Race, Skin Color, and Candidate Preference

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INTRODUCTION[1]

As an outcome of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, vote dilution of blacks was made illegal, and blacks were soon able to elect black candidates to office. Relative to their proportion of the population, however, racial and ethnic minorities remain drastically underrepresented among elected officials at the local, state, and national levels. Less than three percent of all elected officials in the U.S. are black or Latino, even though these groups make up 25 percent of the population according to the 2000 Census (Bositis 2002; NALEO 2001). Further exacerbating this inequality in representation, redistricting has "maxed out" the number of minority-majority districts; given that few black and Latino members of Congress were elected in majority white districts, this ultimately places a ceiling on the number of minority representatives. Representation at the statewide level is even more unequal, with "the number of blacks who have been elected to statewide office a mere one-tenth of the number elected to mayorships" (Jeffries 1999, 583). Blacks in high profile statewide office are rare; there have been only two blacks elected as US Senators (and none currently serving) and only one black has successfully run for governor to date. However, few studies have focused on the intellectual and practical puzzle of why, despite the legislation enacted to alleviate barriers to minority voting, minorities have been underrepresented in office. Unlike white candidates for office, black office-seekers experience a wide discrepancy between the actual number of votes they receive and their reported support in exit polls (Finkel, Guterbock, and Borg 1991).

One scholar has observed that "looking 'more white' in appearance might help blacks initially as they try to cross the color line in statewide campaigns" and help them "blend more easily" (Strickland and Whicker 1992, 209). Research in social psychology has shown bias against darker-skinned blacks, who are more likely to be described as aggressive, criminal, and poor (Maddox and Gray 2002). In addition, skin color affects blacks' and Hispanics' life chances in various domains; among blacks and Latinos, lighter-skinned people have higher incomes and education and are less likely to be unemployed, while their darker-skin counterparts are more likely to be incarcerated and less likely to be homeowners (Allen 2000; Hill 2000; Hochschild and Weaver 2003). Does skin color affect political success in the same way? Do negative stereotypes about darker-skinned blacks affect blacks running for office? Despite the suggestions of anecdotal evidence, there has been little empirical research on the effect of skin color on minority candidates.

These two observations – the underrepresenatation of minorities in elected office and the disadvantage associated with minorities of darker skin – is the springboard of this study. Using a survey experiment on over 2000 white adults through the internet instrument of the Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences, I examine the role of race and skin color on candidate

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[1] This paper builds on two pilot studies, and therefore uses language from two previous papers: *The Color of the Campaign: A Quasi-Experimental Study of the Influence of Skin Color on Candidate Evaluation.* Paper presented at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Philadelphia, PA. August, 2003.
Race of Candidate Effects on Vote Support. Paper presented at the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. Oakland, CA. March 2003.
Sections of the paper also use language from my proposal to the Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences with Jennifer Hochschild and Traci Burch.

preferences. Subjects were randomly assigned to campaign literature of two opposing candidates, in which the race, skin tone, and issue stance of candidates was varied.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The election of several black mayors in the 1970s prompted studies interested in the factors that lead to black electoral success. This line of research is primarily concerned with the extent of racial crossover voting and the conditions under which black candidates attract white votes. An early study of over fifty biracial election contests in Atlanta found that white voters were more likely to vote for black candidates if they were incumbents or had the backing of local newspapers; black incumbents were almost three times as likely as non-incumbent black candidates to receive the support of white voters in challenger and open seat contests (Bullock 1984). Party endorsements and important positions are more important for black candidates in gaining legitimacy (Jeffries 1999). Another study, based on survey data, found that white support of black candidates was contingent on the prestige of the office: "the higher the office, the more likely it is that whites report that they would not vote for a black candidate" (Barker 1990, 51). White support for black candidates has also been linked to local racial composition; one study found that the probability that whites would vote for black mayoral candidate David Dinkins increased as the number of black voters in their precinct increased (Carsey 1995).

Research on black candidates for higher offices, especially at the statewide level, has been sparse, primarily because of the scarcity of blacks at this level of office. As a result, most of these studies are based on analysis of a single case or comparison of a few prominent cases (Becker and Heaton 1967; Strickland and Whicker 1992; Jeffries 1999). These case studies have found that black candidates tend to receive a smaller proportion of the vote than what people report in exit polls; voters provide inaccurate information about their voting behavior when they feel pressure to provide a socially acceptable response (termed "social desirability bias" by psychologists). The first and only black governor to date, Doug Wilder, was expected to win by a margin of 10 percentage points based on exit polls, but in the actual vote tally, only beat his white opponent by less than one half of one percent, a pattern that was not evident for his white running mates (Jones and Clemons 1993); pre-election and exit polls were similarly inaccurate for black mayoral candidate David Dinkins and Harvey Gantt's unsuccessful bid for Senate (Strickland and Whicker 1992). In addition, research has shown that in biracial election contests, the percent of undecided voters remains high even in the last days before the election (Sonenshein 1990).

How do blacks attract a white crossover vote? The support of the white electorate is even more important for statewide candidates because they must appeal to a white majority, unlike urban campaigns and black candidates running in minority-majority congressional districts. Success appears to depend on the pursuit of a "deracialization" strategy (Jones and Clemons 1993; McCormick and Jones 1993). Blacks must take steps to "minimize the role of race" and stay away from racially-charged issues (Jeffries 1999, 584). To be viable, black candidates must be political insiders, project a conservative image, and blend with the dominant white culture (Strickland and Whicker 1992). Finally, Sonenshein argues that black candidates must adopt a "flexible" campaign strategy by "using a quiet, conciliatory style" that is non-threatening to whites (Sonenshein 1990). This deracialization strategy represents a delicate balance between winning over reluctant whites while not alienating black voters. Several studies also see crime as a make or break issue for black candidates: "Black statewide candidates cannot afford to be

vulnerable on crime, an issue deeply intertwined with racial feelings" (Sonenshein 1990, 239; Jeffries 1999).

Other studies have challenged the implicit assumption of these deracialization studies, namely that race inhibits black candidates. Citrin, Green, and Sears analyzed how racial attitudes of whites influenced their voting in the 1982 gubernatorial election in California between Tom Bradley and George Deukmejian, finding that Bradley's race did not encourage racially motivated voting behavior any greater than that observed in the races with white candidates; liberal white candidates were just as likely to be similarly punished by voters who were resentful over the governments perceived preferential policies (1990).[2]

Hajnal's study examines the racial attitudes and policy preferences of whites prior to and after the election of a black mayor, finding that racially tolerant attitudes among whites increase under black leadership. In addition, white voting behavior changes after a black mayoralty, with whites more willing to vote for a black candidate (2001). Hajnal hypothesizes that racialized voting is a product of whites uncertainty and low information about how blacks will perform once in office. Therefore, white voters don't have any information but racial stereotypes to go on. However, when the black challenger becomes an incumbent in succeeding elections opposition to black officials greatly diminishes because they now have a record in office. Characteristic of these studies is an overemphasis on how blacks can attract whites rather than studying why whites are reluctant to vote for black candidates.

Nayda Terkildsen's experimental study found that despite identical issues stances, personal characteristics, and qualification white voters were less likely to vote for a black candidate (1993). Another experiment conducted on 656 whites revealed that black conservatives were viewed as more liberal than their white counterparts and black liberals were more likely to be seen as incompetent (Sigelman, et al. 1995). Black candidates were also believed to be more compassionate than whites.

The experimental studies that have dealt with the impact of the race of a candidate on voting have also been limited, both in quantity and design. Most are based on non-probability samples like students on college campuses that have little external validity. The experimental analyses are marred by another defect: the use of candidate descriptions rather than visual stimuli. Visual stimuli are stronger manipulations (Gilens 1999), especially given that in the real world a candidate's race is more "readily discernable" than other characteristics like religion (Bullock 1984). Most studies expose subjects to only one candidate (Terkildsen 1993); absent a referential candidate, extrapolating conclusions based on levels of support is somewhat arbitrary and unrealistic (voters usually know the race of both candidates); in addition, the scale used to evaluate candidates varies by subject so they aren't necessarily comparable across subjects.[3]

A few of these case studies have attributed some of Doug Wilder and Edward Brooke's electoral success to physical characteristics. At the end of the long list of dos and don'ts, one study curiously stated that "looking more white" was a deracialization strategy (Strickland and Whicker 1992, 209). However, none of the studies analyze what role skin color played in affecting reactions to black candidates. While social psychologists have demonstrated the negative stereotypes against darker blacks and Latinos and anecdotal evidence has suggested the

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[2] This study had several major problems, the primary one being that they compared races with black candidates for different levels of elected office (governor, superintendent).

[3] Another experimental study exposed subjects to two candidates but subjects were only asked to assess one of them. *See* Sigelman, et al.

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disadvantages associated with being a darker-skinned minority candidate, there have been no systematic studies of the impact of skin color gradations on candidate evaluation and electoral success.

This study hopes to improve on the limitations of past work and data constraints by utilizing a new methodology that combines the benefits of public opinion survey research with new experimental analysis of voter psychology. It improves on prior research by utilizing a broader representation of subjects than college students and by simulating a real campaign that involves the *comparison* of at least two candidates.

QUESTIONS POSED & HYPOTHESES

I explore a three-pronged hypothesis to determine the importance of race alone and race as it interacts with skin color:

1. **In-group/Out-group**
White voters prefer candidates who share their racial identity. When a candidate is not from the majority racial group, racial dissimilarity is more determinative of voting behavior than ideological, partisan, or other similarity. Beliefs that come out of identification with a racial group affect the vote in strong ways, particularly because of the "tendency of group members to make extreme judgments of outsiders" (Sigelman, et al. 1995). Therefore, black candidates should receive lower support from white voters, without regard to issue stances.

2. **Skin Color**
The importance of race effects are dependent on candidate skin color. The effect of skin color pigmentation on evaluations in other settings has been largely confirmed in the social-psychological literature. Race functions differently for darker members of the out-group. Race interacts with skin color, particularly in same-race election contests. Therefore, light-skinned black candidates will receive more support than their dark-skinned counterparts.
   a. This would also predict that when faced with 2 candidates that are from the racial out-group, they favor the one that is closest to them, the light-skinned black; therefore, white voters will vote against the black candidates and this will be even more pronounced for the darker-black candidate

3. **Racial Stereotyping**
Voters use a preexisting notion of the candidate's traits, ideology, and behavioral expectations; stereotyping lowers uncertainty by providing cognitive shortcuts. Race acts as an information shortcut in candidate evaluation, and racial stereotypes as a filter through which this information is processed. This hypothesis would predict that even when white voters do not disfavor the outgroup, they are more likely to stereotype them as being less qualified, less likely to win, and better/worse on certain issues. It may not be simply the race alone that voters react negatively to but the stereotypes that come out of racial cues, for instance, that black candidates support race-based policies they are opposed to.
   a. In relation to the skin color hypothesis above, the darker the candidate, the more he will activate negative stereotypes.

DATA & METHODS

This study will examine how voters' evaluations of political candidates are influenced by the race and skin color of the candidate. To this end, a survey experiment was designed in which respondents are exposed to visual stimuli (in the form of campaign advertisements) that alters the race and skin color of the opponent and then asked about their attitudes toward the contenders.[4]

Using the Internet instrument of the Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences[5], the survey experiment was administered on a nationally representative sample of 2138 white adults.[6] First, subjects are shown the campaign literature of two opposing candidates and informed that the candidates are running for an open Senate seat in a neighboring state. The literature approximates real campaign placards with the candidate pictured in a static pose with a flag in the background. The candidates are all males of approximately the same age.[7] The race/ethnicity and skin color of the candidates varies across experimental groups. To control for visual candidate differences, this study used a morphing technique using photo editing software, which digitally averages several faces together to produce distinct candidates, equating all relevant characteristics, while altering the race and skin color of the target candidate.[8] Each candidate is generated from a set of images that share at least one person in common, therefore minimizing the effective difference between opposing candidates.[9] The goal of this technique is to allow realistic variation in race and skin tone while controlling for other sources of variation such as attractiveness and facial expression that might affect the outcome of the experiment. Previous studies have relied on white candidates that are darkened by a computer; this method is artificial and negates the potential effect of other phenotypic racial cues like hair, lips, and nose.

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[4] The following people gave very useful feedback at various stages of the design of this study: Jennifer Hochschild, Jim Alt, Mahzarin Banaji, Michael Dawson, Don Green, Jim Glaser, Vince Hutchings, Shanto Iyengar, Steve Ansolabehere, Sid Verba, Taeku Lee, Yoi Herrera, Iain Johnson, Terry Martin. Previous drafts have also benefited from extensive comments from David Ellwood, Katherine Newman, and Tali Mendelberg, and the American Politics Research Workshop, the Political Behavior and Psychology Workshop, the Proseminar on Inequality & Social Policy, and the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. Ethan Haymovitz was responsible for the morphed images. Thanks to TESS co-PIs Diana Mutz and Arthur Lupia and Knowledge Networks staff for improving the final protocol prior to fielding and for careful execution of the study.

[5] TESS administers a random internet sample, which is currently gathered through Knowledge Networks, a company that specializes in providing representative samples that are interviewed via WebTV. First, a random RDD sample of telephone numbers is pre-contacted by mail inviting the household to participate in the Internet study. These letters are followed by phone calls in which individual respondents are recruited and are asked a series of basic demographic questions by phone. When a person agrees to participate, they are provided with free Internet access (via WebTV) and are given the necessary hardware for as long as they remain in the sample. Most research to date comparing this kind of sample with telephone RDD samples suggest they are equally representative, and some suggest that the data obtained via WebTV/internet are somewhat more reliable than what is obtained by phone.

[6] The preferred sample for this study includes white respondents only, as we currently are interested in testing the effects of race and skin color as they relate to white voters.

[7] The author does not mean to imply that race and skin color only affect male candidates. Given the limited number of treatment groups and conditions, the gender of the candidates must be held constant.

[8] The morphing technique was adapted from the Implicit Association Tests (IAT). This technique allows researchers to have a comparison of two candidates while carefully controlled visual stimuli can elicit subject responses to the condition in question – race and skin color. See Appendix I for a description of how images were produced.

[9] White candidate 1 = generated from images A, B, C
White candidate 2 = generated from images A, B, D
Ligh-skinned black candidate = generated from images A, E, F
Dark-skinned black candidate = generated from images E, F, G

The campaign ads position the candidates in opposing stances on 5 issues – economic growth, health care, education, public safety, and the environment.[10] The candidates' skin color, name and platform are randomly assigned, creating a total of 16 possible versions of the experimental stimuli. Respondents are randomly assigned to one of these four campaigns:

- White vs. White
- White vs. Light skinned Black
- White vs. Dark skinned Black
- Light skinned Black vs. Dark skinned Black

The names of the two candidates were randomized ("Tom Sheldon" and "Martin Turner"). Within the treatments, the issue positions were randomly assigned to the candidates, such that one candidate supports a conservative platform while the other candidate supports a liberal platform across the five issues. This setup controls for one name being more favorable and will allow for an examination of the interaction of race and issue stances. The experimental groups, name randomization, and platform manipulation results in a 16 cell design (4 X 2 X 2).

Immediately after subjects read the campaign literature, subjects were asked a battery of questions about their reactions, including a thermometer rating, queries on how strong each candidate is on various issues, items tapping into stereotypes (which candidate is more experienced and hardworking), and their interest in the campaign.[11] Finally, subjects voted for their favored candidate on a simulated ballot. We also include a racial predispositions question separately in the survey to test whether racial affect influences reactions to minority candidates.[12] We also include a racial predispositions question separately in the survey to test whether racial affect influences reactions to minority candidates.

This study makes methodological improvements to studies of racially inflected voting. The advantages of the internet-based design cannot be overstated. First, it ameliorates many of the problems of survey questions on racial attitudes (social desirability bias) by using an anonymous computer response, which reduces the likelihood of self-monitoring and non-response. Unlike other experiments, it contains a nationally representative sample. The design is unique in its verisimilitude to a real campaign; it also utilizes comparison of two candidates using visual stimuli (past studies have only looked at one candidate and usually rely on descriptions alone).[13] Given that skin color affects both blacks and Latinos with regard to socioeconomic outcomes, I expand on past research to test whether skin color affects electoral success for black and Latino candidates in similar ways. Finally, the design allows for an exploration of contextual interactions (e.g. how skin color affects the perception of minority candidates with counter-stereotypical stances).

RESULTS

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[10] Candidate issue stances were modified versions of real candidate positions taken from campaign websites.

[11] Refer to the Appendix for the exact survey. The questions were carefully designed and pretested in two pilot studies. Where possible, these questions are directly taken from, or closely resemble, survey items in the American National Election Studies (ANES).

[12] This was a feeling thermometer for blacks and whites embedded in ratings for other groups, including labor unions, Catholics, and homosexuals. It is a standard racial predispositions measure taken from the ANES.

[13] Terkildsen, Nayda. "When white voters evaluate black candidates: The processing implications of candidate skin color, prejudice, and self-monitoring," American Journal of Political Science (1993) 37:1032-53.

The survey experiment was fielded in September 2004 and remained in the field for two weeks. The study included a total of 2138 non-Hispanic white respondents, out of 3000 total contacted.[14] The sample in the study is representative of the general population. There are slightly more women than men (52 and 48 percent, respectively). As shown in Tables 1 through 3, these distributions are relatively constant for the control and treatment groups, with one exception. Despite the random assignment, there is a statistically significant difference in party identification, with slightly more Republican identifiers in Treatment 1B and slightly fewer respondents identifying as Democrats in Treatment 2 (p = .04).[15] Similarly, there are fewer subjects who described themselves as liberal in Treatment 2 and more moderates in Treatments 1b and 2 (p = .08).

Table 1: Demographic Distribution by Subject Group

SUBJECT GROUP	N	GENDER		AGE	REGION			
		Male	*Female*	*Mean*	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Control: *White opponent*	537	52%	48%	49	17.7%	29.4%	32.4%	20.5%
Treatment 1a: *Light-skinned Black*	528	45.8	54.2	49	18.9	27.8	31.4	21.8
Treatment 1b: *Dark-skinned Black*	542	45.8	54.2	49	18.3	29.5	34.7	17.5
Treatment 2: *Light-Skinned vs. Dark-skinned Black*	531	48.8	51.2	49	19.6	28.2	29.6	22.6
Total Sample	2138	48.1	51.9	49	18.6	28.8	32.0	20.6

Table 2: SES by Subject Group

SUBJECT GROUP	EDUCATION				INCOME			
	Less than HS	*High School*	*Some College*	*Bachelor's or higher*	*Less than $25,000*	*$25-40,000*	*$40-75,000*	*Over $75,000*
Control: *White opponent*	12.7%	27.9%	29.8%	29.6%	22.9%	22.5%	33.5%	21.0%
Treatment 1a: *Light-skinned Black*	10.2	27.3	31.1	31.4	21.0	22.9	32.8	23.3
Treatment 1b: *Dark-skinned Black*	10.1	27.9	29.7	32.3	18.1	22.9	38.0	21.0
Treatment 2: *Light-Skinned vs. Dark-skinned Black*	11.7	29.2	30.3	28.8	22.8	22.6	32.4	22.2
Total Sample	11.2	28.1	30.2	30.5	21.2	22.7	34.2	21.9

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[14] By restricting the study to Caucasian respondents, the author does not mean to imply that the race and skin color of political candidates does not influence evaluations for black and Latino voters in the same or different ways as for white voters.

[15] Differences in party identification were not statistically significant across subject groups, when the measure was a 7-pt scale from strong Republican to strong Democrat (p = .21).

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Table 3: Political Characteristics by Subject Group

SUBJECT GROUP	PARTY			IDEOLOGY		
	DEM	REP	Other	Lib	Mod	Cons
Control: *White opponent*	38.1%	41.8%	20.1%	24.3%	37.4%	38.3%
Treatment 1a: *Light-Skinned Black*	40.2	42.6	17.2	23.2	36.8	39.9
Treatment 1b: *Dark-Skinned Black*	38.0	36.4	25.5	21.5	44.5	34.1
Treatment 2: *Light-Skinned vs. Dark-skinned Black*	32.7	40.8	26.5	16.9	45.0	38.1
Total Sample	37.2	40.5	22.3	21.5	40.9	37.6

The results presented here will focus primarily on the bivariate level, in part because of the controlled experimental design, and in part because the sample generated over 800 missing observations on party identification and ideology.[16] Therefore, the results are based mainly on one-way ANOVAS and crosstabulations. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on how race and skin color affect candidate popularity and evaluations, and how issue stances interact, and save for later analysis the effects of gender, party, and racial predispositions.

Because there are three sources of variation – name, opponent's race and skin color, and platform – the results are complex and potentially confounding. Ideally, there would be no difference between the candidate names Tom Sheldon and Martin Turner. However, the results show a nontrivial difference between the same candidates, when their names are Turner or Sheldon; moreover, the names interact with platform and race such that a black conservative Tom Sheldon is evaluated differently than a black conservative Martin Turner, who is distinct still based on skin color. The fact that the name variation did produce different levels of support is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it makes things indefinitely more confounding, while on the other hand, the results are infinitely more interesting. Similarly, there are differences between the white candidates in the control condition; the candidate with lighter hair is uniformly more popular than his darker-haired counterpart, an important difference that was not picked up in the pretest.

Table 4: Voting by Subject Group & Candidate Platform

SUBJECT GROUP	TOTAL			CONSERVATIVE[17]			LIBERAL[18]		
	Light	*Dark*	*REF*	*Light*	*Dark*	*REF*	*Light*	*Dark*	*REF*
White vs. White	52.1%	41.5%	6.3%	57.3%	37.1%	5.6%	47.0%	45.9%	7.0%
White vs. Light Black	74.6	18.4	7.0	73.1	18.5	8.5	76.1	18.3	5.6
White vs. Dark Black	48.0	46.9	5.2	51.6	43.2	5.1	44.2	50.6	5.2

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[16] To correct this issue, Knowledge Networks has refielded the study to get party id and ideology from respondents for whom these data were missing.

[17] The light candidate is Conservative, while the darker opponent is Liberal.

[18] The light candidate is Liberal, while the darker opponent is Conservative.

Light Black vs. Dark Black	54.6	38.6	6.8	57.8	35.8	6.3	51.3	41.4	7.2

Total Vote: $\chi 2 = 108.76$ p = .000
Conservative: $\chi 2 = 75.00$ p = .000
Liberal: $\chi 2 = 40.27$ p = .000

  Setting aside name and platform differences, the lighter candidates are favored in all conditions against their darker opponents. The magnitude of the difference varies quite substantially across treatments, with the largest support differential in the contest between the white candidate and the light-skinned black candidate. In the "control" condition, subjects voted for the white opponent about 10 percentage points less; when the opponent is light black, however, his vote declines to only 18 percent, giving the white candidate in this race a whole 57 point margin of victory. The hypotheses would predict that support for the dark-skinned black opponent would shrink even further; however, while the dark-skinned candidate does not win against the white opponent, he does better relative to the white candidate in the control condition (he loses by only one percentage point compared to 10 points in the control).

  The findings for black candidates are cross-cutting. The lighter-skinned black candidate receives much less support relative to his white opponent compared to the election with the darker black candidate. Conversely, in the election in which the black candidates run against each other, the light-skinned black candidate beats his darker opponent by 16 percentage points, a larger margin than the control condition. One explanation is that the racial equality norm is primed less when the candidate is light black or that subjects are more aware that they are making a racial decision when the candidate is dark black, so self-monitoring goes up. Another possibility is that people really didn't like the light black.

  Table 4 above shows what happens when the light candidate in each race is conservative or liberal. When he is conservative and runs against another white, he is much more popular, beating his liberal opponent by 10 percentage points; when he is liberal, his margin shrinks but he still wins the contest. In the race with the light-skinned black, issue stance does not affect support levels; the white candidate receives over 70 percent of the vote against the light-skinned black, regardless of whether his platform is conservative or liberal. Again, the results show an interesting anomaly with regard to light and dark-skinned black candidates. The dark-skinned black is rewarded when he runs on a conservative platform. In contrast to the control and to the condition with the light-skinned black, the darker-skinned black actually beats his liberal white opponent. In the control condition, the light-haired white candidate beats his dark-haired white opponent whether he runs as a conservative or liberal. In contrast, the white candidate only beats his dark-skinned black opponent, if the dark black is liberal. This result strongly suggests that issues interact with race for at least one of the black candidates, so much so that it reverses the outcome of the election for identical candidates.

  Again, an important caveat emerges with regard to skin color. We have seen that the light-skinned black candidate is strongly disfavored, regardless of issue stance, while his darker-skinned counterpart is rewarded for being conservative. However, in the last subject group, where the black candidates are in an election contest against each other, the light-skinned black candidate always wins; he beats his darker opponent by 22 percentage points when he is conservative and by 10 percentage points when he is liberal. So being conservative and light-skinned is an advantage for the black candidate *when he runs against another black*, and being conservative and dark-skinned is advantageous when the opponent is white.

The results so far are asymmetrical with regard to skin color. Now I move from basic levels of support to substantive reactions to candidates. Subjects were asked which candidate was more experienced, hard-working, intelligent, and trustworthy. Unlike the vote and thermometer ratings, these measures have a nontrivial number of respondents who skipped the question without registering a choice (about 300 or 18 percent of the sample); therefore, I include refused percentages across conditions. It is important to note that the rate of non-response is higher in the conditions with a black candidate.

Table 5: Candidate Political Stereotypes by Subject Group

SUBJECT GROUP	EXPERIENCED			HARD-WORKING			INTELLIGENT			TRUSTWORTHY		
	Light	*Dark*	*REF*	*Light*	*Dark*	*REF*	*Light*	*Dark*	*REF*	*Light*	*Dark*	*REF*
White vs. White	46.6%	36.1%	17.3%	47.9%	35.6%	16.6%	46.9%	36.9%	16.2%	46.6	37.4	16.0
White vs. Light Black	56.4	25.8	17.8	37.5	43.0	19.5	50.4	32.2	17.4	42.4	39.2	18.4
White vs. Dark Black	52.8	27.5	19.7	34.3	46.1	19.6	41.5	38.0	20.5	37.1	42.4	20.5
Light Black vs. Dark Black	46.3	31.2	18.3	42.4	38.6	19.0	49.5	32.0	18.5	42.6	37.5	20.0

Experienced: $\chi^2 = 23.28$ p = .001
Hardworking: $\chi^2 = 24.26$ p = .000
Intelligent: $\chi^2 = 12.87$ p = .045
Trustworthy: $\chi^2 = 11.55$ p = .073

These measures are perhaps the most interesting and complex of the entire analysis. The differences in trait attribution are statistically significant across treatments for each of the 4 measures. In the control condition, equal percentages of respondents labeled the light-haired white candidate as more experienced, hard-working, intelligent, and trustworthy. This was not at all the case when the white opponent was replaced with a black candidate.

Respondents were much more likely to describe the white candidate as more experienced, when his opponent was black than when he was white. The difference between the white candidates in the control condition was about 10 percentage points. However, when the opponent is black, the difference between the two candidates grows to over 25 percentage points. Even though the majority of respondents rated the dark black candidate favorably and "elected" him, they overwhelmingly believed that he was not as experienced as his white opponent. In the last treatment, less than a third of respondents described the dark-skinned black candidate as more experienced, a lower percentage relative to the control condition, but not as low as when he ran against a white opponent.

While the black candidate in both treatments is perceived as less experienced, he is simultaneously perceived as harder working. In the control group, equivalent majorities of subjects said the light white was more experienced *and* hardworking, while in the treatments with a black opponent the majority reported that the white candidate was more experienced and then switched to say the black candidate was more hardworking. Moreover, this "switch" was even larger for the dark-skinned black candidate. Two explanations seem plausible. First,

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respondents stereotype blacks as being more hardworking because their class background is most likely poor and so to make it this far, the black candidate must have pulled himself "up by the bootstraps." Second, people already said that the white candidate was more experienced so this question allows them to give praise to the black candidate they just stereotyped as less experienced. Regardless of which explanation is correct, something about injecting a black opponent into the race made people stereotype the black candidate as being less experienced but more hardworking, a distinction that was not evident in the control group

      To make matters even more complex, subjects rated the intelligence and trustworthiness of the candidates differently depending on the race and skin color of the opponent. Relative to the control, a larger percent of respondents said the white candidate was more intelligent when his opponent was a light-skinned black. This difference was not apparent when the black candidate was dark-skinned. Running against a black candidate hurt the white candidate on trustworthiness. In both cases, the black candidates were labeled as more trustworthy than the white candidate in the control; in the condition with the dark-skinned black candidate, the stereotyped reversed such that he was believed be more trustworthy than his opponent.

      What accounts for the cross-cutting findings that the black candidates were believed to be more hardworking and trustworthy, less experienced, and at least for one of them, less intelligent? Perhaps white voters believe the black candidates are up against formidable barriers and have therefore "had far less opportunity to gain experience in elective office" and they discount experience in favor of work ethic. In other words, even though they use stereotypes about his experience, this fact alone does not mean that subjects perceive him as less capable but their answers could be reflecting a realistic assumption of unequal opportunity.

      The overall pattern in the political stereotypes is that black candidates elicit different evaluations than their white counterparts; however, inconsistent with the expectations of the skin color hypothesis, the darker-skinned black office-seeker does not make these stereotypical perceptions more pronounced, at least when comparing the black candidates across treatments. Within the black monoracial election, the lighter-complected candidate was universally given the positive trait.

      Somewhat surprising, but not inconsistent with the hypotheses, is that the stereotypes are not consistent in direction. Black candidates are the recipients of some positive stereotypes; additionally, sometimes a black opponent can trigger negative stereotypic evaluations of white candidates. Whether this is an artifact of respondents censoring their answers is a possibility that should be tested further.

Table 6: Candidate Political Stereotypes by Platform & Subject Group

		EXPERIENCED		HARD-WORKING		INTELLIGENT		TRUSTWORTHY	
	SUBJECT GROUP	*Light*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Dark*
CONSERVATIVE	*White vs. White*	63.7%	36.3%	62.7%	37.3%	62.1%	37.9%	59.7%	40.3%
	White vs. Light Black	74.4	25.6	48.1	51.9	65.9	34.1	54.3	45.7
	White vs. Dark Black	72.9	27.1	45.7	54.3	59.4	40.6	47.9	52.1
	Light Black vs. Dark Black	62.2	37.8	51.4	48.6	64.9	35.1	58.1	41.9
	SUBJECT GROUP	*Light*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Dark*
LIBERAL	*White vs. White*	48.9%	51.1%	52.0%	48.0%	49.8%	50.2%	51.1%	48.9%
	White vs. Light Black	63.2	36.8	45.2	54.8	56.4	43.6	49.8	50.2
	White vs. Dark Black	58.4	41.6	39.4	60.6	44.8	55.2	45.3	54.7
	Light Black vs. Dark Black	50.9	49.1	53.3	46.7	56.4	43.6	48.1	51.9

Light Candidate is Conservative
Experienced:: $\chi 2 = 11.79$ p = .008
Hardworking: $\chi 2 = 15.08$ p = .002
Intelligent: $\chi 2 = 2.40$ p = .49
Trustworthy: $\chi 2 = 7.32$ p = .06

Light Candidate is Liberal
Experienced:: $\chi 2 = 11.84$ p = .008
Hardworking: $\chi 2 = 10.72$ p = .01
Intelligent: $\chi 2 = 8.24$ p = .04
Trustworthy: $\chi 2 = 1.65$ p = .65

Table 7: Candidate Issue Strength by Subject Group[19]

	CRIME			HEALTH			ECONOMY			DISADVANTAGED		
SUBJECT GROUP	*Light*	*Same*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Same*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Same*	*Dark*	*Light*	*Same*	*Dark*
White vs. White	21.8%	45.2%	33.0%	31.1%	45.0%	23.9%	28.6%	47.2%	24.2%	26.0%	50.8%	23.3%
White vs. Light Black	23.4	46.4	30.2	35.6	40.4	24.0	35.8	42.0	22.2	27.0	45.1	27.8
White vs. Dark Black	23.7	43.4	32.9	33.1	44.9	21.9	32.1	41.5	26.4	18.4	46.7	34.9
Light Black vs. Dark Black	23.2	49.1	27.2	32.8	45.6	21.6	29.7	44.1	26.2	23.2	52.4	24.4

Crime: $\chi 2 = 5.80$ p = .45
Health: $\chi 2 = 4.71$ p = .58
Economy: $\chi 2 = 9.82$ p = .13
Aiding Disadvantaged: $\chi 2 = 29.43$ p = .000

Unlike the political traits, subjects expressed only modest differences in their prospective evaluations of how well each candidate would do in office on specific issues. The evidence in Table 8 above suggests that for the four issues and across treatments, over forty percent of respondents saw no difference at all in how well each candidate would handle the issue. There are two slight exceptions. First, subjects were significantly more likely to believe the black candidates would do better in office on helping the disadvantaged (p = .000); while the majority

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[19] These results are based on a 5-pt measure. Much and somewhat better were collapsed for purposes of reporting results.

of respondents still saw no difference between candidates, a slightly larger percent believed the light and dark-skinned black candidate would help the disadvantaged relative to the race with two whites (5 and 12 percent, respectively). This is not a small difference, given that the campaign ads contained no information on "disadvantaged communities." This implies that voters believe the black candidates are more compassionate to the needs of the less fortunate. Subjects also believed that white candidate would handle the economy better when his opponent was black but the difference is modest – only 7 and 3 percent for the light and dark-skinned candidates, respectively -- and doesn't reach statistical significance (p =.13). These findings are consistent with previous survey research that found that black candidates were stereotyped as being more qualified in certain policy areas – helping the poor, improving public education, and helping farmers – while lacking in areas related to the economy and foreign policy (Barker 1990). In general, these results do not support the hypothesis that black candidates would be strongly associated with certain issues and viewed as less competent on others.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Will black candidates at the statewide level continue to be an "endangered species"? By studying the manner in which race and skin color affects black office-seekers, this analysis has attempted to shed light on why blacks have been relatively unsuccessful at mobilizing the white electorate. This study suggests the complex relationship between candidate race and skin color.

A large portion of the effect of race on subjects' reactions to candidates is due to skin color, not to race alone. In some cases, the effects were larger moving from the light-skinned candidate treatment to the dark-skinned candidate treatment. However, the results are contradictory with regard to skin color. Why is the light-skinned black candidate so unpopular next to his white opponent and relative to the dark-skinned black condition, but simultaneously favored when he runs directly against the dark-skinned black candidate? Is the effect of skin color really opposite depending on the race of the other candidate? That the skin color results are divergent depending on whether we are looking within or across treatments is problematic and suggests that respondents self-monitor when they are forced to choose between a white and black candidate but not when they have to choose between two black candidates. Whichever interpretation is correct, the finding that black candidates are perceived differently based on skin color differences casts doubt on the operation of the one-drop rule in politics.

In addition, manipulating the race and skin color of the candidates led subjects to make assumptions about the experience and work ethic of the candidates. Both the light-skinned and dark-skinned black candidates were viewed as considerably less experienced (but harder-working) than their white opponent. The study also demonstrates that black candidates have some advantages they can exploit– being viewed as more trustworthy and better suited to help disadvantaged populations.

Despite these findings, this study has raised more questions than it answers. It will conclude by pointing to the need for further research. Because this study was based on an all white sample it remains uncertain whether black voters react in consistent ways with white voters. Future research should test whether respondents of different races and ethnicities respond to skin color variation in similar ways as whites. In addition, it remains to be seen whether the same dynamics would be seen in electoral contests with black women or Latino candidates. Eventually, we plan to replicate the study to examine: 1) whether skin color operates similarly

for Latino, and Asian candidates; and 2) whether respondents of different races and ethnicities respond skin color variation in similar ways as whites.

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APPENDIX I. MORPHED IMAGES

For each candidate, 3 images were morphed.[20] This procedure removes distinctive features and creates a very "average" face; it also increases attractiveness. Because each candidate shares 2 images, the resulting faces are extremely similar while appearing to be distinct individuals. This essentially fools subjects into believing the political candidates are unrelated while in reality they are qualitatively equivalent. I pretested the resulting images with inter-rater reliability tests to ensure there was no difference in attractiveness or political appearance. The resulting candidates were inserted onto the same body in front of an identical background with the exception that the flag appears in the opposite corner for the opponents who also have the same tie in a different color to ensure that subjects don't guess the nature of the experiment. This methodology diminishes the likelihood that support differentials across treatment groups are due to different target candidates.
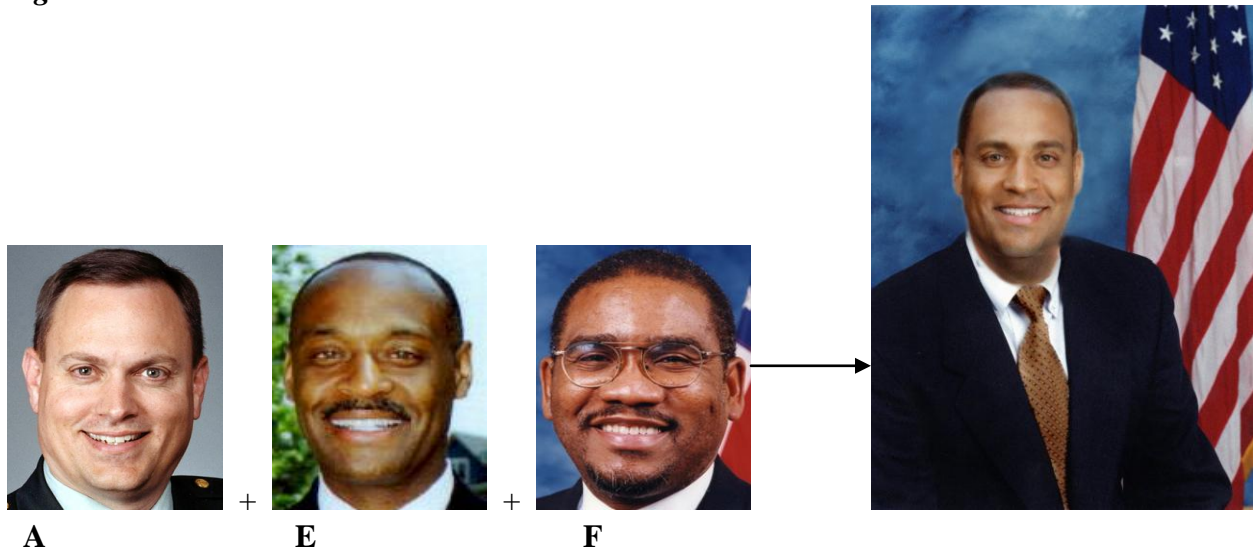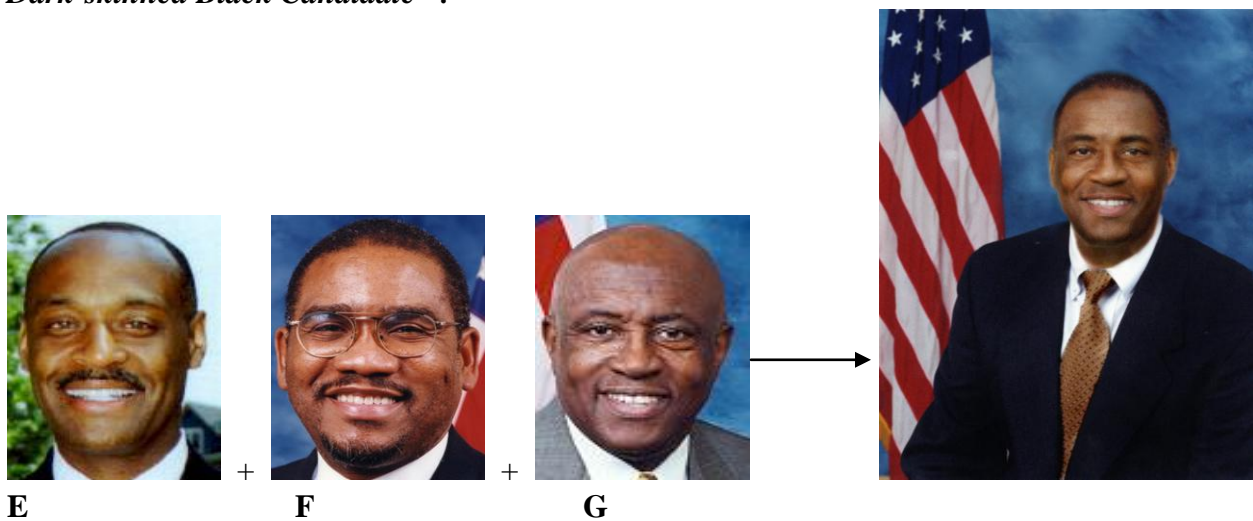
White Candidate 1:

A + B + C

White Candidate 2:

A + B + D

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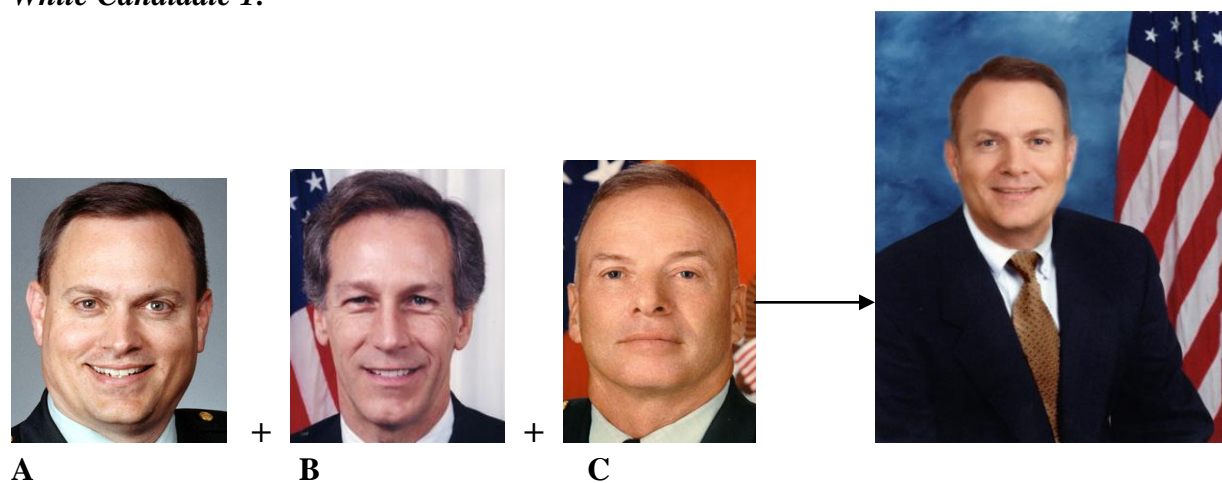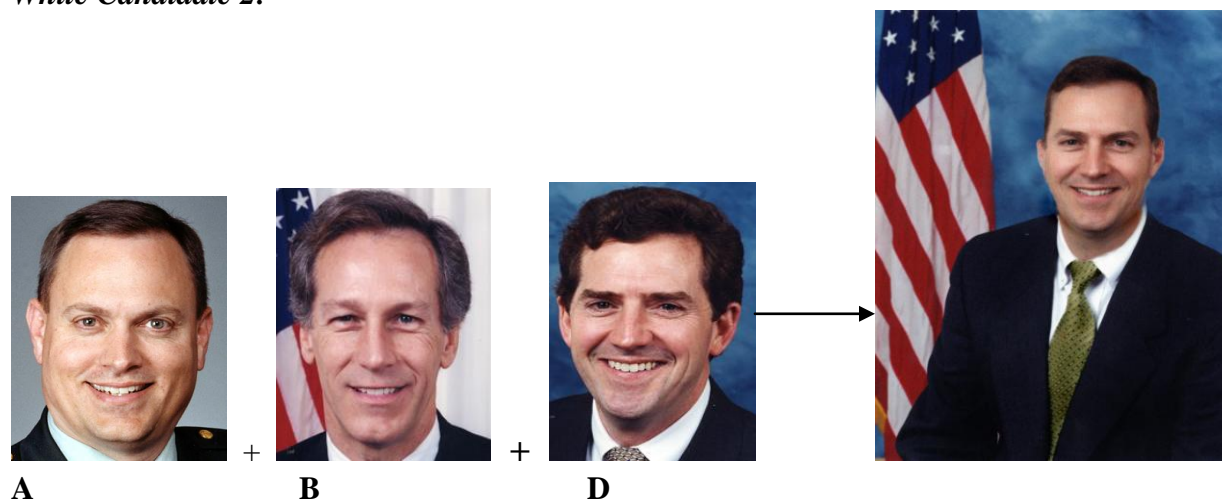
[20] The morphing method is replicated from the Implicit Association Tests (IAT).

Light-skinned Black Candidate:

A + E + F

Dark-skinned Black Candidate[21]:

E + F + G

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[21] The dark-black candidate was purposefully generated from all black images so that he is different from the light-skinned black candidate in both complexion and phenotype (his nose and lips are more afrocentric). The hair and eyebrows of the light-skinned candidate have also been digitally lightened.

APPENDIX II. SIMULATED CAMPAIGN LITERATURE

Conservative Candidate Platform:

Martin Turner

- High quality <u>health care</u> means providing affordable, accessible health care. I will increase funding for medical research and community health centers.
- <u>Economic growth</u> and prosperity require that we provide incentives to small businesses and tax relief to middle income Americans. I support stimulating the economy through reducing the tax burden and providing jobs to the unemployed.
- Sound <u>environmental</u> protection is compatible with economic prosperity. I will expand incentives for homeowners and businesses to employ energy efficient practices.
- Educating our children should be a top priority - I support investing in higher <u>education</u>, school choice programs, and increasing technology and computers in the classroom. I will also implement stricter standards and accountability at public schools that are falling behind.
- I support increasing penalties for violent offenders and mandatory sentences to keep criminals off our streets. The <u>safety</u> of our children comes first.

Paid for by the Turner for Senate Campaign

Continue

Liberal Candidate Platform:

Tom Sheldon

- I will provide the innovation, planning and management needed to create the kind of <u>health</u> system that includes affordable prescription drugs and care, while expanding health coverage to uninsured children.
- Huge tax cuts that benefit the wealthy are starving essential government services like education. Stimulating the <u>economy</u> means investing in job creation; my economic policies will create decent, well-paying jobs for all who want them.
- My vision of a healthy <u>environment</u> is based on maintaining important recreational areas and increasing clean air standards.
- <u>Educating</u> kids starts even before kindergarten. I will fight against the dismantling of Head Start programs. I will reduce class sizes, maintain important vocational programs, and increase funding for after-school programs.
- I believe in creating drug-free, <u>safe neighborhoods</u> in inner-city areas by investing in community revitilization and helping renters become homeowners.

Paid for by the Sheldon in 2004 Campaign

Continue

APPENDIX III: SURVEY QUESTIONS

> Describe how TESS administered the survey….
> Appendix on pilot study?

To minimize non-response, subjects would be given a prompt "We would like to have your answer to this question" if they attempted to go to the next question without answering.

> The candidates, Martin Turner and Tom Sheldon, are running for an important office in a neighboring state in the 2004 election. This is a very close race.
>
> Please evaluate their positions and answer each question, trying not to skip over questions. Then cast your vote. Your responses are confidential.

Continue

[The candidates and their platforms were shown. Each following page of the internet questionnaire featured the candidate pictures and their names at the top of the page so that respondents could keep track of the candidates. If they needed to, subjects could return to their issue stances at any time by clicking on their image/name.]

> We'd like to get your feelings towards the candidates you just read about. How would you rate candidates Martin Turner and Tom Sheldon?

Select one answer from each row in the grid

	Very Unfavorable	Unfavorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable	Somewhat Favorable	Favorable	Very Favorable
Tom Sheldon	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Martin Turner	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Next Question

What is the <u>most</u> important criterion in your decision of who to vote for?

Select one answer only

- ◯ Qualifications
- ◯ Party
- ◯ Platform
- ◯ Ideology
- ◯ Background
- ◯ Other:

Next Question

[This question was repeated for their top four criteria, eliminating the response for each subsequent ranking.]

In your opinion, which candidate will do a better job in office for each of the following issues?
Select one answer from each row in the grid

	TURNER			SHELDON	
	Much Better	Somewhat Better	No Difference	Somewhat Better	Much Better
Helping to reduce crime	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Improving health care	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

The Color of the Campaign

| Promoting a healthy economy | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Aiding the disadvantaged | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Next Question

Assume that these candidates are running for Senate in [respondent's state from demographic profile].

Would you say that you are very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interested in this campaign?

Select one answer only

○ Very much interested

○ Somewhat interested

○ Not much interested

Next Question

Assume that these candidates are running for Senate in [respondent's state].

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

Select one answer only

○ Care a good deal

○ Don't care very much

[Next Question]

Which candidate seems to be more:
Select one answer from each row in the grid

	Martin Turner	Tom Sheldon
Intelligent	○	○
Hard-working	○	○
Experienced	○	○
Trustworthy	○	○

[Next Question]

Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative.

Where would you place each of the candidates on this scale?

Select one answer from each row in the grid

	Extremely liberal	Liberal	Slightly Liberal	Moderate; Middle of the Road	Slightly Conservative	Conservative	Extremely Conservative
Tom Sheldon	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Martin Turner	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The Color of the Campaign

Next Question

2004 Election for U.S. Senate

TO VOTE: Mark the ballot by selecting the candidate you choose.

United States Senator

Select one answer only

◌   Martin Turner

◌   Tom Sheldon

* Confidential Document *

Next Question

[If the subject goes on to the next question without registering a choice, the following prompt comes up: Needless to say, the election for Senate is a long time away in November. But we'd like to ask you for your best guess about who you would vote for in the election.]

We'd like to get your feelings toward groups of people. On the next six screens, you will be rating groups using something we call the feeling thermometer.

Ratings between the middle and the right end of the thermometer mean that you feel favorable and warm toward that group.

Ratings between the left end and the middle of the thermometer mean that you don't feel favorable toward that

group and that you don't care too much for that group.

You would rate them in the middle if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the group.

Continue

[The feeling thermometer was given for the following groups, in this order:
labor unions
whites
conservatives
catholics
blacks
homosexuals

Debriefing Statement

The main purpose of this research was to explore what impact race and skin color has on how voters respond to political candidates. The candidates you just read about were made up and are not running for an election in another state. Your responses are completely confidential.

Thank you very much for your help with this study!

Thinking about this topic, do you have any comments you would like to share?

Any comments welcome!