Countering Implicit Appeals: Which Strategies Work?

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Abstract

Contemporary politicians try to mobilize lingering racial resentments in the form of implicit appeals — ones in which the racial reference is subtle but recognizable. Although politicians have tried a number of different strategies to respond to implicit appeals, little is known about the effectiveness of these strategies. Using two survey experiments, we answer the question: Does calling the appeal a racial one work? Results suggest that calling attention to the racial nature of the appeal does not work, but rebutting the appeal on factual grounds does. However, it is not the case that any mention of racism is harmful. Calling attention to the racial nature of the attack can work in combination with a factual rebuttal.

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1 Introduction

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama avoided the topic of race as much as possible. However, some of his critics did not shy away from making subtle allusions to his race. One example was an ad run by Freedom’s Defense Fund, a conservative political action committee, that linked Obama to the African American former Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, who pleaded guilty to two counts of obstruction of justice and resigned in early September 2008. In this ad, a voice-over of Obama praising Kilpatrick provided the audio background for images of Kilpatrick’s mug shot and of Obama and Kilpatrick posing for pictures together (before the mayor’s downfall).

When confronted with a reference to his race, Obama pursued several different strategies over the course of the campaign. Most often, he tried to distract attention toward nonracial issues more favorable to him like the economy. On one occasion, however, Obama chose to directly engage the attack by calling attention to its racial overtones, as he did in response to a John McCain ad that juxtaposed Obama’s image and irrelevant images of the blonde female celebrities Britney Spears and Paris Hilton. Obama said that the intent of the ad was to scare voters by suggesting he "doesn’t look like all those other presidents on the dollar bills."2

This paper examines the effectiveness of responses to an implicit racial appeal, defined by Mendelberg (2001, 11) as “one that contains a recognizable—if subtle—racial reference, most easily through visual references.” We focus on implicit appeals because 1) they are common in U.S. elections; 2) they may be more difficult for

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1 Video can be seen at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNyZ-cbPdoM

candidates to tackle because many voters may not view them as racial and thus as illegitimate; and 3) they powerfully cue racial stereotypes (Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002; White, 2007).

Does calling the appeal a racial one work? The prevailing answer in the racial priming literature suggests that the answer is yes, although this hypothesis has not been tested directly. Our two experiments yield a novel finding that challenges the literature — factual rebuttals to implicit appeals work better than calling the appeal racial. It is a finding with important implications: perhaps voters are more responsive to reasonable communication than previously thought, and hence they are more reason-oriented and competent than expected.

We offer three other contributions. First, we take the racial priming literature one step further and consider not only how effective implicit appeals are at cueing racial stereotypes, but also how candidates can inoculate themselves from their harmful effects. In more general terms, we examine the effect of political messages by looking at the effect of the message and a countermessage. Chong and Druckman (2007) and Sniderman and Theriault (2004) argue that scholars should study elite communication in this more realistic interactive context. Second, we conceptually distinguish between four types of the engage strategy: engage-racial, engage-nonracial, engage-factual, and engage-factual + racial. Third, we compare racial messages by African American and White candidates, a rare but informative approach to studying racial politics.

2 Which Strategies Work?

Although previous studies examined the effect of implicit appeals (Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, 1999; Valentino, Hutchings and White,
2002; White, 2007), interest in their continuing relevance and effect reemerged around the time of Barack Obama’s election as president in 2008. Recent studies document the controversies surrounding racially tinged ads that appeared in the 2006 U.S. Senate race in Tennessee between Republican Bob Corker and African American Democrat Harold Ford (McIlwain and Caliendo, 2011) as well as the 2008 presidential campaign (Erigha and Charles, 2012). McIlwain and Caliendo (2011)’s analysis of television ads in U.S. House and Senate races from 1970 to 2006 shows that racial messages in campaign ads spiked in the 1990s and remained common in the 2000s. In addition to studies documenting the persistence of implicit appeals, a number of recent studies demonstrate that white voters still respond in racialized ways to cues that are not explicit (Tesler and Sears, 2010; DeSante, 2013; Banks, 2013; Banks and Bell, 2013).

For all the studies that have been done on the ubiquity and effect of implicit appeals, not much work has been done on rebuttals to these appeals. Earlier studies found that Democrats since the 1960s were mostly silent in response to Republicans’ implicit appeals (Edsall and Edsall, 1991; Glaser, 1996). Other studies of African American candidates in the 1980s found that avoiding explicit reference to race (“deracialization”) was a popular strategy (Perry, 1991). Mendelberg (2001, 103) argues that “silence in the face of implicit racial appeals is a losing strategy.” Instead, calling out the attack and drawing attention to its racial intent — the engage strategy — is the most effective one for countering implicit appeals. In support of this claim, Mendelberg examines the effect of a rebuttal in her analysis of the 1988 presidential campaign. She finds that racial resentment was closely associated with support for George H.W. Bush during the phase of the campaign in which race was not openly discussed as a possible motive for the infamous Willie Horton ads, but
lost its impact after Jesse Jackson claimed that the Horton ads were about race.

Although the results of this analysis suggest that Jackson’s response effectively countered the implicit appeal, they do not provide strong evidence that the rebuttal and not some other unmeasured factor weakened the link between racial resentment and Bush support. For example, it is unknown whether it was the rebuttal itself, or instead the explicit coverage it prompted of the original implicit Horton appeal, that caused the decline in the power of racial resentment. One of the weaknesses of relying on survey data for estimating the impact of campaign messages is that the investigator does not have control over the amount of exposure or the content of messages. Even if one has a general measure of campaign exposure, it is hard to know what aspect of which message is causing candidate evaluations to change. Experiments offer all of the control over message content, levels of exposure, and presence (or absence) of other messages that survey analysis cannot. Thus, this paper revisits the question of which strategies are most effective at countering implicit appeals, but with the strengths offered by controlled experimentation.

Mendelberg (2009) describes four common strategies that are used by candidates who are targeted by an implicit racial appeal: engage, distract, ignore and mimic. We investigate two of these strategies, setting aside mimic\(^3\) and ignore.\(^4\) The paper goes a step further and distinguishes between three subtypes of the engage strategy — engage-racial, engage-nonracial, and engage-factual. We also test a combination of engage-factual and engage-racial that we call engage-factual + racial. Thus,

\(^3\)Mimic is the strategy of signaling to voters that one is no less sympathetic to white voters’ views than the other party, as Bill Clinton did when he condemned the musician Sister Souljah for her statements about the Los Angeles riots during the 1992 campaign. We set it aside because mimic is used less as a way of defending oneself against attack (which is the scenario explored here) and more as a way of going on the offensive (as Clinton did in his Sister Souljah comments).

\(^4\)We include a control condition that is similar to ignore, but slightly different for reasons we mention later when introducing the experiments.
we test five strategies: 1) engage-racial; 2) engage-nonracial; 3) engage-factual; 4) engage-factual + racial; and 5) distract (plus the control group).

3 Response Strategies

Engage is broken down into four subtypes based on the different ways that candidates have directly responded to attacks. The major conceptual distinction between engage-racial and engage-nonracial is that engage-racial unambiguously labels the attack as racist, while engage-nonracial condemns the attack in nonracial terms such as “negative.” For an illustration of this distinction, compare Jackson’s denunciation of the Horton ads in October 1988 with Obama’s comments after releasing his long-form birth certificate in April 2011. About the Horton ads, Jackson said, “There have been a number of rather ugly race-conscious signals sent from [Bush’s] campaign.”\(^5\) (emphasis added). In contrast to Jackson’s explicitly racial response, Obama responded to questions about his birthplace by saying he is “speaking to the vast majority of the American people as well as to the press — we do not have time for this kind of silliness\(^6\)” (emphasis added).

The third variety, engage-factual is when a candidate confronts the attack not by calling it racist or negative, but by offering a facts-based rebuttal of the accusation. An example of this would be Michael Dukakis’ initial attempt to quiet the Horton controversy by noting that comparable incidents of convicted murderers committing heinous crimes while released on furlough had occurred in the Federal furlough

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program and the California program when Ronald Reagan was the governor of the state.\(^7\) We also test a fourth subtype, *engage-factual + racial*, which is a response that combines a facts-based rebuttal of an attack while also labeling it as racist. *Distract* is when a candidate tries to focus attention on a nonracial issue more favorable to him, as Obama did with the economy in 2008.

As noted earlier, Mendelberg (2001) predicts that explicitly drawing attention to the racial nature of an implicit message (the *engage-racial* strategy as it is called here) will be most successful. According to Mendelberg, implicit appeals operate via an automatic psychological process. When presented with a stimulus that is not explicitly about race but contains a racial cue, many whites allow negative antiblack stereotypes to influence their political judgments. However, almost all whites today are strongly committed to a norm of equality such that explicitly antiblack messages are rejected. The reason why revealing the racial intent behind an implicit appeal is believed to be effective is because it brings the racial content of the message into conscious awareness. When race is brought into conscious awareness, most whites will no longer bring their racial attitudes to bear on political judgments.

However, the strategy of calling out implicit appeals is vulnerable to the counter-strategy of accusing the person doing the “outing” of crying racism. This is in fact what happened after Obama’s “dollar bill” comment in 2008. Following Obama’s rebuttal, McCain campaign spokesman Rick Davis said, “Barack Obama has played the race card, and he played it from the bottom of the deck. It’s negative, divisive, shameful, and wrong.”\(^8\) Assuming that many voters agree with the counterclaim (es-


pecially co-partisans of the person making the counterclaim), we remain skeptical of the argument that denouncing subtle racism is really the most effective rebuttal to an implicit appeal.

Regarding the effectiveness of the other response strategies, some studies find that providing people with factual information about issues such as foreign aid (Gilens, 2001) and school spending (Howell and West, 2009) changes respondents’ opinions from what they were without that information. However, other recent studies find that factual information produces little opinion change and in some cases leads to a backlash effect. The topics of such studies include the Iraq War and its rationales (Nyhan and Reifler, 2010; Berinsky, 2007) and immigration policy (Sides and Citrin, 2007). These studies that find null effects of factual information usually involve issues that the public already has firm (albeit uninformed) opinions about. In contrast, the studies that show a significant effect of factual information on opinion deal with lesser-known issues like foreign aid and school spending.

We expect that the campaign setting of these experiments more closely resembles a lesser-known issue: most voters know very little about state-level elected officials (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). Therefore, factual information may influence opinion about politicians that voters know little about. The existing research’s focus on policy preferences instead of candidate evaluation, as well as its mixed findings on the effect of factual information, suggest more research is necessary.

In sum, we have reason to be skeptical of the claim that engage-racial will be the most effective strategy. However, since it is the most prominent hypothesis in the implicit appeals literature, we are interested in testing it. Thus, we test the hypothesis that the most effective strategy is engage-racial.
4 Bias Against Black Candidates?

Our experimental design allows us to answer an additional question: are rebuttals offered by black candidates less effective than identical rebuttals offered by white candidates? There is conflicting evidence on the general question of whether black candidates are penalized by voters because of their race. One set of findings suggests that they are. Experimental studies from the 1990s found that white voters rate black candidates lower than identical white candidates (Terkildsen, 1993; Sigelman, Sigelman, Walkosz and Nitz, 1995; McDermott, 1998). However, observational studies suggest that racially polarized voting is declining (Highton, 2004; Abrajano, Nagler and Alvarez, 2005). Weaver (2012) finds no effect of race on average in how white and black candidates were evaluated in an experimental study, although men and conservatives were less likely to vote for a dark-skinned black candidate. Hajnal (2001) finds that white voting rates and racial sentiment toward black candidates improves after the electorate experiences a black candidate serving in office. These findings suggest that times have changed with regard to white attitudes about black candidates. On the other hand, studies of opposition to Barack Obama find that racial resentment or stereotypes depressed support for his candidacy and continue to play an important role in shaping opinions of his presidency (Berinsky, Hutchings, Mendelberg, Shaker and Valentino, 2010; Jackman and Vavreck, 2011; Kinder and Dale-Riddle, 2011; Tesler and Sears, 2010; Banks, 2013).

Given that evidence of racial bias is mixed, we do not have a strong expectation that black candidates’ rebuttals will be less effective than white candidates’ rebuttals. The existing literature does not have much to say about the effect of rebuttals in particular. Although the racial priming literature shows that negative racial cues can activate white voters’ stereotypes and resentments (Mendelberg, 2001), we still
do not know how the effect of an implicit message changes when it competes with a counter-message. One purpose of this study is to answer this question.

5 Method

5.1 Overview

We conducted two survey experiments to test how well different responses counter an implicit racial appeal. Study 1, which took place from March-July 2013, was carried out in two stages. First, subjects read a news story about the use of an implicit appeal in a fictitious U.S. Senate race. Second, subjects read one of five responses (or a control response) by the targeted candidate to the implicit appeal. The main dependent variable of interest is the pre- and post-rebuttal difference in the feeling thermometer difference between the attacker and the target. The difference between candidate feeling thermometers is used to take into account the possibility that the attacking candidate might be hurt by deploying an implicit appeal, which some say is why John McCain did not make more use of the tactic in 2008 (Tesler and Sears, 2010, 55). Other dependent variables we measure include vote choice in the Senate race and whether subjects say they would turn out to vote in this election. Study 2 is an earlier version of Study 1 that was run in December 2011 and February 2012. The design of the two studies is very similar, with a few differences explained in the Results section.

5.2 First Stage

In the fictitious Senate race of Study 1, the candidate Michael Wells is attacked by a rival candidate for pardoning David Jones, a former U.S. Representative con-
victed of a number of serious crimes. Wells is the sitting governor of the state, which explains how he could have issued a pardon. The race of the candidate and the corrupt representative (henceforth referred to as the “criminal”) was manipulated by a side-by-side photo of each man that was embedded in the news article (see Figure 1). Subjects were randomly assigned to read one of the four resulting versions of the article. This race manipulation is the only part of the article that varies.

Table 1 shows the basic design of Study 1. The reason why the manipulation of the criminal’s race is important to the design of the study is that it allows us to create an implicit message and a control (nonracial) version of the same message. This makes it possible to test whether the implicit appeal “worked” in the sense that a candidate is rated lower when associated with a black criminal compared to a white criminal. It is hard to know what a racial response does to an attack that is not racial, so we must be able to show that the attack worked. The reason why the manipulation of the candidate’s race is important is that we can determine whether black candidates’ rebuttals are less effective than white candidates’ rebuttals. The manipulation of the candidate’s race allows us to compare identical messages offered by black and white candidates.

White and black versions of the candidate and criminal must be as close to identical as possible so that differences in ratings of candidates between conditions can be attributed to the racial phenotypes of the candidate/criminal pair and not some other aspect of their appearance. In order to do this, we use a morphing procedure

Since the candidate and criminal are manipulated to be either black or white, the four possible combinations are black candidate/black criminal, white candidate/black criminal, black candidate/white criminal, and white candidate/white criminal.

Notice that no engage-racial or engage-factual + racial rebuttal is given in the white candidate/white criminal scenario because it would not make sense for a white candidate to offer a racial rebuttal when tied to a white criminal.
used in recent political science research (Bailenson, Iyengar, Yee and Collins, 2008; Weaver, 2012). The purpose of this procedure is to allow for realistic variation in skin tone and facial features between black and white faces while controlling for as many extraneous sources of variation as possible.

The new black candidate and white candidate created by this method can be seen in Figure 1 of the Online Supplemental Material (hereafter referred to as “OSM”). We picked one white face and held it constant (the “baseline” face) and morphed it with a different white face (the “mixing” face) to create the new white candidate. The faces were combined in a ratio of 40% to 60% mixing-to-baseline. To create the new black candidate, we “painted” the white baseline face black so that its mixture with a black mixing face would result in a realistic black face. 11 Since the black faces were also combined in a 40% to 60% mixing-to-baseline ratio, the new black and white faces share 60% of the same face.

The black criminal and white criminal created using this same procedure can be seen in Figure 2 of the OSM. We ran pilot studies to see if people rate the faces equally along six of Oosterhof and Todorov (2008)’s nine trait dimensions: likeable, threatening, dominance, competence, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. 12 There were no significant differences at the 0.05 level in mean rating along each dimension for either the black and white versions of the candidate or the black and white versions of the criminal (scores for each face are shown in Table 1 of the OSM).

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11 If we did not paint the white baseline face, morphing the white baseline face with the black mixing face would yield a racially ambiguous face. It is important that the faces are clearly recognizable as black or white in the experiment.

12 According to Oosterhof and Todorov (2008), dominance and trustworthiness account for 80% of social judgments, so there is little utility in measuring all nine dimensions.
5.3 Implicit Appeal

We follow Mendelberg (2001, 11)’s definition of an implicit racial appeal as one that “contains a recognizable — if subtle — racial reference, most easily through visual references.” One important consideration is to select an appeal that is representative of ones that take place in the real world. Although there is some variation, linking candidates to symbols of black criminality has been a theme in salient campaign ads (Mendelberg, 2001). This was the theme of the Willie Horton ad in 1988 and more recently of the anti-Obama Kwame Kilpatrick ad in 2008.

The scenario examined in Study 1 is intended to be reminiscent of the Kilpatrick ad. The attack story is three paragraphs long. The first paragraph explains that candidate Peter Moore (the “attacker”) attacked Michael Wells (the “target”) over his pardon of convicted former U.S. Representative David Jones. The second paragraph gives a brief biography of the target Wells. The third paragraph describes the ad as a list of Jones’ crimes, loosely modeled on Kilpatrick’s: eight felony convictions, most notably assault of a police officer that left the officer hospitalized due to head injuries.\textsuperscript{13} Jones’ other crimes include extortion, tax evasion, and improper use of state funds. After the third paragraph, a side-by-side photo of the target (wearing a suit) and the criminal (in his mug shot) appears, with a caption explaining that the photo is a screenshot from an ad released by the attacker. This detail about the photo being a screenshot from an ad is important because it communicates to the reader that the photo is an artifact of the the attacker’s campaign, and that the decision to depict the criminal in prison clothes is a strategic attack, not an editorial decision made by the newspaper.

\textsuperscript{13}Although Kilpatrick was arrested for assaulting a police officer, we added the detail about the officer requiring hospitalization. Our aim was to make the assault seem severe enough that it would prime stereotypes of African American criminality.
In order to isolate the effect of race and neutralize interactions with party identification, we assign subjects to a primary contest between the target and the attacker that matches the respondent’s party ID. In other words, we assign Democratic subjects to a Democratic primary and Republican subjects to a Republican primary. Independent subjects are randomly assigned to either primary.

After reading the first news story, respondents rated their response to the target’s pardon, gave opinions on the target’s character traits, rated the target and attacker on a feeling thermometer, indicated their vote choice and whether they would vote at all in the election, and answered demographic questions (except no questions about the subject’s race or their opinion on any racial issue appeared in the pre-rebuttal survey so as not to contaminate responses to the remaining questions).

5.4 Response Conditions

Table 2 describes the key features of the six response conditions. The first paragraph in each rebuttal is identical: it explains that the target Wells responded to Moore’s attack. The second and third paragraphs are where the responses diverge. In engage-racial, the target says, “This ad is an attempt to stir up racial fears.” (emphasis added). He continues by saying, “Charges like this breed division in our country and our state. They divide us — race against race — so we blame each other instead of work together” (emphasis added). This response is patterned after Governor Bill Clinton’s speech announcing his candidacy for president in 1991 when he said, “For twelve years, Republicans have tried to divide us — race against race — so we get mad at each other and not at them” (quoted from Mendelberg (2001, 104)). Engage-nonracial is identical to engage-racial except it omits the two references to

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14See OSM section 9.9 for full text of each response condition.
race ("racial fears" and "divide us — race against race") that define the *engage-racial* response. In *engage-factual*, the target says:

“This ad is a distortion of the truth... I have already explained my decision in this case. The judge in the case, the trial judge, recommended the commutation. Jones got a 5-0 vote from the bipartisan parole board, which has three members that were appointed by governors from the opposing party. I do not condone what Jones did, but I have faith in the good judgment of these experts. I believe that these are the relevant facts.”

This response is patterned after former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee’s explanation for why he pardoned Maurice Clemmons, an Arkansas convict who murdered four Washington state police officers in 2009, nine years after he was pardoned by Huckabee. In response to his critics, Huckabee cited the recommendation of the trial judge and the unanimous vote of the parole board as the reasons for his decision. The *engage-factual + racial* response combines the target’s factual explanation with the claim that the charges divide us — “race against race.” In the *distract* condition, the target shifts attention from the attacker’s ad to the attacker’s economic policies and goes on to talk about the attacker’s weakness in handling the state economy. Since the target does not offer a response to the attack in the *control* condition, an irrelevant story about YouTube that has a similar format and length to the other response stories is used.

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16 The *control* condition can be thought of as similar to the *ignore* strategy in that the candidate does not offer a response. However, another plausible interpretation of *ignore* could be the candidate talking about another issue without saying anything about the attack. Given that *ignore* has at least two plausible operationalizations, we label this condition as the *control* condition instead.
5.5 Subject Pool

For Study 1, we used Amazon.com’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to recruit a pool of 766 white subjects from March through July 2013. For Study 2, we recruited 670 white subjects via MTurk in December 2011 and February 2012. MTurk is a web-based platform that allows users to recruit subjects to perform various tasks. The primary advantage of using MTurk as a subject recruitment platform is that it allows data to be collected quickly and inexpensively. One potential drawback of using MTurk is that the external validity of findings may be compromised because MTurk’s users are not representative of the U.S. population. MTurkers are generally younger, better educated, and more liberal than the greater population (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz, 2012). However, early research on MTurk’s benefits and limitations shows that MTurk users are more representative and diverse than student and convenience samples that are usually used in political science controlled experiments (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz, 2012). Furthermore, Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) show that MTurk samples replicate the results of experimental studies conducted with nationally representative samples, suggesting that MTurk participants do not behave dramatically differently than subjects in other published research. See Table 2 in the OSM for a demographic profile of our sample from Study 1.

17 Twenty-eight (3.7%) of the 766 subjects in Study 1 were not recruited from MTurk, but instead were recruited from the XXXXX panel constructed by the XXXXX (identifying information removed).
6 Results

Our first result from Study 1 shows that the implicit appeal “worked” as a racial attack. Among subjects who answered all manipulation check questions correctly\(^{18}\) and had a racial resentment score in the top third of the sample (above 0.625), 21.8% (19/87) said they would vote for the target candidate in a head-to-head target-versus-attacker election when the target pardoned a white criminal compared to only 12.3% (10/81) when the target pardoned a black criminal (p=0.05, one-tailed test, pooling across target race). The implicit cue appears to have its intended effect among those most likely to respond to it.\(^{19}\)

We also test whether or not the engage-racial and engage-factual + racial rebuttal actually brings the racial element of the attack into conscious awareness. The argument that calling out the attack is the most effective strategy assumes that once race is made salient, people put less emphasis on racial attitudes and stereotypes. Figure 2 shows the percentage of subjects who responded “correct,” “not correct,” and “don’t know” to the statement, “Moore’s ad had racial overtones.” Subjects who were shown a white candidate and white criminal are set aside in this analysis since they were not exposed to a racial cue either in the form of a black candidate or black criminal and therefore would have less reason to believe that the attack was

\(^{18}\)Three manipulation check questions were included in the survey: 1) Moore criticized Wells’ pardon of David Jones, the convicted former U.S. Representative (correct); 2) Moore criticized Wells’ performance on the state economy (not correct); 3) Moore engaged in a negative attack on Wells (correct). Also, subjects were asked to recall the race of the target and the criminal. Slightly over 70% (538/766) of the sample correctly answered these five questions.

\(^{19}\)Among all respondents with racial resentment scores in the top third of the sample, 18.8% (24/128) said they would vote for the target when he pardoned a white criminal compared to 16.9% (20/118) when the target pardoned a black criminal (p=0.36, one-tailed test). However, since this includes respondents who did not receive the intended treatment (as demonstrated by incorrectly answering a manipulation check question or failing to recall the candidate or criminal’s race), we do not view it as a good assessment of the effect of the treatment.
Results for the full sample in the top panel show that 24% of subjects in the engage-racial condition and 21% in the engage-factual + racial condition thought the ad had racial overtones, compared to 6-13% of subjects in the other conditions. The difference in response patterns between the engage-racial and engage-factual + racial conditions pooled and the other four conditions pooled is significant for the whole sample (chi-squared test, \( p<0.0001 \), two-tailed test) and Democrats only (\( p<0.0005 \)).

Among Republicans, however, engage-racial and engage-factual + racial do not have their intended effect: only 15% in those conditions believe that the ad had racial overtones (although only 59% answered “not correct” in the engage-racial condition, which suggests that the level of uncertainty over whether the ad had a racial element to it is higher for those who read this response compared to those who read the other responses). The difference in response patterns between engage-racial and engage-factual + racial pooled and the other four responses pooled is not significant (chi-squared test, \( p = 0.39 \), two-tailed test). The two rebuttals that mention race — engage-racial and engage-factual + racial — do not convince Republicans that the initial attack was racial any more than the rebuttals that did not mention race.

Next, we turn to the results on one of the dependent variables of interest: the pre- and post-rebuttal difference in feeling thermometer differences between attacker Moore and target Governor Wells.\(^{21}\) Figure 3 shows the difference in pre- and post-

\(^{20}\)Among subjects who correctly answered all manipulation checks and identified candidate and criminal race, the percentage who thought Moore’s ad was a racial appeal is: 29.4% for engage-racial; 8.1% for engage-noracial; 14.3% for engage-factual; 18.8% for engage-factual + racial; 13.1% for distract; and 4.5% for control. The difference in response patterns between engage-racial and engage-factual + racial pooled and the other four conditions pooled is significant (chi-squared test, \( p<0.000005 \)).

\(^{21}\)The pre-rebuttal Attacker-Target difference does not vary significantly depending on the assigned rebuttal condition, verifying that randomization worked. The largest difference is between engage-factual (mean=14.3, n=144) and engage-factual + racial (mean=16.9, n=96), but that
rebuttal Attacker-Target difference scores and their 95% confidence intervals for each
response x candidate/criminal race condition, plus pooling all race combinations.\textsuperscript{22}
Positive values indicate that the rebuttal helped the target while negative values
mean that the rebuttal backfired. As a simple illustration, imagine a subject who
strongly dislikes the target for granting the pardon and likes the attacker’s message,
but accepts the target’s rebuttal and adjusts his post-rebuttal evaluation of the
target upward and the attacker downward. If the subject gave pre-rebuttal scores of
50 to the attacker and 30 to the target and post-rebuttal scores of 40 to the attacker
and 40 to the target, the difference-in-difference score for that subject would be
\((50 - 30) - (40 - 40) = 20\) — a strong endorsement of the target’s rebuttal.

In Figure 3, we see that none of the difference-in-difference estimates for engage-
factual and engage-factual + racial crosses zero, meaning that for each candidate/
criminal pair (and pooling the four together), these rebuttals helped the target
Wells close the feeling thermometer gap. When race combinations are pooled for
distract, its effect is also significant \((p<0.0002, \text{two-tailed test})\). Engage-racial and
engage-nonracial do not appear to move scores in the target’s favor at all. Control
also does not improve the target’s rating, but that is expected given that no new
information pertinent to the target’s pardon is presented in that response. The re-
sults also indicate that black candidates’ rebuttals do not systematically improve the
difference-in-difference scores less than white candidates’ rebuttals. In other words,
the candidate/criminal race pairings do not matter much, so the pooled estimates
are the ones to pay attention to.

\textsuperscript{22}Results in Figures 3, 4, and 5, and Figures 4 and 5 in the OSM are for the entire sample,
including those who did not answer all manipulation checks correctly or misidentified the target
or criminal’s race. Excluding those subjects does not substantially change the results.
To verify these results, we turn to the main result of Study 2 (conducted in December 2011 and February 2012). The four features of the experimental design that were different in Study 2 were: 1) there was no engage-factual + racial rebuttal; 2) no party label was attached to either the attacker or the target; 3) the Senate race was a general election, not a primary election; and 4) the faces embedded in the fictional news stories were created using FaceGen Modeller 3.2, a 3-D face-generating software program that allows users to create a face called an “identity” which one can imbue with “European” or “African” coloring and features.\footnote{The faces used in Study 2 are shown in Figure 3 of the OSM.} Figure 4 shows that the results from Study 2 replicate the main result of Study 1: engage-racial does not work, but engage-factual does.\footnote{One notable difference between the two studies is that engage-nonracial has a small but statistically significant positive effect for the target in Study 2, pooling across all candidate/criminal race pairs.} Thus, the main result of Study 1 is replicated by a similar study conducted on a separate sample at a different time.

The next set of results from Study 1 shows how effective the responses are conditional on different levels of partisanship, racial resentment, and belief in racial stereotypes. The sample was divided between Democrats (42% of the sample) and Republicans (30% of the sample).\footnote{Independents were 25\% of the sample, while don’t knows were 3\%.} Racial resentment is an average score on a four-item battery (scores ranging from 0-1) designed to measure “symbolic racism,” a concept developed to capture anti-black affect by asking people to agree or disagree with statements such as, “Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve” or “It’s really a matter of not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites” (Kinder and Sears, 1981; Kinder and Sanders, 1996). The sample median was 0.5625, and thus we split the sample into
low resentment (below 0.5625) and high resentment (above 0.5625) groups.

Although the racial resentment scale has been shown to predict opposition to race-related policy positions and vote choice (Tesler and Sears, 2010), there is a debate about the scale’s construct validity (Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986). Sniderman and Piazza (1993) and Sniderman and Carmines (1997) argue that measuring prejudice by asking about stereotypes of racial and ethnic groups is better than using the racial resentment scale because stereotype questions only ask about racial attitudes while the racial resentment scale asks about race and values such as hard work at the same time. Four hundred out of 766 (52.2%) respondents rated whites as more hard-working, more peaceful, and/or more intelligent than blacks. Since the validity of the racial resentment scale is still subject to debate and our sample has adequate variance in racial stereotype beliefs, we include both measures of prejudice as a robustness check. Following Jackman and Vavreck (2011), we divide our sample into those who rated whites higher than blacks on any of the three stereotype questions (“negative stereotype” category, 52.2% of the sample) and those who did not (“neutral stereotype” category, 47.8% of the sample).

Figure 5 presents the difference-in-difference plots for Democrats and Republicans, low and high racial resentment groups, and neutral and negative stereotype groups. One finding that stands out is that engage-racial appears to boost opinion of the target Wells among Democrats, but it has the opposite effect among Republicans. Pooling all of the candidate/criminal race pairs, engage-racial improves the target’s difference score among Democrats by about 6.3 feeling thermometer points.

26The low resentment group represented 49% (372 out of 766) of the sample, while the high resentment group made up 43% (327 out of 766). Nine percent of the sample (67 out of 766) clustered at the median and were excluded from the analysis. Including these respondents to either the low resentment or high resentment groups does not substantially change the results presented in the second panel of Figure 5.
(p=0.03, two-tailed test) but hurts the target’s difference score among Republicans by about 4.8 points (p=0.10, two-tailed test). The effect of *engage-factual* and *engage-factual + racial* appears robust across all subsamples.

Since our sample contains a high number of young, educated people (as most MTurk samples do), we want to check to see if the results still hold among older, less educated respondents. Figure 6 shows the difference-in-difference plots for respondents older than age 33\(^{27}\) who do not have a college degree.\(^{28}\) Although the sample sizes are small, the pooled estimates still verify the main result found in the full sample: *engage-factual* and *engage-factual + racial* improve the target’s feeling thermometer score relative to the attacker’s.

Figures 4 and 5 of the OSM show the pre- and post-rebuttal difference for the other two dependent variables we measured: 1) vote choice for the target in a head-to-head election against the attacker and 2) self-reported voter turnout. In both figures, positive values indicate greater support for the target. We see a replication of the patterns found in the feeling thermometer difference-in-difference analysis: *engage-factual* and *engage-factual + racial* improve the target’s standing relative to the attacker (although there is less movement on voter turnout than on the feeling thermometer or vote choice measures).

\(^{27}\)The age question in our survey asked respondents, “Could you give the decade when you were born?” Respondents who answered “1970s” or any earlier decade are older than age 33 and therefore included in this analysis.

\(^{28}\)Educational attainment is a five-category variable coded 1 = “Some high school or less”; 2 = “High school diploma or equivalent certificate”; 3 = “Some college or two-year degree”; 4 = “College degree;” and 5 = “Post-college degree.” Respondents who scored 1, 2, or 3 are included in this analysis.
7 Conclusion

To review the findings: we found that *engage-factual* and *engage-factual + racial* improved ratings of the target overall, in all candidate/criminal race pairings, and regardless of partisanship, racial predispositions, age, or educational attainment. These results are replicated when looking at voting for the target or voter turnout as the dependent variable. Also important is that *engage-racial* improved the difference-in-difference scores in favor of the target among Democrats, but actually hurt the target among Republicans. Finally, black candidates’ rebuttals were not seen as less effective than white candidates’ rebuttals.

Why did the two factual rebuttals work? One possibility is that the fictional scenario chosen for the experiment is the pardon of a convicted ex-politician. In this scenario, there is no way to sever the link between the actions of the candidate and the controversy created by that action. Other acts of political misconduct, such as a controversial policy vote, an act of corruption, a sex scandal, or a demonstrated link to a figure like Jeremiah Wright have this same character. In situations like this where there is no way to deny responsibility for the act, McGraw (1991) argues that it is best to offer a good reason for why one took such action (a “justification”), rather than to question the motives of the opposition (an “excuse”). There are other situations in which implicit appeals are likely to arise, however, where the link between the candidate and the controversial figure is more tenuous. The attempt to link Kwame Kilpatrick to Obama is an example where Obama could more easily deny that he had any genuine relationship with Kilpatrick. Perhaps a strategy of questioning the motives of one’s opponents would be more effective in this instance.

Also, it is interesting that *engage-factual + racial* worked while *engage-racial* did not. The success of *engage-factual + racial* suggests that merely mentioning race
does not mean that a message will be rejected. It does suggest, however, that a racial message cannot be about race alone. It must be accompanied by a direct explanation of the scandalous act in order to sway the public’s view of that act. It is also significant that engage-racial hurt the attacked candidate among Republicans, but engage-factual + racial moved Republican respondents in the attacked candidate’s favor. Even among Republicans, the mention of race in engage-factual + racial did not nullify the effect of a direct explanation of the situation.

The other result in need of explanation is the null finding on the effect of engage-racial. This would appear to cast doubt on the Mendelberg (2001) hypothesis that calling attention to the racial nature of an implicit appeal is the most effective way to counter an implicit appeal. Further evidence on this point is that engage-racial backfired among Republicans.

We also must consider why black candidates’ rebuttals were not less effective than white candidates’ rebuttals. One possibility is that political circumstances can racialize the evaluation of candidates, but that responses such as those we considered in our study can effectively neutralize these racialized evaluations. A number of recent studies support the notion that candidate evaluation and policy positions can become racialized, whether in the case of the 2008 presidential campaign, the health care debate, or support for Tea Party candidates (Tesler and Sears, 2010; Jackman and Vavreck, 2011; Banks, 2013). Our study can contribute to this research by suggesting response strategies that may counter this racialization.

Finally, we consider the limitations of the results. The experimental design only tests a single-shot attack-response episode. The dynamics of repeated play are not investigated here. It would also be desirable to verify our results with a nationally representative sample, especially since our MTurk sample had a high number of
educated young people — not the intended audience for an implicit appeal. It is also possible that educated respondents are more likely to be convinced by factual rebuttals. Finally, such a sample is less likely to show anti-black bias. Perhaps a nationally representative sample would demonstrate bias against black candidates’ rebuttals.

The experiments presented in this paper demonstrate that all else being equal, engage-factual and engage-factual + racial are effective strategies for countering an implicit racial appeal. The findings presented here contradict the conventional wisdom in the racial priming literature that engage-racial is the most effective strategy. It also appears that the lofty and aspirational rhetoric of engage-nonracial is ineffective at combating implicit appeals. Instead, the results suggest that a direct and convincing explanation of the facts of the case is the essential component of any inoculation strategy against attacks that aim to activate negative racial predispositions.

\[29\] We do, however, show in Figure 6 that the effect of engage-factual and engage-factual + racial remains even among those older than age 33 and without a college degree.
8  Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Two versions of the attack news story, black candidate/white criminal on the left and white candidate/black criminal on the right (Study 1). Larger images of the attack news story can be seen in Section 9.8 of the Online Supplemental Material.
### Table 1: Experimental Design (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Level</th>
<th>First Stage</th>
<th>Second Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2: Description of Response Stories (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Engage-racial</th>
<th>Engage-nonracial</th>
<th>Engage-factual</th>
<th>Engage-factual + racial</th>
<th>Disturb</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headline</td>
<td>Wells Claims</td>
<td>Ad is a Negative</td>
<td>Wells Claims</td>
<td>Wells Attacks</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>Takes On</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ad</td>
<td>Attack</td>
<td>Ad is Unfair</td>
<td>Ad is Unfair, Racial</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attack</td>
<td>Attack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Paragraph</td>
<td>Wells fires back against ad...</td>
<td>Identical across conditions</td>
<td>Identical across conditions</td>
<td>Identical across conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Paragraph</td>
<td>&quot;...ad is an attempt to stir up racial fears...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;...ad is an attempt to stir up fears...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;...ad is a distortion of the truth...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;...ad is a distortion of the truth...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;My opponent's economic plan will spell disaster...&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Paragraph</td>
<td>&quot;Charges like this...divide us...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Charges like this...divide us...&quot;</td>
<td>Wells explains reason for pardon: unanimous vote of bipartisan pardon review board</td>
<td>Wells explains reason for pardon, plus: &quot;Charges like this...divide us...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Fought and delivered on behalf of all working families...&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>Candidate and convict, race of each varying</td>
<td>Identical across conditions</td>
<td>Identical across conditions</td>
<td>Identical across conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response in the control condition is a story about YouTube and its efforts to draw viewers away from television. The reason for including this is that we want to control for the mere act of reading a second story and answering the questions about candidates' character traits, feeling thermometer scores, etc.
Figure 2: Thought Ad Had Racial Overtones, by Response Condition, Study 1
(green = “correct,” red = “not correct,” yellow = “don’t know”)

Full Sample (n=570)
'Moore's ad had racial overtones...'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Not Correct</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage Racial</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Nonracial</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Factual</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Factual + Racial</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distract</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dems only (n=238)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Not Correct</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage Racial</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Nonracial</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Factual</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Factual + Racial</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distract</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOP only (n=175)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Not Correct</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage Racial</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Nonracial</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Factual</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Factual + Racial</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distract</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This does not include subjects who were in the white candidate/white criminal condition since those subjects were not exposed to a racial cue either in the form of a black candidate or black criminal.
Figure 3: Difference in pre- and post-rebuttal Attacker-Target difference scores with 95% confidence intervals, by response and candidate/criminal race pair, Study 1 (black candidate/black criminal “bb,” white candidate/black criminal “wb,” black candidate/white criminal “bw,” white candidate/white criminal “ww”)

Engage racial (n=101)

Engage nonracial (n=144)

Engage factual (n=144)

Engage factual + racial (n=96)

Distract (n=138)

Control (n=143)
Figure 4: Difference in pre- and post-rebuttal means with 95% confidence intervals, by response and candidate/criminal race pair (Study 2)

Note: there was no engage-factual + racial rebuttal in Study 2.
Figure 5: Difference-in-difference plots for Democrats and Republicans (top), low- and high racial resentment groups (bottom left), and neutral- and negative stereotype groups (bottom right) (Study 1)
Figure 6: Difference-in-difference plots for people older than 33 and with less than a college degree (Study 1)
9 Online Supplemental Material

9.1 Faces

Figure 1: Example of Morphing Procedure Used to Make Black and White Candidates (Study 1). Note: the baseline face used to create the black candidate is a "painted" version of the baseline face used to create the white candidate. Painting is necessary in order to make the resulting blend look like a realistic black face.
Figure 2: Black and White Criminals Created Using Morphing Procedure (Study 1)

9.2 Face Ratings

Table 1: Human Sample Ratings of Candidates and Criminals, Study 1 (7-point scale for all traits)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>black candidate</th>
<th></th>
<th>white candidate</th>
<th></th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likeable</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>threatening</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dominance</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trustworthiness</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competence</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attractiveness</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n = 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>black criminal</th>
<th></th>
<th>white criminal</th>
<th></th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likeable</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>threatening</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dominance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trustworthiness</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competence</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attractiveness</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n = 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 9.3 Sample Demographics

#### Table 2: Sample Demographics (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong> (Decade of Birth)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930s (73-83 years old)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940s (63-73)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s (53-63)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s (43-53)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s (33-43)</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s (23-33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s (18-23)</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>Below $15,000</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$15,000 - $24,999</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$25,000 - $34,999</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$35,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$75,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$100,000 - $149,999</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$150,000 - $199,999</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$200,000 or more</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Some high school or less</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent certificate</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some college or two-year degree</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-college degree</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partisanship</strong></td>
<td>Strong Democrat</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak Democrat</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent - Democrat</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent - Independent</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent - Republican</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak Republican</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong Republican</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haven’t thought</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>much about this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.4 Faces from Study 2

Figure 3: These faces were created using FaceGen Modeller 3.2 and used in Study 2 (Dec. 2011 and Feb. 2012)
9.5 Vote Choice in Study 1

Figure 4: Difference in pre- and post-rebuttal proportion of Target votes with 95% confidence intervals, by response and candidate/criminal race pair (Study 1)
9.6 Voter Turnout in Study 1

Figure 5: Difference in pre- and post-rebuttal proportion of likely voters with 95% confidence intervals, by response and candidate/criminal race pair (Study 1)
9.7 Question Wording

After the attack, but before the rebuttal...

*Party Identification*

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven’t you thought much about this?

- Strong Democrat
- Weak Democrat
- Independent - Democrat
- Independent - Independent
- Independent - Republican
- Weak Republican
- Strong Republican
- Haven’t Thought Much About This

*Candidate Feeling Thermometers*

Please rate Michael Wells, the governor who pardoned Jones, using something called the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorable toward the person and that you don’t care too much for that person. Rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don’t feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.

Rating: __________

Please rate Peter Moore, the candidate who criticized Wells’ pardon, using some-
thing called the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorable toward the person and that you don’t care too much for that person. Rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don’t feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.

Rating: ____________

*Vote Choice Intention*

If you could vote in this election, who would you vote for?

Michael Wells (the governor who pardoned David Jones)
Peter Moore (the candidate who criticized Wells’ pardon)

*Voter Turnout Intention*

If you could vote in this election, would you vote?

Yes
No

After reading the rebuttal...

 Feeling thermometers, vote choice, and turnout intention are all measured post-rebuttal as well.

*Racial Resentment*

Now, we will ask for your views on various issues. We are interested in your own personal opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.
Most people — blacks and whites alike — agree that the average white person in America is more likely to have a good income, get a good education, and to have a regular job than the average black person. Here are some reasons that have been given as to why the average black American is not as well off as the average white American. For each one, please rate yourself on a scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italian, Irish, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they would be just as well off as whites</td>
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<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Racial Stereotypes Battery*

Now we have some questions about different groups in our society. We’re going to show you a seven-point scale on which the characteristics of people in a group can be rated.
In the first statement, a score of 1 means that you think almost all of the people in the group are “lazy.” A score of 7 means that you think almost all of the people in the group are “hard working.” A score of 4 means you think that the group is not towards one end or another, and of course, you may choose any number in between that comes closest to where you think people in this group stand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 (Lazy)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (Hard working)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>Blacks</td>
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<td>○</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, a score of 1 means that you think almost all of the people in the group are “violent.” A score of 7 means that you think almost all of the people in the group are “peaceful.” A score of 4 means you think that the group is not towards one end or another, and of course, you may choose any number in between that comes closest to where you think people in this group stand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 (Violent)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (Peaceful)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, a score of 1 means that you think almost all of the people in the group are “unintelligent.” A score of 7 means that you think almost all of the people in the group are “intelligent.” A score of 4 means you think that the group is not towards one end or another, and of course, you may choose any number in between that comes closest to where you think people in this group stand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 (Unintelligent)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (Intelligent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
9.8 Implicit Appeals News Stories

Figure 6: Black candidate/black criminal, Study 1 (Democratic primary)

State News

Ad Links Wells, Jones

By James Beck, Times Staff Writer
June 15, 2012

The campaign of Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Peter Moore launched an ad against rival Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Michael Wells on Monday, criticizing Wells’ pardon of convicted former U.S. Representative David Jones.

Wells is the current governor and is running for an open seat in the U.S. Senate. He is a 48-year-old businessman who is married with two children. He has served as governor for two terms. As governor, Wells passed a tax relief plan for middle-class families.

The 30-second ad begins with a description of Jones and the eight felonies he was convicted of, which include the assault of a police officer. The officer was hospitalized for injuries suffered to his head. Jones was also convicted of appointing 29 of his closest friends and relatives to public positions, extortion, tax evasion, and improper use of state funds. The ad ends with text that reads, “Michael Wells: He Can’t Be Trusted.”

Governor Michael Wells (left) and convicted former U.S. Representative David Jones (right) in a screenshot from an ad launched by U.S. Senate candidate Peter Moore
Figure 7: Three Other Implicit Attack Stories, Study 1 (Democratic primary)

*There are four other implicit attack stories used for the Republican primary, but these are not shown in the interest of avoiding redundancy. They are exactly the same as the Democratic primary stories, except the candidates are labeled as Republicans instead of Democrats.
9.9 Responses

Figure 8: Engage-racial, Study 1 (black candidate/black criminal)

State News

Wells Claims Ad Had Racial Intent

By James Beck, Times Staff Writer
June 16, 2012

This morning, U.S. Senate candidate Michael Wells fired back against an ad criticizing his pardon of former U.S. Representative David Jones. The ad showed photos of Wells side-by-side with a mug shot of Jones.

“This ad is an attempt to stir up racial fears,” Wells said. “This is not only contrary to the spirit of mutual purpose that motivates this campaign, it is also not reflective of the higher aspirations we all share.”

Wells said, “Charges like this breed division in our country and our state. They divide us—race against race—so we blame each other instead of work together. My opponent is very good at negative campaigning. My opponent is trying to distract people from talking about the real issues. We cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we focus on them and work together to address them. I have faith in the good judgment of the people of this great state.”
Figure 9: Two Other Engage-Racial Conditions (Study 1)

Engage-racial (white/black)

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Engage-racial (black/white)

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Convicted U.S. Representative David Jones
Wells Claims Ad is a Negative Attack

By James Beck, Times Staff Writer
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Figure 11: Three Other Engage-Nonracial Conditions (Study 1)

Engage-nonracial (white/black)

State News
Wells Claims Ad is a Negative Attack
By James Beck, Times Staff Writer
June 18, 2012

“This ad is an attempt to stir up fears,” Wells said. “This is not only contrary to the spirit of mutual purpose that motivates this campaign, it is also not reflective of the higher aspirations we all share.”

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Engage-nonracial (black/white)

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Wells Claims Ad is Unfair Attack

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“This ad is a distortion of the truth,” Wells said. “This is not only contrary to the spirit of reasonable debate that motivates this campaign, it is also not an accurate representation of the facts of the case.”

Wells said, “I have already explained my decision in this case. The judge in the case, the trial judge, recommended the commutation. Jones got a 5-0 vote from the bipartisan parole board, which has three members that were appointed by governors from the opposing party. I do not condone what Jones did, but I have faith in the good judgment of these experts. I believe that these are the relevant facts.”
Figure 13: Three Other Engage-Factual Conditions (Study 1)

Engage-factual (white/black)  
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Wells continued, “Furthermore, charges like this breed division in our country and our state. They divide us—race against race—so we blame each other instead of work together. My opponent is very good at negative campaigning. My opponent is trying to distract people from talking about the real issues. We cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we focus on them and work together to address them. I have faith in the good judgment of the people of this great state.”
Figure 15: Two Other Engage-Factual + Racial Conditions (Study 1)

Engage-factual + racial (white/black)

State News

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Engage-factual + racial (black/white)

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Figure 16: Distract, Study 1 (black candidate/black criminal)

State News

Wells Attacks Moore on Economy

By James Beck, Times Staff Writer
June 16, 2012

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Wells said he wants to focus on what he said was more important: the economic policies of his rival. “My opponent’s economic plan will spell disaster for the state,” Wells said. “He is arguing for a return to the failed policies of the past.”

Wells said, “As governor, I fought and delivered on behalf of all working families. My opponent is sticking to his old plan, which is going to lead us further from where we need to go. We cannot solve the economic challenges of our time unless we focus on them and work together to address them. I have faith in the good judgment of the people of this great state.”
Figure 17: Three Other Distract Conditions (Study 1)

**Distract (white/black)**

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Convicted U.S. Representative David Jones
Tech News

YouTube Takes on Television

By James Beck, Times Staff Writer
June 16, 2012

YouTube has grown rapidly over the past seven years, as people share videos of piano playing cats and singers demonstrating their talents. But the video website now has its sights set on an even wider audience: everyone watching TV.

If YouTube can increase the amount of time people spend on its site or videos, it can make a lot more advertising money, technology reporter John Seabrook writes. And the way YouTube plans to do that is by targeting non-mainstream audiences.

Seabrook said, "People see a cricket channel or a horsebackriding channel, which don’t really exist on cable—there are a lot of sports and pastimes that have a lot of people interested in them, but they’re not necessarily based in one country. And one of the unique things about YouTube is that it’s global. So you can put together an audience of cricket lovers from many countries around the world and achieve a pretty large audience."

The Wild Dolphin Project

Ultimate Dog Tease has been watched by 80 million people on YouTube.
References


