

**Race to the Top**

*Racial Prejudice Toward Minority Candidates at Different Levels and Types of Office*

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20 April 2015

“This is where we are right now. It’s a racial stalemate we’ve been stuck in for years. Contrary to the claims of some of my critics, Black and White, I have never been so naïve as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy — particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own.

“But I have asserted a firm conviction — a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people — that working together we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds, and that in fact we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union.”

Barack Obama  
18 March 2008

## Acknowledgements

To grossly misquote the well-known Latin phrase, completing my senior thesis was only possible because of the giants on whose shoulders I stood. I cannot express enough thanks to Yale University and the Political Science Department for the continued support and encouragement these institutions provided.

In particular, I would like to thank John Henderson, my academic advisor, for his counsel, conversation, and invaluable review as I completed this study. His innovative thinking and guidance, especially when my original thesis ideas fell through, made him the ideal advisor. I would also like to thank Greg Huber, John Bullock, Eitan Hersh, David Mayhew, and Peter Aronow for advice over the course of the last year; Vesla Weaver for help creating my survey experiment; and Blaine Hudson for enthusiasm, encouragement, and assistance regardless of the administrative mess I managed to create.

Completion of this project could not have been accomplished without the financial support of Alan Gerber and the Center for the Study of American Politics, as well as the largesse of Pierson College, Stephen Davis, Emily Coates, and the Mellon Forum Grant. I am so thankful for this generosity.

I am grateful to Adam Dynes, Baobao Zhang, Michael Weaver, Mary McGrath, and the other Yale graduate students who took the time to help me improve my experimental design and interpret my results. This study would have also been impossible without the assistance of Seth Hill (UC San Diego), Eric Schickler (UC Berkeley), and the 18 politicians who spoke with me at length about their personal experiences running for office.

To my parents, Rhonda Wasserman and Howard Stern, who offered advice and edits — and who have ceaselessly pushed their children to learn and explore — my heartfelt love and thanks. Finally, to Scott Stern, Alisha Jarwala, Becca Ellison, Evan Millstein, and all of the other undergraduates who put up with months-worth of complaining — you all deserve a trip to Disney!

More than anything else, writing this thesis has reminded me how undeservedly lucky I am to have so many smart, thoughtful, and supportive people in my life.

## **Race to the Top**

### Racial Prejudice Toward Minority Candidates at Different Levels and Types of Office

*A substantial body of scholarship has found that skin color and ethnicity influence the way American voters evaluate political candidates. Yet no study has examined whether the penalties candidates of color face among White voters vary depending on the level and type of office sought. In this survey experiment, respondents evaluated one of 12 hypothetical electoral contests — elections for sheriff, mayor, state auditor, or U.S. Representative between two White candidates, White and Black candidates, or White and Hispanic candidates. I find that Hispanic candidates are often the subject of racial prejudice, especially among young voters and for the less-known office of state auditor. I also find that minority candidates (Blacks in particular) perform significantly better in contests for local offices such as sheriff and mayor. Black candidates appear to be favored by Democratic respondents in elections up and down the ballot. Through a series of interviews with former candidates and elected officials, I augment these findings with qualitative data. Although other factors have a greater influence on electoral outcomes, a political candidate's race clearly continues to impact candidate evaluation in varying ways depending on the level and type of office sought.*

## 1. Introduction

“You hear it all the time: ‘I’m not voting for the Black guy,’” said Howard Gentry, Jr. “It happens so much that you just shake your head about it now.”

Over the last two decades, Gentry has run for various offices in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1999, he won a seat on Nashville’s Metro Council, and in 2002, he became Nashville-Davidson County’s first Black vice mayor. He lost a race for mayor in 2008, but was elected the Criminal Court Clerk of Davidson County in 2011. In each of these contests, Gentry said, his ethnicity had an impact on his interactions with White voters. “When I was running for vice mayor, one guy actually left me a voicemail threatening my whole family,” Gentry said. “Then when I was vice mayor, about five White councilmen came into my office and one of them just said, ‘Man, I’ve never had a Black man tell me what to do.’ He wasn’t uncomfortable saying that. He told me that to my face.”

Gentry’s experiences are not unique, or even atypical. Although a Black man has twice been elected President, and minority representation in Congress is at its highest level ever (Krogstad 2015), the evidence that political candidates of color often face a penalty due to their skin color is robust and unambiguous. Despite the social norms that discourage explicit expressions of racism, between one fifth and one fourth of White respondent admitted to the national American Racial Opinion Survey that they believe fundamental differences in genetics and intelligence explain disparities between Black and White achievement (Huddy and Feldman 2009). In 2008, 14 percent of White voters in Democratic presidential primaries said that “race was a factor” in determining their votes. This figure ranged from 8 percent in Oregon and New Mexico to 24 percent in Mississippi (Huddy and Feldman 2009).

“Sure, race still has an impact,” said Gentry, who was born and raised in the segregated South. “It had an impact when I ran for council. It had an impact when I ran for vice mayor. It had an impact when I ran for mayor. And it had an impact when I ran for clerk.”

Study after study has confirmed Gentry’s anecdotal experiences. But one question no study has examined is whether a political candidate’s race impacts his or her election in different ways depending on the level and type of office sought. In other words, did Gentry’s race have a different impact when he was running for vice mayor as opposed to council, or when he was running for criminal court clerk as opposed to mayor? In general, do minority candidates running for local office (such as sheriff) face more or less of a penalty than candidates for higher office (like Congress)? Do minority candidates running for a relatively obscure office (like state auditor) face more or less of a penalty than candidates running for a well-known office (like mayor)? Through a randomized survey experiment, I seek to answer just that.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. In the second section, I will examine the existing scholarship concerning race and electoral politics. In the third section, I will lay out my four main hypotheses and describe the reasoning that led to them. In the fourth section, I will explain my experimental design and decision to utilize Amazon Mechanical Turk to conduct a survey experiment. In the fifth section, I will describe my results and present a variety of regression models. In the sixth section, I will discuss my findings, delve into potential threats to their validity, and consider future research to expand on this experiment. In the seventh section, I will augment this quantitative analysis through a series of interviews conducted with 18 minority politicians, including former mayors, congressmen, and statewide elected officials. In the eighth and final section, I will consider the implications of this study and steps moving forward.

Ultimately, the effect of race in America is, and has always been, variable. Its impact today may be different than its impact tomorrow, and its impact at one level of government is not necessarily revealing about its impact at another. The question I seek to answer is not if race plays a role in modern American politics, but rather when, how, and why.

## **2. The Impact of Race on Electoral Politics**

According to Gordon Allport, “Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a group member” (1954, 9). For years, many Whites had few qualms overtly articulating racial prejudices. As expressions of explicit prejudice have become taboo, however, it has become increasingly difficult to measure the extent to which lingering racism still afflicts White Americans (Huddy and Feldman 2009). There can be little doubt that fewer Whites report prejudiced opinions in face-to-face interviews than their parents or grandparents did in decades past (Bobo and Dawson 2009; Jaynes and Williams 1989; Kluegel 1990; Schuman, et al. 1997). The percent of Whites who agreed that “African Americans should have as good a chance as White people to get any job,” for example, rose from 45 percent in 1942 to 97 percent three decades later (Schuman, et al. 1997, 104). Whether the opinions of White Americans really changed, or simply the norms against explicitly expressing bigoted views, remains an intriguing and unsettled question (Dovidio and Fazio 1992; Feagin and Sikes 1995).

Regardless of the state of general racial prejudice in America, there can be little doubt that Black and Hispanic candidates continue to struggle on the political stage. Of the thousands of elections held in majority-White districts between 1966 and 1996, for instance, only 35 (0.52

percent) were won by Black candidates (Canon 1999). Even today, in the age of Barack Obama, Blacks constitute less than 2 percent of all elected officials, despite comprising 13 percent of the American population (Farley 2008; Bositis 2001; Jaynes and Williams 1989). Hispanics, meanwhile, constitute 8 percent of Congress, versus 17 percent of the overall American population (NALEO 2014).

That Blacks and Hispanics struggle to win support from White voters cannot simply be attributed to factors such as candidate ideology, or a dearth of well-qualified minority politicians. Through a randomized survey experiment, Terkildsen (1993) found that Black candidates receive a smaller share of the White vote than White candidates with identical issue stances, qualifications, and personal attributes. Other studies have confirmed that Black and Hispanic political candidates receive fewer votes than otherwise identical White candidates (e.g., McConaughy, et al. 2010; Weaver 2005; Sigelman, et al. 1995; Moskowitz and Stroh 1994; Reeves 1997). Sonenshein (1990) found that White voters also remain undecided much longer in biracial elections than in elections between two candidates of the same race. Evidently, it takes more time and mental effort for even those voters who will eventually vote for a minority candidate to reconcile this action.

Many pundits and researchers have pointed to the historic election of Barack Obama as a turning point — a final step in America’s progression from a slave-owning nation to a colorblind one. Goldman (2012) wrote that Obama’s ascendance to the White House caused Whites to update their beliefs about Blacks as a racial group. He found that the number of Whites agreeing with negative stereotypes about Blacks decreased in the months following Obama’s election. This so-called “Obama Effect” reduced racial prejudice between five and 14 times faster than would be expected. Nevertheless, a follow-up survey by Goldman in October 2010 found that



respondents' racial prejudice returned to pre-campaign levels in the subsequent years. This latter, less rose-colored finding has been confirmed by a variety of other scholars in additional recent studies.

Models created by Donald Kinder and Allison Dale-Riddle (2012) found that Obama performed worse than a similarly qualified White presidential candidate. They predicted that a White Democrat would have received between 58.1 and 60.7 percent of the vote in 2008, not the 53.7 percent Obama actually did (115). Obama finished with just 44.3 percent of the White vote versus 98.8 percent of the Black vote that year, the largest racial divide ever recorded (96). "All things considered," Kinder and Dale-Riddle concluded, "Barack Obama became president in spite of his race" (4). Stephens-Davidowitz (2013) likewise found, through evaluations of Google search results, that racial prejudice cost Obama 9.1 percent of the White vote in 2008 and 9.5 percent of the White vote in 2012. Scholars remain torn, however, on the reasons minority candidates continue to struggle under the glow of the political spotlight.

One likely cause is racially polarized voting: members of one racial group are often reluctant to support out-group members. To wit, Whites tend to support White candidates, while minority voters — who historically turn out to vote at lower rates — tend to support candidates of color (Kam 2007; Sigelman, et al. 1995). For instance, in the 1999 Philadelphia mayoral election, Sam Katz, a White Republican, won 97 percent of the 742 White-majority precincts, while John Street, a Black Democrat, won 98 percent of the 750 Black-majority precincts. This trend was significant for White voters despite controls for partisanship (Slocum and Ting-Lee 2004, 90). A recent study confirmed that co-ethnic preference among Blacks and Hispanics is completely accounted for by party, but Whites favor co-ethnics *even after* accounting for party

(Ansolabehere and Fraga 2013). In other words, White voters often discriminate against minority politicians, relative to White candidates, despite ideological agreement.

A number of psychologists and political scientists have argued that racist voting tendencies now manifest themselves in subtler, more socially acceptable forms (e.g., Greenwald, et al. 1998; Payne, et al. 2005; Iyengar and Hahn 2010; Feldman and Huddy 2005). Researchers have found that prejudice conveyed through White opposition to stereotypically Black demands — coined “new racism” — is a pervasive trend (Sears and Henry 2005; Bobo, et al. 1997; Henry and Sears 2002; Kinder and Sanders 1996). Mendelberg (2001), for instance, argued that implicitly racial appeals strongly impact Whites’ political behavior, leading to opposition to policies that frequently aid Blacks. Other scholars dismiss this measure of “new racism,” arguing that expressions of conservative ideology confound these results (e.g., Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000; Huber and Lapinski 2006). Sears and Henry (2003) determined that disapproval of racial policies, such as increased welfare payments, is a function of individualism, not broader principles.

Yet in spite of the library of books and papers that have examined the political impact of race and the motivations behind these sentiments, no piece of scholarship has adequately studied whether this impact varies depending on the level and type of political office sought. If researchers such as Mendelberg are correct that Americans still exhibit high levels of implicit racism, what institutional dynamics might foment these beliefs? If researchers such as Sears and Henry are correct, what factors continue to limit the success of minority politicians, as we know is the case? Are there certain elected positions — or perhaps specific political issues associated with them — that emphasize or ameliorate racial prejudices? On this front, the existing literature is sparse, though a few studies are instructive.

It is clear that not every minority politician is equally impacted by racism. One study of biracial electoral contests in Atlanta found that Black incumbents and candidates boasting local newspaper endorsements received a significantly greater share of the White vote than non-incumbents or unendorsed candidates (Bullock 1984). A later study found that party endorsements similarly increased Blacks' share of the White vote (Jeffries 1999). Minority candidates may also appeal to White voters by crafting a conservative image (Strickland and Whicker 1992; Kunda and Thagard 1996, 290), by avoiding racially charged issues (Jeffries 1999, 584), and by "using a quiet, conciliatory style" (Sonenshein 1990). It further appears — perhaps counterintuitively — that White voters are less likely to exhibit racist voting patterns when they hail from relatively segregated communities. In his 1990 campaign for U.S. Senate and his 1991 campaign for governor of Louisiana, former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke received his highest White vote share in the areas with the highest Black voter registration (Giles and Buckner 1993; 1995). Recent studies have confirmed that anti-Black sentiments are diminished among Whites who do not live around high proportions of Black residents (Taylor 2000; Hajnal 2007, 51).

Even these factors cannot save some minority politicians competing in particularly obscure elections, however. In one notable 2004 race for the board of the Orange Unified School District (which governs more than 30,000 California students), a candidate who made no public appearances, raised no money, and received no endorsements defeated his more qualified and infinitely better-funded opponent. The opponent's name was Phil Martinez (Burnett and Kogan 2013). Research indeed suggests that voters rely more heavily on demographic cues and candidates' names and physical appearances in low-information elections (Matson and Fine

2006; McDermott 1998; Lien 1998; Squire and Smith 1988). Thus, racial prejudices are likely more pronounced in races for less salient and less well-known political offices.

Aside from salience, there is also evidence White voters are more inclined to discriminate in contests for seemingly important elected positions. According to empirical findings gathered by Williams (1990, 51), “the higher the office, the more likely it is that Whites report that they would not vote for a black candidate.” Roughly 3.4 percent of Whites reported in a 1987 JCPS/Gallup survey that they would not vote for a black candidate for school board, compared with 3.6 percent for state legislature, 4.3 percent for U.S. House of Representatives, 5.6 percent for U.S. Senator, 10.5 percent for vice president, and 19.7 percent for president (52).<sup>1</sup> Gallup has since stopped asking this question, but the 1987 results nonetheless demonstrate that minority candidates for local office may be favored over those for higher positions. A handful of other recent empirical studies appear to confirm this finding (Bejarano 2014, 1958).

One hundred and fifty years after the end of the Civil War, fifty years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, and seven years after the election of a Black president, race continues to impact our political process. Despite the wide array of studies on the subject, however, the dynamics of this relationship — particularly when these dynamics interact with a given electoral contest — remain unclear. In order to remedy this, I designed a survey experiment that exposed potential voters to political contests for different types of elected office up and down the ballot.

### **3. Hypotheses**

Although little previous research directly addresses my primary questions of interest,

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<sup>1</sup> Research surrounding the role of gender in races for different political offices has likewise found that hypothetical female candidates are favored for a local office (town councilor) and penalized for prominent executive offices (president and governor) (Adams 1975).

existing literature was nonetheless useful in formulating my hypotheses. My first hypothesis is that, relative to the White candidates, Black and Hispanic candidates will both face discrimination among White voters. Despite radically different histories and political trajectories, both Black and Hispanic candidates for elected office have encountered similar headwinds in recent years. Both groups face a variety of negative stereotypes well documented by other scholars that influence the likelihood that minority candidates run in and win elections. Overall, Whites report being equally intimidated by Blacks and Hispanics (Bobo and Johnson 2000). And, as I have previously explained, both groups are significantly underrepresented in elected office.

Nevertheless, I believe that the prejudice the candidates face will vary depending on the political party of each respective voter. My second hypothesis is that Republicans will discriminate against minority politicians significantly more than Democrats. Although the extent to which Republicans hold more or less prejudiced views on race in general remains unclear, numerous studies have found that Democrats and Independents are more likely than Republicans to support Black candidates (Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Bejarano 2014, 1953; Silver and McCann 2014; Ingraham 2014). This partisan divide has only been heightened in recent years as the two major parties have polarized along ideological lines — with liberals increasingly flocking to the Democratic Party and conservatives to the GOP (Hajnal 2007).

My third hypothesis is that Black and Hispanic candidates will face less discrimination from voters in contests for local elected office than in contests for higher (and seemingly more important) office. Williams, whose empirical analysis I described in the previous section, found that Whites were most skeptical of Black candidates' ability to handle foreign policy and pressing national economic issues (1990, 44). The areas in which the Black candidates were

viewed more favorably all surrounded issues that disproportionately impact minority citizens (such as poverty, teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse) (47). These issues are also those most commonly addressed by local officials such as mayors, sheriffs, and city councilors. There is indeed substantial evidence that urbanites are willing to vote for Blacks and Hispanics for mayor (Cole 1976); for example, four of America's five largest cities have elected Black mayors (JCPS 2002). But voting for a racial minority at the local level is a wholly different action than voting for a minority candidate for higher elected office.

My fourth hypothesis is that Black and Hispanic candidates will face the most discrimination when they seek a less well-known elected office. A report by the Census Bureau found that there were more than 510,000 elected officials in the United States in 1992 — more than one for every 500 residents at the time (Census of Governments 1992). A vast majority of these positions, however, are largely unknown to the public. Most voters may be aware of the president, as well as mayors and members of Congress, but few are cognizant of the existence of state auditors, village selectmen, or the proverbial dogcatchers, let alone what these officials actually do. Elections for relatively obscure posts are covered sparingly by local media (McDermott 1997), and usually appear to the end of the ballot (Bowler, Donovan, and Happ 1992). As Aldrich (1993) demonstrated, voters view electoral behavior as an act of relatively minimal consequence, so often refrain from expending even token effort to learn about political contests that do not end at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Because of all of this, racism will likely have a more significant impact in less salient contests — after all, there are fewer factors to mitigate prejudicial tendencies in low-information or seemingly low-importance elections.

Evidence for this hypothesis stems from the 1982 California elections for governor, lieutenant governor, and state superintendent (Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990). In the contest for

governor, Tom Bradley, a Black Democrat, faced George Deukmejian, a White Republican. In the contest for lieutenant governor, both Democrat Leo McCarthy and Republican Carol Hallett were white. And in the ostensibly nonpartisan contest for superintendent, Wilson Riles, a Black Democrat, faced Bill Honig, a White Republican. While racial attitudes hurt both Bradley and McCarthy among Whites, Bradley's skin color and background did not stimulate an atypical level of racially polarized voting. The election for superintendent — in which both candidates were largely unknown professional educators — told a different story. In that election, Riles was disproportionately hurt by anti-Black voting. As Citrin, et al., concluded, “[I]n the absence of a partisan anchor and little detailed information about the candidates, race becomes a more salient cue for voting decisions.”

#### **4. Experimental Design**

I examined the effect of office level and type on minority candidate evaluation with a survey experiment that exposed respondents to different combinations of fictional candidates running for four different political offices. This allowed me to gauge support for hypothetical candidates of different races and at different levels in a controlled, randomized setting. The survey experiment used a 3 (White/White vs. White/Black vs. White/Hispanic) × 4 (sheriff vs. mayor vs. state auditor vs. U.S. Rep.) experimental design to study whether hypothetical Black and Hispanic candidates face varying levels of discrimination. These four elected offices respectively communicated different things to respondents: a sheriff is a hyper-local official who deals primarily with matters of law and order; a mayor is a well-known local executive; a state auditor is a statewide position, but undoubtedly the least-understood elected position considered; a congressman or woman is a legislator who deals far more than any of the other officials with

national issues. The survey experiment I created allowed me to control for each fictional candidate's background and policy preferences, and to vary platform and race across the treatment groups. My experimental design (divided into 12 basic treatment groups) is detailed in Table I.

	White candidate vs. White candidate	White candidate vs. Black candidate	White candidate vs. Hispanic candidate
Sheriff	~140 respondents	~140 respondents	~140 respondents
Mayor	~140 respondents	~140 respondents	~140 respondents
State Auditor	~140 respondents	~140 respondents	~140 respondents
U.S. House Rep.	~140 respondents	~140 respondents	~140 respondents

All respondents were first asked to describe their political views and background. Then, distributed across the 12 treatment groups, they read brief overviews of the policy platforms and backgrounds of two (randomly assigned) hypothetical candidates, both of whom were characterized as competing in a fictional Democratic primary. In designing the candidate materials, I decided to expose respondents to two potential candidates, not just one, as many similar studies have done (e.g., Terkildsen 1993). I also chose to include pictures of the candidates in order to best replicate voters' actual experiences interacting with politicians. Previous research has shown that physical characteristics, such as skin color, make for strong experimental manipulations (Gilens 1999; Bullock 1984).

All respondents were exposed to one White candidate — a fictional man I called Alan Miller — as well as one of three fictional opponents: a White man named Don Baker, a Black man named Thomas Washington, or a Hispanic man named Robert Garcia. Each of the surnames was selected because more than 80 percent of Americans with that name belong to the respective race (Roberts 2007). This served to underscore for respondents the racial distinctions between candidates. For many elections, political party affiliation is the simplest and most straightforward



cue (Conover and Feldman 1989; Rahn 1993), but the name of the candidate often has a substantial effect as well (Burnett and Kogan 2013; McDermott 1998).

The candidate descriptions were randomized within treatment groups; there was always one clearly qualified candidate, and one candidate for whom there was no mention of experience or expertise. This allowed me to determine the extent to which relevant candidate qualifications factored into voters' choices for different offices and among different candidates. The platforms were also distinct across treatment groups; candidates for sheriff mentioned issues of law and order, candidates for mayor mentioned education and unemployment, candidates for state auditor mentioned financial management and corruption, and candidates for Congress mentioned taxes and healthcare. This setup allowed me to reinforce the differences between the types of offices. For instance, emphasizing matters such as community policing undoubtedly reminded survey-takers of the duties and idiosyncrasies of a sheriff.

The brief overview of the candidates presented to each respondent was inspired by language from the previous paper, "Race, Skin Color, and Candidate Preference," by Vesla Weaver (2005), though almost all of the text was original. In order to provide headshots (which varied by race across different treatment groups) to accompany each overview, I acquired pictures of two White men, one Black man, and one Hispanic man from Weaver, who previously used them for her experiment. (Weaver's study controlled for visual candidate differences by utilizing a morphing technique through photo editing software, which digitally averaged several faces together to produce distinct candidates, equating all relevant characteristics while altering the race and skin color. The White, Black, and Hispanic candidates I presented share at least one face in common, which minimizes the effective difference between opposing candidates.) An example of one set of candidate overviews may be viewed in Figure I.

**Figure I – Screenshot of Amazon Mechanical Turk Survey**

**Candidates for Sheriff**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Alan Miller</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Gender: Male Age: 46 Party: Democrat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a local law enforcement officer for 17 years, I have learned firsthand the impact a strong and responsible police force can have on stopping crime.</li> <li>• Community policing, drug and alcohol rehabilitation initiatives, and gun buyback programs are among the top priorities for my term as sheriff.</li> <li>• People expect their police department to use force only as a last resort. Enforcing the law with the minimal amount of force necessary will be a goal of my term as sheriff.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Robert Garcia</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Gender: Male Age: 48 Party: Democrat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I believe that "smart justice" initiatives such as new approaches to risk assessment and to sentencing options increase public safety.</li> <li>• Goals for my term include increasing dialogue with local leaders, investigating corruption among county officials, and expanding field investigations for drug crimes.</li> <li>• I support increasing penalties for violent offenders and mandatory sentences to keep criminals off our streets. The safety of our children comes first.</li> </ul>
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Respondents were asked to report which of the two candidates shown they were inclined to support for the given elected office. After this initial question, global candidate evaluation was also measured with a unitless feeling thermometer asking respondents to rate each candidate from 0 (cold) to 100 (warm). Respondents were prompted with a battery of other questions about the candidates and their perceived policy preferences. This metric was designed to shed additional light on voters' motivation for their support (or lack thereof) of candidates of different races. For instance, one question examined the perceived support for law enforcement by both candidates, while another asked respondents to choose the most important criterion in their voting decision. (At no point did respondents have the option to go back and edit answers.) Finally, I asked questions designed to measure explicit racism. This section was presented last so as not to prime respondents to the true intentions of the survey. (See Appendix I for the full list

and order of questions posed to respondents.)

My research design makes methodological improvements on many similar studies of racially motivated voting. An internet-based survey design solves numerous problems associated with surveying racial attitudes, including social desirability bias. By allowing respondents to answer anonymously and in the comfort of their own homes, I was able to reduce the likelihood of self-monitoring or nonresponse. The relatively large sample sizes in this survey allowed me to attain robust results, despite the variations among and within treatment groups. In fact, the treatment groups of other studies that evaluate the impact of physical characteristics on candidate evaluation usually include around 60 respondents (Leigh and Susilo 2009; Miller and Lundgren 2010; Todorov, et al. 2005). I more than doubled that number.

I found participants — as seen in Table I, I sought roughly 1,680 respondents — for this survey experiment using Amazon Mechanical Turk (<https://www.mturk.com/>), through which I paid respondents online. Each respondent received 50 cents for participation in the survey, which took approximately five minutes. There are concerns regarding the representativeness of the American population reflected in the MTurk sample. Namely, are MTurk’s estimated treatment effects duplicable, and are they accurate assessments of the effects outside the MTurk setting? (MTurk respondents commonly tend to skew male and liberal.) A study by Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz (2012) found that MTurk subjects are often *more* representative of the American public than those of other common survey methods. They wrote: “MTurk subjects appear to respond to experimental stimuli in a manner consistent with prior research. ... Put simply, despite possible self-selection concerns, the MTurk subject pool is no worse than convenience samples used by other researchers in political science.” Although I remain hesitant to accept the results of any MTurk survey *carte blanche*, I see little reason to disagree with the findings of Berinsky, Huber,

and Lenz. Moreover, even if I ultimately conclude that the effects I glean from the MTurk sample are difficult to generalize to the American public writ large, my results will nonetheless provide evidence of the plausibility of the effects. This in turn would inform subsequent analyses with more rigorous sampling methods.

Of course, there are other serious limitations to the survey experiment I designed; chief among them is external validity. My study will present respondents with the same amount of information in the races for relatively high-profile offices like U.S. House, and relatively low-profile offices like state auditor. This is unrealistic. Still, voters perceive these races to be less important (and have a less firm idea what state auditors actually do), so I believe they will rely more heavily on the names and ethnicity of candidates in their evaluations. Stepping back, it is also unlikely that voters in the real world will ever be neutrally provided with summaries of two opposing political candidates. Nevertheless, my survey experiment improves on many other previous attempts to measure racially prejudiced behavior among voters — as I have described — and represents a step forward in our understanding of the dynamics that govern American elections.

## **5. Results**

My goal in this paper was to measure the effects of candidate race and office type on voter evaluation. I focused principally on two outcome variables:  $y_1$ , the expected vote share received by Alan Miller, the White candidate viewed by all respondents; and  $y_2$ , the expected feeling thermometer rating received by Alan Miller. (As I explored the data, I briefly focused on other units of analysis — such as the feeling thermometer rating for the Black and Hispanic candidates; I will be clear in the following pages when I am not referring to the variables  $y_1$  or

y<sub>2</sub>.) In total, 1,678 people responded to the MTurk survey. The respondents I examined — all White American adults — were disproportionately male (55.7 percent), well-educated (50.4 percent had a full-length college degree or more), and Democratic (just 18.8 percent identified as Republicans). Additional demographic information about the respondents is presented in Table II.

<b>Education</b>		<b>Region</b>		<b>Party ID</b>		<b>Ideology</b>	
No HS	1 (>0.1%)	Northwest	422 (25.0%)	Democrat	651 (38.9%)	Very liberal	210 (12.5%)
Some HS	17 (1.0%)	Midwest	427 (25.3%)	Republican	314 (18.8%)	Liberal	449 (29.8%)
HS grad.	159 (9.5%)	South	499 (29.6%)	Independent	514 (30.6%)	Lean lib.	271 (16.2%)
Some col.	495 (29.5%)	West	320 (19.0%)	Other party	54 (3.2%)	Moderate	347 (20.7%)
2-year col.	160 (9.5%)			No pref.	139 (8.3%)	Lean cons.	199 (11.9%)
Col. grad.	652 (38.9%)					Conservative	132 (7.9%)
Post-col.	193 (11.5%)					Very cons.	69 (4.1%)

As seen in Table III, a series of balance tests — empirically examining the distribution of respondents' ages, education levels, political ideologies, and regions — across treatment groups confirm that assignment was approximately random. There may be small differences in the make-up of the groups (for instance, there is a difference of three years between the average age of respondents for the White-versus-White and the White-versus-Black mayoral contests), but any such aberrations will be controlled for by the inclusion of covariates in my regression analyses.

The first question I sought to answer was whether the survey-takers empirically responded to White, Black, and Hispanic candidates differently. I examined the expected percent of the vote received by Alan Miller ( $y_1$ ) when he was competing against his respective

Contest	Age (mean)	Education (mean)	Ideology (mean)	Region (mean)
Sheriff (W v. W)	34.863	5.209	3.235	2.388
Mayor (W v. W)	36.470	4.947	3.298	2.409
State Auditor (W v. W)	35.622	5.142	3.228	2.408
U.S. Rep. (W v. W)	35.216	5.122	3.424	2.526
Sheriff (W v. B)	35.260	5.308	3.342	2.377
Mayor (W v. B)	33.188	5.023	3.414	2.504
State Auditor (W v. B)	33.299	4.839	3.467	2.511
U.S. Rep. (W v. B)	33.304	5.068	3.297	2.405
Sheriff (W v. H)	34.029	5.169	3.301	2.276
Mayor (W v. H)	33.248	4.837	3.202	2.441
State Auditor (W v. H)	33.664	5.295	3.336	2.436
U.S. Rep. (W v. H)	34.403	5.188	3.369	2.480

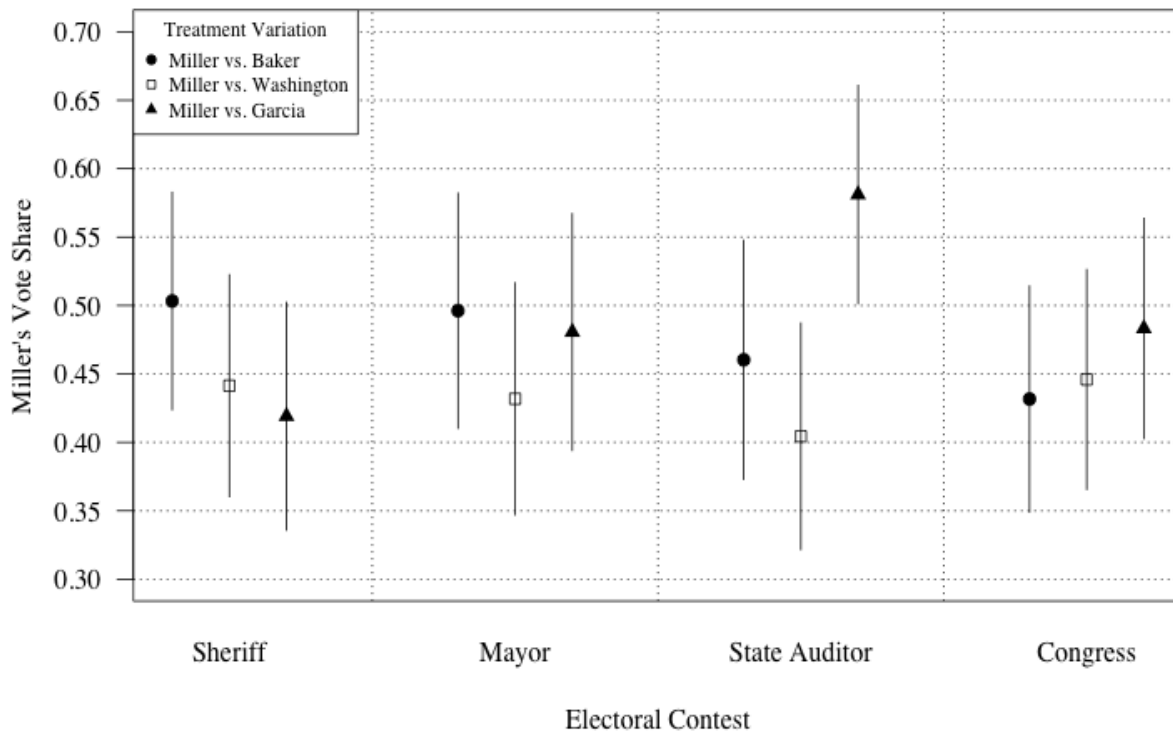
Note: Region is coded with a 1 for the Northeast, 2 for the Midwest, 3 for the South, and 4 for the West.

opponents. When paired with his White opponent, Don Baker, Miller received an average of 47.4 percent. Against his Black opponent, Thomas Washington, Miller received an average of 43.1 percent. Against his Hispanic opponent, Robert Garcia, Miller received an average of 49.3 percent. Neither the difference between Baker and Washington nor the difference between Baker and Garcia was statistically significant. However, there was a meaningful difference between the ways in which Black and Hispanic candidates were evaluated, with a simple t-test revealing that respondents viewed Washington significantly more favorably than Garcia ( $p\text{-value} = 0.03874$ ).

In order to further examine the data, I subsetting the candidates' respective vote shares by the contest in which they were competing. The expected vote share for Alan Miller ( $y_1$ ) is

presented in Figure II, along with 95 percent confidence intervals. The largest empirical differences between candidates appeared in the elections for sheriff and state auditor. Both Washington and Garcia performed much better than Baker (who is identical to the two except for his race) in the sheriff contest. In the races for higher positions, Garcia appeared to perform dramatically worse, with Miller taking an average of 58 percent when facing a Hispanic opponent in the race for state auditor. A t-test confirms that Miller performed significantly worse than either minority candidate in the contest for sheriff ( $p\text{-value} = 0.04891$ ). On the other hand, a t-test confirms that Miller performed significantly better than Garcia in the contest for state auditor ( $p\text{-value} = 0.04645$ ). Further analysis reveals that Hispanic state auditor candidates actually performed worse than all other Hispanic candidates ( $p\text{-value} = 0.004511$ ). This finding was not true for either White or Black candidates.

**Figure II - Alan Miller's Vote Share (by Contest)**



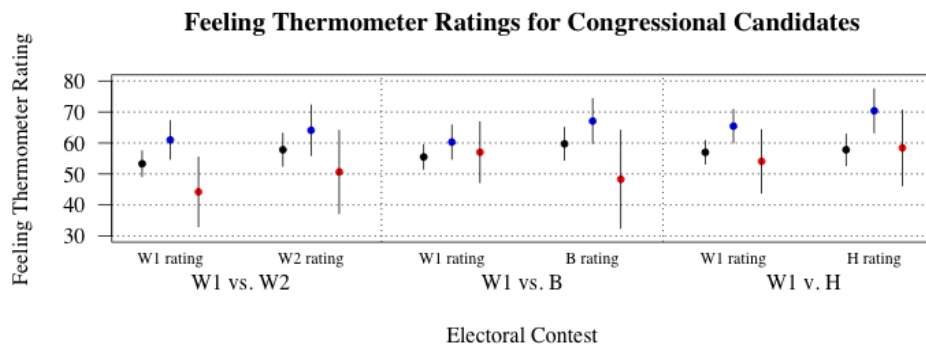
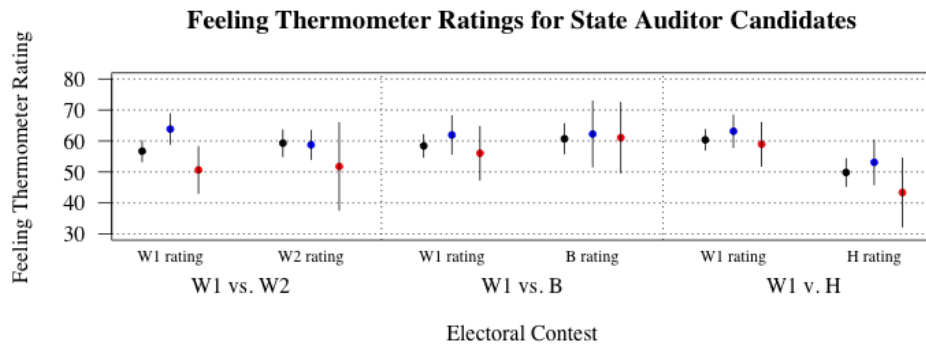
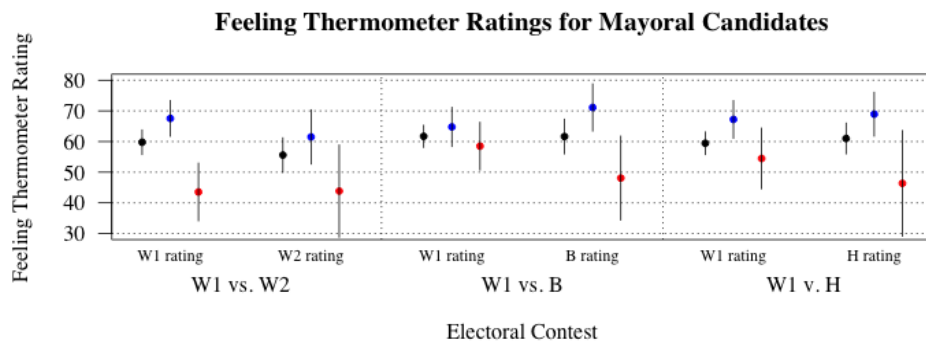
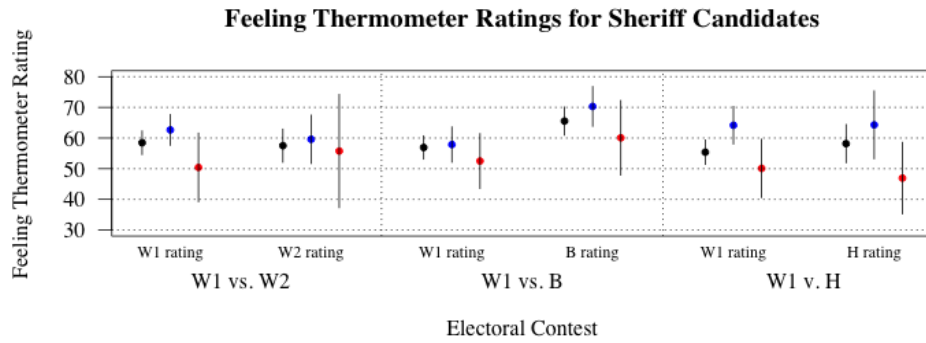
These statistical tests are quite simple, however, and it is worth delving deeper into the data to examine what is driving these findings. It is instructive to examine the differences between candidates' feeling thermometer ratings ( $y_2$ ). In many ways, this is a more nuanced and perceptive measure of voters' attitudes toward a particular candidate. To see how voters rated the candidates in each hypothetical election, with respondents broken down by party identification (as well as the full sample), see Figure III.

As Figure III — which displays mean ratings and 95 percent confidence intervals — demonstrates, respondents rated Black sheriff candidates significantly more favorably than their White opponents (p-value = 0.04606); Washington received an average thermometer rating of 65.53, versus 56.92 for Miller. Hispanic state auditor candidates were rated significantly less favorably than their White opponents (p-value = 0.005163); Garcia was rated 49.83 on average, versus 60.36 for Miller. Segregating responses by party identification allows us to further clarify these results. Democrats empirically rated Washington higher than Miller in every single comparison. That said, this difference approached significance (p-value = 0.07988) only in the contest for sheriff. Democrats also empirically rated Garcia higher than Miller in every race except for that of state auditor, in which case the rating received by Garcia was significantly lower than that of Miller (p-value = 0.03299). This race — a White candidate versus a Hispanic candidate for state auditor — was likewise the race in which Republicans most favored Miller over his minority opponent (p-value = 0.02917).

It is informative to examine the difference between each opponent's rating and the rating his counterparts received when running for the same office. (e.g., Do the thermometer ratings received by Washington differ significantly from those of Baker, or from those of Garcia?) The sheriff candidate Washington was rated significantly higher than either Baker



**Figure III – Feeling Thermometer Ratings**



Note: The feeling thermometer ratings from all respondents are in black; the ratings from just Democrat respondents are in blue; and the ratings from just Republican respondents are in red.

(p-value = 0.02811) or Garcia (p-value = 0.04524) in that contest. Additionally, both state auditor candidates Washington (p-value = 0.001526) and Baker (p-value = 0.003273) were rated significantly more favorably than Garcia. Diving deeper, it is evident that Democrats rated Washington significantly higher than Baker in two local races: sheriff (p-value = 0.04404) and mayor (p-value = 0.04877). (Empirically, Democrats looked to rate the minority candidates higher than Baker in every race except for state auditor, but the relationships not detailed in this paragraph are not statistically significant.)

Among Republican respondents, on the other hand, the presence of a minority candidate empirically increased the White candidate Alan Miller's rating in *every single instance*. This increase was statistically significant in the races for mayor (between both Miller and Washington, and Miller and Garcia) and in the races for Congress (between both Miller and Washington, and Miller and Garcia). What's more, among Republican respondents, the sheriff candidate Washington performed significantly better against Miller than did Garcia. And both state auditor candidates Baker and Washington performed significantly better against Miller than did Garcia.

In examining both the  $y_1$  and  $y_2$  outcome variables, the biggest determinant of support for Black candidates across the board appeared to be political ideology; self-identified liberals favored Washington significantly more (relative to the other candidates) than conservatives in every single race. (Of course, it is obvious that liberals viewed the hypothetical Democratic candidates more favorably than did conservatives; but liberals liked Washington significantly more than they liked the *other* candidates, Baker and Garcia.) I will discuss these results at length in the subsequent section.

In order to fully explore my data, I employed a series of regression models. My models follow the formula  $y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_1*x_3 + \beta_5x_2*x_3 + \beta_kx_k + \varepsilon$ , where  $y$ , the unit of analysis, again comprises two outcome variables:  $y_1$ , the expected vote share received by Alan Miller; and  $y_2$ , the expected feeling thermometer rating received by Miller.  $x_1$  is the dummy variable indicating whether respondents were shown Washington (in addition to Miller),  $x_2$  is the dummy variable indicating whether respondents were shown Garcia (in addition to Miller), and  $x_3$  indicates the office that the two hypothetical candidates were seeking.  $\beta_0$  equals the linear intercept, or the estimated level of support for Miller when he is competing against Baker for the lowest possible elected office.  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$  equal the impact of race for Black and Hispanic candidates, respectively;  $\beta_3$  equals the impact of office level; and  $\beta_4$  and  $\beta_5$  equal the impact of the respective interactions between the variables. I also introduced a number of controls ( $x_k$ ) for factors such as respondent age, gender, interest in politics, and political ideology.

In the most basic regression model, Model 1 in Table IV, it appears there is a significant interaction between the presence of a Hispanic candidate and the level of the office sought.<sup>2</sup> This initial analysis indicates that Hispanic candidates were significantly disadvantaged at higher levels.<sup>3</sup> This dynamic, in which Hispanics running for less local office seem to be penalized, is likely driven by the unpopularity of Hispanic candidates for state auditor, given our knowledge of the earlier t-tests. In general, the penalty paid by Hispanic candidates is most pronounced in one specific electoral race: that for state auditor. Among just respondents who evaluated a contest for state auditor (as seen in Model 2), Hispanic candidates were discriminated against

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<sup>2</sup> An even simpler regression model following the formula  $y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \varepsilon$  finds null results. But a model that excludes interactions is nonsensical, given that my principal inquiry surrounds the relationship between candidate race and the office sought.

<sup>3</sup> The "Office" variable is coded with a 1 for the contest for sheriff, 2 for the contest for mayor, 3 for the contest for state auditor, and 4 for the contest for U.S. Representative. This loosely mirrors a progression from the most to the least local elected office.

significantly. There was no statistically significant discrimination evident when the data are restricted to just the contests for sheriff, mayor, or U.S. Representative.

Additional results emerge when I subset the data by age, as seen in Table IV. Older voters (almost all of whom fall into the Baby Boomer generation, given the infrequency of respondents older than 70) appear to favor Hispanics significantly more than their younger peers. Indeed, Model 3, which examines just respondents 50 years and older, shows that Hispanics do significantly better across the board among these voters. Model 4, which examines just respondents 35 years and younger, on the other hand, shows that these voters discriminate against Hispanics in races for higher levels of office (a result, again, likely caused by the numbers from the state auditor's race).

Finally, while respondent age clearly had an impact, it is apparent that voters' political ideology drove much of the results. Model 5, in which the pool of respondents is restricted to just those who self-identified as liberal (1, 2, or 3 on the traditional 7-point ideology scale), finds once again that the interaction between the presence of a Hispanic candidate and the level of the office sought is significant.<sup>4</sup> The interaction between the presence of a Black candidate and the office is likewise significant. This model indicates that as liberal voters age, they become progressively more supportive of both the Black and Hispanic candidates. Liberal respondents tended to decrease their support for Allen Miller by between 0.7 and 0.9 percent when they were shown a minority candidate.

The findings I have described so far paint a complicated picture of the way race impacts political candidates running for different elected offices. I will further explore these results in the next section. However, it is worth noting that one of the survey's final questions asked

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<sup>4</sup> There is no significance among just moderate and/or conservative respondents; however, these groups comprise a substantially smaller sample size than self-identified liberals.

Dependent variable:	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Model 5</b>
<b>Miller’s vote share (%)</b>	Basic model	Model (just for the state auditor contest)	Model (just for respondents 50 and older)	Model (just for respondents 35 and younger)	Model (just among liberal respondents)
<b>Black candidate indicator</b>	0.052 (0.150)	0.058 (0.231)	-0.272 (0.205)	-0.087 (0.107)	0.162 (0.169)
<b>Hisp. candidate indicator</b>	0.072 (0.125)	0.481* (0.223)	-0.409* (0.203)	-0.087 (0.108)	0.259 (0.166)
<b>Office</b>	-0.032 (0.047)		0.041 (0.091)	-0.023 (0.042)	-0.046 (0.067)
<b>Black candidate x Office</b>	0.023 (0.027)		0.051 (0.079)	0.043 (0.034)	0.020 (0.036)
<b>Hisp. candidate x Office</b>	0.055* (0.027)		0.061 (0.078)	0.069* (0.034)	0.036 (0.036)
<b>Respondent age</b>	0.002 (0.003)	>0.001 (0.004)			0.003 (0.004)
<b>Respondent gender</b>	0.056 (0.071)	0.124 (0.091)	0.194 (0.198)	0.002 (0.029)	0.117 (0.094)
<b>Respondent ideology</b>	0.002 (0.009)	0.015 (0.020)	0.009 (0.068)	0.020 (0.032)	0.011 (0.021)
<b>Region</b>	-0.004 (0.012)	-0.031 (0.023)	-0.033 (0.038)	0.003 (0.015)	0.006 (0.015)
<b>Black candidate x Age</b>	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.006)			-0.007* (0.004)
<b>Hisp. candidate x Age</b>	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.005)			-0.009** (0.003)
<b>Black candidate x Gender</b>	-0.074 (0.062)	0.059 (0.128)	0.062 (0.182)	-0.084 (0.079)	-0.088 (0.084)
<b>Hisp. candidate x Gender</b>	-0.069* (0.062)	-0.240* (0.126)	0.168 (0.184)	-0.088 (0.080)	-0.041 (0.083)
<b>Constant</b>	0.461** (0.150)	0.370* (0.204)	0.533* (0.265)	0.505*** (0.134)	0.493* (0.208)

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; p-values are indicated with ‘\*\*\*\*’ (p<0.001), ‘\*\*\*’ (p<0.01), ‘\*\*’ (p<0.05), ‘.’ (p<0.1). Additional control and interaction variables are included in all of the models; these are neither significant nor presented above.

respondents whether they agreed with the statement that Black and Hispanics tend “to work as hard as everybody else.” More than 17 percent of respondents disagreed about Blacks (including roughly one in three Republican respondents), and 16 percent of respondents disagreed about Hispanics. Regardless of how they behave at the ballot box, many respondents plainly continue to hold prejudiced views of candidates of color.

## 6. Discussion

I exposed 1,678 respondents to pictures, platforms, and brief descriptions of hypothetical candidates via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in order to examine the political impact of race and ethnicity. Although many of my findings were stimulating and compelling, most effects were relatively small. This indicates that candidate race is generally a much stronger determinant of vote choice than office level. Prejudiced Americans, in other words, are likely to treat minority politicians the same regardless of whether those politicians are running for sheriff, mayor, state auditor, or congressperson. This result is unsurprising, given the central role race has played in American politics for centuries (e.g., Noll 2010; Goldman 2012; Fields 1982; Gossett 1963).

Among the most surprising results I found surround my first hypothesis: that, relative to the White candidates, minority candidates will face discrimination among White voters. While this appeared to be true for Hispanic candidates, particularly in contests for higher office (I will further explore this below), it was clearly not the case for Black candidates. As I detailed in the previous section, respondents generally viewed the Black candidate Washington significantly more favorably than the Hispanic candidate Garcia, and often more favorably than the two White candidates as well. In light of Washington's relatively high favorability, it may be surprising that Garcia was viewed so negatively. Garcia received a smaller share of the vote relative to White and Black candidates in several of the regression models. Although I have no definitive answer for the reasons behind this racial discrepancy, preexisting data may be instructive. Some recent surveys have found, for the first time in American history, that more prejudice is harbored against Hispanics than against Blacks (Fram 2010; Ross and Agiesta 2012). As several pundits have speculated, it may now be more socially acceptable to express anti-Hispanic views,

couched in disapproval of America's immigration policies, than anti-Black views (Calabresi 2006; Mock 2007).

Interestingly, Garcia's low favorability appears to have been driven largely by younger respondents. My data and regression analyses indicate that Garcia was favored by respondents 50 years or older, and disfavored (in conjunction with higher levels of office) by respondents 35 years or younger. At face value, these results seem perplexing; why would older respondents, most of them members of Generation X or late baby boomers, be more likely to favor racial minorities than members of the millennial generation? A recent *Chicago Tribune* column trumpeted, "Today's teenagers are the most tolerant generation in history" (McElwee 2015). This conforms to the popular narrative of young Americans as open-minded on racial issues.

Survey data, however, reveal that the opinions of millennials are no more progressive on issues of race than those of previous generations. A 2010 Pew survey found that 93 percent of millennials believe it is "all right for blacks and whites to date each other," compared to 92 percent of Gen Xers. Roughly 42 percent of White millennials believe "a lot" must be done to achieve racial equality, compared with 41 percent of White Gen Xers and 44 percent of White baby boomers (McElwee 2015). Indeed, a study by Vincent Hutchings (2009) found that "younger cohorts of Whites [were] no more racially liberal in 2008 than they were in 1988." It is possible that younger voters, who never experienced the rancor of immigration debates of the past several decades, are more strongly impacted by the strident rhetoric many politicians increasingly use to discuss Mexican and other Hispanic immigrants (Rodriguez 2010).

Additional research should be conducted to further examine whether younger voters are, as I found, more likely than older voters to discriminate against Hispanic candidates.<sup>5</sup>

It was not just age that divided how respondents viewed the candidates, however; political ideology also played a significant role. In my second hypothesis, I posited that Republicans would discriminate against minority politicians significantly more than would Democrats. It is certainly true that Republicans viewed Garcia less favorably than either of the White candidates, and the presence of a Black candidate empirically increased Miller's vote share in all 12 survey variations. Yet the extent to which liberal Democrats supported Washington (as the t-tests and Model 5 demonstrate) goes far beyond what I expected. Not only did Democrats discriminate against minority candidates less than Republicans (which is consistent with my hypothesis), but they actually appeared to *prefer* the Black candidate Washington over either White candidate — a finding so significant that it actually skewed the results for all respondents in favor of Washington.

This finding is surprising, though not altogether unprecedented. There is some evidence (though much of it is speculative) that Democrats are more keenly aware of racial prejudice in American society and, as such, feel a stronger urge to push back against it. Significantly higher proportions of White Democrats than White Republicans believe that anti-Black racism exists (Jones 2012b; Pew Research Center 2013). Yet while similar levels of Democrats and Republicans report prejudiced sentiments, far fewer Democrats act on these beliefs (Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Silver and McCann 2014). Because Republicans are less likely to believe that racism is still pervasive in American society, they are less likely to take action to combat it.

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<sup>5</sup> My findings also raise questions of external validity. To wit, it is certainly possible that the population of Internet-using baby boomers differs from baby boomers in the broader American public in many ways. This question should be more fully investigated.



In this way, prejudice may serve as a motivator for Democrats (and not Republicans) to compensate for perceived prejudice and boost the candidacies of Black politicians.<sup>6</sup>

It is also possible that these results may have been accentuated in my experiment in light of specific, salient events. There is robust evidence that voters regularly incorporate current events into the making of political decisions (Hajnal 2007; Popkin 1991; Alvarez 1997; Bowler and Donovan 1994; Allsop and Weisberg 1988). My survey was in the field in early 2015 at the height of the recent racial tensions (thanks to, for instance, the fatal shooting of Michael Brown and rioting in Ferguson, Missouri). Polls confirmed that the events in Ferguson are causing Democrats to view the world and behave in different and unexpected ways (Pew Research Center 2014; Weiss 2014). The intensified salience of racial issues may have (perhaps temporarily) impacted the way Democrats perceive Black political candidates, causing them to view such candidates even more favorably than they already would.

The fact that Democrats are more inclined to support a Black candidate also may have something to do with the fact that Barack Obama (as well as nearly all other elected Black politicians) is a Democrat. A 2012 Gallup poll (conducted just weeks before Obama formally became the Democratic presidential nominee, and before Mitt Romney — a Mormon — became the Republican nominee) found that Democrats were indeed more likely to support a Black candidate. On the other hand, Republicans were more likely to support a Mormon candidate by a dramatic 18 point margin (Jones 2012). GSS surveys from the mid-1990s — when the most prominent Black politician in the country was the Republican Colin Powell — found that 13 percent of Democrats said they were unwilling to support a Black presidential candidate,

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<sup>6</sup> The surveys that find that Democrats are more likely to believe that anti-Black racism exists do not necessarily reveal similar findings for anti-Hispanic racism. Accordingly, it is logical that the boost Democrats may give Black candidates is not evident for Hispanics.

compared to 5 percent of Republicans (Silver and McCann 2014). This implies that much of the impetus behind partisans expressing support for political candidates stems from the men and women currently at the forefront of American politics. Were the Republicans to nominate a Black candidate and the Democrats to nominate a Mormon candidate in some future election, it seems plausible that these prejudices would again shift significantly. Additional research should be conducted to flesh out these assertions.

Consistent with my third hypothesis, both Black and Hispanic candidates performed significantly better in the fictional elections for local office, especially that for sheriff. A t-test found that the White candidate Miller performed worse than either minority candidate in the contest for sheriff. The electoral performance of the Black candidate Washington significantly improved in both the contests for sheriff and mayor. Even the Hispanic candidate Garcia, who faced fierce headwinds for many of the higher offices, was significantly favored in the race for sheriff.

This finding recalls the example of Colin Powell, the decorated general and statesman, who has long remained popular among Whites. Kinder and Dale-Riddle (2012, 168) argued that Powell's enduring popularity is due in no small part to Powell's deviation from most Americans' "standard conception of a black person." He is light-skinned, well-spoken, and, even more importantly, a respected and victorious military leader. The minority candidates I presented confounded expectations as well (albeit not as spectacularly as Powell). For the sheriff's race in particular, the image of upright minority citizens competently running for political office to protect law and order surely diminished the impact of negative racial stereotypes (Golebiowska 1996). Moreover, because both Washington and Garcia came across as polished and articulate,

they were likely viewed as exceptional politicians, thus boosting their respective candidacies.<sup>7</sup>

Consistent with my fourth hypothesis, Hispanic candidates in particular performed significantly worse — relative to both White candidates and to other hypothetical Hispanics running for different offices — in the contest for state auditor. (This was not the case for Black candidates, but that result was largely driven by the partisan dynamics I described in response to my second hypothesis.) The position of state auditor was undoubtedly the least-known and most removed electoral office in this survey. Indeed, respondents in the state auditor treatment groups were significantly less likely than those in any other group to express the belief that they would interact with the winner of the election or that the winner would affect their life. They also said they cared significantly less who won the election. As several studies have pointed out, this sort of low-information, low-importance election is exactly the type of scenario in which voters often rely on harmful racial stereotypes (Burnett and Kogan 2013; Matson and Fine 2006; Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; McDermott 1998; Lien 1998; Squire and Smith 1988). After all, it is difficult and costly for voters to find information about relatively obscure political candidates and contests, so individuals often refrain from doing so (Downs 1957).

Although I am confident in the design and execution of my experiment, it is of course possible that this study is inherently flawed. Many MTurk respondents regularly take surveys similar to mine; if a significant group realized that the survey concerned race, they may have answered differently than they would have otherwise. Additionally, my neutral and controlled presentation of the candidate platforms may be a serious weakness of this survey experiment.

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting the theory that an exceptional minority candidate may actually *increase* racial divides over time, even as he or she garners significant support among White voters. In Katz and Braly's classic 1933 study of prejudice, they suggested that an anti-Semite might react unexpectedly upon learning that an acquaintance is Jewish. The anti-Semite will "observe that this Jew is an exception, he is not like other Jews, he is a 'white Jew.' By thus omitting cases which contradict the stereotype, the individual becomes convinced from association with a race that its member are just the kind of people he always thought they were" (1933, 288).

The media are far from unbiased in the real world, often presenting minority and female candidates dramatically differently than White males (Kahn 1994, 179-81). As Witt, Paget, and Matthews wrote (1995, 67), “Women with years of office-holding experience have been surprised to find themselves described as ‘overnight sensations,’ or ‘coming from nowhere,’ when they announced their candidacies for higher office.” Future research on this topic should attempt to better account for this real-world discrepancy.

The sample I gleaned from MTurk, even if most respondents were unaware of the true intentions of my study, is clearly not representative of the American public. In years to come, this experiment should be repeated (with more respondents) in order to strengthen the conclusions at which I arrived. More iterations should be included in future surveys, including minority candidates with additional ethnic backgrounds, incumbents versus challengers, and candidates from different political parties. Alternatively, it may be worth replicating my study with just two markedly different treatment variations — state senate and U.S. Senate, for instance — in order to better capture effects that, in subtler experiments like mine, may be overshadowed by racial attitudes across the board. Finally, my study should be duplicated if and when racial issues again recede from the forefront of the national consciousness to determine the impact of prejudice on Black candidates under different circumstances. This will allow us to arrive a more specific and nuanced conclusion about the effects of race and office on candidate evaluation.

Of course, it is worth pointing out that biases are not unchanging. One of the first papers to study the impact of ethnicity on candidate evaluation examined some 500 central committee elections in California between 1948 and 1970. The data showed that candidates with Scandinavian surnames had a 24 percent advantage over other candidates. Those with Irish

names faced neither a penalty nor an advantage, while those with Jewish names suffered a 14 percent disadvantage, and those with Italian names suffered a 39 percent disadvantage (Byrne and Pueschel 1973). We know, however, that Jews and Italians are not penalized in modern-day electoral contests (Jones 2012). Who is to say that new biases and prejudices won't soon emerge, or that existing ones won't be further exacerbated? One study recently pointed out that because many Hispanics actually self-identify as White, and because assimilation trends can change attitudes toward who is included in racial categories, more Hispanics and other racial and ethnic minorities will likely represent majority-White constituencies in the foreseeable future (Casellas 2011, 104). This is just one avenue through which biases may change in the coming years. In the meantime, however, race and ethnicity still obviously have an enormous impact on life in America today.

## **7. Candidate Interviews**

In addition to the quantitative analyses I conducted, I sought to augment my study through a series of interviews conducted at length with 18 minority politicians (see Table V). This qualitative perspective may help to fill in the gaps even the best-designed experiment is bound to have. In order to most fully supplement my research questions, I sought out minority politicians whose constituencies were predominantly White. This was no mean feat. Just 5 percent of Black and Hispanic officeholders nationwide represent districts where more than one in four residents is White (Gonzalez Juenke and Preuhs 2012).<sup>8</sup> Of the 18 officials I spoke with, however, 16 either represented or ran to represent districts where a majority of voters were

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<sup>8</sup> One study found that Hispanic candidates are unlikely to succeed even in districts that are majority-Hispanic; their share of the population must near 70 percent for victory to be likely, due to higher turnout rates among Whites (Grofman and Handley 1989).

White. Additionally, 13 of the 18 do not currently hold elected office, which encouraged a more straightforward and nuanced discussion of race and electoral politics. Finally, 13 of the 18 have run for office at multiple levels of government (from local councilmembers to a governor and a state supreme court justice), which allowed for a valuable new perspective on my principal question of interest.

**Table V – Political Candidates Interviewed**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Highest Elected Office Held</b>	<b>Majority White Voters?</b>	<b>Most Recent Election</b>
John Aguilera	Hispanic	D	Vista, CA	WE	Councilmember, Vista	Yes	2014
Dennis Archer	Black	D	Detroit, MI	MW	MI Supreme Ct; Mayor, Detroit	Yes	2002
Henry Bonilla	Hispanic	R	San Antonio, TX	SO	U.S. House	No	2004
Hansen Clarke	Black	D	Detroit, MI	MW	U.S. House	Yes	2014
John Duran	Hispanic	D	W. Hollywood, CA	WE	Councilmember, W. Hollywood	Yes	2014
Greg Evans	Black	D	Eugene, OR	WE	City Councilor, Eugene	Yes	2014
Pete Gallego	Hispanic	D	Alpine, TX	SO	U.S. House	Yes	2014
David Garcia	Hispanic	D	Phoenix, AZ	WE	NA	Yes	2014
Howard Gentry	Black	D	Nashville, TN	SO	Davidson Co. Crim'1 Ct Clerk	Yes	2015
Phyllis G. Kenney	Hispanic	D	Seattle, WA	WE	WA legislature	Yes	2012
Ron Kirk	Black	D	Dallas, TX	SO	Mayor, Dallas	Yes	2002
Mark Mallory	Black	D	Cincinnati, OH	MW	Mayor, Cincinnati	Yes	2009
David Paterson	Black	D	New York, NY	NE	Governor, NY	Yes	2006
Federico Peña	Hispanic	D	Denver, CO	SW	Mayor, Denver	Yes	1987
Jermaine Reed	Black	D	Kansas City, KS	MW	Councilmember, Kansas City	No	2015
Kurt Schmoke	Black	D	Baltimore, MD	NE	Mayor, Baltimore	Yes	1995
Fernando Shipley	Hispanic	D	Globe, AZ	WE	Mayor, Globe	Yes	2008
Jesse Smith	Black	D	Montgomery, AL	SO	NA	Yes	2014

Of course, these interviews do not allow for the same kind of rigorous analysis that survey data facilitate. Politicians are more aware than most when they are “on the record,” and will surely tailor their responses accordingly. Nevertheless, the real-world perspectives that these interviews communicate needn’t be tempered by concerns such as external validity; provided I am confident in the veracity of my interview subjects, they will yield a fresh and clarifying viewpoint on this topic.

Many of the politicians I spoke with have run for office only in the twenty-first century, and came of age decades after the civil rights demonstrations of the 1960s and 1970s, a period in which minority candidates almost never succeeded in White-dominated areas (Davidson and Grofman 1994; Grofman and Handley 1989; Lublin 1997a, 1997b). Several of the interviewees were not only alive during that time, however, but already active in politics. Without exception, these latter candidates and elected officials affirmed that it has since become easier to find a receptive audience among White voters for offices up and down the ballot.

“The voting public today is very different than the voting public of the 1970s. Voters are far more open to candidates of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as female candidates, gay candidates, and other minorities, for two reasons,” said Federico Peña, who was first elected to the Colorado House of Representatives in 1979. “First, voters now have the experience of seeing candidates from many racial and ethnic backgrounds become successful in different positions. So the question of whether these candidates can be good, effective, sophisticated public servants has been answered. Second, candidates now running from those backgrounds are far more prepared and experienced than they used to be.” Peña, who went on to serve as Denver’s first Hispanic mayor, as well as Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of Energy under Bill Clinton, continued: “Does that mean that if you’re Hispanic and you’re

running in a very conservative area, there won't be a certain percent of population who will never vote for you? No, but it is a dwindling number. There was certainly a group that would never vote for me because my last name is Peña.”

As I have described, all of the candidates in my survey experiment were given strongly racialized names; nearly nine in ten Washingtons are Black, for instance (Roberts 2007). Even voters who chose not to dwell on the accompanying images were primed to the candidates' races by their very names. This experience is not ubiquitous in the real world, however. The interviews I conducted revealed that political candidates who could not escape their ethnicity (David Garcia, for example, who ran unsuccessfully for Arizona's superintendent of public instruction) described different campaigns in kind from those who could (Phyllis Kenney, for example, who held a seat in the Washington state house for 16 years and lost an election for Washington's secretary of state). These former candidates recounted that strongly racialized names were less of a hurdle in local elections — when they were asking for votes from their friends and neighbors — but that the issue was nevertheless present.

When voters are largely uninformed about an election (as is often the case, in reality), these dynamics may affect different racial minorities differently. “Blacks have somewhat of an advantage over Latinos in this issue, because when you look at the name on the ballot, chances are you don't know that person is Black,” said Pete Gallego, a Texas Democrat who served in Congress from 2013 to 2015. “I remember laughing with Ron Kirk. He ran for the U.S. Senate against John Cornyn. He was running neck and neck at the beginning. But the moment they put his picture on TV, his numbers dropped immediately.” In a lengthy interview, Gallego confirmed results of my experiment: when voters are made aware of a candidate's race, they tend to



penalize him or her more for higher elections, such as that for Senate, and for offices where they are less likely to interact with the official.

For his part, Kirk — a Black Democrat — believes many minority candidates struggle to break into national politics because most of them get their start in urban politics, where voters are more liberal and diverse than at higher levels. “When you flip that and run statewide, all of those demographic advantages vanish,” Kirk said. Outside of the straightforward contours of a survey experiment, this issue is exacerbated by race-based gerrymandering, in which heavily minority districts are drawn for the U.S. House of Representatives and for state legislatures. Gerrymandering may aid local Black and Hispanic politicians, but the corresponding liberalism of most of their districts means that few of these politicians will be palatable to voters at higher levels (Kraushaar 2010).

David Paterson, who became only the fourth Black governor in American history when he was sworn in to replace Eliot Spitzer in 2008, said that minority candidates are disproportionately impacted by race at higher levels due to the interplay between ethnicity and other factors, such as more critical media coverage. Paterson believes that lingering or implicit racism won’t, by itself, prevent minority candidates from winning statewide office. But when this racism is coupled with other structural forces, the result can be disastrous for Black and Hispanic politicians, principally in high-profile electoral contests.

“Voters aren’t the problem. Voters elected Obama president six months after I became governor. The media is the problem, because the media likes to pander with stereotypical representations of African American officials,” said Paterson, who was first elected to the New York senate in 1985. “For example, another former governor and I said the same thing about experimental use of cocaine. We both said we did it back in the 1970s. I endured negative media

for months, and had to go through rumors that ‘he’s still doing it,’ etc. But the other guy did not. The same type of story is a much more interesting and fascinating story if the elected official is Black or Hispanic instead of White.”

The interaction between race and political office may also be exacerbated by regional idiosyncrasies. “It affects you differently depending on where you’re from,” said Greg Evans, a Black man who represents a ward that is less than 1 percent Black on the Eugene, Oregon, city council. “Racism is not as virulent on the West Coast as it is in Atlanta or Mississippi. I would call it ‘racism-lite.’” Several candidates from the Deep South acknowledged that many voters from below the Mason-Dixon line approach minority candidates more warily than voters in other parts of the country. Jesse Smith — who unsuccessfully ran for Congress in Alabama last year — said that Southern Whites are inclined to discriminate more in political contests when they do not anticipate interacting with the candidate. Smith believes that in local races like those for school board or mayor, where the candidates typically know most of their constituents and may knock on doors all throughout their district before the election, Southern Blacks and Hispanics are likeliest to overcome racial prejudice.

Because of the structural and budgetary limitations of my survey experiment, I could only ask respondents about their preferences regarding Democratic candidates. There is evidence, supported by the politicians I interviewed, that different racial dynamics are at play on the Republican side of the aisle. As I found, there can be little doubt that conservatives in general hold less progressive views on race. Still, White Republicans respond to Black and Hispanic candidates in startlingly different ways than do White Democrats, particularly at higher levels. Republicans make up less than 16 percent of the minority members of the House of

Representatives,<sup>9</sup> but Black Republicans make up more than half (eight of 15) of the minority members holding majority-White seats. Indeed, six of these eight represent seats that are at least 70 percent White (Boschma 2015). Fully one third of the candidates I interviewed mentioned Republican Mia Love — a Black freshman congresswoman who represents a conservative Utah district that is roughly 1.7 percent Black — as a symbol of the progress that has been made. Yet despite Love’s success, it is worth noting that in her first congressional run, in 2012, Love was defeated by a White Democratic incumbent, although the district is one of the most Republican in the country. Even in 2014, after the incumbent retired, she could only muster 50.04 percent of the vote against an underfunded, largely unknown Democratic opponent who is White (Moyer 2014). Evidently, racial dynamics were still at play among Love’s conservative Republican constituents, and these dynamics proved significantly more harmful than in her earlier (successful) elections for city council and mayor in the small city of Saratoga Springs, Utah (Moyer 2014).

One other type of political contest that I have not discussed so far is a rarer, more specialized form of election: a closed election among a group of political elites. Of the politicians I spoke to, five had been candidates in such an election. Paterson ran for minority leader in the New York Senate, Peña ran for minority leader in the Colorado House, Gallego ran for Democratic caucus chair in the Texas House, Mark Mallory ran for assistant minority leader in the Ohio Senate, and Dennis Archer ran for president of the American Bar Association. All five won the respective posts, and most do not recall any discrimination — overt or otherwise — in these elections. Paterson, however, believes that race did play a role in his run for leader of the New York Senate Democrats. “There had never been a minority who was the leader of any

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<sup>9</sup> Although Blacks are underrepresented among GOP politicians, it is worth noting that there has been a recent surge in Black candidacies in GOP congressional primaries (Rogowski and Fairdosi 2012).

conference in the history of the state,” he said. “All of the African American senators were on record voting for me, and that seemed to bother some of the other senators; I don’t know why.” The fact that Paterson was the first, a glass ceiling-shattering politician, may have actually had something to do with this reception. More of half of my interviewees discussed the impact that the first minority candidate for a given office has on other aspirants years down the road. “Fear of the unknown added to historical prejudices,” said Kurt Schmoke, who was Baltimore’s first elected minority mayor. “After a term where I focused on issues everyone was concerned about, there was much less fear and opposition.”

Doubtlessly, one of the most significant boosts to minority candidates — at high or low levels of elected office — is the presence of a fellow candidate of color on the ballot in years past. There is evidence that the experience of living under a minority incumbent positively affects Whites’ perceptions of minority politicians and the Black or Hispanic communities at large (Hajnal 2007, 73). One study found that the *second* time a major Black candidate runs for mayor, voter turnout among White racists declines substantially (Pettigrew 1976, 15-16). Race was a significant factor in the election of Detroit’s first Black mayor, Coleman Young, but it hardly impacted the subsequent election at all, said Dennis Archer, who succeeded Young after serving on the Michigan Supreme Court. Peña, the former Denver mayor, told me, “After I retired, 7 candidates ran [for mayor], and the top two vote-getters were African American. One of them won, and he went on to serve three terms.” The lessons from these real-world examples would be impossible to glean from a controlled survey experiment; they serve to underscore that, across every level and type of political office, each election is different, and the impact of race is variable.

A final subject raised by all 18 politicians I spoke with was the nation's first minority president, Barack Obama. In their eyes, Obama's election has fundamentally rewritten the rulebook for Black and Hispanic candidates. Several complained that they were, regardless of their true policy stances, tagged with supporting Obama's positions because of their similar skin color. Others said that Obama's election paved the way for more previously unelectable candidates to have a legitimate chance of winning office. "In 2008, only four states had ever elected Black governors or senators, so 46 states had not elected a Black to anything. Obama's election broke the barrier in all of them all at once," said Paterson. "He won the state of Indiana — how did that happen?" Kirk, who went on to serve as U.S. Trade Representative under Obama, told me that the president's biggest impact has been rousing other minority politicians from the sidelines. "What encourages me more than anything else is that Obama has inspired a new generation of African Americans to run for elected office, and to not worry about what White people will or won't do."

Still, 12 of the 18 candidates I interviewed could point to instances of explicit racism during their runs for offices from city council to U.S. Senate. What's more, the growing salience of race relations — thanks to discussions fomented by the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, among others — may impact minority politicians in unanticipated ways. "These major incidents could have set back Black politicians running in New York for the foreseeable future," Paterson told me toward the end of his interview. Mark Mallory, the first directly elected Black mayor of Cincinnati, agreed that while there is less racism at play in American elections than in decades past, the events of the last few months have surely increased the significance of race as a campaign issue, particularly in contests for higher office. "It does seem that there's much more racial tension in the country now, and that will affect elections," Mallory said. "That doesn't

necessarily mean the defeat of minority candidates, but it means that new and important conversations will have to be had.”

## **8. Conclusion**

Despite the obvious racial progress that has been made in the United States — it would be foolish to forget that lynchings and de jure segregation were commonplace a mere half-century ago — our country still has a long way to go. Racial prejudice can be found in children as young as three months old (Blake 2014, Aboud 1988); one study found that more than half of White six-year-olds display significant degrees of anti-Black bias (Katz 2003, 897). Both Blacks and Hispanics continue to lag behind Whites in terms of income, employment, education, healthcare coverage and outcomes, housing opportunities, and incarceration rates, often by wide margins (National Research Council 2004; Blake 2014; Kochhar and Fry 2014; Hemphill and Vanneman 2010; Pantoja and Segura 2002).

With regard to prejudice toward minority politicians, I found that Whites often discriminate against Hispanic candidates, especially young White voters and in elections for a less-known office, like that of state auditor. Although candidate race is generally a much stronger determinant of vote choice than office level, I found that minority candidates (Black candidates above all) perform significantly better in elections for local offices such as sheriff and mayor. I also found that Black candidates are favored by Democratic voters in electoral contests at various levels of government. Evidently, the race of political candidates continues to impact voter evaluation — albeit in varying ways depending on the level and type of office sought. These findings are generalizable beyond the specific contests I examined. The results for a contest between White and Hispanic candidates for a hypothetical state auditor post, for example, may

inform the dynamics of additional low-information elections. It would thus be easy and straightforward for other social scientists to expand upon my results. In fact, given how little we know for certain about the role of race and ethnicity in electoral politics, I hope that more researchers will continue my investigation. Definitive answers to many of the questions I posed could have real-world consequences for political representation and candidate recruitment. Understanding how to best mitigate the effects of enduring racial prejudice would be pivotal for any minority politician eager to ascend the political ladder.

Attempts to answer questions surrounding the electoral impact of race, of course, are dart throws at a moving target. There can be little doubt that the way White voters respond to minority politicians has changed in the last 50 years, and — given the historic ascendance of Barack Obama — even in the last ten, or five, years. Yet it is vitally important — in light of the deaths of Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice and Eric Garner and Tony Robinson and Walter Scott, and the countless other recent incidents that have strained racial tensions nationwide — that we nevertheless seek to better understand the impact of race and ethnicity in American politics today. A recent CBS survey revealed that the percentage of Americans who say race relations are the most important problem in America is at its highest point since the 1992 Rodney King verdict (Enten 2014). This issue is neither abstract nor esoteric; it has very real and potentially wide-reaching electoral consequences. Until April of 2015, for instance, practically the entire local government of Ferguson, Missouri — a city where two thirds of residents are Black — was White (Wolf 2014). In Ferguson's most recent local elections, however, four Black candidates ran for city council (a larger number than the total sum of Black candidates in the city's history), one of whom ultimately prevailed in a majority-White district (Ballotpedia 2015).

“I’m not bitter — or I hope I’m not. But this is reality,” said Howard Gentry, who is again running for mayor of Nashville in 2015, when I asked for his reaction to the recent unrest in Ferguson. “The reality is that I grew up in Nashville when I couldn’t ride on the bus or swim in swimming pools or go to the White schools, and I experienced segregation in a huge way. But I also experienced the civil rights movement, and I experienced the change. I was actually in the first group of African Americans to swim in the swimming pool here. I was one of the first two African Americans to play Little League. I have seen Nashville grow and change.” Gentry continued: “As a matter of fact, I am the change — from a person who couldn’t go through this door, to being the first African American vice mayor. But, you know, we’ve still got a ways to go.”



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## Appendix I – Survey Design

You are invited to participate in a research study on politics and public affairs that will take approximately 5 to 7 minutes. You will be asked to answer some questions about yourself and your views on public affairs.

No identifying information about you will be made public and all of your choices will be kept confidential. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop and withdraw at any time. There are no known risks associated with this study beyond those associated with everyday life. Although this study will not benefit you personally, we hope that our results will add to research about how people develop views on politics.

You will receive \$0.50 for completing the survey, paid through Amazon Mechanical Turk.

If you have any concerns about this research, its procedures, or its risks and benefits, you may contact Eric Stern (eric.stern@yale.edu). If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Yale University Human Subjects Committee, 203-785-4688, human.subjects@yale.edu. You may also write to the Yale University Human Subjects Committee, P.O. Box 208304, New Haven, CT 06520-8304.

- I agree to participate
- I do not agree to participate

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Are you a citizen of the United States?

- Yes
- No

What is your age?

- [18, 19, ... 98, 99]

What is your ethnicity?

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Mixed
- Other

We are interested in learning about your preferences on a variety of topics, including activities. To demonstrate that you've read this much, just go ahead and select both swimming and dancing among the alternatives below, no matter what your true preferences are. Yes, ignore the question below and select both of those options.

If you had to choose just ONE, which one of the following physical activities would be your preferred form of exercise?

- Walking
  - Swimming
  - Weightlifting
  - Biking
  - Tennis
  - Team sport (soccer, basketball, softball, etc.)
  - Going to the gym
  - Dancing
  - Squash
  - Something else
- 

# Unless the respondent is a White, 18+ American citizen who answers the fourth question correctly, s/he will not be allowed to proceed.

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What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is the highest level of education you have received?

- No high school
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2-year college
- College graduate
- Post-graduate

What region of the United States do you live in?

- Northeast
- Midwest
- South
- West

What is your political party identification?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other party
- No preference

How strong is your party identification?

- Strong
- Not very
- Cannot say

How do you identify ideologically?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Moderate
- Somewhat conservative
- Conservative
- Very conservative

How would you describe your interest in politics?

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested
- Not all interested

Now, we'd like to get your feelings toward the following political candidates currently running for office. Both candidates are Democrats competing in a primary election. The winner will likely face little opposition in the general election. Please examine the candidates carefully and respond to the questions below.

[ONE OF 12 SETS OF CANDIDATES SIDE BY SIDE – example below]

**Candidates for Congress**

Thomas Washington	Alan Miller
	
<p>Gender: Male Age: 46 Party: Democrat</p>	<p>Gender: Male Age: 48 Party: Democrat</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a member of Congress, I will work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to propose thoughtful and innovative legislation.</li> <li>• Economic growth and prosperity require that we provide incentives to local business owners. I support stimulating the economy through reducing the tax burden.</li> <li>• High quality health care means providing affordable, accessible health care. I will increase funding for medical research and community health centers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A four-term state representative, I formerly worked as president of a successful 50-person company where I prioritized giving back to the community.</li> <li>• Tax cuts that benefit the wealthy are starving essential government services. Stimulating the economy means redirecting the resources used to pay for tax breaks elsewhere.</li> <li>• I will provide the planning needed to create the kind of healthcare system that includes affordable prescription drugs, while expanding coverage to even more people.</li> </ul>

Which of these two candidates will you vote for in the upcoming primary election?

- Alan Miller



- Don Baker/Thomas Washington/Robert Garcia

On this scale, ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable or warm toward the candidate. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you feel cold or unfavorable toward the candidate. You would rate the candidate at the 50 degree mark if you didn't feel particularly warm or cold toward the candidate.

[0, 1, ... 99, 100]

How much do you think the winner of this election will affect your life?

- A great deal
- Somewhat
- A little bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

How much do you think you will interact with the winner of this election?

- A great deal
- Somewhat
- A little bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

What is the most important criterion in your decision of who to vote for?

- Qualifications
- Platform
- Ideology
- Background
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you say that you personally care a good deal who wins this election, or that you don't care very much who wins?

- Care a good deal
- Don't care very much

---

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Below is a scale that runs from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place each candidate on this scale?

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate, middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely conservative

How strongly do you believe each candidate will support law enforcement?

- Very strongly
- Somewhat strongly
- A little bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

How strongly do you believe each candidate will support education?

- Very strongly
- Somewhat strongly
- A little bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

How strongly do you believe each candidate will support policies that create jobs?

- Very strongly
- Somewhat strongly
- A little bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

How strongly do you believe each candidate will support policies that aid the disadvantaged?

- Very strongly
- Somewhat strongly
- A little bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

---

How much do you agree with the following statement: Whites tend to favor other people who look like them.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Don't know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How much do you agree with the following statement: Blacks tend to favor other people who look like them.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Don't know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How much do you agree with the following statement: Hispanics tend to favor other people who look like them.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Don't know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How much do you agree with the following statement: Blacks tend to work as hard as everyone else in the United States.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Don't know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How much do you agree with the following statement: Hispanics tend to work as hard as everyone else in the United States.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Don't know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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Thank you for your participation. You have now completed the survey. Please continue to the next page for payment information.

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### Debriefing Form

Thank you for your participation in this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of a political candidate's race on candidate evaluation, as well as the office sought. Specifically, we are interested in determining whether voters will evaluate candidates differently that are identical in every respect except for their races, and the level of the elected office the candidates are seeking.

Several studies have demonstrated that candidate's appearance and attractiveness, sex, race, and sexual orientation play a significant in the public's overall evaluation. For example, an obese female candidate tends to perform worse than a similar candidate who has a normal weight. We believe that people will be inclined to vote for white candidates, then Hispanic candidates, and then black candidates. We also believe that participants will be more likely to support minority candidates running for higher office (like a member of the US Congress and state auditor) than local office (like mayor and sheriff).

In order to test our hypotheses, we randomly assigned participants to evaluate fictional candidates running in one of twelve variations: two white candidates running for sheriff, a white and a Hispanic candidate running for sheriff, a white and a black candidate running for sheriff; and these same three contests for mayor, state auditor, and US Representative. The candidates were identical except for their names, races, and attached photographs.

Because of what we are studying, we had to use some deception in today's study. The candidates are all fictional. If you were upset, disturbed, or distressed by participation in this experiment, we encourage you to make contact Eric Stern with your concerns or complaints at [eric.stern@yale.edu](mailto:eric.stern@yale.edu).