The "Race Card" Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests

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In The Race Card *(2001), Mendelberg finds support for her theory that implicit racial appeals, but not explicit ones, prime racial resentment in opinion formation. She argues that citizens reject explicit appeals, rendering them ineffective, because they violate widespread egalitarian norms. Mendelberg's innovative research, however, suffers from several limitations. We remedy these deficiencies using two randomized experiments with over 6,300 respondents. We confirm that individuals do tend to reject explicit appeals outright, but find that implicit appeals are no more effective than explicit ones in priming racial resentment in opinion formation. In accounting for the differences between previous research and our own, we show that education moderates both the accessibility of racial predispositions and message acceptance. This suggests that the necessary assumptions of Mendelberg's theory hold only for different and exclusive subsets of the general population.*

Race is one of the most divisive issues in American politics today. Many white Americans hold negative views of African Americans, and these racial predispositions are powerful predictors of opinions on a host of political issues (Bobo 2000; Gilens 1999; Kinder and Sanders 1997; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000; but see Sniderman and Carmines 1997). Despite the importance of racial attitudes, however, contemporary electoral campaigns and policy appeals are remarkable for their lack of explicitly racial content (Mendelberg 2001, chapter 3).

In *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages and the Norm of Equality* (2001), Mendelberg offers the most compelling explanation for this disjuncture between widespread white antipathy toward blacks and the near invisibility of racial content in political communication. She argues that politicians have not abandoned racialized appeals. Instead, they have simply shifted to using covertly racial communications instead of explicitly racial messages. Underlying this argument is Mendelberg's model of the different effects of implicit and explicit appeals in priming racial attitudes (hereafter the IE model). In the IE model, political communication containing references to race primes underlying antiblack predispositions. An explicitly racial message, however, also causes citizens to become aware of the racial nature of the appeal. Consequently, even those who hold negative views of blacks consciously resist explicit appeals by instead embracing a widely held egalitarian antiracist ideal that is stronger than its racist counterpart. In contrast, implicit appeals, those containing visual images of blacks, do not evoke this egalitarian counterreaction, but still prime underlying antiblack predispositions.[1]

Implicit racial appeals are therefore ideal for priming racial predispositions because they are not consciously recognized as racial cues. Overall, political communication must be ambiguous to activate racial predispositions. If a message's racial content is too apparent, the norm of equality becomes active. If it is absent, then the

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[1]Mendelberg categorizes appeals as implicit if they contain visual references to blacks and explicit if they use verbal references. We adopt her categorization: "[A] racial appeal is explicit if it uses racial nouns or adjectives . . . such . . . as 'blacks,' 'race,' or 'racial' to express antiblack sentiment or to make racially stereotypical or derogatory statements . . . . Implicit racial appeals convey the same message as explicit racial appeals, but they replace the racial nouns and adjectives with more oblique reference to race . . . . Visual images are a more effective way to communicate implicitly" (2001, 8–9).

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message will not activate antiblack racial predispositions at all.

This powerful argument has important implications for our understanding of both opinion formation and campaign strategy. Foremost, it suggests that racial priming can take place and influence opinion without being consciously recognized by those subject to such political communication. Additionally, if only implicit appeals are effective, then the theory suggests that addressing the racial content of implicit appeals in a straightforward manner can counteract them. In other words, simply "calling" the race card by making citizens aware of the implicit racial content of these political messages can mitigate this unconscious priming.

This article tests and qualifies the IE model of racial priming in the context of contemporary political issue advertisements. We test directly whether explicit appeals are considered less legitimate than implicitly racial or race-neutral political communication. In support of Mendelberg's theory, we find that individuals are more likely to reject explicit appeals as illegitimate than implicit ones. Additionally, we evaluate the effects of different forms of racial messages in priming antiblack predispositions in opinion formation. Contrary to Mendelberg's earlier findings, however, we find no evidence that implicit appeals are more effective than explicit ones in priming racial resentment in opinion formation.

These findings present a puzzle: if individuals do distinguish between implicit and explicit appeals on their face, why aren't implicit appeals more effective than explicit ones in priming racial resentment? We argue it is because the necessary assumptions of the IE model are met only among different and exclusive subpopulations. Drawing on work that suggests education may be a crucial moderator of both the accessibility of racial predispositions in opinion formation and message acceptance, we argue that it is relatively less-educated individuals who are ripe for priming. More-educated individuals are already likely (even in the absence of racial communication) to rely on racial predispositions in forming opinions to questions of race-related policy (Sears 1993). At the same time, it is highly educated individuals who are most likely to hold egalitarian norms and identify and reject messages that run counter to these norms.

Confirming these arguments, we find strong evidence that racial messages are unnecessary to prime racial resentment in opinion formation among high education respondents. Those with less education remain amenable to priming, however, but are less likely to distinguish between implicitly and explicitly racial messages. In the aggregate, we find that different forms of racial communication vary little in activating racial predispositions in opinion formation because those who distinguish explicit and implicit appeals are a distinct subset of the population from the group susceptible to racial priming in opinion formation.

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. We first consider the predictions from the IE model and describe the experiments we implement to test this theory. Next, we use the data generated from our randomized experiments to test these hypotheses. We then reconcile our results with Mendelberg's findings by testing the microfoundations of the IE model. We show that racial message discernment and susceptibility to priming, the key components of the IE model, work only among different subsets of the population. We conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for understanding models of opinion formation and campaign strategy as well as topics for additional research.

Hypotheses, Experimental Design, and Data

To test the IE model's predictions about the effects of racial message style on public opinion, we designed and fielded two unique national surveys with embedded randomized experiments. Here we review the predictions of this theory, describe the experimental design we use to test these hypotheses, and discuss the data we gathered.

Racial Message Style and Public Opinion

Mendelberg's IE model, introduced above, distinguishes between the effectiveness of different types of racial appeals. It provides two sets of hypotheses about racial message style. The first set of hypotheses concern the acceptability of different forms of racial messages. Specifically, Mendelberg argues that explicit racial messages, those containing verbal references to blacks, will be viewed less legitimately than implicit racial appeals, those which contain only visual references to blacks (Mendelberg 2001, 8, 112). We label this *H1*. This difference is predicted because conscious processing of verbal racial cues allows those viewing an explicit appeal to identify its racial content and reject it in favor of widespread egalitarian norms. For this reason, the IE model also suggests a corollary hypothesis to H1: that implicit appeals will be viewed no more unfavorably than counterstereotypical racial appeals. Only explicit appeals should trigger conscious recognition of a message's racial content and thereby a negative reaction to the appeal itself. We label this *H1A*.

In addition to these hypotheses concerning evaluations of racial messages themselves, the IE model also offers an interrelated set of predictions about the effects of racial messages in priming racial predispositions in

the formation of policy opinions. The first argument is that implicit appeals will be more effective in priming antiblack predispositions than explicitly racial communications, counterstereotypical racialized messages, or policy appeals altogether unrelated to race. We label as *H2* the prediction that implicit appeals will be more effective than explicit appeals in priming racial resentment. While both bring antiblack predispositions to the fore in respondents' minds, the former are processed subconsciously while the conscious identification of explicit appeals allows respondents to reject them in favor of egalitarian norms.

A slightly different mechanism leads to the prediction that implicit appeals will be more effective than counterstereotypical or deracialized messages in priming racial resentment. This is a corollary to H2 and is therefore labeled *H2A*. This prediction emerges because implicit appeals activate existing racial schemas. In contrast, messages altogether unrelated to race do not offer an opportunity to trigger existing racial predispositions. Likewise counterstereotypical messages either similarly fail to prime these predispositions or challenge their underpinnings altogether.[2] As a result, resentful whites should express greater support for policies designed to aid African Americans after viewing deracialized or counterstereotypical appeals rather than an implicitly racial one.

Experimental Design

To test the predictions offered by the IE model directly, we designed and implemented two nationally representative controlled experiments during 2003 and 2004. As with Mendelberg (2001, chapter 7), our primary dependent variable is opinion on race-related and other policy issues and our experimental treatments vary in their racial presentation of welfare reform.[3] The experiments were designed to allow us to study the effects of exposure to different types of racial messages on policy opinions with sufficiently large samples to differentiate treatment effects across important subgroups. In our two experiments, respondents were randomly assigned to view one of a series of constructed political advertisements on their home television.[4] We can therefore examine the direct and conditional effect of racial message style on expressed opinion.

Our experiments were conducted using Knowledge Networks' (KN) Web-TV survey panel, which closely approximates a national random digit dialing sample. A full description of our experimental design and data analysis, including question wording and variable coding, is available from the authors.[5] Both experiments shared a common survey instrument with three components: a pre-test, an experimental treatment, and a post-test.

Unlike Mendelberg's experiment in which respondents were shown a constructed newscast containing a report of a candidate's welfare reform proposals that varied in its racial content, our control group viewed a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) appeal and the treatments are issue advertisements concerning welfare reform that vary in their racial content (described in greater detail below).[6] Our reason for examining issue advertisements is threefold. First, issue advertisements are common in contemporary policy contests and campaigns (Jamieson 2000) and are arguably more important sources of citizen knowledge than newscasts, newspapers, or formal political debates (Jamieson 1993). Second, because of the high levels of media self-evaluation in the "post-Horton" era, ambiguous

[2]There are two potential mechanisms for this effect. First, it might be the case that counterstereotypical appeals simply fail to prime existing antiblack predispositions (Mendelberg 2001, 11). In this case, whites are less likely to draw on their negative feelings toward blacks in constructing their opinions about these government policies. Second, counterstereotypical appeals might upset existing linkages between antiblack predispositions and these policies. Consequently, respondents who might otherwise oppose policies they perceive as tied to blacks might not draw on these predispositions after being subject to a counterstereotypical appeal. It is also important to note that there are different ways to counteract negative stereotypes. In Mendelberg's empirical work, counterstereotypical advertisements are those that disassociate welfare policy from blacks by associating it with whites. In Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002), a counterstereotypical advertisement portrays blacks as deserving. In this article, we adopt Mendelberg's usage.

[3]All four policy areas and most question wordings are drawn verbatim from Mendelberg's work. We omit defense spending where she finds minimal effects.

[4]While we cannot guarantee that respondents actually watched their assigned treatment, randomization assures that any nonexposure bias will be equal across treatments. Additionally, as will become clear below, we have strong evidence from respondents' evaluations of the issue advertisements themselves that many individuals viewed and heard their assigned treatment.

[5]See Clinton and Lapinski (2004) for a more extensive description of the KN panel and a complete description of how the self-administered surveys are implemented.

[6]Although in Mendelberg's experiment the newscaster simply reported on candidate positions, one might be concerned that the impact of these messages may have been altered by perceptions of media neutrality because issue advertisements are explicitly advocacy driven. While issue advertisements are viewed less suspiciously than candidate-focused advertisements (Falk 2003) and newscasts are now much closer in content and presentation to issue advertisements, with shorter news segments and fewer news items per broadcast (Annenberg 2004), we also tested directly for whether experiment participants rejected all of the issue advertisements outright. (They did not.) Additionally, in our experimental framework, we can hold constant citizen suspicion of message form while manipulating its racial content. Below we show that changes in racial content affect perceptions of message acceptability.

racial content in newscasts is likely to be followed by commentary that makes its racial content apparent. For this reason, implicit racial priming, if it is to occur at all, is now most likely with unmediated group or party-sponsored advertising. Third, normatively, concerns about elite manipulation of public opinion are most common with nonnews communication.

Our experiments differ in other important regards from previous experimental work on racial priming, most significantly in that we have a very large nationally representative sample with over 6,300 respondents who were exposed to a video treatment. One advantage of our representative sample is that we can evaluate the effects of racial appeals on groups, especially racial conservatives, who have been underrepresented in the high quality convenience samples of earlier experimental work (Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002). Also, the large number of participants in our experiments allows us to make precise estimates about the effects of different message styles. As with Mendelberg's experiment, we also are able to let respondents take the survey in their own home while viewing our treatments on their own televisions. Additionally, because we are interested in policy opinions that are directly or indirectly related to race, our ability to evoke respondent answers without the potential for the traditional interviewer-induced acceptability bias enhances the external validity of our experiment.

Finally, unlike Mendelberg's earlier study of policy opinions, our design builds in a full control group along with all combinations of racial message style. We can therefore compare not just the effects of different racial messages, but also the effects of racial messages relative to political communication altogether unrelated to race. In experiment A members of the control group view a GOTV appeal. We can therefore compare their responses to members of the treatment groups viewing different welfare-related advertisements. In experiment B we examine all combinations of racial message styles, including a treatment with both racially neutral (counterstereotypical) images and audio. This allows us to further compare the effects of exposure to deracialized welfare presentations from those that explicitly or implicitly evoke race. Overall, these experiments make it possible for us to distinguish the effect of presenting welfare-related issues from the effects associated with different racial cues embedded in these presentations.

Survey Elements Common to Both Experiments. Both pre-tests were identical and included a variety of standard questions about partisanship, political ideology, and racial resentment toward blacks.[7] From the racial resentment questions we created a scale of antiblack predispositions with higher values associated with greater levels of antiblack feelings. Scale items and coding were derived from existing work (see Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002).

Next, respondents viewed our experimental treatments that were designed to measure the effects of messages containing different types of verbal and visual racial cues on policy attitudes. In experiment A, respondents viewed one of three constructed political advertisements (described in greater detail below). In experiment B, respondents viewed one of four constructed advertisements.

Both post-tests begin with three questions asking the respondent her opinions about the advertisement she just viewed. Specifically, we asked each respondent (1) whether she thought issue advertisements were good for democracy, (2) to evaluate the quality of the advertisement she watched relative to other non-political television advertisements, and (3) if she believed issue advertisements affected the behavior of elected officials in Washington. The first question provides a direct measure of the perceived legitimacy and acceptability of a given appeal.

Respondents were next asked their opinions about four areas of public policy (in this order): government spending, welfare work requirements, government assistance to blacks, and affirmative action. The answers to these policy questions are used as the dependent variables in our analysis of priming effects. Note that while government assistance to blacks and affirmative action are arguably highly racialized policy domains even in the absence of external racial priming, welfare work

[7] Unlike some earlier research (e.g. Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002), we placed our antiblack predispositions battery in the pretest because we were concerned that the discussions of the deservedness of welfare recipients in our experimental manipulations, especially when linked either implicitly or explicitly to race, would affect the responses of participants to the survey items used to construct measures of antiblack predispositions. Sniderman and Piazza's "mere mention" experiment (1993, 104) supports this concern, showing that exposure to race-related policy discussions alters expressed antiblack predispositions. If this occurred despite a constant true relationship between antiblack predispositions and policy opinions, analysis of the relationship between *expressed* antiblack predispositions and opinion would find a larger effect of antiblack predispositions in the treatment case. This would purely be an artifact of movement in the relative distribution of expressed antiblack predispositions (an independent variable in the analysis) across treatments. In our approach, we accept the risk of priming racial considerations with the pre-test, but implement a full control group in experiment A and four different racial message styles in experiment B.

requirements and government spending are not so automatically related to opinions about race. By asking the policy questions in an order that moves from relatively unracialized domains (government spending, welfare work requirements) to highly racialized areas, we can avoid concerns that asking about the latter would prime antiblack predispositions in respondents' answers to the former. Because KN panelists complete a core survey battery, we were also able to obtain background information about each respondent's age, gender, educational attainment, and race.

Experiment A. In experiment A, over 2,600 respondents were randomly assigned to three groups at equal rates. In the control group, respondents viewed a GOTV public service announcement. In the two treatment groups, respondents viewed one of two constructed issue advertisements concerning welfare reform. Each video, designed to mimic the style and content of contemporary issue advertisements, is 30 seconds long.

In all versions of the welfare reform advertisement in both experiments, the first third and last third of the advertisement are identical. The advertisement opens with the fade in of a picture of the U.S. Capitol on a dark blue background while the female announcer states, "The U.S. Senate is now considering a renewal of the historic 1996 Welfare Reform Act." As the announcer continues, "We must not pass up this opportunity to strengthen the work requirements for those receiving welfare" the words "Strengthen Welfare Work Requirements" appear in large white text at the bottom of the frame and the picture of the Capitol shrinks toward the top of the frame. The advertisement then shifts to the experimental treatment, which is described below.

The last third of the advertisement has two smaller pictures on the identical blue background in the top of the frame, a picture of the U.S. Capitol and a Caucasian woman on the telephone. The words "Call your Senator Today (202) 224-3121" then appear (in the same format as before) below the pictures, after which the announcer intones, "Call your Senator. Let them know that you want to end welfare as a way of life." As the announcer finishes this statement, "Paid for by the Coalition for Real Welfare Reform" appears in small white text in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. The picture and text linger for a moment, and then the entire screen fades to black.

In experiment A, the manipulated section of the advertisement varies in the text spoken by the announcer. The language is either neutral or explicitly racial. In the neutral language version, the middle section of the advertisement opens with a picture of an African American woman at the top of the frame. As the announcer states, "Too many welfare recipients take advantage of our tax dollars," "Workfare not Welfare" appears below the picture. The announcer then continues, "To end dependency, we must require everyone receiving welfare to work," as "Help End Dependency" appears below "Workfare not Welfare." Following the IE model, we label this treatment as being *implicitly racial*.

In the racial language version, the announcer's first sentence is, "Too many welfare recipients, especially blacks, take advantage of our tax dollars." This phrasing is nearly identical to that implemented by Mendelberg, in which the newscaster reports, "In his last campaign, Hayes [one of the candidates] said some people, especially blacks, take advantage of welfare . . ." (Mendelberg 2001, 205). The remainder of the advertisement is the same. We label this version, per the IE model's classification, as being *explicitly racial*. These experimental manipulations, as well as the manipulations used in experiment B, are summarized in Figure 1.

The use of the unambiguously racial language "especially blacks" provides an ideal mechanism to test the IE model's predictions about how the egalitarian reaction to explicit racial appeals counteracts the priming of antiblack predispositions. With our construction, there is no doubt that the advertisement with this language is explicitly racial. Any other language, for instance racially coded phrasing like "especially in big cities," would require us to determine how individual respondents perceived the advertisement's racial content. One might initially object to our labeling the first welfare advertisement as "implicitly racial" on the grounds that the phrase "too many welfare recipients" directly triggers group resentment. This is, of course, *a necessity* for a message to be implicitly racial. Racial undertones accompanied by universal language about all welfare recipients allow those viewing the advertisement to deny that their opinions are directly related to race while nonetheless recalling their antipathy toward blacks.[8] Furthermore, while some people may perceive this language as explicitly racial, it is undeniably *less* explicit than the appeal containing the language "especially blacks."

Experiment B. In experiment B, over 3,700 respondents were randomly assigned to one of four groups at equal rates. In each of the four treatment groups, respondents viewed one of four constructed issue advertisements concerning welfare reform. Two of the groups

[8]Here we draw on Valentino (2001), who argues that Mendelberg's findings are consistent with an explanation in which many whites are simply looking for an excuse to discriminate against blacks as long as plausible deniability exists.

FIGURE 1 Experimental Advertisement Manipulations

Experiment A

		Advertisement Text	
		Racial: Explicit Reference to Blacks	Neutral: No racial reference
Advertisement Image	Racial: Picture of an African-American woman	Racial Language, Racial Visual Treatment (IE Model: Explicit)	Neutral Language, Racial Visual Treatment (IE Model: Implicit)

Experiment B

		Advertisement Text	
		Racial: Explicit Reference to Blacks	Neutral: No racial reference
Advertisement Image	Racial: Picture of an African-American woman	Racial Language, Racial Visual Treatment (IE Model: Explicit)	Neutral Language, Racial Visual Treatment (IE Model: Implicit)
	Neutral/Counter-Stereotypical: Picture of a Caucasian woman	Racial Language, Neutral Visual Treatment (IE Model: Not Classified)	Neutral Language, Neutral Visual Treatment (IE Model: Counter-Stereotypical)

viewed the same advertisements shown to the treatment groups in experiment A that included an image of an African American woman and varied in whether they included an explicit verbal reference to blacks. The two other groups viewed advertisements that were identical to the two used in experiment A, except that the welfare recipient pictured in the middle section of the advertisement was Caucasian rather than African American. In the counterstereotypical ads the image of a Caucasian welfare recipient was paired with both the explicit and neutral language. To eliminate concerns that factors unrelated to the individual's race might influence the interpretation of the visual image, we relied on Gilliam's (1999) race-manipulated images. Other than the woman's race these images are therefore identical in all regards.

When paired with the neutral language, this treatment is *counterstereotypical* according to the IE model because it presents whites as the beneficiaries of welfare. The advertisement that mixes *racial language and counterstereotypical visuals* has no clear classification in the IE model categorization. While we know of no case in which actual candidates or policy appeals have mixed explicit verbal references to blacks with counterstereotypical images, we included this treatment to ascertain whether respondents were viewing the experiments with or without the volume on their television adjusted so they could hear the advertisement's audio. Reactions to this advertisement, which mirror those associated with the explicit appeal, suggest that participants both saw and heard the advertisement.

Data

We have 2,634 cases from experiment A and 3,733 from experiment B.[9] Cell size and survey item summary statistics are reported in Table 1.[10] Randomization checks confirm that in both experiments there are no observable differences across treatment groups.[11]

Analysis

Our analysis builds on previous work that seeks to understand the direct and conditional effects of predispositions on opinions across exposure to different political messages. We begin by testing Mendelberg's hypotheses concerning the acceptability of different forms of racial appeals. We then turn to an analysis of the effects of different racial messages in priming racial resentment.

Evaluations of Racial Appeals

Our first task is to test whether individuals distinguished among the different types of racial messages used in these

[9]Like Mendelberg (2001) and Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002), we restrict our analysis to white non-Hispanics.

[10]Overall item response rates range from 78 to 91%. Among those completing the pre-test questions concerning antiblack predispositions, item response rates range from 82 to 95%.

[11]In a multinomial logit model predicting treatment groups as a function of education, age (and age squared), gender, ideological conservatism, and antiblack predispositions, all of these variables and the entire model are statistically insignificant for both experiments.

Table 1 Cell Sizes and Summary Statistics

Advertisement Viewed	IE Model Classification	Experiment A Number	Experiment B Number
Control (Get Out the Vote)		883	—
Racial Language, Racial Visual	Explicit	899	992
Neutral Language, Racial Visual	Implicit	852	929
Racial Language, Neutral Visual	Not Classified	—	896
Neutral Language, Neutral Visual	Counter-Stereotypical	—	916
Total		2634	3733

	Experiment A		Experiment B	
Variable (1)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Antiblack Predispositions (7 categories)	0.59	0.26	0.59	0.26
Issue Advertisements Are Bad for Democracy (5 categories)	0.38	0.30	0.39	0.30
Decrease Spending (3 categories)	0.50	0.39	0.48	0.39
Strengthen Welfare Work Requirements (5 categories)	0.73	0.29	0.73	0.28
Oppose Government Aid to Blacks (2 categories)	0.84	0.36	0.85	0.36
Decrease Affirmative Action (3 categories)	0.80	0.28	0.82	0.27
Education (4 categories)	2.84	0.93	2.71	0.94
Age	54.41	15.43	52.35	16.49
Female (1 = yes)	0.51	0.50	0.49	0.50
Conservatism (Ideology, 7 categories)	0.56	0.23	0.55	0.22

Antiblack Predispositions

		Experiment A		Experiment B	
Value	Score	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
Low	0.000	81	3.51%	86	2.64%
	0.166	184	7.97%	245	7.53%
	0.333	322	13.95%	449	13.80%
	0.500	545	23.60%	787	24.19%
	0.667	525	22.74%	725	22.28%
	0.833	361	15.63%	563	17.30%
High	1.000	291	12.60%	399	12.26%

(1) All variables coded 0 to 1, except education (1 to 4) and age (years).

experiments as is predicted by the IE model. This undertaking also allows us to confirm that our experimental manipulations were successful, i.e., that participants in our experiments perceived them differently. To do so, we use the item from our post-treatment battery that asked respondents, "Do you think that it is good for democracy that groups run these types of ads?" We then created a variable coded 0 to 1 so that the belief that issue advertisements are *bad* for democracy receives a higher score. It is our assumption that this question taps both agreement with a message's policy content (stronger welfare work requirements) and the acceptability of its racial content.[12] In Table 2, we report the mean item score for each treatment for each experiment.

In experiment A, we can compare perceptions of message acceptability across the GOTV appeal and the implicitly and explicitly racial welfare presentations. In

[12]We find differences across treatments for the "good for democracy" item, but not for the measure of perceived influence on elected officials in Washington, D.C. This further confirms that the democracy item taps agreement with the message's racial content, rather than some unobserved heterogeneity across treatment groups.

Table 2 Average Evaluation of Issue Advertisements as Bad for Democracy by Racial Message Style

Advertisement Viewed	IE Model Classification	Experiment A Mean Opinion (1)	Standard Deviation	N	Statistically Significant Differences (2) Control	Explicit	Implicit
Control (Get Out the Vote)		0.32	0.27	745	—	Y	Y
Racial Language, Racial Visual	Explicit	0.44	0.31	780	Y	—	Y
Neutral Language, Racial Visual	Implicit	0.37	0.30	720	Y	Y	—

Advertisement Viewed	IE Model Classification	Experiment B Mean Opinion (1)	Standard Deviation	N	Statistically Significant Differences (2) Explicit	Implicit	Not Classified	Counter-Stereotypical
Racial Language, Racial Visual	Explicit	0.43	0.32	854	—	Y	N	Y
Neutral Language, Racial Visual	Implicit	0.37	0.28	823	Y	—	Y	N
Racial Language, Neutral Visual	Not Classified	0.42	0.30	762	N	Y	—	Y
Neutral Language, Neutral Visual	Counter-Stereotypical	0.35	0.29	795	Y	N	Y	—

(1) Table entries are mean scores for the Issue Advertisements are Bad for Democracy item.
(2) Indicates whether difference in means (t-test, 2-tailed) is statistically significant between treatments at $p < .05$.

experiment B, in contrast, we can isolate the effects of using racial language and racial imagery on message acceptability within the context of welfare reform. Average responses across versions of the welfare reform advertisements support the IE model's predictions that explicit appeals are viewed less favorably than implicit appeals (H1) and that implicit appeals are treated similarly to counterstereotypical appeals (H1A). In experiment A, those viewing the explicit appeal are most likely to believe that issue advertisements are bad for democracy, those viewing the GOTV appeal are least likely to believe issue advertisements are bad for democracy, and those viewing the implicit appeal score nearly between these two extremes. All three means are statistically distinguishable from one another and the differences are substantively large.

Again, in experiment B, those viewing the explicit advertisement are most likely to believe that issue advertisements are bad for democracy, followed very closely by those viewing the racial language and neutral visual appeal, next by those viewing the implicitly racial appeal, and finally by those viewing the counterstereotypical appeal. The average evaluations of the explicit appeal and the racial language and neutral visual appeal are statistically distinguishable from the evaluations of the implicit and counterstereotypical appeals (and vice versa). However, neither the counterstereotypical and the implicit appeal, nor the racial language and neutral visual and the explicit appeal, are statistically distinguishable from one another. That the racial language and neutral visual advertisement elicits nearly as large a negative reaction as the fully explicit advertisement confirms that experiment participants had not turned off their television's audio output (or else their evaluations of the advertisement should have been indistinguishable from those viewing the implicit appeal). Consequently, hereafter we ignore this treatment and instead compare only the GOTV treatment and the implicit, explicit, and counterstereotypical appeals. We note also that this negative response to the simple use of racial language (even when accompanied by images of whites) confirms Mendelberg's argument that racial language is treated, on its face, differently from racial imagery.

Racial Message Style and Policy Opinions

Having shown that individuals distinguish implicit and explicit appeals on their face, our second, and primary, task is to determine whether different types of racial messages vary in their priming of respondents' racial resentment in opinion formation. The IE model argues that implicit appeals are effective in priming antiblack predispositions, whereas other appeals are not. An essential question, therefore, is what does it mean that a message is "more effective" in priming predispositions? Mendelberg argues that priming takes place when those who hold negative views of blacks bring those views to bear in expressing opposition to government policies that might be perceived as assisting blacks. In her own words,

TABLE 3 Average Policy Opinions by Racial Message Style

		Experiment A			Experiment B		
Advertisement Viewed	IE Model Classification	Mean Policy Opinion (1)	Standard Deviation	N	Mean Policy Opinion	Standard Deviation	N
			Decrease Spending				
Control (Get Out the Vote)		0.486	0.394	731	—	—	—
Racial Language, Racial Visual	Explicit	0.504	0.393	742	0.462	0.388	829
Neutral Language, Racial Visual	Implicit	0.508	0.387	713	0.482	0.381	795
Neutral Language, Neutral Visual	Counter-Stereotypical				0.493	0.393	766
			Strengthen Welfare Work Requirements				
Control (Get Out the Vote)		0.756***	0.278	795	—	—	—
Racial Language, Racial Visual	Explicit	0.711***	0.296	824	0.720	0.288	917
Neutral Language, Racial Visual	Implicit	0.714***	0.296	772	0.731	0.268	862
Neutral Language, Neutral Visual	Counter-Stereotypical	—	—	—	0.728	0.287	842
			Oppose Government Aid to Blacks				
Control (Get Out the Vote)		0.847	0.360	668	—	—	—
Racial Language, Racial Visual	Explicit	0.843	0.364	708	0.853	0.354	782
Neutral Language, Racial Visual	Implicit	0.840	0.367	673	0.847	0.360	734
Neutral Language, Neutral Visual	Counter-Stereotypical	—	—	—	0.858	0.350	702
			Decrease Affirmative Action				
Control (Get Out the Vote)		0.810	0.271	786	—	—	—
Racial Language, Racial Visual	Explicit	0.802	0.280	806	0.831*	0.262	883
Neutral Language, Racial Visual	Implicit	0.802	0.290	756	0.809*	0.275	832
Neutral Language, Neutral Visual	Counter-Stereotypical	—	—	—	0.815	0.265	799

(1) Table entries are mean scores for the relevant policy area question.
***indicates differences between control and both implicit and explicit are significant at $p < .01$ (t-test, 2-tailed). *indicates difference between explicit and implicit is significant at $p < .10$ (t-test, 2-tailed). No other pairwise comparisons are statistically distinguishable at $p < .10$.

"implicitly racial appeals are more likely to prime whites' racial resentment . . . leading them to express greater opposition to government efforts to ameliorate racial inequality. Unlike messages that are explicitly racial . . . *implicit messages are expected to increase the tendency of resentful whites to reject policies designed to redress the problems of African-Americans*" (2001, 193, emphasis added). Thus, the IE model proposes a directional priming effect given the distribution of racial resentment that surveys find in American whites (Kinder and Sanders 1997). Implicit appeals should generate more conservative policy opinions among resentful whites vis-à-vis explicit (H2), counterstereotypical (H2A), and race-neutral messages (H2A).

To begin with, we start by examining the aggregate effect of exposure to different types of racial messages on opinion. Table 3 displays average respondent policy opinions by exposure to our experimental advertisement manipulations. Table entries are average expressed opinion scores in one of four policy areas: government spending, welfare work requirements, government aid to blacks, and affirmative action. As a reminder, each variable is scored from 0 to 1 so that higher responses are more conservative. At first glance, these data provide little evidence that racial appeals alter average policy opinions. Across all four policy areas and both experiments, there is no instance in which exposure to the explicitly racial message produces a statistically significantly more liberal policy opinion than the implicit message. The only case in which the aggregate opinions of those viewing the implicit and explicit messages are statistically distinguishable occurs for the Decrease Affirmative Action item in experiment B, and in this instance the explicitly racial messages yields more conservative opinions, although this effect is a mere 2.7%.[13] More generally, the average expressed policy

[13] 2.7% is calculated as (Explicit Score – Implicit Score)/Implicit Score.

opinions of those viewing the implicit and explicit advertisements are tightly clustered, with an average difference of about .01.

Similarly, there is no case in which exposure to the implicitly racial message generates a more conservative opinion that is statistically distinguishable from the opinion of those viewing the non-welfare related GOTV treatment. In fact, in the Strengthen Welfare Work Requirements case, exposure to either the implicit or explicit advertisement generates about 6% *less* conservative opinions and these differences are statistically distinguishable from the control at $p < .01$. Neither does exposure to the counterstereotypical advertisement yield more liberal opinions that are statistically distinguishable from those viewing the implicitly racial appeal.

These aggregate data are of course not a complete test of the IE model, which makes predictions about the conditional effects of antiblack predispositions on opinion. For this reason, we estimated models of respondent opinion for each policy question including the same set of treatment effects, measures of antiblack predispositions, and the interactions between treatments and antiblack predispositions.[14] Table 4 displays the estimated baseline effect of antiblack predispositions (in the implicit treatment group) and the incremental effect of predispositions for the other treatments (Explicit in experiments A and B, GOTV in experiment A, and counterstereotypical in experiment B). As a reminder, the IE model predicts that the effect of predispositions will be positive after viewing the implicit appeal because it is predicted to prime antiblack resentment, while the explicit (H2), counterstereotypical (H2A), and GOTV appeals (H2A) should suppress or avoid this priming altogether. Thus, the IE model predicts a positive coefficient for the baseline effect of predispositions and a negative incremental effect for the remaining treatments because these other treatments will be less effective than the implicit appeal in priming underlying predispositions.

Examining Table 4 makes clear that these predictions are, in large part, not supported. While the baseline effect of predispositions is large, positive, and statistically significant in all specifications, the incremental effect of predispositions after viewing any of the other treatments is never statistically significant. Hypothesis H2 is not supported: exposure to the explicit appeal decreases the effect of predispositions relative to the implicit appeal only half

[14] All statistical models reported in this article also include age (and age squared), education, ideology, and gender. In the experimental setting the inclusion of these controls is unnecessary to avoid omitted variables bias, but it does improve the efficiency of model estimates. As a practical matter, excluding the controls has no effect on the reported results.

TABLE 4 Baseline and Incremental Effects of Antiblack Predispositions on Policy Views, by Message Style

	Decrease Spending		Strengthen Welfare Work Requirements		Oppose Aid to Blacks		Decrease Affirmative Action	
Message Style	**Experiment A**	**Experiment B**	**Experiment A**	**Experiment B**	**Experiment A**	**Experiment B**	**Experiment A**	**Experiment B**
Implicit Racial	0.732***	1.094***	1.780***	1.577***	3.508***	3.019***	2.184***	1.635***
(Baseline effect)	(3.96)	(6.04)	(10.18)	(8.96)	(9.69)	(8.17)	(9.74)	(7.39)
Explicit Racial	0.186	−0.335	−0.192	0.157	−0.208	0.340	−0.112	0.269
(Incremental effect)	(0.72)	(1.36)	(0.82)	(0.66)	(0.43)	(0.66)	(0.39)	(0.93)
Control/GOTV	0.064	—	−0.322	—	−0.352	—	−0.136	—
(Incremental effect)	(0.25)		(1.29)		(0.72)		(0.45)	
Counter-Stereotypical	—	0.075	—	−0.079	—	0.127	—	0.057
(Incremental effect)		(0.29)		(0.32)		(0.25)		(0.21)
Observations	1852	1995	1991	2138	1749	1859	1986	2091
χ^2	440.22***	445.89***	454.69***	430.29***	397.19***	309.50***	419.85***	336.66***

Robust Z-statistics in parentheses. ***denotes $p < .01$, **denotes $p < .05$, *denotes $p < .10$. Functional form is ordered probit, except for oppose aid to blacks item, for which functional form is probit.

the time, and these coefficients are small and never statistically significant. Put more starkly, the explicit appeal increases the effect of predispositions as often as it decreases them. Nor is H2A supported: The incremental effect of predispositions is smaller in the control group (GOTV treatment) for three of four policy areas, but these effects are also never statistically significant. Likewise, the counterstereotypical appeal increases the incremental effect of predispositions for three of four policy areas, exactly the opposite of the outcome predicted by the IE model, although again these effects are small and never statistically significant.

Confirming this general pattern of indistinguishable priming effects across treatments, Figure 2 plots for each policy area and both experiments predicted policy opinions by treatment and antiblack predispositions. The vertical axis is the probability of offering the most conservative answer to each question, and the horizontal axis measures antiblack predispositions. In each graph, the solid line is the predicted opinion for those viewing the implicit appeal, and the grey area is the 95% confidence interval for this prediction.[15] The dashed line is the predicted policy opinion for those viewing the explicit appeal. In experiment A, the dotted line is the predicted opinion among those in the control group viewing the GOTV appeal. In experiment B, the dot-dash line is the predicted opinion among those viewing the counterstereotypical appeal.

Note generally that the predicted opinions of those viewing the implicit and explicit appeals are tightly clustered. Across all eight panels, there is only one instance in which the predicted opinions of those viewing the explicit appeal are statistically distinguishable from those viewing the implicit appeal. In panel 4B), those with the highest levels of antiblack predispositions are predicted to offer greater opposition to affirmative action after viewing the explicit appeal than the implicit appeal. This result, which is contrary to H2, is not robust, however, as it does not appear in both experiments.

Similarly, contra H2A, the predicted opinions of those in the control group or those viewing the counterstereotypical appeal are never more liberal than those viewing the implicit appeal. Only for experiment A and the welfare work requirements item (panel 2A) are the opinions of those in the control group statistically differentiable from those viewing the implicit appeal. In this case, however, those with relatively low levels of antiblack predispositions express more *conservative* opinions after viewing the GOTV appeal than after viewing either the implicit or explicit racial message. The opinions of those viewing the counterstereotypical appeal are never differentiable from those exposed to the implicit appeal.

In summary, our data provide no support for the basic predictions about priming offered by the IE model. Implicit appeals are not more effective than explicit appeals in causing resentful individuals to express more conservative opinions. Nor do counterstereotypical and race neutral messages yield more liberal policy opinions among resentful whites than implicit ones

Collectively, these results present a puzzle. On the one hand, we find no evidence that implicit appeals are more effective than explicit messages in priming antiblack predispositions. On the other hand, we do find that survey respondents are more likely to reject explicit appeals as illegitimate than implicit ones. This suggests that survey respondents are differentiating between explicit and implicit appeals on their face. Given that individuals distinguish between types of racial messages, why is there so little evidence of differential priming? In the following section, we provide an answer to this puzzle. Specifically, we show that individuals who distinguish between implicit and explicit appeals are a different subset of the population from the portion of the population most amenable to racial priming.

Testing the Microfoundations of the IE model

The IE model makes two assumptions about how racial messages are received and processed in predicting a larger priming effect in opinion formation from implicit than explicit appeals. These assumptions about susceptibility to priming and message discernment, however, are unlikely to hold for all segments of the population. In the context of the IE model, we argue that while less-educated respondents are more receptive to priming, they are simultaneously less likely to reject explicit appeals as illegitimate relative to implicit messages (even after controlling for underlying racial resentment). We find strong evidence to support this argument, thereby helping to better understand the mechanisms that govern racial priming across individuals.

The first assumption of the IE model is that a survey respondent's underlying racial resentment is not automatically brought to bear in constructing policy opinions in the absence of racial appeals. Even resentful whites may not fully express their opposition to policies associated with blacks in the absence of political communication priming their underlying predispositions. There is

[15] Marginal effects calculated using Clarify (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) with all other variables held constant at their sample medians.

FIGURE 2 Predicted Policy Opinions by Treatment and Antiblack Predispositions

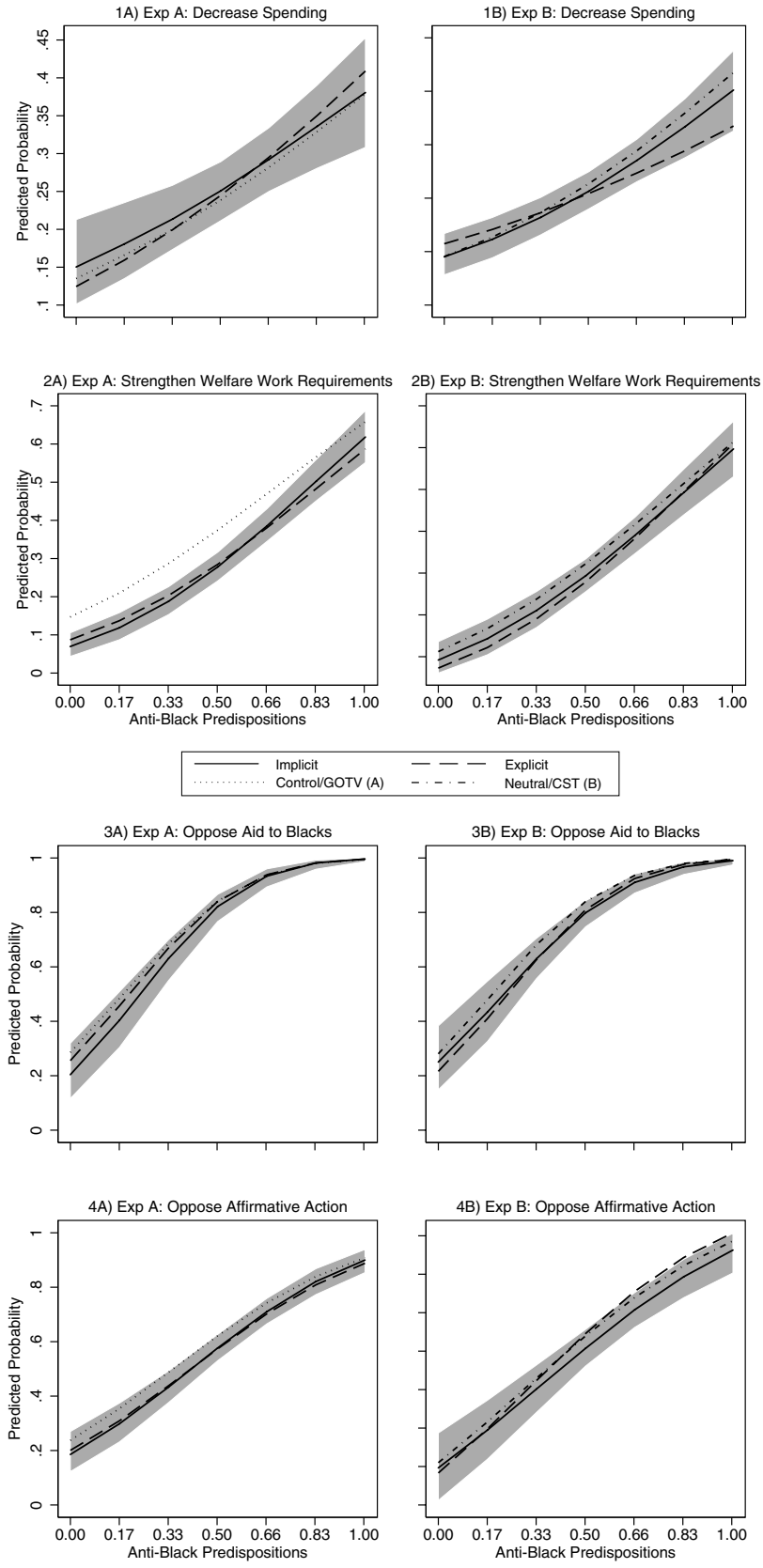


TABLE 5 Educationally Conditioned Effects of Antiblack Predispositions on Policy Views in Control Group

	Decrease Spending	Strengthen Welfare	Oppose Aid to Blacks	Decrease Affirmative Action
Baseline Effect of Antiblack Predispositions	−1.459**	1.147*	2.354**	0.707
	(2.24)	(1.88)	(2.13)	(0.91)
Education × Antiblack Predispositions	0.748***	0.128	0.281	0.482**
	(3.52)	(0.66)	(0.81)	(1.97)
Observations	615	663	575	662
χ^2	152.04***	108.92***	126.85***	132.76***

Robust Z-statistics in parentheses. ***denotes p < .01, **denotes p < .05, *denotes p < .10. Functional form is ordered probit, except for oppose aid to Blacks item, for which functional form is probit.

long-standing research in political science, however, that individuals vary substantially in their reliance on their underlying beliefs during opinion formation in the absence of priming. One critical component of this degree of "automatic" priming is a respondent's education. More-educated individuals are more constrained by their underlying belief constructs (Converse 1964, Sears 1993) and more likely to make connections between issues and ideologies, both generally (Zaller 1992) and for questions of racial politics (Sears et al. 1997, 41).[16] In contrast, those individuals who are less educated are relatively ripe for priming, since they will not automatically bring their predispositions to bear in constructing opinions on race-related issues.[17]

At the same time, the IE model presupposes that all respondents recognize and reject explicit appeals as illegitimate because they violate widely held norms against racial discrimination. But rejecting an explicit appeal as illegitimate requires attachment to the egalitarian norm, recognition that the message is violating this norm, and the ability to reject a message that violates a norm. All three steps of this process are more likely among those with higher levels of education.[18] Consequently, if the same low-education subset of the population that is susceptible to racial priming is no more likely to reject explicit than implicit appeals, then one would not expect to find much aggregate evidence of differential priming between implicit and explicit appeals.

To test these arguments, we begin by looking at the "automatic" priming of antiblack predispositions by level of education. Specifically, we analyze the opinions of respondents from experiment A's control group controlling for predispositions, education, and the interaction between education and predispositions.[19] By focusing on the control group, we can identify the independent effects of antiblack predispositions on policy opinions in the absence of any discussion of race related policy (welfare) and without any implicit or explicit racial cues. If, as we predict, education conditions the priming of antiblack predispositions in the absence of racial messages, we should find a positive coefficient on the interaction between education and antiblack predispositions. We label this differential effects hypothesis as *H3*. The results of our estimation appear in Table 5.

Confirming H3, we find that for each of the four policy areas, the unprimed effect of antiblack predispositions is larger among those who are more educated. For

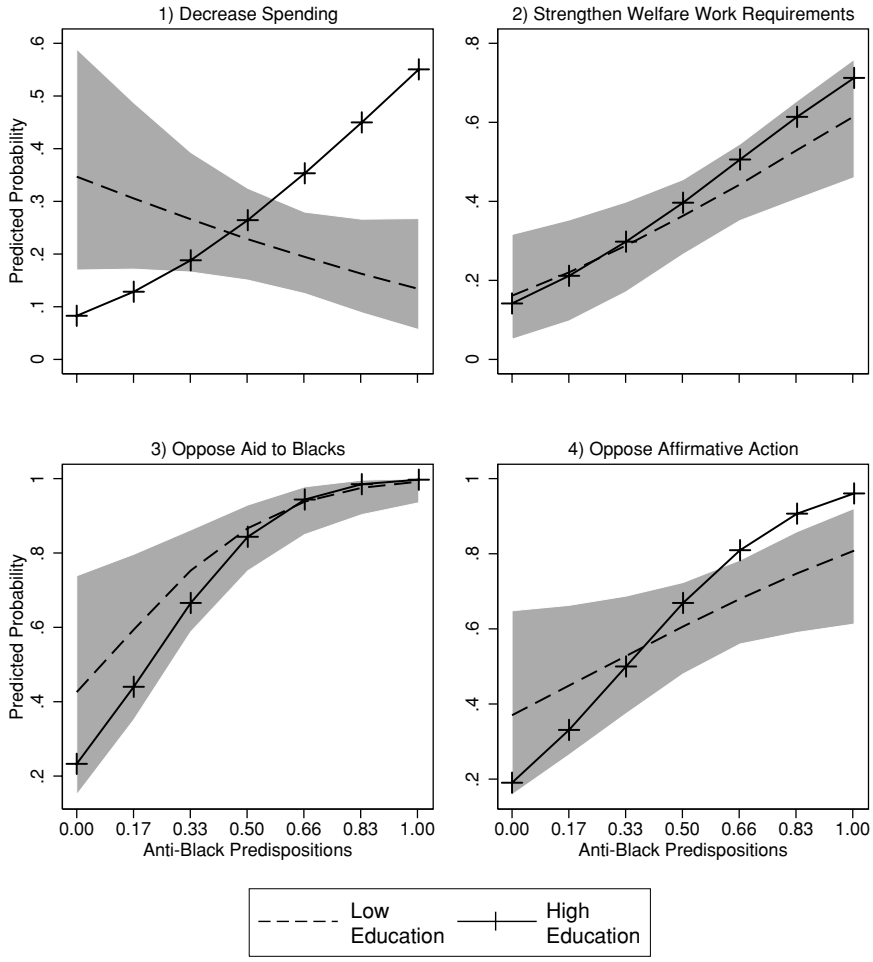
[16] Highly educated individuals may be more likely to draw on their predispositions because they are more constrained by their cognitive schemas or because they possess information that allows them to link policies to abstract ideologies. (For evidence of the correlation between education and factual knowledge about politics, see Price and Zaller 1993.)

[17] This discussion sidesteps the question of exposure and treatment recall. Previous research has shown exposure and recall are highly correlated with education (MacKuen 1984; Zaller 1992). In the experimental setting, however, these are less of a concern because everyone is exposed to the treatment and the time lapse between treatment and the post-treatment survey is short.

[18] Bobo and Licari (1989) and Sniderman and Piazza (1993) demonstrate that education is highly correlated with attachment to political tolerance. Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1985) show that better educated individuals hold more progressive racial attitudes across a wide range of subjects. Blair and Banaji (1996) show that motivated college students can identify and overcome attempts to prime stereotypes. Zaller (1992, 65) and MacKuen (1984, 374) suggest that more-educated and sophisticated individuals are better able to resist messages with which they disagree (sophistication is correlated with education, according to Price and Zaller 1993).

[19] We also include the same set of control variables as before.

FIGURE 3 Predicted "Unprimed" Policy Opinions in Control Group by Education Level and Antiblack Predispositions



the decrease spending and affirmative action items this interaction effect is also highly statistically significant. To give a sense of the magnitude of these results, Figure 3 displays predicted opinion across antiblack predispositions for the least (dashed line, did not graduate from high school) and most (plus line, graduated from college) educated respondents in our sample. The grey area in the figure is the simulated 95% confidence interval for the prediction for the low-education respondents.

Note that, in support of H3, the unprimed effect of antiblack predispositions is always smaller (a flatter slope) for the low-education than high-education respondents. Additionally, for the decrease spending item (Panel 1) and oppose affirmative action items (Panel 4), the opinions of higher-education respondents are statistically differentiable from those of low-education respondents with the same level of racial resentment. In the spending case, highly educated individuals are less likely, relative to low-education respondents, to support decreasing spending if they have low levels of racial resentment and more likely if they have high levels of resentment. For the affirmative action item, only the opinions of high-resentment individuals are distinguishable by education level. Overall, these results show that external priming of racial predispositions is less important for high- than low-education respondents. In the absence of racialized communication, high-education respondents are more likely than low-education respondents to associate their policy views on these items with their underlying racial resentment.

Next, to test whether education affects the relative acceptance of implicit versus explicit appeals, we again examined respondents' answers to the "Issue Advertisements Bad for Democracy" item, this time as a function of antiblack predispositions, education, and the interaction between the two. If our hypothesis that highly educated respondents are more likely to reject explicit appeals than

TABLE 6 Educationally Conditioned Effects of Antiblack Predispositions on Evaluations of Implicit and Explicit Appeals

	Explicit Appeal	Implicit Appeal
Baseline Effect of	−1.10***	−0.55
Antiblack Predispositions	(2.03)	(0.82)
Education × Antiblack	0.10	−0.16
Predispositions	(0.61)	(0.75)
Observations	664	616
χ^2	38.10***	44.22***

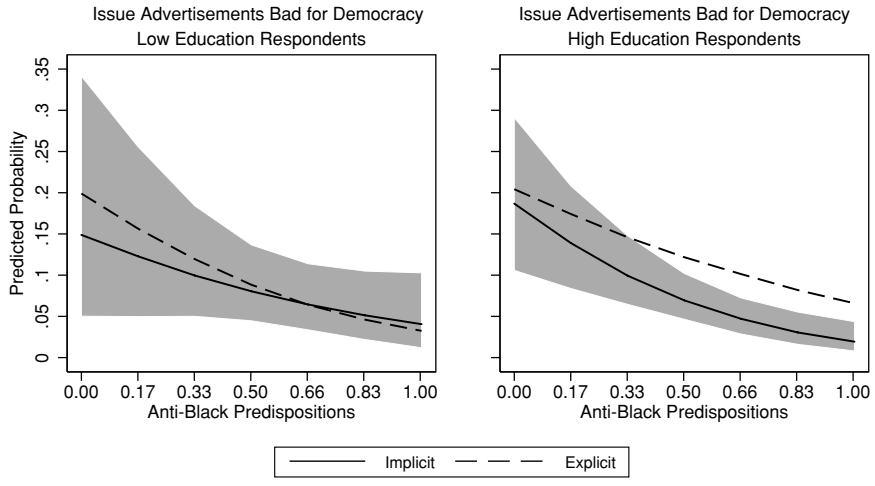
Robust Z-statistics in parentheses. ***denotes p < .01, **denotes p < .05, *denotes p < .10. Functional form is ordered probit. Dependent variable is scale score on Issue Advertisements Bad for Democracy item.

less-educated respondents is correct, we would expect a positive coefficient on the interaction between education and antiblack predispositions. This hypothesis is labeled *H4*. Model estimates are reported in Table 6. Note that as a respondent's racial resentment increases, she is less likely to consider either the explicit or implicit appeal as bad for democracy. Confirming H4, the results shown in the first column demonstrate that highly educated respondents are more likely to rate the explicit appeal as "Bad for Democracy" than less-educated respondents *even after accounting for the respondent's underlying racial predispositions.* (Note too that we do not find this effect for respondents viewing the implicit appeal. In the second column, the interaction between education and predispositions receives a negative coefficient.)

Comparing the relative evaluation of implicit and explicit appeals by education level and antiblack predispositions helps to put this finding in context. In Figure 4, we plot predicted evaluations of the implicit and explicit appeals (using the Table 6 results) separately for high- and low-education respondents. Again, the grey area is the 95% confidence interval of the prediction for those viewing the implicit appeal. In the left panel, we observe that low-education respondents evaluate implicit and explicit appeals the same. In contrast, for the high-education respondents plotted in the right panel, explicit appeals are more likely to be deemed bad for democracy than implicit appeals, and these differences are statistically significant for individuals with average or higher levels of racial resentment. Both patterns support H4. To put these findings as starkly as possible, low-education respondents don't view implicit appeals as "better" than explicit ones, while high-education respondents do.

Paired together, these results provide the necessary pieces of the puzzle to explain why our larger experiments fail to detect evidence of more effective priming of racial predispositions from implicit appeals relative to explicit ones. Critically, high-education individuals, the ones who distinguish between implicit and explicit appeals, don't need to be primed to make their racial resentment relevant in policy evaluation. For these respondents, the relative racial content of political communication is largely irrelevant, except that explicit appeals are viewed (on their

FIGURE 4 Predicted Evaluation of Implicit and Explicit Appeals by Treatment, Antiblack Predispositions, and Education



face), less favorably. Low-education respondents, meanwhile, are susceptible to priming, but because they don't reject explicit appeals as illegitimate, either implicit or explicit appeals have the same effect on their opinions by priming antiblack predispositions.

The aggregate effects of these microfoundational arguments are confirmed by recreating the direct test of priming of racial resentment in policy evaluations separately for high- and low-education respondents. These results (for the experiment A data only) are shown graphically in Figure 5 and follow the format of Figure 2. The left side of Figure 5 plots the predicted opinions, across treatments, of individuals in the lowest education category. The right side displays the predicted opinions of the most highly educated respondents. For both high- and low-education respondents, there is no evidence to support H2's prediction that implicit appeals are more effective in priming antiblack predispositions than explicit ones. Note how closely the predicted opinions on the decrease spending item track for the low-education respondents viewing the implicit or explicit appeals in panel 1A. Both types of racial messages increase the conditional effect of antiblack predispositions in generating opposition to spending relative to those in the control group viewing the GOTV appeal (although neither effect is statistically significant, in part because the smaller sample size of low-education respondents generates greater uncertainty in these predictions). Among highly educated respondents, in contrast, opinions in all three treatment conditions are tightly clustered.

More generally, across all four policy areas and for both education levels, there are no instances in which the opinions of those viewing the implicit and explicit appeals are distinguishable. Thus, H2 is supported neither in the entire sample, nor in either education subgroup. The best evidence for the rejection of explicit appeals and the suppression of racial priming emerges among high-education respondents on the welfare work requirements item (Panel 2B), but there we find that *either* the implicit or explicit message generates greater opposition to welfare work requirements among low-resentment individuals. These results suggest that either implicit or explicit appeals suppress priming only among highly educated and low-resentment individuals, thereby leading them to express more liberal policy opinions than in the absence of racial communication.

Discussion: On the Nature of Racial Appeals

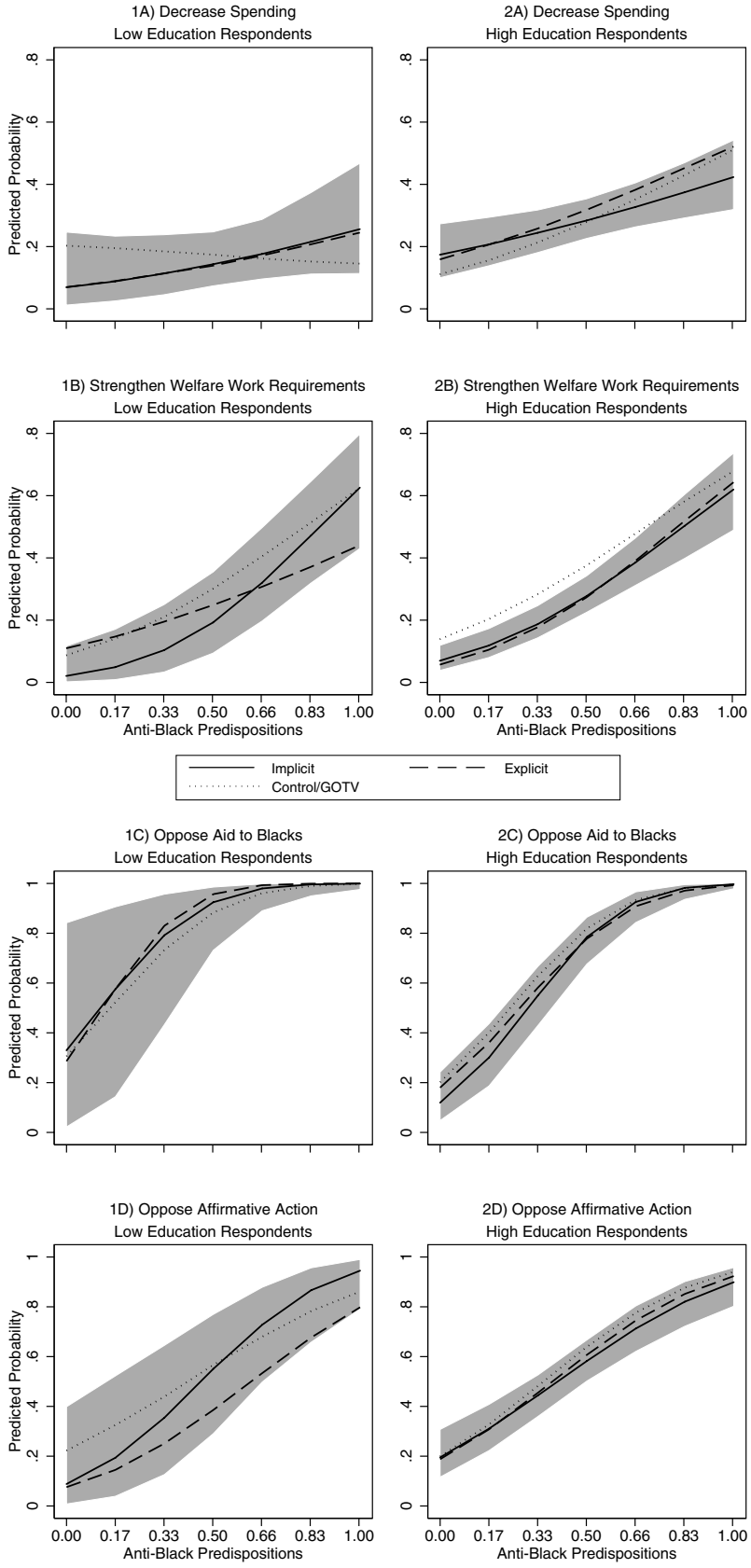
Our research provides strong evidence that the IE model of opinion formation, which distinguishes between the racial priming effects of implicit and explicit racial appeals, is not supported in a direct test of racial priming on policy opinions. One cannot evoke more conservative responses to opinion questions by covertly appealing to underlying antiblack predispositions. Nor do explicit or counterstereotypical appeals evoke more liberal policy opinions. In short, the evidence from our large randomized experiment with a full control group contrasts sharply with those from Mendelberg's earlier study.

Our further analysis of the necessary assumptions of the IE model, susceptibility to racial priming in opinion formation and the discernment of implicit from explicit appeals, suggests that our results more accurately reflect the fact that different segments of the population are vulnerable to racial priming (low-education respondents) than distinguish implicit from explicit appeals (high-education respondents). Still, the question remains as to why we, unlike Mendelberg, fail to detect differential priming effects in our aggregate analysis.

Two explanations seem most likely. First, Mendelberg's experimental work, while innovative, relies on a sample of about 200 respondents, most with relatively low levels of racial resentment. Looking more specifically at those high-resentment individuals that the IE model predicts (H2) will be most amenable to priming by implicit appeals, more than 50% of our sample has racial resentment scores of between .67 and 1, whereas only 16% of Mendelberg's (2001, 198; table 7.2) sample does. Thus, in estimating the differential effects of racial messages on these high-resentment individuals, Mendelberg's statistical analysis can rely on at most about 11 individuals for each of her three treatments. In contrast, in experiment A, we have more than 900 respondents meeting these conditions, and a minimum of 295 in each of the three treatments. Thus, Mendelberg's earlier results may simply be due to the vagaries of small samples.

Second, perhaps there are important differences between Mendelberg's sample of Michigan residents and our national sample. Mendelberg acknowledges that her sample is highly educated (46% had some post graduate education), but our earlier finding is that implicit and explicit appeals have almost no effect in priming racial predispositions for these types of individuals. Alternatively, perhaps these individuals had a stronger attachment to the norm of equality (which is correlated with education) than our respondents and therefore reacted more negatively to the explicit appeal. Unfortunately, because Mendelberg's analysis did not include a control group, it is impossible to differentiate less effective priming by explicit appeals relative to implicit ones from less effective priming by explicit appeals relative to nonracial appeals. Our results show that both explicit and implicit appeals depress priming among low-resentment and high-education respondents relative

FIGURE 5 Predicted Policy Opinions by Treatment, Antiblack Predispositions, and Education



to nonracial messages. In a smaller sample without a control group, Mendelberg's finding could emerge if there was simply unobserved heterogeneity in attachment to the norm of equality across treatment conditions, variation that is much less likely to be correlated with treatment conditions in a larger experiment.

Nonetheless, our results should not be held as evidence that race is unimportant in policy and political campaigns. Rather, our findings suggest that it is. Racial predispositions are a powerful predictor of opinions on a host of issues. Furthermore, certain segments of the population—relatively educated individuals—distinguish between types of racial appeals on their face. For these individuals, explicit appeals are deemed less acceptable than implicit or counterstereotypical message. These same individuals, though, are not those most amenable to priming in opinion formation about policy (MacKuen 1984; McGuire 1973; Zaller 1992). We find the strongest priming effect among resentful respondents (relative to a control GOTV appeal) for less-educated individuals in the area of opinions on government spending. All types of racial appeals similarly sway these individuals, however, and these individuals do not object nearly as much to explicit appeals on their face. In short, susceptibility to priming and differential evaluation of types of appeals occur in different samples of the population.

This finding may explain, better than the IE model, why contemporary campaigns are remarkable for their lack of explicit racial appeals. Among less-educated individuals, either implicit or explicit appeals appear somewhat effective in activating racial predispositions in opinion formation on non race-related policy. For candidates targeting this set of individuals, however, there is no clear advantage to offering an explicit message over an implicit one. Moreover, more-educated individuals do react more negatively to explicit appeals than implicit ones. These individuals appear relatively impervious to priming in any case, but candidates may still face real costs if they anger voters by violating perceived racial norms. Consequently, given that any effort to target racial messages to less-educated individuals might still reach some of these potential voters, there are large potential costs and no clear benefits to using explicitly racial language in campaign ads. Doing so risks public censure without offering clear priming benefits. Thus, while we do not find evidence to support the IE model of racial priming, we agree with Mendelberg that conservatives would be ill suited by airing racially explicit advertisements in their quest for office because it would likely anger more-educated individuals.

We therefore think there are two grounds for further research to understand the nature of racial appeals in campaign contests. First, we need to directly test how different forms of racial appeals affect candidate evaluations, particularly among racial conservatives.[20] In our study, we find that many respondents evaluate explicitly racial advertisements more negatively than implicitly racial ones, while far fewer individuals consider an implicit appeal problematic. In other words, there may be an electoral penalty with many Americans for simply using racial language. This is not, however, because racial images prime antiblack predispositions and explicit language makes these primes too apparent. Rather, Mendelberg may be correct that many Americans hold egalitarian beliefs, and talking explicitly about race may simply violate these norms.[21] This itself, however, is not evidence for the stronger claim that implicit priming of antiblack predispositions makes these racial predispositions more relevant in candidate evaluation and opinion formation.

Second, political scientists need to examine in greater detail how "calling" the race card would undo its alleged pernicious effect, particularly for low-education citizens who do not distinguish explicit and implicit appeals on their own. Here, Mendelberg's analysis of the effects of the Horton advertisement during the 1988 presidential contest is particularly interesting (2001: chapter 6). After Jesse Jackson forcefully spoke against the advertisement as racist, Mendelberg argues that its racial content was revealed (made explicit) and therefore lost much of its persuasive power. But Jackson's move did more than attack Bush's racial appeals—it also called on Democrats to support Dukakis. His statements also coincided with a newly renewed campaign effort by Dukakis himself. Did Jackson's appeal really change opinion? If so, how?[22] From our evidence, it seems clear that educated low-resentment individuals, many of whom likely voted for Dukakis, would have already recognized the racial content of the Horton message. Perhaps Jackson's speaking forcefully about race and discrimination in America reminded these Democrats they were Democrats. From the

[20] This is the focus of Valentino, Hutchings, and White's (2002) study of the effect of implicit appeals and counterstereotypical messages on a largely racially liberal sample.

[21] One could test for this generic aversion to talking about race by examining the reaction, among racial liberals and conservatives, to liberal appeals containing verbal references to blacks (e.g., "Blacks are deserving").

[22] Hutchings (2002) raises a similar argument and notes that while Mendelberg's analysis of NES data shows a decline in the effect of antiblack predispositions after Jackson's criticism of the Horton advertisement, it cannot exclude alternative explanations or identify the particular mechanism for this decline.

existing evidence, however, it is impossible to ascertain how Jackson's countermessage worked, that is whether it mitigated racial priming or simply swayed Democrats to support Dukakis. Significantly, Jackson also jump-started elite condemnation of Bush's campaign, a powerful force irrespective of the racism charge. This intervening role of "neutral" elites may be what leads candidates to avoid racially coded messages in the post-Horton era, but this is a distinctly different mechanism than advanced by the IE model.

Overall, this article helps to discern the mechanisms of racial priming in policy contests. We show that previous efforts to understand the priming effects of implicit and explicit racial appeals are not supported. Implicitly racial policy appeals do not prime existing racial predispositions any more effectively than explicitly racial ones. We demonstrate that implicit appeals are no more effective than explicit appeals because the necessary assumptions of Mendelberg's IE model are not supported in the general population. While highly educated respondents do identify and deem unacceptable explicit appeals relative to implicit ones, low-education respondents do not. High-education respondents, however, are not amenable to priming of racial predispositions in opinion formation, whereas low-education respondents are. Thus, the segment of the population vulnerable to racial priming does not reject explicit appeals relative to implicit ones, while those who do distinguish racial appeals outright are not susceptible to implicit racial cues. In short, we find evidence that some citizens make an intrinsic distinction between explicit and explicit racial communication, but none that shows that implicit appeals make racial predispositions more relevant in opinion formation relative to explicit ones.

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