a larger black population are less prejudiced. They are also less likely to feel close to the Republican Party, and are less likely to take conservative positions on racialized policy issues. While whites who live in racially diverse areas are likely to be more liberal on racial prejudice and policy, their proximity to blacks does not affect their propensity to hold negative stereotypes about blacks, or to favor increased spending on crime.

The effect of black percent in the metro area is consistent with findings in the group threat literature. As the black percent in the metro area increases, so does the racial prejudice among white people. Controlling for the effects of local diversity, white respondents who live in metro areas with a large black population will be more conservative in their racial attitudes, more likely to identify with the Republican Party, and more likely to take conservative positions on policy issues dealing with race.

These findings are consistent with white flight and the history of modern cities. Rather than face integration of their neighborhoods, white people moved out of urban centers in the 1960s and 1970s, and used the language of local control to build racially homogenous communities, while still maintaining a reliance on the broader metro area for economic and cultural enrichment.

The contrasting effects between the zip-code and metro-area level demonstrates that scholars concerned with racial context should be cautious with how they model these effects in the electorate. These results suggest that scholars would be wise to take into account the development of urban settlement patterns, and how different geographic levels can take on different meaning for individual voters.

These results also demonstrate that the results presented in the Oliver and Mendelberg paper, which are so often cited as problematic for group threat theory, do not hold up when replicated in a larger dataset across multiple years. To be sure, the Oliver and Mendelberg results are still useful in drawing attention to the importance of demographic variables in shaping racial attitudes. But their conclusion that those factors supplant racial context in importance do not bear out under replication.

The potential for selection effects to explain these results is something that would be fruitful to continue to explore in future research. This paper showed that the main results still hold when the model is estimated on individuals who had not experienced residential choice. However, the residential-choice decision should be modeled more explicitly, because it could be an important pre-cursor to the racial context effects we see here.

Additionally, it would be useful to examine the regional differences in these effects across the United States. The settlement patterns that I describe in this paper, particularly with respect to white flight, most closely describe the urban development of former-industrial cities in the northeast and mid-west. Although the effects reported here are not moderated by north-south divisions, there is reason to believe that the patterns of segregation and suburbanization are not consistent in all parts of the U.S. In the spirit of embracing geographic nuances as I have argued for here, future research could continue to refine the analysis presented here by accounting for regional variation.

CHAPTER 4 - Playing with Prejudice: How Political Geography Affects Campaign Strategies to Invoke Social Group Animosity

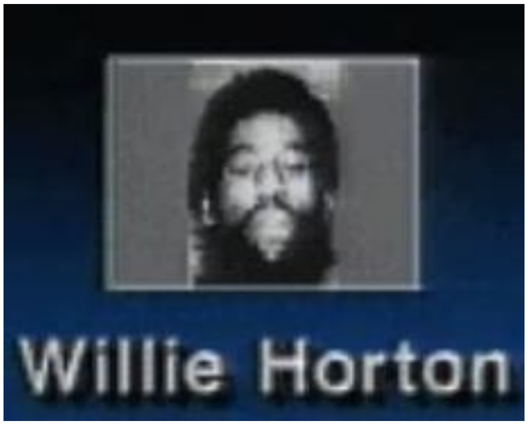
Abstract

Research on racial priming has found that implicit racial themes in campaign ads affect voters by making racial attitudes mentally accessible. Although this finding has been replicated numerous times in the laboratory, a weakness of this literature is that the accessibility mechanism has not been evaluated in real campaign ads out in the field. My project remedies this oversight by testing the theoretical propositions generated by the racial priming literature among real ads aired in U.S. Presidential and Senate races from 2000-2008. By looking at the geographic distribution of real campaign ads in the field, I find that ads with racial cues are most likely to occur in areas where racial attitudes are already salient among voters. This means that a core premise of the racial priming literature – that racialized ads change the accessibility of racial considerations – is not a plausible mechanism through which these ads affect voters in actual practice. I argue that racialized ads actually affect voters by changing perceptions of the *applicability* of racial considerations among voters for whom race is already salient.

Introduction

In 1988, a man named Willie Horton became a central figure in the presidential campaign between Michael Dukakis and George H.W. Bush. Horton was a convicted felon who had been given a weekend furlough from prison through a program supported by then-governor Dukakis. During the furlough, Horton – an African-American man – committed rape, assault, and battery of a white woman and man. George H.W. Bush's campaign put the Horton issue at the center of a campaign ad that attacked Dukakis's record on crime. A conservative political action committee used Horton's image in a related anti-Dukakis ad (Simon 1990).

Figure 4.1: An Image From the Infamous Willie Horton Ad



Because it played on whites' negative associations between African Americans and violent crime, the Horton ad was denounced as racist by several political leaders at the time (Boyd 1988; Mendelberg 2001). And in the years since that campaign, the Horton ad has become the canonical example of playing the "race card," by invoking racism in a political campaign. The Horton ad has also inspired a robust line of academic inquiry into the role of subtle cues that seek to invoke prejudice in campaign ads. Tali

Mendelberg's book *The Race Card* uses data gathered before and after the Horton ad aired to show that the ad activated racial predispositions to reduce support for Dukakis before the ad was denounced as racist (2001).

Numerous other studies have found similar results to Mendelberg's, showing that campaign ads and news programs can prime prejudicial attitudes among voters, leading to changes in the recipients' political evaluations. Valentino, Hutchings and White showed that racial cues in ads work by making racial considerations more accessible in the minds of voters, leading the voters to use these considerations in subsequent evaluations of political figures (2002). Other studies have taken these results to different domains, showing that ads can prime other attitudes like gender discrimination (Dolan 2004; Lawless 2004; Winter 2008), and attitudes about religion (Albertson 2011; Weber and Thornton 2012).

The racial cues that are used in these ads usually take the form of images or issue positions that tap into voters' beliefs about race. The issues and images are connected to racial attitudes through racial schemas, which are cognitive structures that organize thoughts and ideas onto related concepts (Markus and Zajonc 1985). In the American context, the typical racial schema includes a bundle of associations that include racial stereotypes, beliefs about fairness and personal responsibility, and a sense of zero-sum racial group competition (Winter 2008). In particular, the issues of welfare, violent crime, drugs, and social security have been shown to prime racial attitudes through their association with stereotypes about black and white Americans. Welfare, crime, and drugs are connected with blacks and urban ghettos, while social security is associated with whiteness and hard work (Winter 2008; Gilens 1999; Hurwitz and Peffley 2005; Valentino 1999).[15]

In addition to associations between policy issues and racial groups, racial schemas also contain stereotypes related to the two main political parties. As Democrats and Republicans have worked to advocate for the interests of their core constituencies over time, they have developed reputations for "owning" those issues. Over the past 50 years, the Democratic Party has developed a track record of advocating for African Americans and, as a result, voters tend to associate civil rights and social issues with Democrats. Republicans, on the other hand, are associated with crime, law enforcement, taxes, and defense (Petrocik 1996; Winter 2010).

Schemas become relevant to public opinion when they are activated through priming. Priming occurs when a message from the media focuses on an issue or idea, causing considerations associated with that theme to become accessible in the minds of voters (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). When these considerations are accessible, they are more likely to come to mind when a voter makes a subsequent judgment about a politician or issue. By discussing an issue like welfare, then, a candidate implicitly makes racial attitudes more accessible in the minds of voters because welfare is connected to race in the American racial schema through associated beliefs about hard work, the (un)worthiness of some groups to receive benefits, and Democrats' reputation of support for welfare on behalf of their black constituents (Gilens 1999; Valentino et al 2002).

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[15] Tesler (2012) also provides compelling evidence that health care became racialized once Obama made it his signature issue. Because my data is from 2000-2008, and therefore pre-dates the Obamacare debate, I do not use that as a racialized issue in this analysis.

The literature on racial priming has relied on accessibility to explain how racialized campaign ads affect voters (Valentino et al 2002). Because Democrats are presumed to not benefit from the activation of negative racial attitudes, scholars in this literature have assumed that only Republican candidates would have the strategic incentive to make race salient through campaign ads. As Kinder and Sanders note:

> The strategic problem for Democratic candidates is to maintain the loyalty and enthusiasm of black voters without alienating conservative whites: for Democratic presidential campaigns, the temptation on matters of race is silence and evasion. The strategic problem of Republican candidates is to draw the support of white conservatives without appearing to make racist appeals: the Republican temptation is racial codewords (1996).

Other scholars contributing to the racial priming literature concur that Republicans are the only political actors with strategic incentives to use racially themed campaign ads. Noting that African Americans became solidly aligned with the Democratic party in the 1960's, Mendelberg argues that it would be irrational for a Democratic candidate to risk alienating his or her base by trying to appeal to racially conservative whites with ads that play on negative racial stereotypes. Republicans, on the other hand, can use these ads with more freedom, because they rarely attract a sizable share of the black vote. The primary concern for Republicans, Mendelberg argues, is to try to avoid being deemed racist in the media, as that would turn off racially moderate white voters (2001). The assumption that Republicans are most likely to engage in racial priming is shared by other scholars in the field, either stated explicitly or implied through the use of Republican ads as the source of racial cues in priming experiments (Valentino et al. 2002; White 2007; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Hutchings et al. 2010)

A different approach to understanding campaign strategy is offered by Petrocik in his theory of issue ownership. Petrocik suggests that Democrats and Republicans have developed a reputation for having strengths on different political issues. This reputation, or issue ownership, is a result of each party's tendency to promote the same issues over time on behalf of constituency groups with which they are aligned. Petrocik argues that candidates are primarily concerned with a strategy of agenda-setting – they will discuss the issues on which they have a reputational advantage, in an effort to encourage voters to make their decision on those grounds. Thus, Democrats are most likely to focus on social issues, civil rights, agriculture and women's issues, while Republicans will focus on crime, law enforcement, taxes, defense and big government (1996).[16]

Both the issue ownership theory and racial priming theory are useful because they generate clear, if conflicting, predictions about which of the two parties we can expect to use racially-themed ads. The racial priming literature suggests that Republicans will inject race into campaigns by positioning themselves against issues associated with blacks. The intent behind this strategy would be to prime racial prejudice as a consideration that would negatively affect evaluations of Democratic candidates. The issue ownership theory, on the other hand, would suggest that Democrats would talk about racialized issues positively to highlight their strength on civil rights. Their goal would be to make those issues more important as evaluation criteria in the minds of sympathetic voters. Republicans would avoid talking about these issues, according to the issue ownership theory, because it is not a traditional area of strength for them.

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[16] Druckman also finds support for the idea that candidates will focus on their areas of advantage (Druckman et al 2004; Druckman et al 2009).

A core insight from both of these theories is that parties matter when it comes to strategy on the use of racial themes in campaign ads. Racial attitudes and partisan loyalties rank among the most powerful and stable influences upon American public opinion, and these two identities have overlapped to shape the strategic electoral environment for the majority of American history (Campbell et al 1960; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Carmines and Stimson 1989). These theories recognize that opportunistic politicians will exploit these racial and partisan attitudes for their own gain, especially when the electoral environment presents opportunities through timely issues or images that link attitudes in a way that favors a particular candidate.

Neither of these theories, however, can account for a particular manifestation of this strategic behavior, which is that Democrats would invoke racial themes negatively in campaign ads. One need not look too far back in history to find Democrats, led by Bill Clinton, taking a firm stand against welfare. As Soss and Schram note, centrist Democrats like Clinton pursued welfare reform in the 1990's because, "poverty politics was widely viewed as a frustrating and politically costly quagmire" (2007). The racial priming and issue ownership theory, however, cannot explain why Democrats would champion a policy position favored by racial conservatives (Gilens 1999).

To address this puzzle, I put forth an alternative explanation that builds upon the strength of the racial priming and issue ownership approaches, while also attempting to resolve the reality that Democrats have pivoted away from the expectations generated by these two theories. In particular, I suggest that the reliance on the accessibility mechanism as an explanation for racial priming has led scholars to overlook a second cognitive component that is necessary for campaign effects to take place. That is applicability. In order for a campaign frame or prime to have an effect, it must make attitudes accessible *and* it must also contain an issue or theme that is congruent with, or applicable to, the existing racial schema (Winter 2008). When a Democrat runs an ad stating that he or she is opposed to welfare, it contradicts the existing racial schema, which stereotypes Democrats as being associated with blacks, and as supporting welfare. Rather than activating racial attitudes, the counter-stereotypic claim made in the campaign ad is actually seeking to suppress the relevance of racial attitudes in areas where those attitudes are already salient. These are areas where voters are pre-disposed to use racial attitudes against Democratic candidates, and so Democrats run these schema-incongruent ads to inoculate themselves against the power of these racial attitudes.

But where exactly would we expect racial attitudes to be salient? To answer that question, it is useful to look at the literature on group threat.

Group Threat

Groups structure our social world, providing individuals with useful social attachments and identity, and providing useful informational shortcuts about how to understand the world around them (Sherif et al 1961, Tajfel 1982, Lazarsfeld et al 1944; Campbell et al 1960). Groups also come into conflict with each other as they compete for political or economic power.

The "power threat" theory in sociology and the "realistic group conflict" theory in social psychology are similar theories that were created to explain how group conflict affects individual attitudes and real policy outcomes. In particular, these theories argue that when social groups hold goals that are in conflict with each other, or are in zero-sum competition over resources, out-group hostility will become a by-product of that competition (Blumer 1958; Sherif et al 1961). These theories see racial and ethnic groups, in particular, as "participants in ongoing competition for control of economic, political, and social structures" (Giles and Evans 1986).

In his ethnography of the American South, V.O. Key applied the logic of group conflict theory to understand patterns of white racial animosity. Key observed that whites were most hardened against racial equality in areas where the black population was the highest and, as a result, whites had the most to fear from blacks gaining political power (1949). Dozens of studies have followed in the tradition of Key's seminal work, with results that provide strong support for the influence of racial context in activating prejudicial attitudes and outcomes. The size of the black population in an area has been shown to increase racially prejudicial attitudes (Pettigrew 1959; Taylor 1998; Glaser 1994), feelings of threat (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989), and racial inequality in housing, income and education (Blalock 1956; Wilcox and Roof 1978).[17]

We can extrapolate from this literature that racial context can influence the salience of racial considerations in the minds of voters. In particular, the higher the percentage of a black population in an area, the more salient race will be in the minds of neighboring white voters.

In addition to identifying the geographic salience of racial attitudes, it is also important to examine the competitive partisan environment that would lead to either a

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[17] A contrary argument, called the group contact theory, asserts that face-to-face interaction actually ameliorates racial prejudice by allowing for positive interaction among people of different races (Stein et al 1998; Taylor 1998).

Democrat or Republican running negative racially themed ads. Recent work by LaFleur Stephens suggests that Democrats have a strategic incentive to use race-based appeals. Her theory of racial signaling suggests that some candidates will have an incentive to signal to voters that they are not aligned with rival groups. In the case of racial ads, this means that Democrats may use negative racial themes in their ads to prevent voters from making assumptions that they will be working on behalf of black voters.[18]

In a series of interviews with political consultants reported in a separate paper, I find that political candidates, when running in areas that are unfavorable to them, will position themselves in counter-stereotypic ways to minimize the damage that can occur from negative associations that voters might assign to them (2014). In the case of racially-themed ads, this indicates that Democrats would be most likely to use this strategy in areas where they are at a partisan disadvantage. Thus, when a Democrat is running in a Republican-leaning district, she will have an incentive to send a signal to voters that she is a counter-stereotypic Democrat, and will not be working on behalf of African American interests. The zero-sum nature of these group attitudes will cause racially prejudiced voters to believe that a candidate is “for” them after seeing an ad in which a candidate implicitly distances himself or herself from issues that are commonly associated with African Americans.

Hypotheses

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[18] In a formal model, Glaeser et al (2005) reinforces this point by offering an explanation for why a candidate would engage in “strategic extremism” that could offend members of their base. The authors suggest that this strategy is effective when the candidate’s extreme appeals are likely to be decoded by the message’s target, but unlikely to be noticed by the candidate’s base.

The primary questions about racial ads that have not been answered by the racial priming literature are: which party's candidates will be likely to run these ads in real campaigns? Will the tone of the ads be positive or negative? Where will the ads be aired?

For the first question, we have diverging hypotheses coming from the three main theories. The racial priming (RP) perspective suggests that only Republicans will run negative racially-themed ads. Democrats will abstain from this practice for fear of alienating their base. The issue ownership theory (IO) argues that Democrats would run positively-themed racial ads to emphasize their strengths on these issues. My theory, however, suggests that some Democrats will have an incentive to run racially-themed ads as a counter-stereotypical measure to stem their losses among racially conservative voters. Republicans will also run these ads, and both parties will discuss these issues in a negative light.[19] This suggests the following hypotheses:

RP 1: Only Republicans will run negative racially-themed ads

IO 1: Only Democrats will run positive racially-themed ads

H 1: Both Democrats and Republicans will run negative racially-themed ads

For the second question, on where these ads would be aired, we get to a core test of the mechanism behind the racial priming theory. That literature suggests that racialized ads work by increasing the accessibility of race in the minds of voters. Assuming political elites are rational actors interested in efficiently using limited campaign resources, we can expect that they would not run ads to activate race in places where race is already salient. Since the size of the black population in an area provides a threat stimulus, we can expect race to be chronically salient in the minds of white voters in those areas. Thus, the racial priming literature would suggest that we should see these ads in areas where the black population is low, or race is not already salient. While the issue ownership theory is agnostic on this question, my theory suggests that these ads actually seek to manipulate racial attitudes among voters who are already likely to be thinking about race. Democrats will want to suppress racial attitudes with counter-stereotypic messages in areas where race is chronically salient, while Republicans will be trying to keep racial attitudes relevant.

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[19] Apart from the fear of being called racist, there are few strategic downsides for Republicans to run these types of ads.

> RP 2: There will be a *negative* relationship between the percent black in a media market and the likelihood of a racially-themed ad occurring in that market.

> H 2: There will be a *positive* relationship between the percent black in a media market and the likelihood of a racially-themed ad occurring in that market.

A final hypothesis has to do with the competitive environment in which we'd see these ads occurring. Given that the racial priming and issue ownership theories predict that Democrats would not run racially-themed ads at all, we can infer that these theories would particularly not expect to see these ads to occur in areas where Democrats are running difficult races. My theory, however, predicts the opposite: it is in Republican areas that Democrats will want to run against type, mitigating any negative racial associations voters may connect with Democrats through their racial schemas.

> RP 3 and IO 3: The more Republican an area, the *less* likely a Democrat will be to run negative racially-themed ads.

H 3: The more Republican an area, the *more* likely a Democrat will be to run negative racially-themed ads.

Ad Data

To test these hypotheses, I built a dataset that combines ads with the demographic characteristics of the media markets in which they are aired. I use ads from U.S. Senate and Presidential elections from 2000-2008. The presidential ads create a conservative test for my theory, because these candidates are accountable to a national audience.[20] However, the use of presidential ads has the major advantage of controlling for candidate characteristics across districts. This means that variation across districts is more likely to reflect strategic considerations relating to the district rather than differences in candidates or campaign consulting teams.[21]

The advertising data comes from the Wisconsin Advertising Project (WAP). WAP collects storyboards of ads with transcribed text of the verbal message. They also code the ads to determine which issues are mentioned, and provide additional data on how many times the ad aired in each media market, and the estimated cost for airing the ads (Goldstein et al 2002; Goldstein and Rivlin 2005 and 2007).

As for defining race-based ads, scholars who have studied racial priming have found that they can prime race by mentioning a policy issue that is connected with race. Issues stereotypically linked to African Americans are welfare, crime, and drugs (Winter 2008; Gilens 1999; Hurwitz and Peffley 2005; Valentino 1999). There is also some evidence in political science that Social Security is racialized through an association with white in-group identification (Winter 2006). Because studies have suggested that white in-group identity is an important part of threat activation, we may see that percent black significantly predicts the occurrence of an ad about these issues as well, and thus I include it in my analysis.[22]

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[20] As much as they may want to play on racial animosities in certain areas, they are at risk of alienating racially liberal voters in other parts of the country who may be alerted to the themes in an ad through the national media, as was the case with the Willie Horton as in 1988. U.S. House and Senate candidates can be less cautious with using these themes because they don't risk alienating a wider audience.

[21] From a statistical perspective, the use of U.S. Senate ads is also a conservative test – the noise caused by cross-candidate variation could make it harder to find statistically significant results.

To validate the ways in which WAP coded ads, I re-examined all ads that had been coded as a racial issue by the WAP content analysis team. I made some corrections to WAP coding if their formulation did not capture my definition of racialized policies. For the most part, these disagreements were not difficult to arbitrate.[23] To read exemplary ads from each of these categories, see Table 4.1.

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[22] Gun control is another racialized issue, but does not appear in any of the ads I analyze.

[23] The errors were almost always brought about by the WAP coding under-counting ads about crime or welfare. When analyzing the discrepancies, it was clear that this was human error and not a result of over-zealous coding on my part. For example, ads that we deemed to be about crime but WAP did not included phrases like "for crime victims, a bill of rights to protect victims not just criminals," and "Seven of ten fourth graders in our highest poverty schools cannot read a simple children's book. Millions trapped in schools where violence is common."

Table 4.1: Examples of Ads about Welfare, Crime, Drugs and Social Security

Candidate / Ad	Issue	Ad Text
Obama 2008 “Dignity” Democratic Ad	Welfare	[Obama]: "I’m Barack Obama, and I approve this message." [Announcer]: “He worked his way through college and Harvard Law. Turned down big money offers, and helped lift neighborhoods stung by job loss. Fought for workers’ rights. He passed a law to move people from welfare to work, slashed the rolls by eighty percent. Passed tax cuts for workers; health care for kids. As president, he’ll end tax breaks for companies that export jobs, reward those that create jobs in America. And never forget the dignity that comes from work.”
MI Senate 2000 “Stabenow Record on Crime” Republican Ad	Crime	[Announcers]: “Debbie Stabenow’s record on crime? Stabenow voted against critical funding for state police law enforcement. Voted against prison funding. Supported expanded probation, stating there’s an over-reliance on prisons. Stabenow does not support the death penalty, even for the most vicious crimes. Spence Abraham’s record? Mandatory penalties for drug pushers and violent juveniles who commit crimes with a gun. He wrote the law to outlaw the date rape drug. Debbie Stabenow wants to turn back the clock. That’s dangerous for Michigan.”
MO Senate 2000 “Ashcroft MC Record Crime” Republican Ad	Drugs	[Announcer]: “FBI records state Missouri’s violent crime rate is higher under Mel Carnahan than John Ashcroft. St. Louis has the highest serious crime rate in America. Kansas City is number four. Missouri has the nation’s 2nd worse methamphetamine drug crisis. Why? Carnahan slashed highway payroll requests for state meth funding and new troopers, over 90%. Vetoed critical funding for sheriffs. His weak drug law lets meth dealers in schools and drug traffickers avoid prison. Carnahan’s record: higher taxes, dangerous streets.”
NC Senate 2008 “Hagan Social Security” Democratic Ad	Social Security	[Announcer]: “$2 trillion lost. It could have been your Social Security check. Elizabeth Dole voted for George Bush’s Social Security privatization plan that risks our guaranteed monthly benefit on Wall Street. Just another example of Senator Dole putting special interests before us. [Hagan]: Social Security promises a guaranteed benefit for retirement. That’s why we have to strengthen it not risk our savings in today’s stock market. I’m Kay Hagan and I approve this message because seniors deserve the Social Security they were promised.”

Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project

The unit of analysis in this dataset is a unique pairing of a presidential ad with a media market where it aired. In many cases, the ad was aired multiple times in a given market. I collapse those multiple airings into one observation since I am less interested in the volume of advertising in each market than I am in the variation between media markets. The dependent variable in my analysis is coded as a 1 if the ad mentions a particular policy and 0 if it does not. That means that one ad appears multiple times in the dataset, as it is paired with each media market where it was aired. This also means that media markets appear multiple times, as they are paired with different ads. To control for this violation of the assumption of independent observations, I cluster the standard errors by media market within my analysis. Also, to control for the effects of temporal variation, I include a dummy variable for each election year (2000, 2002, 2004 and 2008). I include only ads that are aired by candidates or national party committees on their behalf. Finally, the analysis is constrained to the general election, and excludes ads that were originally aired in Spanish.

Because I am interested in looking at how the demographic make-up of a media market affects the ads that are aired there, the independent variables in my model are aggregate measures of demographic characteristics in the media market.[24] The variables of interest are:

Percent Black: This is the percent of non-Hispanic African Americans in the media market, coded to range from 0 to 1.

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[24] The U.S. Census does not provide data aggregated at the media market level, so I combined county-level data into media markets.

Segregation: This is included in case it is actually racial segregation, and not just racial threat that is predicting ads with racial themes. This is an isolation measure of segregation, which captures the degree to which the average African American is surrounded by other African Americans within the metro area (Glaeser and Vigdor 2012).

Percent Urban: This is the percent of the population in the media market deemed as living in Census-defined urban conditions, coded to range from 0 to 1.

Education: The U.S. Census provides the percent of people in each area who have achieved a certain education level. To find a measure of the overall education level, I divide the number of people in the top three categories (Doctoral, Professional Degree, and Masters) by the number in the bottom two levels (Less than high school, and High school graduate). High levels of this 0 to 1 variable indicate an area is proportionately more educated.

Age: I divide the number of people in the oldest age group (Age 55 and over) by the number aged 18-54. High levels of this 0 to 1 variable indicate an area is proportionately older.

Swing State: This is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the state was decided by 5 percentage points or less in that presidential election and 0 if it was decided by greater than 6 points. This is included as a control to capture the fact that advertising in any market will be affected by the competitiveness of that area.

Democrat Presidential Performance: This data was gathered from the U.S. Election Atlas project. It is a measure of the share of the vote in the current election captured by the Democratic Presidential candidate. The data is weighted by the population of each county before being aggregated to the media market.[25]

Inequality: Following recent political science research that shows that inequality, not just income, have an effect on political attitudes (Gelman 2007), I create a measure of inequality that is the portion of the population in the wealthiest group times the portion in the lowest income group, divided by the product of the portions in the two middle class groups. Larger numbers of this 0 to 1 variable indicate higher levels of inequality.

Percent Evangelical: This data comes from the 2000 Religious Congregations and Membership Study. It is the percent of people in a media market who attend evangelical churches.

South: Because I am interested in the extent to which southern culture influences racial attitudes, I follow John Shelton Reed in defining the South as including states where Southern self-identification and culture is the highest (Reed 1973). That means that the 11 secession states plus Oklahoma and Kentucky are coded as 1 and all other states are coded as 0.

Democrat: This is a dichotomous variable that measures whether the sponsor of the ad is a Democrat or Republican.

Percent Welfare Recipients: From the U.S. Census, this is a measure of the percent of people in the area who receive welfare benefits. It is included as a control to rule out the possibility that ads about welfare are aired in a media market because they are of interest to actual welfare recipients, or because it is welfare alone that is driving animosity in an area.

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[25] A downside of using data from the current election is that it assumes candidates are making decisions as if they already know the outcome of the election. While this isn't true per se, it is reasonable to assume that both Senate and Presidential candidates are aware of their standing in the current election through tracking polls. Because I am interested in looking at how a Senate candidate wants to position themselves relative to their national party, it is most useful to look at the standing of the presidential candidate running in the same election.

Crime Rate: This is a measure of crime produced by the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics.[26] This data is produced at the level of the metro area and was matched to corresponding media markets in my data.

Percent Social Security Recipients: Like the number of welfare recipients, this U.S. Census variable is included to account for the fact that Medicare or social security ads may be aired in direct proportion to the number of people who benefit from that program.

Results

The first hypothesis, which has to do with which party's candidates will run racialized ads, can be evaluated with a simple test. Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3 provide a distribution of the number of ad airings for racialized ads in presidential and senate elections. At the presidential level, it is clear that Democrats use racialized ads at least as much as Republicans. In fact, Barack Obama, the first African American presidential nominee for a major party, used more racialized ads than the previous two Democratic nominees combined. Table 4.1 provides some examples of the racialized ads used in these elections. As these ads in Table 4.1 suggest, all ads for Senate and President that mentioned racialized issues did so with a negative valence.

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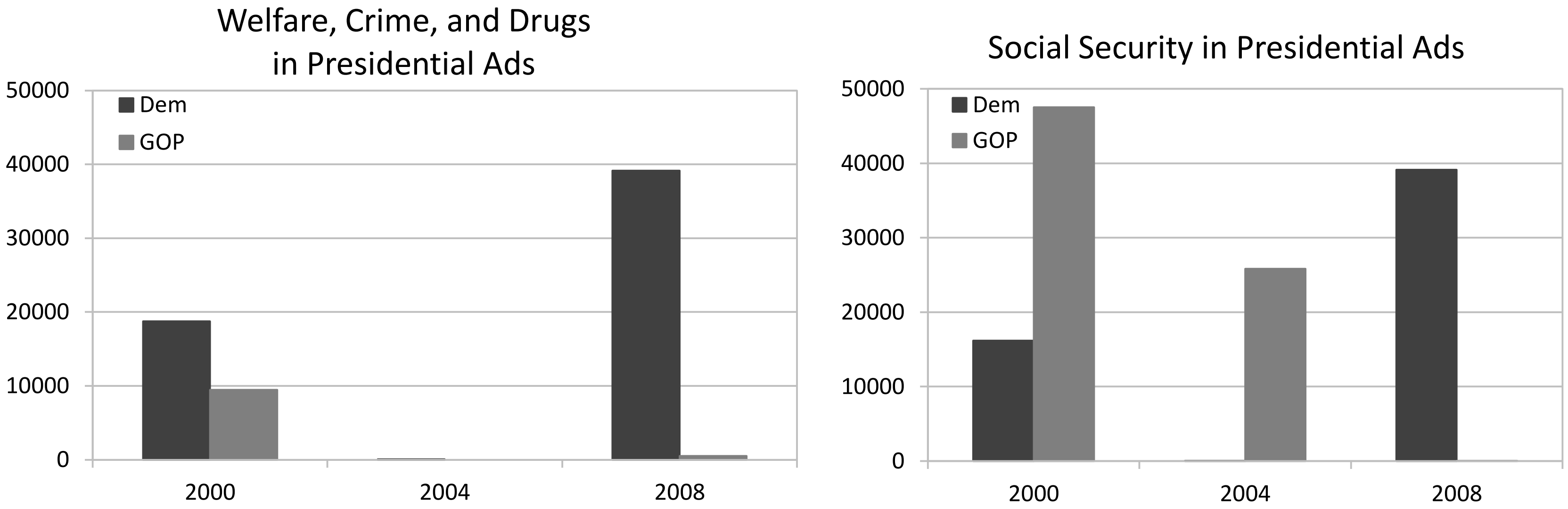
[26] The crime data is based on self-reports of local law-enforcement officials and, as a result, the FBI cautions against using the data to compare across cities. This means we cannot have a great deal of confidence in the coefficients that this variable produces.

Figure 4.2: Ad Frequencies for Racial Issues in U.S. Presidential Races

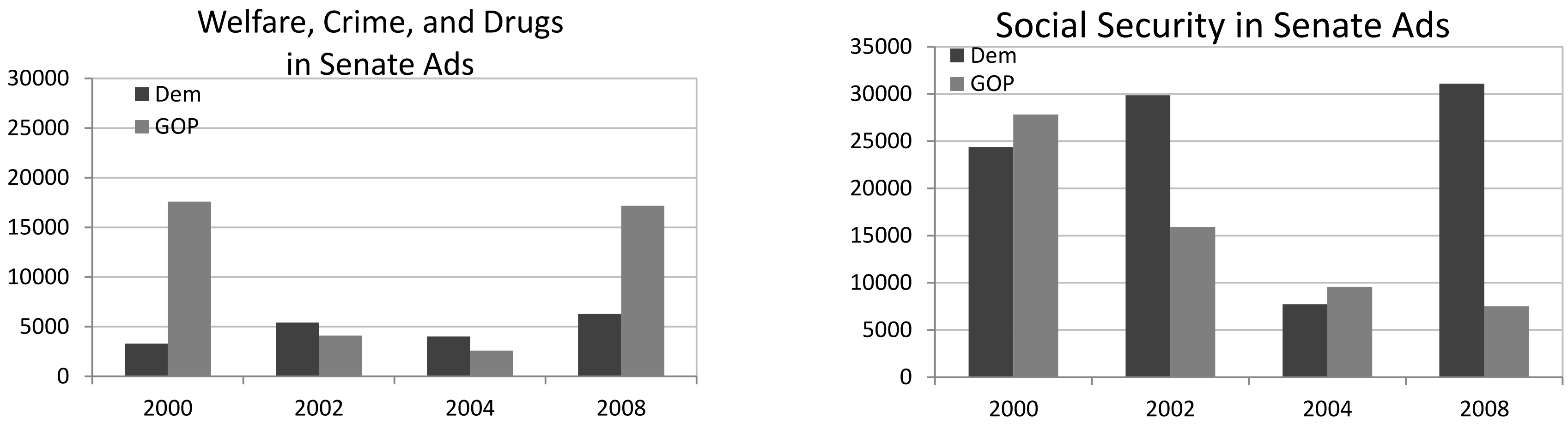


Welfare, Crime, and Drugs in Presidential Ads

Social Security in Presidential Ads

Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project

Figure 4.3: Ad Frequencies for Racial Issues in U.S. Senate Race



Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project

It is interesting to note in Figure 4.2 how aggressive Republican George W. Bush was in talking about Social Security. His campaign emphasized personal savings accounts for Social Security in 2000, a strategy that was considered bold and assertive because it entailed encroaching on a traditional Democratic issue (IOP 2003). A look at Figure 4.3 suggests that Republican Senate candidates followed Bush's lead in 2000-2004, but then shied away from this strategy in the 2008 election, where Democrats swung back to discussing this issue with greater frequency.

Figure 4.3 also shows that Democratic Senate candidates were somewhat less likely than Republican Senate candidates to discuss other racialized issues like welfare, crime and drugs. But they still ran a substantial number of strongly-worded ads about those issues. While it appears as though Democratic Senate candidates ran fewer of these ads than Democratic Presidential candidates, this difference is most likely due to the fact that there are fewer ads aired in Senate races than in a national race.

The data presented in Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3 undermines predictions from the racial priming and issue ownership theories. Contrary to the hypothesis from the racial priming literature, Democrats appear to evenly match Republicans in their likelihood of using negative racially-themed ads, airing 51% of the racially-themed ads in the races from 2000-2008. This provides support for my argument that Democratic candidates would seek to use these ads to mute the effect of racial attitudes.

Obama's use of welfare-themed ads is particularly interesting, given his status as the first African American major party nominee and president. The text of his welfare ad in Table 4.1 makes it clear that this is a negative message on welfare, and not an appeal to black voters. Rather than just activating racial beliefs, which would have hurt Obama, this result suggests that Obama's campaign team believed in the persuasive power of counter-stereotypical position-taking.

Figure 4.4 displays a series of maps that allow for a visual analysis of the spatial distribution of ads and demographic variables. In the first map, we see the distribution of the percent black variable in metro areas across the country. With cautions about the lack of representativeness of aggregating survey data to sub-national units, the second map shows the distribution of racial prejudice from the American National Election Studies in metro areas that had 6 or more respondents.[27] Finally, the third map shows the distribution of welfare ads from the 2000 and 2008 presidential elections, also by metro area. Perhaps the most striking observation that can be drawn from these maps is that while the percent black seems to be most concentrated in the South, resentment and welfare ads are well-represented in the rustbelt areas outside of the South. In fact, the top three metro areas for welfare ads are Albuquerque, Pittsburgh and Cleveland. This suggests that racialized ads are not strictly a southern phenomenon.

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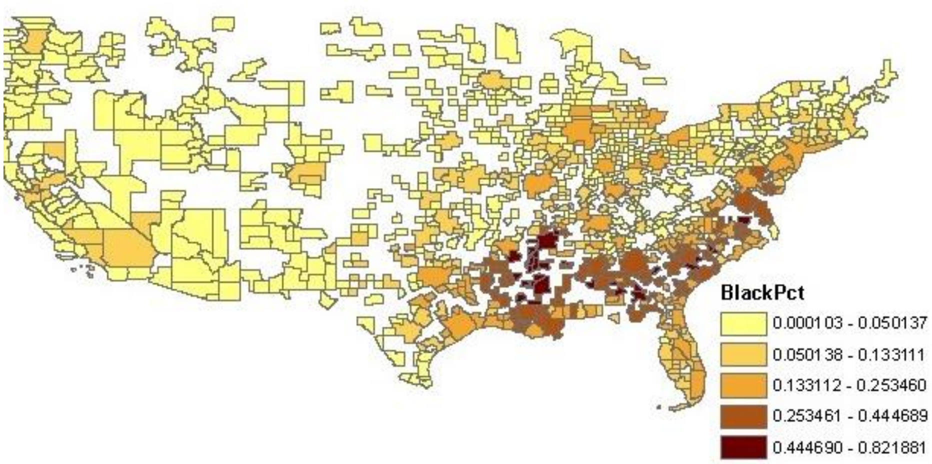
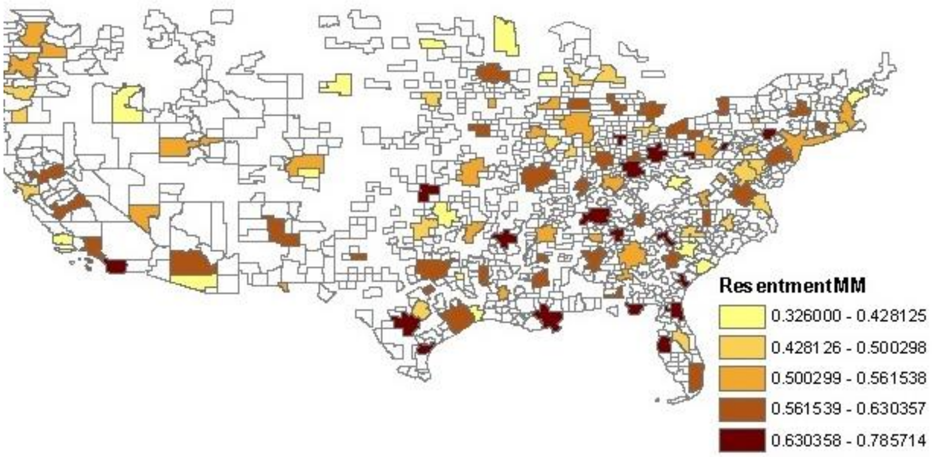
[27] Prejudice here is measured through the racial resentment scale (Kinder and Sanders 1996)

Figure 4.4: Maps

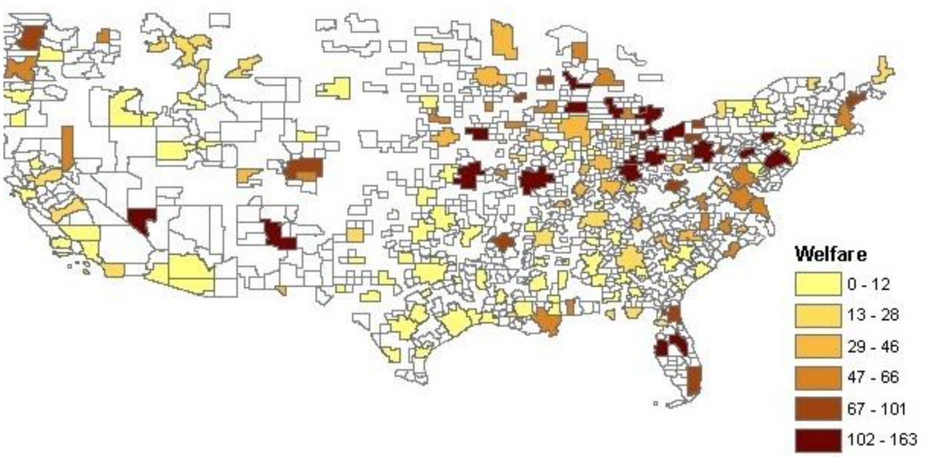
Percent Black


BlackPct
0.000103 - 0.050137
0.050138 - 0.133111
0.133112 - 0.253460
0.253461 - 0.444689
0.444690 - 0.821881

Racial Resentment Levels


ResentmentMM
0.326000 - 0.428125
0.428126 - 0.500298
0.500299 - 0.561538
0.561539 - 0.630357
0.630358 - 0.785714

Number of Welfare Ad Airings (2000 and 2008)


Welfare
0 - 12
13 - 28
29 - 46
47 - 66
67 - 101
102 - 163

Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project; U.S. Census Bureau; American National Election Studies

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 present the results from the logit analysis of the factors that predict the occurrence of a race-based ad in a media market, first in Presidential races and then in Senate races. Percent black, which is the variable of interest, is in the expected direction in every case. The positive coefficient indicates that an increase in the percent black in an area corresponds to an increase in the likelihood of seeing an ad about a racial issue in that area. In Presidential races, percent black significantly predicts the occurrence of ads about welfare, while the same variable predicts ads on the other racialized issues (crime, drugs, and social security) in Senate races. This suggests that welfare is a more politically useful issue at the national level, whereas other issues fare better in state-level races.

The significance of percent black is not diminished by controlling for the actual incidence of crime or number of welfare recipients in the media market, and for whether or not that market is in the South or in the Rust Belt. Overall, these results support my hypothesis on the second question; percent black positively predicts the occurrence of racially-themed ads. This result holds in spite of the temporal variation that caused changes in issue agendas across these elections.

To confirm that percent black does not predict the occurrence of ads on every policy issue, I estimated the logit model across a range of non-racialized policies to determine whether percent black uniquely predicts the occurrence of race-based ads.[28] In these results, which are reported in Appendix Tables 1 and 2, it is clear that percent black does not consistently predict other issues in a positive and significant way.

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[28] Like the race analysis, this analysis is limited to the general election and English-only ads. It also excludes any ads that also mentioned welfare or crime, to ensure that any results for percent black were being driven solely by the issue at hand.

Table 4.2: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Presidential Ad Mentioning each Policy (by Media Market)

	Welfare	Crime	Drugs	Social Security
Percent Black	4.00*** (1.05)	0.02 (0.95)	2.03 (2.16)	0.37 (0.89)
Segregation	-0.93** (0.37)	0.80 (0.53)	-0.21 (0.67)	-0.25 (0.26)
Percent Urban	0.02 (0.48)	-1.31* (0.74)	-2.11* (1.12)	-0.18 (0.29)
Swing State	0.01 (0.08)	0.08 (0.14)	0.67*** (0.19)	0.19** (0.08)
Dem Pres Performance	-0.50 (0.76)	0.21 (0.86)	1.90 (1.33)	0.57 (0.54)
Democrat Sponsor	0.00 (0.00)	-0.37*** (0.13)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.64*** (0.14)
Democrat Sponsor * Swing State	0.00 (0.00)	0.09 (0.16)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.33* (0.18)
Education	-0.06 (0.95)	4.39*** (1.41)	2.70 (2.71)	0.45 (0.84)
Age	1.61** (0.67)	-0.44 (0.94)	-0.63 (1.40)	2.00 (1.38)
Inequality	-0.18 (0.66)	-0.64 (0.63)	-0.93 (0.98)	0.00 (0.39)
Percent Evangelical	1.67** (0.81)	-0.55 (0.72)	0.13 (1.17)	-0.04 (0.54)
South	-0.39** (0.20)	0.33 (0.21)	0.20 (0.36)	0.24 (0.15)
Rust Belt	-0.01 (0.11)	-0.06 (0.09)	0.16 (0.19)	0.10 (0.09)
Year 2004	0.00 (0.00)	-5.44*** (1.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-1.67*** (0.04)
Year 2008	-0.45*** (0.08)	-2.89*** (0.26)	0.00 (0.00)	-2.85*** (0.11)
Constant	-3.26*** (0.53)	-2.18*** (0.54)	-3.00*** (0.77)	-0.94** (0.44)
Observations	3,522	9,604	896	9,604

Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project; US Census; FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics; US Election Atlas
Standard errors in parenthesis *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4.3: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Senate Ad Mentioning each Policy (by Media Market)

	Welfare	Crime	Drugs	Soc. Sec.
Percent Black	3.03	3.51***	4.05*	3.21***
	(2.02)	(1.35)	(2.28)	(0.84)
Segregation	2.04*	-1.76*	1.66	-0.37
	(1.24)	(0.96)	(1.12)	(0.53)
Percent Urban	-2.69*	3.08**	-1.24	0.17
	(1.46)	(1.40)	(1.64)	(0.70)
Close Race	0.05	-0.10	0.17	0.07
	(0.33)	(0.24)	(0.35)	(0.13)
Dem Senate Performance	2.05	3.42**	2.30	0.28
	(2.14)	(1.35)	(1.54)	(0.47)
Dem Pres Performance	-2.60	2.45	0.20	-1.74
	(2.67)	(1.88)	(2.30)	(1.19)
Dem Sponsor	-0.36	0.61*	-0.40	0.63***
	(0.31)	(0.36)	(0.74)	(0.13)
Dem Sponsor * Dem Pres Perf	-6.05***	-2.19***	-0.24	-1.06***
	(1.73)	(0.82)	(1.60)	(0.34)
Education	-0.00	-0.85	-7.70***	-4.10***
	(3.80)	(1.97)	(2.01)	(1.28)
Age	-1.31	-1.52	-17.88***	9.73***
	(2.82)	(2.65)	(4.03)	(2.85)
Inequality	-3.51*	-0.91	0.40	0.46
	(1.99)	(0.88)	(1.73)	(0.59)
Percent Evangelical	-1.46	8.23***	8.46***	-0.93
	(2.27)	(1.71)	(3.11)	(1.07)
South	-0.31	-1.24***	-3.19***	-0.18
	(0.51)	(0.43)	(0.82)	(0.20)
Rust Belt	-0.15	-0.04	-0.24	-0.21*
	(0.37)	(0.24)	(0.32)	(0.12)
Year 2002	-2.50*	-0.14	-1.70	-1.65**
	(1.36)	(0.90)	(1.16)	(0.57)
Year 2004	-1.79***	-1.42***	0.00	-1.85***
	(0.49)	(0.36)	(0.00)	(0.18)
Year 2008	-1.91***	-0.53	-2.16***	-1.89***
	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.45)	(0.20)
Constant	0.90	-7.57***	2.74	-0.23
	(1.98)	(2.12)	(2.86)	(1.16)
Observations	7,148	7,148	5,479	6,874

Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project; US Census; FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics; US Election Atlas// Standard errors in parenthesis *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0$.

As a test of the applicability argument outlined in Hypothesis 3, I examined whether Democrats are most likely to use these racially-themed ads in areas where they are running in tough races. Democrats who are running in close races must gain cross-over appeal among Republican voters, so they have the most to benefit from distancing themselves from stereotypes associated with the national Democratic Party. And, indeed, I find that Democratic U.S. Senate candidates are significantly more likely to use this strategy when they are running in areas where their party's presidential candidate is not popular. The significant interaction term between "Dem Sponsor" and "Dem Pres Perf" suggests that Democrats are more like to run a racialized ad when their party's presidential candidate is doing badly in that area. By distancing themselves from the national party, those Democrats are conveying to local voters that they care about people like them, and that they are not beholden to the core constituencies of the national party (i.e. African Americans).

These results provide support for my theory about the strategic use of racialized ads, and also call into question some of the key assumptions underlying the racial priming and issue ownership theories. Democrats and Republicans both run race-based ads, and percent black significantly predicted the likelihood of seeing a racialized ad, but was not regularly linked to ads about other issues.

Conclusion

The racial priming literature has provided compelling evidence that racially-themed ads can change voter attitudes in an experimental setting. But the theoretical insights from that literature have limited traction in predicting where and when we expect to see these ads in real campaigns. While the priming literature finds that campaign ads operate by making racial considerations more accessible in the minds of voters, the results of this analysis suggest that racially-themed ads are most likely to be aired in places where racial considerations are *already* accessible. This result suggests that it may be more useful to think of the effects of racially-themed ads in terms of their effort to strengthen or weaken a candidate's perceived connection to racial groups.

A second weakness of the priming literature was the assumption that these ads would only be used by Republicans. Not only do Democrats use these ads as well, but Barack Obama used them in his 2008 campaign to become the first black President. This suggests a powerful counter-stereotypical effect for these ads that the priming literature has not considered.

Beyond the racial priming literature, these results present a number of insights about campaign advertising strategy, and also about the voting public. I found support for the group conflict theory in the finding that politicians are most likely to talk about welfare, crime, and other racialized issues in places where the white population feels the most threatened by black voters. These results also highlight the need to explore the role that elites play in validating and promoting conflict among racial groups in the electorate. A useful follow-up to this project would be to investigate the effects of prejudice-inducing ads on voter animosity in the electorate. Additionally, it would be useful to dis-aggregate racial attitudes from the metro-area, which is the unit of analysis in this project, to examine how residential integration and contact with out-groups affect voter attitudes and political outcomes at the local level.

CHAPTER 5 - Conclusion

Scholars working in the field of public opinion have developed sophisticated methods for understanding the psychological underpinnings of attitudes on the individual level. The study of micro-processes has led scholars to uncover findings about implicit attitudes and their measurement (Greenwald et al. 2009), the impact of brain function on attitudes (e.g. Westen et al 2006; Kobayashi et al 2006), and even the impact of genetics on the expression of outward political predispositions (Alford et al. 2005).

In this dissertation, I suggest that the study of political behavior can benefit from a step back from the examination of micro-processes, to look at the strategic, temporal, and geographic contexts in which those processes take place. Situating those micro-processes within the real political environment can improve our understanding of psychological responses of voters. Context helps us to understand more about the conditions under which different messages are likely to be paired with different political scenarios. It also helps us understand the ways in which social groups, and attitudes about groups, can come to bear on political behavior in the real world.

In the three empirical chapters that make up this dissertation, I used geographic and contextual insights to evaluate political science theories that had been previously tested in the lab, or under conditions that allow for limited generalization. In Chapter 2, I reported on interviews I conducted with campaign operatives to learn more about how they view voters, and their process for crafting campaign strategy. These political elites suggested that they will use group-based threats to mobilize their base when the conditions favor such a strategy. Chapter 3 looked at the voters who are most likely to be manipulated by racial group threats, with results that show that diversity at the metro level increases racial conservatism, while local diversity can reduce prejudice. Finally, the results in Chapter 4 demonstrated that political consultants will, in fact, pursue a threat-based strategy when it helps their candidate. Even Barack Obama, the first African American president, used racially themed campaign ads to influence the applicability of voters' racial schemas on evaluations of his candidacy.

Taken together, the results from this dissertation present a somewhat pessimistic portrayal of the American campaign process. Lippmann's concerns about elite manipulation are mostly confirmed – elites do, in fact, seek to manipulate voters, and in ways that are perhaps even more cynical than he expected. However, the negative implications of these campaign strategies might be different from what Lippmann expected. While it is true that elites use of the power of mass media in ways that attempt to manipulate voters, the fact of elite pluralism in American politics ensures that no single faction can accumulate undue power through the use of these tactics.

In his case study of New Haven politics, Dahl described a system of elite pluralism that governed the power dynamics there. He found that elites from both political parties were using strategies that were fairly evenly matched, and that elite connections to broader social groups prevented any clear dominant coalition from emerging. Social groups are varied and over-lapping, and the elite connections to those groups are also over-lapping (Truman 1951). Dahl says that, among elites, "there are many lines of cleavage. The most apparent and probably the most durable are symbolized by affiliation with different political parties" (1961). Further, Dahl notes that there is little evidence of "any single common denominator of motive" among political elites (1961).

In fact, what Lippmann and his associates should perhaps have been more concerned about is the failure of political elites to take *more* leadership. By manipulating voter attitudes toward out-groups, and stoking those fears for political gain, elites are encouraging the most prejudicial elements of human nature. In contrast to Madison's hopes that political leaders would "refine and enlarge" public sentiment, the reality is that political leaders are manipulating already-existing conflicts in the electorate for their own benefit.

From the perspective of democratic stability, this is a satisfactory equilibrium, because it provides group-based checks on elite power. From an egalitarian perspective, these implications are more troubling. The social divisions that elites exploit in the electorate are rooted in deep material inequalities. Rather than giving a voice to powerless groups, or reducing the prejudice that freezes social progress for minorities, politicians are exploiting, and perhaps even reinforcing, the most politically expedient cleavages in each election. There is some evidence that elites actually exercise the same prejudice themselves, in determining who to help when they get into office (Butler and Broockman 2011).

Whether or not elite strategic manipulation of threat actually reinforces prejudice is something that should be tested empirically in future research. Through campaign case studies, or the pairing of campaign ads with longitudinal survey data, it would be possible to identify the effects of threat-based ads on prejudicial attitudes in the electorate.

More generally, a central lesson that can be taken from this dissertation is that any analysis of campaign effects should be rooted in an awareness of the spatial and strategic context of each election. Practically speaking, this can include the incorporation of methodological advancements, such as including spatial weights for survey analysis (Franzese and Hays 2007), or it can simply account for more careful theoretical specification for the ways in which geography and political context can affect the outcomes we study in the political world.

Appendix

Table A.1: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Presidential Ad Mentioning each Policy (by Media Market)

	Welfare	Crime	Drugs	Soc Sec	Medicare	Taxes	Gov Spd	Jobs	Abortion	Education	Defense	Enviro	Hlth Cre
Percent Black	4.00*** (1.05)	0.02 (0.95)	2.03 (2.16)	0.37 (0.89)	-1.18 (0.82)	-0.66 (0.58)	0.72 (0.57)	0.26 (0.54)	-11.27** (4.56)	1.84*** (0.57)	0.20 (0.37)	-1.42 (1.29)	-0.92 (0.56)
Segregation	-0.93** (0.37)	0.80 (0.53)	-0.21 (0.67)	-0.25 (0.26)	0.16 (0.25)	-0.07 (0.14)	-0.52** (0.23)	0.47*** (0.18)	4.50** (1.97)	-0.54*** (0.17)	-0.19 (0.14)	0.31 (0.36)	-0.06 (0.16)
Percent Urban	0.02 (0.48)	-1.31* (0.74)	-2.11* (1.12)	-0.18 (0.29)	-0.54** (0.27)	-0.28* (0.17)	-0.11 (0.30)	-0.30 (0.20)	-0.88 (1.37)	0.30 (0.19)	0.16 (0.13)	0.89* (0.52)	-0.37** (0.18)
Swing State	0.01 (0.08)	0.08 (0.14)	0.67*** (0.19)	0.19** (0.08)	0.33** (0.15)	0.03 (0.04)	0.14** (0.07)	0.16 (0.14)	0.95 (0.74)	0.32*** (0.12)	0.09 (0.07)	-1.02*** (0.25)	0.49*** (0.12)
Dem Pres Performance	-0.50 (0.76)	0.21 (0.86)	1.90 (1.33)	0.57 (0.54)	-0.44 (0.49)	0.05 (0.28)	0.10 (0.40)	0.06 (0.29)	-1.17 (2.04)	0.13 (0.32)	0.01 (0.26)	2.58*** (0.86)	-0.48 (0.30)
Dem Sponsor	0.00 (0.00)	-0.37*** (0.13)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.64*** (0.14)	1.15*** (0.16)	0.26*** (0.04)	-2.35*** (0.09)	1.73*** (0.11)	1.37** (0.58)	0.06 (0.17)	0.48*** (0.06)	0.19 (0.22)	1.85*** (0.12)
Democrat Spnsr * Swing State	0.00 (0.00)	0.09 (0.16)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.33* (0.18)	-0.02 (0.18)	-0.00 (0.06)	0.06 (0.16)	-0.27 (0.17)	-2.05*** (0.74)	-0.58** (0.23)	-0.30*** (0.10)	1.03*** (0.31)	-0.54*** (0.15)
Education	-0.06 (0.95)	4.39*** (1.41)	2.70 (2.71)	0.45 (0.84)	0.40 (0.62)	-0.66 (0.50)	-0.19 (0.42)	0.05 (0.51)	-8.77*** (3.14)	0.13 (0.48)	-0.02 (0.23)	0.17 (1.24)	-1.05** (0.53)
Age	1.61** (0.67)	-0.44 (0.94)	-0.63 (1.40)	2.00 (1.38)	-0.42 (0.51)	-0.48 (0.41)	0.43 (0.43)	-0.28 (0.49)	-2.36 (1.57)	0.84*** (0.30)	0.03 (0.24)	1.21 (0.99)	-0.48 (0.33)
Inequality	-0.18 (0.66)	-0.64 (0.63)	-0.93 (0.98)	0.00 (0.39)	-0.27 (0.37)	0.08 (0.18)	-0.54* (0.29)	-0.04 (0.22)	0.05 (2.98)	0.36 (0.26)	-0.07 (0.19)	-1.84*** (0.67)	1.10*** (0.22)
Prcnt Evangelical	1.67** (0.81)	-0.55 (0.72)	0.13 (1.17)	-0.04 (0.54)	-1.53*** (0.56)	0.49 (0.35)	0.23 (0.59)	-0.16 (0.33)	-12.00** (5.50)	0.86** (0.37)	0.84** (0.34)	0.02 (0.71)	-0.34 (0.41)
South	-0.39** (0.20)	0.33 (0.21)	0.20 (0.36)	0.24 (0.15)	0.59*** (0.16)	0.12 (0.11)	0.44*** (0.10)	-0.23** (0.10)	0.73 (0.65)	-0.34*** (0.09)	-0.11 (0.06)	-0.14 (0.24)	0.27*** (0.09)
Rust Belt	-0.01 (0.11)	-0.06 (0.09)	0.16 (0.19)	0.10 (0.09)	0.09 (0.08)	0.06 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.99*** (0.33)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.11 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.04)

Year 2004	0.00	-5.44***	0.00	-1.67***		-1.15***	0.19***	2.42***	4.23***	1.81*	-1.28***	6.05***	-5.17***	-0.72***
	(0.00)	(1.00)	(0.00)	(0.04)		(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.58)	(0.41)	(1.03)	(0.05)	(1.01)	(0.49)	(0.04)
Year 2008	-0.45***	-2.89***	0.00	-2.85***		-2.06***	1.56***	4.89***	4.02***	2.05*	-1.60***	5.95***	-2.98***	-1.39***
	(0.08)	(0.26)	(0.00)	(0.11)		(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.58)	(0.40)	(1.05)	(0.05)	(1.00)	(0.13)	(0.05)
Observations	3,522	9,604	896	9,604		8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400

Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project; US Census; FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics; US Election Atlas; Standard errors in parenthesis *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A.2: Effect of % Black on the Likelihood of a Senate Ad Mentioning each Policy (by Media Market)

	Welfare	Crime	Drugs	Soc. Sec.	Medicare	Taxes	GovSpend	Jobs	Abortion	Education	Defense	Enviro	Immigration	HlthCare
Percent Black	3.03	3.51***	4.05*	3.21***	-2.19	0.84	1.76**	-0.48	5.96***	0.24	0.36	2.43	-9.06**	-1.77*
	(2.02)	(1.35)	(2.28)	(0.84)	(1.44)	(0.72)	(0.82)	(0.87)	(1.86)	(0.75)	(1.00)	(1.90)	(3.93)	(1.07)
Segregation	2.04*	-1.76*	1.66	-0.37	0.02	-0.04	-1.45**	2.19***	-0.85	0.21	1.00*	-1.27	1.93	0.17
	(1.24)	(0.96)	(1.12)	(0.53)	(0.59)	(0.37)	(0.57)	(0.54)	(1.12)	(0.47)	(0.59)	(0.89)	(2.18)	(0.59)
Percent Urban	-2.69*	3.08**	-1.24	0.17	1.66**	0.00	1.24*	-2.92***	1.89	-0.74	-0.45	3.22***	7.44***	-0.29
	(1.46)	(1.40)	(1.64)	(0.70)	(0.68)	(0.52)	(0.69)	(0.66)	(1.58)	(0.61)	(0.70)	(1.03)	(2.48)	(0.63)
Close Race	0.05	-0.10	0.17	0.07	0.04	0.14*	-0.18	-0.03	-0.15	-0.20	0.19	0.18	-1.75**	0.01
	(0.33)	(0.24)	(0.35)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.14)	(0.23)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.22)	(0.78)	(0.11)
Dem Senate Performance	2.05	3.42**	2.30	0.28	-1.91***	1.52***	1.68***	-0.13	1.28	0.07	-0.40	-1.36**	8.79***	-0.72
	(2.14)	(1.35)	(1.54)	(0.47)	(0.64)	(0.43)	(0.65)	(0.72)	(1.01)	(0.75)	(0.59)	(0.65)	(2.66)	(0.55)
Dem Pres Performance	-2.60	2.45	0.20	-1.74	1.80*	-1.77**	-4.01***	1.07	-3.70*	-0.38	-0.90	-3.99**	-13.51**	0.83
	(2.67)	(1.88)	(2.30)	(1.19)	(1.00)	(0.77)	(0.99)	(1.17)	(2.02)	(1.10)	(0.93)	(1.98)	(6.53)	(0.82)
Dem Sponsor	-0.36	0.61*	-0.40	0.63***	0.74***	-0.74***	-1.69***	0.26	-0.48	0.29*	-1.58***	0.26	-2.57**	0.84***
	(0.31)	(0.36)	(0.74)	(0.13)	(0.26)	(0.14)	(0.41)	(0.16)	(0.45)	(0.16)	(0.22)	(0.28)	(1.14)	(0.18)
Dem Sponsor * DemPr Perf	-6.05***	-2.19***	-0.24	-1.06***	-0.79	0.81**	1.78*	0.82**	-0.20	0.59	3.42***	0.89	3.80	0.62
	(1.73)	(0.82)	(1.60)	(0.34)	(0.58)	(0.35)	(0.92)	(0.35)	(1.02)	(0.43)	(0.58)	(0.71)	(3.08)	(0.45)
Education	-0.00	-0.85	-7.70***	-4.10***	-1.17	2.27***	-0.28	1.18	0.64	2.30**	1.04	5.53***	-9.27	-5.11***
	(3.80)	(1.97)	(2.01)	(1.28)	(1.42)	(0.79)	(1.33)	(1.67)	(3.34)	(1.13)	(1.37)	(1.39)	(5.95)	(1.26)
Age	-1.31	-1.52	-17.88***	9.73***	2.79**	0.62	-0.12	-2.47*	1.96	-0.66	1.35	1.59	2.99	-2.31***
	(2.82)	(2.65)	(4.03)	(2.85)	(1.09)	(0.66)	(1.06)	(1.36)	(1.85)	(1.07)	(1.00)	(1.80)	(2.38)	(0.89)
Inequality	-3.51*	-0.91	0.40	0.46	0.03	-0.09	1.00	-0.56	0.56	0.10	-0.23	-0.19	-6.72	1.22**
	(1.99)	(0.88)	(1.73)	(0.59)	(0.59)	(0.37)	(0.78)	(0.60)	(1.04)	(0.48)	(0.70)	(0.73)	(5.00)	(0.54)
Percent Evangelical	-1.46	8.23***	8.46***	-0.93	1.76*	0.69	0.29	0.36	2.15	0.07	0.88	-2.28	-0.23	0.56
	(2.27)	(1.71)	(3.11)	(1.07)	(1.03)	(0.65)	(0.82)	(0.97)	(1.50)	(0.88)	(1.07)	(1.79)	(3.86)	(0.86)
South	-0.31	-1.24***	-3.19***	-0.18	-0.87***	0.10	0.27	-0.06	-0.53	0.16	-0.40	-0.64*	1.07	-0.82***
	(0.51)	(0.43)	(0.82)	(0.20)	(0.28)	(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.25)	(0.51)	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.38)	(1.19)	(0.25)
Rust Belt	-0.15	-0.04	-0.24	-0.21*	0.27	0.09	0.42***	-0.00	-0.14	0.13	-0.15	-0.42	-0.46	-0.03
	(0.37)	(0.24)	(0.32)	(0.12)	(0.18)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.15)	(0.24)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.26)	(0.70)	(0.14)
Year 2002	-2.50*	-0.14	-1.70	-1.65**	0.22	-0.40	-2.75***	1.52***	-1.94*	-0.65	1.61***	-0.71	-3.16	-0.42
	(1.36)	(0.90)	(1.16)	(0.57)	(0.49)	(0.39)	(0.52)	(0.58)	(1.04)	(0.50)	(0.57)	(1.01)	(2.25)	(0.36)

Year 2004	-1.79*** (0.49)	-1.42*** (0.36)	0.00 (0.00)	-1.85*** (0.18)		-1.71*** (0.19)	0.40** (0.16)	0.17 (0.27)	1.55*** (0.26)	0.06 (0.37)	-0.95*** (0.17)	1.42*** (0.41)	-0.46 (0.33)	2.65* (1.47)	-0.16 (0.12)
Year 2008	-1.91*** (0.37)	-0.53 (0.36)	-2.16*** (0.45)	-1.89*** (0.20)		-1.24*** (0.20)	0.93*** (0.15)	1.10*** (0.21)	1.31*** (0.26)	-0.83** (0.42)	-1.50*** (0.18)	2.06*** (0.39)	-2.22*** (0.46)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.70*** (0.14)
Observations	7,148	7,148	5,479	6,874		6,170	6,170	6,170	6,170	6,170	6,170	6,170	6,170	4,112	6,170

Source: Wisconsin Advertising Project; US Census; FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics; US Election Atlas// Standard errors in parenthesis *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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