Racial Cues in Campaign Advertisements
An Analysis of Partisan Differences and Change over Time in the Use of Racial Cues in U.S. Presidential Campaign Advertisements, 1952-2012

Senior Thesis

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By
Michael Duggan

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Michael Duggan

Committee members:

Name: Prof. Jill Greenlee Signature: _____________________________

Name: Prof. Daniel Kryder Signature: _____________________________

Name: Prof. Michael Willrich Signature: _____________________________
Introduction

Modern-day political campaigns have a wide variety of tools at their disposal. One of the most prominent of these is the campaign advertisements. Ads are perhaps the most omnipresent and intrusive part of modern-day campaigns. The operatives who run political campaigns, and some political scientists, believe that these ads have an impact on their viewers. An area of interest for political scientists concerns the use of race in politics. The aim of this project is to analyze the use of race in campaign advertisements by candidates across time. Two related research questions guide this project. First, how do candidates use racial cues in campaign advertisements to prime negative racial stereotypes in the minds of the viewing-and-voting public? Second, how do candidates use racial cues to form new racial associations, effectively countering negative stereotypes? This paper attempts to bridge a gap in the scholarship on both race in politics and campaign effects. This analysis uses these areas of scholarship to guide an attempt to uncover patterns in when and how candidates use racial priming in campaign advertisements.

Literature Review

There is a large body of scholarship that shows that racial cues have a significant impact on potential voters. Mendelberg (2001) found that implicit racial appeals in political campaigns prime racial stereotypes, and while Huber and Lapinski (2006) challenged the validity of some of her conclusions, they also found support for the idea that, at least in some cases, racial cues are effective at priming negative racial stereotypes. Valentino (2002) conducted an experiment and found two important results; that racial cues in campaign advertisements can indeed prime negative racial stereotypes, and that racial cues that are counter to stereotypes dampen these negative stereotypes, possibly allowing for the formation of new, more positive racial
associations.¹ Caliendo and McIlwain (2006) and Hurwitz and Peffley (2005) also find support for the theory that racial cues can prime racial stereotypes or new racial associations, though their work is not specifically interested in campaign advertisements. Priming matters because it links racial stereotypes with policy opinions, giving candidates the ability to use racial cues to bring associated policy opinions to the fore in the minds of voters when they make political decisions (Valentino 2002).

Campaign advertisements are designed to advance the cause of winning elections for the candidates who create them, and that racial cues can prime racial attitudes in viewers of those campaign advertisements. The implicit link between these two areas of research lies in the assumption that racial cues are included in campaign advertisements because those who create them believe that they can have useful effects, a sentiment supported by scholarship. Hutchings (2004), Hasen (2014), Giles (1994), McDaniel (2008) and Frymer (1999) all discuss various aspects of the relationship between race and political party affiliation. Basic breakdowns of voter demographics show a split, with African-Americans overwhelmingly supporting the Democratic Party (Pew 2012). Giles (1994) in particular discusses the fact that as the Democratic Party in the South has increasingly relied on African-American voters as white voters desert it in favor of the Republican Party over time. McIlwain (2011) and Hasen (2014) argue that candidates use racial (and in some cases racist) appeals in order to provoke a predictable response in their constituencies. Taken together, their argument is that (typically Republican) candidates use implicit racial cues (in advertisements and other forms of communication) in order to prime negative racial stereotypes among white voters, thereby mobilizing them to vote in favor of the (typically Republican) candidates in question. Their arguments specifically concern Republicans

¹ My analysis differs from Valentino’s in that I am analyzing real-world, historical campaign advertisements. Valentino’s experiment demonstrated the effects of racial-cue priming in advertisements, but did not examine how or when such priming had been used in actual candidates’ advertisements.
in the South. They do not claim that these tactics are used by all Republicans across the nation, but their arguments are an example of how and why candidates use racial cues in certain ways.

The combination of these distinct-but-related areas of scholarship forms a theoretical framework that holds that partisan differences among racial constituencies create an electoral incentive for candidates to use racial cues in campaign advertisements in order to use their priming effects for (at least hoped-for) electoral gain. This constructed framework produces some testable hypotheses. If Republican candidates have a greater electoral incentive to seek the maximum possible percentage of white voters, then I hypothesize that Republican-candidate advertisements will show a greater use of racial cues designed to prime negative racial stereotypes than will advertisements for similarly-situated Democratic candidates. This hypothesis is time-dependent; its effects should appear after the 1960s partisan realignment triggered by the Civil Rights Movement, which saw African-American voters overwhelmingly side with the Democratic Party. An inverse hypothesis holds that, if Republican candidates see a greater electoral benefit in trying to gain African-American supporters (possibly due to regional demographic differences) then their advertisements will use racial cues more similarly to Democratic candidates, in seeking to display a message of inclusiveness. Elements of the scholarship seem to lend support to both these hypotheses, perhaps at different times. Brown (2004) discusses the “southern strategy” by which the Republican Party sought to gain political ground in the South by appealing to white voters who opposed the Democratic Party’s move to embrace greater civil rights for African-Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. By the 21st century, the Republicans may have found cause to move towards more inclusive messaging, as suggested by Philpot (2007), which would lend support to the latter hypothesis. If this is the case, then we might expect to see fewer uses of negative racial cues by Republicans in more recent decades.
than in the era immediately after the 1960s realignment, as there may now be greater incentives towards using positive cues than in the past.

**Methodology**

*Concepts*

In order to clearly lay out the bounds of my analysis, it is necessary to develop a precise definition of certain concepts critical to this project. The first, most critical concept that must be defined is racial cues. For the purpose of this analysis, racial cues consist of visual images of non-white groups or individuals displayed as part of a campaign advertisement, as well as language relating to race within advertisements. These two components of the concept of racial cues need not be independent; a racial cue may well consist of both visual images and spoken words or written text, though the two need not be combined for a racial cue to be present. This definition of racial cues is derived in significant part from Valentino (2002), who analyzed the effects of racial cues on priming racial stereotypes in an experimental setting. The experiment consisted of several versions of a researcher-created campaign advertisement using George W. Bush as an example candidate, with a narrator discussing various aspects of Bush’s political platform (Valentino 2002). The various versions of the ad used in the experiment combined the standard narration with different images, some of which were race-neutral, and others of which were designed to evoke racial stereotypes. The experiment was designed to measure three aspects of racial attitudes (relating to stereotypes). These measures were: racial resentment, the “contention that blacks do not try hard enough to overcome the difficulties they face” (Valentino 2002. 80), laissez-faire racism, the idea that presumes that “all major obstacles facing blacks as a group have been removed” (Valentino 2002, 81); and the related indicator of perceived racial conflict, the idea that “blacks have too much influence in American life and politics” (Valentino
2002, 81). These aspects of Valentino’s work are helpful because they allow us to understand the stereotypes that politicians may use cues to stimulate, thereby helping us to identify those cues. In addition to Valentino, Mendelberg (2008) discusses racial cues, which she calls implicit messages. She, for example, mentions an image of a black criminal as a stereotypical racial cue (Mendelberg 2008). Mendelberg (2008, 110) defines racial cues as follows.

This general approach to the impact of negative racial cues applies to studies of implicit racial cues or messages as well. Implicit messages are distinguished from explicit messages, which use "racial nouns or adjectives to endorse white prerogatives, to express anti-black sentiment, to represent racial stereotypes, or to portray a threat from African Americans." Implicit messages have a similar content but use a more subtle and indirect communication style by omitting racial nouns and adjectives such as "blacks" or "racial".

Both of these pieces of the scholarship define racial cues similarly, as those images, words, or combinations thereof involving race. This definition is suitable for the purposes of this analysis, albeit with a few minor caveats. Valentino and Mendelberg are, for the most part, concerned with studying the association between racial cues that appeal to negative racial stereotypes on racial attitudes. I adopt their definition because we agree on what racial cues are: depictions or references to race that either reinforce or counter negative stereotypes. They, however, treat racial cues as an independent variable, whereas for the purposes of my analysis racial cues are the dependent variable. As such, I am satisfied with operationally defining racial cues as visual and/or verbal depictions of or references to race that either reinforce or counter racial stereotypes.

The independent variable in my analysis, the concept I think explains the hypothesized divergence in use of racial cues by candidates, is the candidates’ political party affiliation. For the purposes of my analysis, I stipulate that the operational definition of political party affiliation will be “a candidate’s stated party affiliation at the time any given advertisement under analysis
was produced.”

This definition is based largely on common sense, given that party affiliation is a concrete (relatively speaking) concept. Valentino (2002) does not explicitly define the concept of political party, but his work contains clear references to the two major parties, Democratic and Republican, and at least implicitly defines parties and party affiliation in similar terms to my definition.

The Sample

In order to be able to draw any meaningful conclusions from this analysis, it was necessary to draw a sufficiently large sample of advertisements to investigate. I initially set out a target of 150 advertisements. This target figure was chosen as sufficiently large that any single advertisement would not dramatically skew the results. During the data-collection phase of this project, I added an additional four advertisements to the sample, for a total sample size of 154 advertisements.

I compiled the sample using a multi-step process that I will describe in the following paragraphs.

The goal of my analysis was to assess candidates’ use of racial cues over time. Accordingly, the advertisements in my sample are drawn from both recent and past electoral campaigns, in order to assess change over the sixty years since television advertisements were first used in campaigns. I began by assigning a minimum baseline of four advertisements to each of the sixteen presidential campaigns, ranging from 1952 to 2012, where television advertisements were used as part of the campaign. This ensured that each campaign was included in the sample, in order to avoid the possibility of accidentally overlooking a candidate who might have been particularly prone to use racial cues, and who might have been missed if only a sample

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2 This definition will likely result in the expected binary of Democratic Party candidate advertisements and Republican Party candidate advertisements. It does at least account for the possibility of third parties, as well as for the potentially-interesting factor of party-switching by any candidates between elections.

3 These additional advertisements were added to ensure that all years had at least an equal minimum number of advertisements in the sample.
of years had been included. This decision does mean that the total number of advertisements analyzed for any given was smaller, but I believe that the benefit of a broader range of advertisements is worth the cost of a slightly Shallower analysis of any given year.

In addition to the base of at least four advertisements for each of the 16 campaigns, which comprised only one-third of the overall sample, other advertisements were added to the sample via other methods. Four campaign years, 1964, 1968, 2008, and 2012 were purposively selected for increased scrutiny. The reasons for these years’ selection involve unusually-heightened considerations of race; for 1964 and 1968 the ongoing Civil Rights Movement and subsequent partisan realignment, and for 2008 and 2012 the presence of a major-party African-American candidate on the presidential ballot. Each of these years was deliberately a larger share of the sample; 1964 and 1968 had sixteen ads each, and 2008 and 2012 had 18 ads each included in the sample. In addition to this deliberate oversampling, I also oversampled several other, randomly-selected years. I did this because I thought that the purposively-oversampled years should display unusually-high use of racial cues, and I did not want them to dramatically skew the sample, though with the trade-off of degrading the representativeness of the sample.

For all but the 2008 and 2012 campaigns, all advertisements included in my analysis were sampled from the Living Room Candidate, a site operated by the Museum of the Moving Image which archives campaign advertisements from 1952 to the present.4 This database does not include all advertisements from all campaigns, but it provides a selection of advertisements for each candidate in each year. It was necessary to draw advertisements from the Living Room

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4 Located at www.livingroomcandidate.org.
Candidate despite it not including all advertisements due to logistical difficulties inherent in finding older campaign advertisements, as well as due to a lack of time and resources.\(^5\)

I compiled most of the sample (excluding 2008 and 2012) by randomly sampling advertisements from the Living Room Candidate. I sampled an equal number of Democratic and Republican advertisements in each year to provide a basis of comparison between the parties. This process generated a sample of 118 randomly-selected advertisements for analysis.

The remaining 36 advertisements in the sample, for the years 2008 and 2012, were sampled from the online archives of the Political Communications Lab at Stanford University.\(^6\) This archive included many more advertisements for each candidate than the Living Room Candidate did.\(^7\) I compiled a sampling frame for each of the four candidates containing all of their campaign advertisements, and eliminating any advertisements run on their behalf by independent groups in order to capture only the actual attitudes expressed by the candidates’ campaigns. Each advertisement was assigned a number, and nine advertisements were randomly sampled per candidate for each of these two years.

The outcome of this process was a sample of 154 campaign advertisements, representing sixteen campaign years and thirty-two candidates; half of which were from Democratic candidates and half of which were from Republican candidates. Once my sample was assembled,

\(^5\) Though logistically necessary, drawing a sample from the Living Room Candidate has drawbacks. The site includes only a partial subset of all of the advertisements from a given year, and it is possible that the advertisements in their database are systematically biased. The Living Room Candidate seeks to archive particularly-notable advertisements. It is possible that these notable advertisements are not representative of advertisements as a whole. In the context of this analysis, that could mean that the racial cues in included advertisements may be extreme and not representative of how cues are used overall. Despite the possibility of systemic bias, the logistical difficulties inherent in trying to find (especially older) advertisements made using the Living Room Candidate the only viable method.

\(^6\) Located at pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/

\(^7\) I cannot say with any certainty that all advertisements from these years were included. The pool of advertisements was largest for 2008 and 2012 and may have been more-representative, but I do not know if it contained the entire universe of cases. If it did not, it would also have a risk of systemic bias.
I analyzed the racial contents of the advertisements by a process of content analysis, as described in the following section.

**Content Analysis**

Concurrently with assembling the sample of advertisements to be analyzed, I developed a coding scheme to assess the use of racial cues in these advertisements. The coding scheme was designed to produce two scores for each advertisement. The full coding scheme is included, along with the instructions for its use, in the appendix.

The first variable (denoted V1) measures each advertisement’s level of negative racial cues, stereotypes, and images. V1 was scored on five-point scales ranging from 0 to 1 in increments of .25. For V1, a score of 1 would represent a heavily racist advertisement rife with negative racial cues. A score of 0 on V1 would represent an advertisement with no negative racial cues, or no racial content whatsoever, and intermediate scores would indicate negative racial content between the two extremes. The coding frame for variable V1 did not assess different forms of negative racial content, such as explicit versus implicit content, visual or audio content, or other various forms, as separate variables. V1 is a composite measure of negative racial content. It indicates a level of negative racial content but does not include information as to the exact nature of that content, information which is not relevant to this analysis but which might have been interesting for further study.

The second variable (denoted V2), measures each advertisement’s level of what I have called, in shorthand form, “anti-racism.” This variable measures positive racial associations in the sample advertisements. These positive associations vary in their exact nature, but either
subvert negative racial stereotypes or promote new racial understandings. As with V1, variable V2 was measured on a five-point scale ranging from 0 to 1 in .25 increments. A V2 score of 0 indicates no positive racial content or no racial content whatsoever. A V2 score of 1 indicates that positive racial associations are the focus of the advertisement. Intermediate V2 scores indicate intermediate levels of anti-racist content.

Each advertisement in the sample was coded using the coding scheme, which served as a guide for assigning consistent and reliable scores to advertisements with similar levels of racial content in my analysis. Due to an oversight, an intercoder reliability check was not conducted on the coding scheme. As such, the data collected may be subjectively biased, and the results of my analysis may not be generalizable.

All advertisements were scored on the variables V1 (racist content, for short) and V2 (anti-racist content, for short). The dataset also included the party, scored as DEM for the Democratic Party and GOP for the Republican Party, the year of the campaign for each advertisement, and the name of the candidate responsible for the advertisement. The dataset also included identification numbers for each advertisement, along with the names of each advertisement; these elements were not part of the statistical analysis of the data and were included only for identification purposes. Included in the dataset was a variable for decade. This

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8 For example, an advertisement might seek to subvert stereotypes such as the stereotype that African-Americans are undeserving recipients of welfare by portraying them as hardworking and responsible citizens. See also Valentino (2002).

9 Each advertisement was viewed multiple times. No analysis was done during the first viewing. After the first viewing, the advertisement was viewed again, at least one time, and then assigned a score on the variables V1 and V2 according to the scoring intervals laid out in the coding frame, after the final viewing. Advertisements that appeared to include significant or borderline racial content were viewed more than two times in order to better assess the correct scores to be assigned; not all advertisements were viewed more than twice. No changes to the coding frame were made during the process of analysis, and no preliminary assessment of the data was conducted until the entire sample had been coded, in order to avoid the potential of introducing confirmation biases.

10 The failure to conduct an intercoder reliability check is my error. I overlooked that step accidentally, and had insufficient time to re-work the coding scheme and re-code the advertisements. I regret that this error may compromise the validity of my findings.
helped with assessing change over time.\textsuperscript{11} The following sections explain the results of several statistical tests, including a comparison of means, factorial analysis of variance and simple analysis of variance, and lay out the notable findings of my analysis.

**Findings**

**Comparison of Means**

To begin my analysis, I conducted a comparison of the mean scores on variables V1 and V2 by party to assess whether there were any significant differences in the use of racial cues in advertisements between the two parties. My primary hypothesis holds that there will be a difference in the use of racial cues between the parties. Specifically, Republicans will be more likely to use negative racial cues than Democratic candidates, particularly in the years after the 1968 partisan realignment\textsuperscript{12}. A second hypothesis holds that Republican candidates in may use more anti-racist cues in an attempt to broaden their party’s support, a use which may be more apparent in more recent years.\textsuperscript{13} The following table displays a comparison of the mean scores for each party on variables V1 and V2.

| [Table 1 here] |

In the sample advertisements, the mean scores on variables V1 and V2 were observed to be different between the two parties, though these differences were not statistically significant.\textsuperscript{14} The apparent differences in means by party may be nothing more than random error. The

\textsuperscript{11} The decades were: 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s (indicated as 2000-2009) and 2010s (indicated as 2010+).

\textsuperscript{12} Specifically, in the years 1968-1980.

\textsuperscript{13} In years after 2000.

\textsuperscript{14} The mean V1 (negative) scores were .006 for the Democrats and .013 for the Republicans. The mean V2 (positive) scores were .292 for the Democrats and .162 for the Republicans. These were the average scores of positive and negative content by party. The differences were not significant, though the Democratic advertisements had fewer negative cues and more positive cues than their Republican counterparts, but without significance this observation is of limited value.
comparison of means provides no support for my hypothesis due to the lack of a statistically significant difference between the parties.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Change over time}

My second hypothesis was that the use of race in campaign advertisements would change over time due to the changing political salience of race and racially-linked issues. Republicans would be more likely to increasingly use positive racial cues as they seek to broaden their party’s appeal and Democratic candidates would use more anti-racist content, over time, as the party built and sought (and seeks) to keep its diverse coalition intact. In order to test these hypotheses, I grouped the data by decade, to better see change over time that would be less impacted by individual campaign years’ influence. I then conducted a factorial analysis of variance (factorial ANOVA) to see if there were any significant differences on the variables by decade, and by decade and party.\textsuperscript{16} The only significant findings were on variable V2, as displayed in the table.\textsuperscript{17}

[Table 2 here]

The factorial ANOVA indicated a statistically significant main effect difference by decade on V2, and a statistically significant interaction effect between party and decade on V2. This indicated that there was a statistically-significant change over time in the use of positive racial cues in advertisements by party over time. The interaction effect indicates that the use of positive racial cues changed differently between the two parties, but the test does not indicate which party demonstrated the change, only that there was a significant difference over time that was stronger for one party.

\textsuperscript{15} This may be an area that is ripe for further research, to assess whether the observed (if not significant) difference in means is a coincidence.

\textsuperscript{16} The factorial analysis of variance (factorial ANOVA) is a statistical test for significant differences between the mean scores of different groups. The factorial ANOVA will indicate whether there are any significant differences in variable scores by party, decade, and both. It is appropriate to use in this situation, because I am testing the hypothesis that there may be differences between the parties, which the factorial ANOVA will state.

\textsuperscript{17} I conducted a factorial ANOVA for both variables. There were no significant differences on V1.
Subsequent to conducting the factorial ANOVA which indicated a significant interaction effect between decade and party on V2, I conducted an analysis of variance test (ANOVA) to find where those differences occurred. As the factorial ANOVA indicated that party is a significant factor, I ran separate ANOVA tests for the Democratic and Republican advertisements. The ANOVA for Republican advertisements did not display any statistically significant variance across time. Table 3 shows the ANOVA output for the Democratic advertisements only for variable V2.

[Table 3 here]

For Democratic advertisements only, and only on V2 (anti-racist content), there was a statistically-significant variation by decade indicated by the ANOVA. The Bonferroni post hoc test (as shown in Table 4) illustrated where in time that variation occurred.

[Table 4 here]

As indicated in the table, there was a statistically significant difference in the V2 scores of Democratic advertisements between the 1950s and all other decades with the exception of the 1960s. The mean scores for V2 for Democratic advertisements were significantly different in the 1950s from all decades other than the 1960s. What this means is that the positive racial cues in Democratic advertisements in the sample changed significantly over time. The use of positive racial cues by Democrats had one form in the 1950s that is significantly different from their use

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18 The simple analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical test that tests for significance between the means of two or more groups. In this case, the groups were the mean scores of each decade. Four separate ANOVA tests were conducted; one for V1 for Republican advertisements, one for V1 for Democratic advertisements, one for V2 for Republican advertisements, and one for V2 for Democratic advertisements. Only the ANOVA for V2 for Democratic advertisements indicated a statistically significant difference between the means for each decade. The other three showed no significant differences.

19 The Bonferroni post hoc test is conducted after running an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. The ANOVA for Democratic advertisements on V2 showed a statistically significant change in mean V2 scores across the decades, but the ANOVA does not indicate where those differences are occurring. The Bonferroni test compares the means of the decades and shows where there are significant differences between the means of specific decades, allowing us to see when in time the changes in Democratic V2 scores occurred.
in later decades. Clearly, the use of positive racial content in advertisements by Democrats underwent some form of change between these two decades and later decades. These tests were insufficient to determine the nature of that change, so further tests were conducted, which I will describe in the next section. There were no statistically significant variations by decade for V2 for Republican advertisements, and no statistically significant variations by decade on V1 for either party.

Section III: Change in V2 for Democratic Advertisements

The analysis of variance and Bonferroni post hoc tests conducted on the V2 scores for Democratic advertisements indicated that there was a statistically-significant variation in the use of positive racial cues by Democrats between the 1950s and 1960s, but did not indicate the nature of that relationship. In order to understand the nature of the relationship, I ran a correlation on the data for the Democratic advertisements in order to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between year and V2 indicated in the Democratic advertisements by the ANOVA, the results of which are shown in Table 5, below.

[Table 5 here]

The correlation analysis shows a statistically significant change over time in the mean scores on variable V2 for Democratic candidates. The relationship is of weak-to-moderate strength and the relationship is negative. This indicates that the mean V2 scores, measuring positive racial content, decreased over time. More recent campaign advertisements have had less in the way of positive racial content in their advertisements than the campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s.

[Figure 1 here]

Figure 1, above, shows a visualization of the mean scores for V1 and V2 for both parties by decade; only the Democratic scores changed in a statistically significant way, and only on V2.
The Republican V2 scores, and the scores for V1 for both parties, are included for illustrative purposes, but the changes in these scores were not statistically significant. The implications of the findings laid out in this chapter will be discussed in the following section.

Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

Discussion

My primary hypothesis to answer the question of how racial cues are used in campaign advertisements held that there was likely to be a difference in how these cues were used depending on the party of the candidates involved, and specifically that Republican candidates would be more likely to use negative racial cues than Democratic candidates, particularly after the 1960s partisan realignment. The comparison of means of the V1 and V2 scores displayed in Table 1 provides no support for that hypothesis. The mean scores for V1 and V2 were not significantly different between the Republican and Democratic parties. Because the differences were not statistically significant, there is no evidence to support my hypothesis.

Though Democratic candidates do seem to use more positive racial cues overall than their Republican counterparts, as the hypothesis indicates, surprisingly there was a distinct and significant decrease over time in their use of positive racial cues. From a peak in the 1950s, and to a lesser extent in the 1960s, the Democratic advertisements in all subsequent decades showed a marked drop in the use of positive racial cues. This decrease was statistically significant, though it was not accompanied by a statistically significant increase in Democratic use of negative racial cues, nor any statistically significant change in the use of racial cues by Republicans. My analysis of the advertisements did not extend to including factors that might

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20 The comparison of means test did show differences in means that, at a glance, might appear to be in keeping with the hypothesis. However, because these differences are not statistically significant, I cannot draw any conclusions about my hypothesis. Further study would be necessary to more thoroughly attempt to support or refute this hypothesis.
explain this decrease in the use of racial cues by Democrats, though I can speculate on possible reasons by reference to the theories contained in the Literature Review section.

As discussed earlier, I referenced demographic research indicating that, since the 1960s, most African-Americans and a large segment of other non-white groups have become aligned with the Democratic Party. This research was included as part of the discussion of the hypothesis that Republicans may use more positive racial cues over time in order to attract more non-white voters, a hypothesis that I found no evidence to support. I would postulate that, since the Democratic Party already has, in large part, the support of non-white groups, its candidates may not see a need to include positive racial cues designed to foster new racial understandings. This is consistent with Frymer (1999), who discusses the idea that African-American voters have been “captured” by the Democratic Party. What this means is that the Democratic Party, having gained the support of African-Americans, sees little need to use positive cues to try and win the support of those who are already likely to support them. This possibility would explain both the decrease on V2 (which measures positive racial cues) for Democratic candidates and the lack of a simultaneous increase on V1. In effect, it may well be the case that Democratic candidates do not see a need to use race much if at all in their advertisements, as they already have the support that positive cues would be expected to gain them, and would risk damaging their coalition by using negative racial cues. The Republican scores do not display significant variation. Republican candidates may well see some minor benefit to continuing use of low levels of negative racial cues, but may not see much of a benefit to using positive cues in a way which might upset their largely-white base of voters for the indeterminate benefit of trying to pry non-white voters away from the other party. Without further study, this must remain speculative.

[Figure 2 here]
Figure 2 and Figure 3 are, respectively, histograms showing all of the years in which there were advertisements that scored above 0 on V1 and V2, respectively, broken down by party. Only 15 advertisements, less than 10% of the sample, scored above 0 on either variable. The vast majority of the advertisements I scored contained no meaningful racial content, or were entirely neutral on the issue of race. Apart from in the 1950s and (slightly) the 1960s, race was a rarely-occurring subject in the sample advertisements. It may be the case that the sample was simply too small to properly filter out the “signal” of racially-tinged advertisements from the “noise” of those without racial cues. However, it may also be the case that the lack of racial cues in most advertisements is in fact a meaningful finding in and of itself. It is possible that race is simply not something that candidates see as particularly important when it comes to making and airing campaign advertisements. The assessment of that possibility is beyond the scope of my analysis in this paper, but remains an interesting open question that I believe is ripe for future study.

Conclusion

I set out to answer the question of whether and how Democratic and Republican candidates could be expected to differ in their use of negative and positive racial cues in campaign advertisements. I hypothesized that the parties would use racial cues differently, and specifically that Republicans would use more negative cues than Democrats, but I found no statistically significant evidence to support. I also found no significant evidence to support the hypothesis that Democrats would use more positive racial cues than Republicans. I also hypothesized that there may be change over time in the use of racial cues. There was no statistically significant variation in the use of negative cues over time by either Democrats or
Republicans. There was a statistically-significant decline in the use of positive racial cues by Democratic candidates after the 1950s and 1960s, though my analysis was not sophisticated enough to assess the reasons for that decline beyond the possibilities laid out in the previous section. What I found in this analysis was only that Democratic use of positive racial cues has significantly decreased over time. I believe that this area is ripe for future study. My analysis was conducted on only a small sample of the entire population of campaign advertisements. Between limitations on time and limitations on resources, I could not analyze a larger and possibly more representative sample of advertisements, and I believe that a future study along these lines, of a larger sample of advertisements, would be worthwhile to further the goal of confirming or rejecting my hypotheses about how racial cues are used in campaign advertisements by party, and how that use changes over time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Negative/Racist Content (V1)</th>
<th>Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2)</th>
<th>N</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All variables scored between 0 and 1, with scores closer to 0 indicating no/neutral racial content.*
Table 2. Factorial Analysis of Variance of Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2) by Party and Decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1.054</td>
<td>.306</td>
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<td>.004*</td>
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<td>.013</td>
<td>2.127</td>
<td>.054*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.10
Table 3. Analysis of Variance of Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2) for Democratic-Candidate Advertisements by Decade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>3.791</td>
<td>.003**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: **p < .05*
Table 4. Variance of Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2) for Democratic-Candidate Advertisements by Decade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decades</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950's</td>
<td>.10088</td>
<td>.04202</td>
<td>.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>.16667</td>
<td>.04729</td>
<td>.016**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>.16667</td>
<td>.04634</td>
<td>.013**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>.16667</td>
<td>.04992</td>
<td>.028**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>.16667</td>
<td>.04261</td>
<td>.004**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>.16667</td>
<td>.04729</td>
<td>.016**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>.16667</td>
<td>.04729</td>
<td>.016**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: **p<.05
Table 5. Correlation Matrix for Negative/Racist Content (V1), Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2) and Year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative/Racist Content (V1)</th>
<th>Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative/Racist Content (V1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2)</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.366**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **p<.05
Figure 1. Mean Positive and Negative Racial Content Variable Scores Over Time by Party.
Figure 2. Number of Advertisements Scoring Above 0 for Negative/Racist Content (V1) by Year and Party.
**Figure 3.** Number of Advertisements Scoring Above 0 for Positive/Anti-Racist Content (V2) by Year and Party.
Appendix A – Coding Scheme

All advertisements are assessed by means of a coding rubric that allows their contents to be translated into quantitative data. The advertisements are scored on two main variables: Negative racial associations (racial cues designed to prime negative racial stereotypes) and Positive racial associations (use of racial cues to subvert negative stereotypes and/or form positive racial associations). The Negative and Positive variables (V1 and V2) are scored between 0 and 1 on a five-interval scale. Scores closer to 0 indicate less racial content, scores closer to 1 indicate more.

V1 – Negative Racial Association

Advertisements are assigned a score between 0 and 1 in intervals of .25 based on their negative racial content. The five intervals are laid out as follows.

0: The advertisement contains no negative racial content, or no racial content whatsoever. Any images of non-white individuals or groups are presented in neutral or positive contexts. No racial codewords or other stereotype triggers are included in the advertisement’s visual images or audio content.

.25: The advertisement contains minor negative racial content. Negative stereotypes (such as the classic stereotype of African-Americans as undeserving recipients of welfare), if used, appear briefly, or are not the principal focus of the advertisements. The advertisement may feature implicit negative content, such as images or visuals of white people while discussing personal responsibility, or pairing images of non-white people with general discussions of governmental problems, such as overspending or mismanagement.

.5: The advertisement contains some negative racial content. Negative stereotypes may be used, but are generally not the principal focus of the advertisement. The advertisement may include negative associations, such as pairing images of non-white people with discussion of welfare, or crime statistics. In this category, there are clear links between racial images and advertisement content, but these links are not explicit.

.75: The advertisement contains significant negative racial content. Negative stereotypes are used and reinforced. The advertisement may indicate that non-white groups are the reason for problems encountered by white people. It may state or explicitly imply through images that minority groups lack responsibility and depend on government handouts. The principal difference between this category and the preceding category is that here the use of negative associations is explicit. The principal difference between this category and the following category is that advertisements in this category are not explicitly racist in nature, and particularly that non-white groups are not depicted as inherently dangerous or violent.

1: The advertisement is blatantly racist. Negative racial stereotypes are used throughout. Minority groups are explicitly depicted as dangerous, violent, or problematic. The advertisement insinuates or states that non-white groups are inferior or alien. Blatantly and explicitly racist advertisements should be given a score of 1.

V2 – Positive Racial Associations
Advertisements are assigned a score between 0 and 1 in intervals of .25 based on their positive racial content. The five intervals are laid out as follows.

0: The advertisement contains no positive racial content, or no racial content whatsoever. Any images of non-white individuals or groups are presented in neutral contexts.

.25: The advertisement contains minor positive racial content. Images of non-white groups may be shown in contexts that are not associated with negative stereotypes. Visuals may include images of mixed-racial gatherings, or other public instances of diversity. The advertisement does not contain any discussion of race.

.5: The advertisement contains some positive racial content. Images of non-white groups will be shown in non-stereotypical contexts, and will be interspersed with images of white people. Images or discussions of interracial couples or families may be included. If any discussion of race or racial issues is included, it is neutral or positive and not the principal focus of the advertisement. The advertisement may implicitly challenge stereotypes by pairing images of non-whites with positive text or audio.

.75: The advertisement contains significant positive racial content. Images of non-white groups will be shown in non-stereotypical contexts. Images showing diversity in public gatherings, diverse family groupings, or similar situations of diversity may be included. Text or audio will emphasize unity and togetherness, and celebrate American diversity. The advertisement may explicitly challenge stereotypes by emphasizing achievements of a diverse range of Americans. It may not explicitly be concerned wholly or primarily with race.

1: The advertisement is anti-racist. Images and depictions of a wide range of diverse America will be included. The text and/or audio of the advertisement will specifically and explicitly challenge racism, division, and will celebrate diversity. Unlike the previous category, any advertisement scoring in this category must be solely or primarily concerned with forming positive racial associations.
Bibliography


