

Race and Racism in US Campaigns

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Abstract and Keywords

Lately, much has been made about the state of disrepair of American democracy. Oddly enough, race and racism are almost always absent from these accounts. If campaigns, elections, and representation remain central to American democracy, and some researchers think they do, the impact of racial difference must be considered. This chapter undertakes to examine work in this vein, hoping to shed light on the continuing significance of race and racism. In the end, it shows that appeals to race and racism continues to play a key role in the American democratic experiment.

Keywords: race, racism, campaigns, American democracy, representation

Notwithstanding the Civil War, race has never been more central to American politics than it is now. To be sure, it's always been an important feature of the American political terrain. Even if we restricted the importance of race to party formation and realignment (e.g., Carmines and Stimson 1989; Foner 1988; Gerring 2001), it would suffice to secure its place among the foundational elements of American politics. Largely driven by reactions on the part of whites to the Obama presidency (e.g., Parker 2016; Parker and Barreto 2014) and the election of the forty-fifth president of the United States, race reminds us anew of its centrality to the American political scene. Indeed, race and racism influenced the outcome of the 2016 election cycle and are very likely to continue influencing outcomes in coming election cycles. Given this likelihood, we take this opportunity to examine the ways in which race has been, and continues to be, deployed by politicians.

The study by political scientists of the ways in which candidates manipulate racial appeals as a means of influencing voter decision-making and turnout in political campaigns is nothing new. For the most part, the literature suggests that racial cues in candidate advertising can benefit conservative white candidates. In particular, analysts have investigated how subtle racial cues in advertising, alongside white candidates' so-called implicit appeals, activate whites' negative stereotypes of blacks and Latinos. Recent findings, however, suggest earlier models of understanding racial cues and appeals are outdated. Similarly, another area of scholarly growth builds on the finding that Democratic voters

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demonstrate lower levels of racial resentment in 2016 than previously recorded. As the party system continues to realign along race (and concomitant attitudes), a growing body of research examines the importance of understanding racial sympathy, not just resentment. Finally, an expanding literature examines how white voters respond to minority candidates. Two trends have emerged here, both of which are relatively new: one focusing especially on the concept of de-racialization; a second showing that minority candidates may be able to capitalize on white racial guilt.

Given the current historical moment, one in which the country is seriously polarized by race, close attention to the ways in which race and racial attitudes impact the political process is overdue. Consider how the first post-Obama Democrat candidate, Hillary Clinton, failed to come close to mobilizing a core constituency of the party to the same level as Obama had: black voters. In fact, turnout among black voters in 2016 was down 8 percent from 2012. For whites, however, turnout in 2016 versus 2012, increased by 3 percent.¹ Naturally, mobilizing voters of color will be a concern for candidates in the 2020 election cycle. Consider the fact that 36 percent of all voters in the Democratic Party who voted for Obama in 2012 but stayed at home in 2016 were black.² Finally, race apparently played a crucial role in the 2016 insofar as racism pushed former Obama voters to switch to Trump (e.g., Reny, Collingwood, and Valenzuela 2019).

Our chapter unfolds in the following manner. We begin with an examination of racial cues, the general category in which race is deployed during campaign season. After exploring this more general framework, we shift gears to explore this terrain with a bit more specificity. Here, we examine the ways in which the race of the candidate influences the effectiveness of racial appeals. In the section that follows, we discuss cross-racial coalitions. Given the rapidly changing racial demographics of the country, the United States will be a “majority-minority” country no later than 2044 (Frey 2015), and candidates will continue to find it necessary to hunt for support among groups for whom descriptive representation isn’t possible. We conclude with an exegesis of the relationship between descriptive representation and political empowerment.

Racial Cues

Following the social upheaval during the Civil Rights Movement, many whites recognized the emergence of a new prevailing norm where racist and biased comments were no longer publicly acceptable (e.g., Sears 2008). Throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, Southern political campaigns often centered on candidate support for segregation (e.g., Black and Black 2003; Carter 1995; Schickler 2016). After the late 1960s, however, Southern politicians strategically broke from the blatantly segregationist politics of George Wallace’s presidential campaign in 1968. Relatively racially moderate white candidates, such as Edwin Edwards of Louisiana and Dale Bumpers of Arkansas, began winning elections by patching together biracial coalitions based on economic appeals. Moreover, survey data began to show that whites no longer subscribed to biological racism (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Sears 2008). Despite these developments,

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when white and black candidates pair off, McIlwain and Caliendo (2011) show that white candidates often seek to inject subtle racial cues into their ads in an attempt to benefit from white racial prejudice. Ultimately, they find that such tactics vary as a function of district/state demographic characteristics.

White candidates often seek to introduce race into their appeals because such strategies often work to their advantage. Scholars consistently find that the basket of racial attitudes, specifically symbolic racism, was the principal driving force behind realignment of the party system (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Parker and Barreto 2014; Sears, Hensler, Speer 1979; Sears and Kinder 1985; Tesler 2016). Race and racial attitudes are so central to American politics that even subtle racial cues in advertising help voters report more constrained attitudes on racialized issues (Converse 1964; Valentino, Traugott, and Hutchings 2002). That is, subjects exposed to implicit racial appeals tend to report more constrained attitudes on issues like welfare, affirmative action, and crime policy.

The electoral implication of this broad social change is that conservative white candidates seek to inject race into their campaigns when advantageous, but have to do so in a roundabout way. Tali Mendleberg's *The Race Card* (2001), best articulates this phenomenon known as the implicit-explicit model of racial appeals. In this framework, candidates invoke racial imagery in ads but avoid discussing race outright, serving to prime racial attitudes which voters use to evaluate subsequent political objects (i.e., the candidates themselves). This priming is thought to produce automatic psychological pairings tying the candidate's opponent with negative racial affective responses. The process is implicit because the connection falls outside of conscious cognitive processing given that race is not explicitly mentioned in the appeal (Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji 2003; Mendelberg 2001).³

For instance, the 1988 presidential election featured the infamous Willie Horton television advertisement. Horton, who was incarcerated for murder, committed an assault and rape of a white couple while released on a weekend furlough program. Horton's weekend release became a central issue in the 1988 presidential campaign when his mug shot in the advertisement clearly conflated race and crime, thereby injecting race into voters' considerations but not specifically mentioning it (implicit—visual but not verbal). Furthermore, Mendelberg (1997) suggests that the Horton ad primarily activated general racial considerations rather than an actual worry about crime. *The Race Card* fueled extensive research demonstrating that, in general, explicitly racist appeals opposing politically correct norms often backfired, whereas implicitly racist appeals can enhance white candidates' vote share. (As we show later, explicit appeals seem to work now.)

Similarly, Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002) investigate the psychological underpinnings of the implicit-explicit model, showing that racial priming in advertisements is mediated by the cognitive accessibility of racial attitudes in the minds of white voters. The trio find that racial priming effects vary depending on whether the priming is stereotypical (e.g., blacks and welfare) or counter-stereotypical (e.g., blacks and individualism).

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Further, using experimental methods, White (2007) demonstrates that implicit references to race activate racial out-group resentment (i.e., black) among whites. Banks and Bell (2013), focusing on negative affect, illustrate that inducing anger in a racialized campaign ad uniquely leads to racial policy opposition among white racial conservatives.

Explicit frames, it seems, fail to activate such resentments presumably because they alert whites to the fact that such frames violate social norms. Hurwitz and Peffley (2005) take implicit frames to another level, demonstrating that simply referencing the “inner city” activates racial considerations among whites by providing a cue that respondents should evaluate the outcome variable (spending on prisons) through racial attitudes. In another experiment, Nteta, Lisi, and Tarsi (2015) find that exposure to an op-ed denouncing a racialized welfare ad by Romney in 2012 shifted whites against Romney’s candidacy more so than for those who weren’t exposed to the op-ed.

Recent work, however, suggests that the distinction between the implicit and explicit model of racial cues may no longer exist. Drawing on the election and presidency of Obama, Valentino, Neuner, and Vandebroek (2017) suggest racial norms of equality may be changing. In four nationally representative experiments, white voters recognize racial cues in candidate advertising—either explicit or implicit conditions—and respond favorably toward the candidate. In the past, research suggests whites reject the candidate making explicit cues, but this no longer seems to be the case. Other unpublished work (as of this writing) in political science replicates these findings. To us, this finding is one of the most important in understanding how racial conflict and prejudice will shape campaign politics in the coming decade.

Emerging studies of the 2016 election routinely show that some form of racial/identity/status threat pushed some whites into either voting for Trump (Newman, Shah, Collingwood 2018; Schaffner, MacWilliams, and Nteta 2018) or switching to Trump from Obama (Hopkins 2018; Mutz, 2018; Reny, Collingwood, and Valenzuela 2019). These findings resonate with Parker and Barreto’s (2014) work on the Tea Party, showing that the Tea Party’s roots emanate not from some sort of economic concern but out of identity/status-based threats then exemplified by President Obama.

This is also consistent with Tesler’s (2016) work showing that, despite Obama’s relatively deracialized governance, his policies became racialized by virtue of his blackness. Consequently, the coupling of the nation’s first black president with large demographic (primarily Latino and Asian) shifts happening across the country has given rise to a broad white anxiety and reactionary politics (Parker and Barreto 2014). This is consistent with work by both Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008) and Gadarian and Albertson (2014) who show that concern about Latino immigration uniquely triggers anxiety in ways that may not occur when newspaper stories cover white immigrants. The success of Trump’s overt racial appeals, and the rising acceptance of explicit racial appeals as acceptable (Valentino, Neuner, and Vandebroek 2017), makes considerably more sense given these recent scholarly discoveries. We may attribute the success of overt racial appeals to the sense of threat perceived by many whites, especially those who believe white cultural dominance

is on the decline in light of changing racial dynamics of the country. Indeed, Major and colleagues (2016) show, whites primed with the fact that the United States will become a “majority-minority” country in 2042 reported that they were more likely to vote for Trump than whites who remained ignorant of that fact.

Minority Candidates and White Voters

The ways in which race, racial appeals, and prejudice influence voters in political campaigns varies significantly depending on the race of the candidate. Much of the work in political science is aimed at white candidates and white voters. However, an emerging area of research examines how race-based persuasion operates differently depending on the race of the candidate *and* the race of the voter. While McIlwain and Caliendo (2009, 2011) focus to some degree on how candidate race influences the content of racial appeals, existing research also addresses the concept of deracialization, and how downplaying race may be an effective strategy for minority candidates who wish to appeal to white voters. This concept is particularly notable given Barack Obama’s success.

Perry (1991) was the first to identify the concept of deracialization, based on the election of black politicians in many majority-white jurisdictions. These candidates—often purposely—play down their racial identity as a means of cultivating the support of white voters. Recognizing the potentially polarizing effects of race and racial attitudes, to win white support, McCormick and Jones (1993) argue, black candidates purposely avoid explicit reference to racial issues. Instead, they elevate racially transcendent issues (i.e., broad economic calls, healthcare, etc.).

Obviously, minority candidates may limit racial appeals because candidates wish to avoid penalization from white voters who often make up a majority of the electorate (but see Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990). One may well ask: What is the incidence rate of deracialized campaigns? Orey and Ricks (2007) find that of the black elected officials in California they interviewed, about 41 percent employed this strategy.

Further, Orey (2006) suggests that deracialization may not always be a black candidate’s best strategy. He demonstrates that Harvey Johnson’s deracialized 1993 campaign for mayor in Jackson, Mississippi, failed to promote sufficient enthusiasm among black voters or draw in enough whites. Subsequently in 1997, Johnson ran a more racialized—and victorious—campaign, further alienating white voters but doubling his support among black voters. Likewise, Wright Austin and Middleton (2004) show that Antonio Villaraigosa’s deracialized campaign was also limited in its ability to stimulate higher Latino turnout in the city of Los Angeles. This is not to say that deracialization never works. Consider long-time Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley’s *successful* campaigns. Toning down the racial rhetoric resulted in his defeat of the incumbent, Sam Yorty, in 1973, after running a relatively racialized campaign in 1969 (Sonenshein 1993). The most recent work on deracialization suggests, however, that it can work, with a caveat. Christopher Stout’s (2015) recent book suggests black candidates who make racial appeals to black voters, *without at-*

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tacking outgroup members, do better with respect to both black and Latino voters, yet pay no penalty with whites.

While the scholarly debates continue about deracialization and racial appeals, a promising area that complements rather than challenges the modern racism literature focuses on racial sympathy. Jennifer Chudy's 2017 dissertation examines how the concept of racial sympathy is distinct from modern racism, and may be activated in campaigns to generate support among whites for non-white candidates and racially progressive policies. Chudy, Piston, and Shipper (2019) show that white collective racial guilt is indeed something distinct from modern racism—and that whites high in collective guilt are disproportionately likely to support black politicians. Although the research in this area is not extensive, the findings so far suggest that minority candidates might be able to conduct bifurcated campaigns by: 1) appealing to their base racial groups using identity-based appeals; 2) deracializing to mainstream white audiences; 3) identifying whites likely to find calls to white racial guilt mobilizing.

Another relatively new research area, possibly overlapping with work on racial guilt, is the increased attention to racial group empathy (Sirin, Valentino, and Villalobos 2016; Sirin, Villalobos, and Valentino 2016). Instead of focusing on the intolerance typically associated with the study of white racial attitudes, this scholarship highlights the potential upsides to white racial attitudes. Like racial guilt, whites high in racial group empathy may be more supportive of minority candidates should such candidates manage to prime such empathy during campaigns.

Penalties or not, experimental research indicates that white voters' racial attitudes can be easily activated when evaluating black officials and candidates (Piston 2010; Reeves 1997; Terkildsen 1993) — going so far as to diminish black candidates' ability to make ambiguous political appeals (Piston et al. 2018). Deracialization is one way for black politicians and candidates to avoid a "race tax," if you will, among the white electorate. Another way in which race may be effectively neutralized is through the demonstrated competence of elected officials of color. Hajnal (2006) suggests that whites' familiarity with black incumbents assists in the alleviation of their anxiety when it comes to black mayors, so much so that they're willing to support the black incumbent in subsequent election cycles. The problem, however, is getting to the place at which the politician of color is elected in the first place.

Minority Voters and the Construction of Cross-Racial Coalitions

Recent scholarship is rapidly updating the record on how race within political campaigns influences white electoral participation and support for white candidates and candidates of color. Indeed, there is much scholarship that also explores the relationship between (candidate and voter) race, political mobilization, and candidate preference among non-whites (e.g., blacks, Latinos, Asian-Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans). While the lit-

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erature suggests that racism and fear is often infused into political campaigns in attempts to invigorate whites, priming race also influences non-white attitudes in at least two very different ways. First, scholarship indicates campaigns successfully prime race to mobilize and influence non-white voters through multiracial coalitions. Here, priming ethnic cues leads to significant changes in both the vote choice and electoral turnout of non-white groups (see e.g., Barreto 2010). Second, campaigns led by people of color lead to distinct outcomes in both the political behaviors and attitudes of their non-white peers. In this case, descriptive representation empowers voters of color as they identify with candidates and campaigns because of their shared racial group identity.

Although campaigns are often thought to have “minimal effects” on election outcomes, recent scholarship indicates that campaigns specifically prime constituents in ways that electorally matter (Hillygus and Jackman 2003; Holbrook 1996; Shaw 1999a, 1999b; Vavreck 2009). While significant research has examined how white candidates activate whites’ racial attitudes to influence candidate evaluation, scholarship also demonstrates the ways candidates mobilize across racial groups to maximize vote share. Prior to the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA), white candidates often mobilized non-white constituents covertly, primarily through monetary support aimed at turning out the non-white vote, but also through campaign strategies that included engaging non-white communities directly either in church or through community leaders (Collingwood 2019). As minority populations’ vote strength continued to grow in the decades following the VRA, overt appeals to the direct policy needs of non-white constituents became commonplace (Black and Black 2003; Glaser 1998).

Contemporarily, Democratic and Republican candidates racially primed voters in the 2017 political campaigns in Virginia and Georgia, suggesting that the party system is further cleaving along racial/ethnic lines. With racialized issues such as immigration and police gun violence, dominating the discourse in non-white communities, white (Anglo) candidates, such as Texan Beto O’Rourke, attempt to tap into the social identity of their non-white constituents by pushing culturally sensitive issues. In the white candidate, Latino voter paradigm, Alamillo and Collingwood (2017) demonstrate that social-identity tactics signaling respect and accommodation, such as stressing aptitude and highlighting culturally sensitive issues like immigration, generate higher levels of candidate support. In other words, while white voters may lack a cohesive cultural identity with non-white voting populations, candidate policy stances that convey care and concern to a minority community improve perceptions that a candidate is “on their side” and influences vote choice (Collingwood, Barreto, and Garcia-Rios 2014).

Furthermore, Barack Obama’s campaign for President also relied upon group-based appeals to rally Latinos. Barreto and Collingwood (2015) argue that emphasizing culturally relevant issues already salient within the Latino community allowed Obama’s 2012 campaign to increase voter turnout among Latinos, as well as the Democratic vote share. Specifically, Obama’s position on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy (DACA) was more powerful in determining Latino vote choice than traditional forms of political attachment, such as partisan identity. Barreto and Collingwood’s findings fall squarely

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in a growing field of research that not only argues non-Latino candidates can perform well among Latino voters by stressing aptitude (Manzano and Sanchez 2010) and pushing culturally sensitive policy issues (Collingwood, Barreto, and Garcia-Rios 2014), but that ethnic identification and attachment are an especially salient aspect of non-white political identity (Barreto 2010; Dawson 1995; Sanchez 2006).

In addition to emphasizing policy appeals that tap into group-based ethnic identity, scholarship also suggests that language preference can convey cultural sensitivity to non-white constituents. For example, Marisa Abrajano (2010) finds that Latinos who are recent immigrants, and who also typically express a strong connection to their ethnic identity, are more receptive to Spanish-language communications. Similar to Spanish language commercial advertising, Latinos may view Spanish-language communications as a sign of respect and recognition on the part of the candidate (Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone 1994). Ramirez (2007) finds that Spanish language radio played a key role in marshalling Latino opposition against the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437) in the months following its passage in 2006. Moreover, experimental research focused on radio ads during the 2006 midterm election cycle indicates that nonpartisan Spanish radio ads that encouraged Latinos to vote, and also informed them of the competing candidates, significantly boosted Latino turnout (Panagopoulos and Green, 2011). Notably, however, while examinations of Spanish language appeals are relatively recent, the use of community resources, such as culturally specific radio stations, to connect to different racial and ethnic groups is a well-documented strategy (Collingwood 2019). Finally, on this point, Valenzuela and Michelson (2016) show that the strength of an individual's ethnic group identity moderates their responses to ethnic campaign appeals. No doubt, future research will delve into this notable and important granularity to cross-ethnic and co-ethnic campaign persuasion.

Scholarship on candidates and campaigns has also explored other ways to express cultural sensitivity beyond well-crafted and language-specific campaign messages. Through field experiments, scholars reveal the importance of door-to-door personal contact in mobilizing Latino voters (Michelson 2003, 2005, 2006). Furthermore, contact by canvassers who are from the local area significantly increase Latino turnout (Sinclair et al. 2010), as well as when contact involves Spanish language campaign material (Abrajano and Panagopoulos 2011).

Additional research finds that the messenger is just as important as the message. For instance, Latinos who were contacted by Latino Republicans, rather the non-Latino Republicans, were significantly more likely to vote for Bush for president in 2000 (Barreto and Nuño, 2011; Nuño 2007). While “messenger politics” might serve as a useful way for Republicans to improve their prospects of appealing to Latinos, Latino voters are also significantly more susceptible to co-ethnic Get Out the Vote mobilization campaigns regardless of the candidates' partisan ties (Michelson 2003; Ramírez 2005).

Cross-racial mobilization appears to be the future—for the Democrats. Given the white base of the Republican Party, they'll be hard pressed to attract minority voters in enough

numbers to matter in any substantive way, and will likely rely on appealing to disaffected whites who are turned off from Democratic appeals to Latinos (Ostfeld 2019). In theory Democrats, especially ones of color, should profit handsomely from the increasingly race-based polarization that characterizes the current climate by attracting white political independent voters. Indeed, cross-racial mobilization on the part of progressive candidates may well represent the margin of victory in future elections.

Descriptive Representation and Political Empowerment

Priming race by providing interpersonal co-ethnic contact might offer an opportunity for candidates to express cultural sensitivity across racial boundaries. However, candidates of color have always offered a unique mode of empowerment for the communities they represent. Seminal work in political science examines the connection between candidates of color and their constituent communities, especially when candidates are working to become firsts in their respective offices (Tate 1993; Tesler 2016). Katherine Tate (1993) analyzed black turnout surrounding Jesse Jackson's bids for president in 1984 and 1988. Noting that black turnout in 1984 reversed a twenty-year trend of decline, Tate suggests that Jackson's bid for president boosted black turnout in the 1984 presidential primary through organizational group membership, especially in the black church. Jackson's campaign focus in both the black church and the black South persuaded many blacks to rally around him—especially during his first bid in 1984. Later work buttressed Tate's findings, showing that black turnout increases when a black candidate is the first serious candidate to run for that office (i.e., governor, president, mayor, etc.) (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1997; Simien 2015).

Harold Washington's bid for mayor of Chicago in 1983, a year earlier than Jackson's run, produced a similar historical moment. Washington relied on a coalition of black voters who made up over 30 percent of the city's electorate at the time. Notably, his campaign evoked a social movement of sorts to allow him to become the first black mayor of Chicago. Through similar means as Jackson, Washington's focus on the black South Side of Chicago, while intimately working with black churches, created a reform movement in which Washington was perceived as "a messiah for the black community" (Grimshaw 1992, 174). Washington, like Jackson, connected to the black community due to shared racial identity. In such cases, race becomes central to the campaigns of candidates of color, even to the point where campaigns become movements or even crusades for social justice and political reform. Thus, co-ethnic campaign persuasion (conceptualized as both vote choice and voter turnout) is often most effective when candidates move toward using quasi-social movement strategies.

Further, Andrea Benjamin's (2017) work, *Racial Coalition Building in Local Elections: Elite Cues and Cross-Ethnic Voting*, highlights another aspect of co-ethnic campaigning and coalition building: the importance of co-ethnic campaign endorsements. As coalition building is essential for political success, and "cross-racial linked fate" between blacks

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and Latinos is a central factor in understanding black and Latino policy symmetry (Dowe, Franklin, and Carter 2018), Benjamin's research offers important insight. Focusing on local mayoral elections, Benjamin's work suggests that the significance of elite racial cues, in the form of campaign endorsements, are significantly associated with the co-ethnic vote share candidates receive. In other words, unlike white candidates who must rely on policy congruency to win votes from communities of color, Benjamin finds that an endorsement from Latino leaders for black candidates is enough on its own to significantly increase support among Latino voters, and vice versa. Thus, political campaigns trying to appeal to non-white voters are likely to prime racial cues and work hard to gain the support of opinion leaders from each respective group.

It's clear that racial cues are central to campaigns appealing to communities of color. Still, scholars have gone to great lengths to determine the mechanisms guiding the power of racial cues, especially when candidates of color are appealing to voters of a similar racial background. For instance, research finds that blacks consistently express higher levels of satisfaction with their black legislators, suggesting that racial group identity uniquely determines the relationship between representatives of color and their racially similar constituents (Tate 2001). Other recent work finds that descriptive representation continues to raise levels of black voter participation and candidate support, as blacks use the status of their racial group to evaluate their individual position (Whitby 2007).⁴

To be sure, research suggests that descriptive representation can empower black communities by increasing levels of political knowledge and efficacy, which subsequently effects political participation (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Gleason and Stout 2014; Tate 2001). However, the power of descriptive representation extends beyond African Americans. To start, scholars link majority-minority districts, as well as the percentage of black and Latino legislators at the state level, with increases in minority participation (Barreto, Segura, and Woods 2004; Fraga 2015; Rocha et al. 2010). Specifically, Latino and Asian-American voters similar to blacks, are influenced by shared racial group identity, such that Latino candidates mobilize Latino voters at higher rates (Barreto 2007) and Asian-American candidates and Asian-American led campaigns have similar effects on Asian-American political participation (Lai et al 2001; Nakanishi 1986).

For instance, Pei-Te Lien (2001, 177), in *Making of Asian America*, finds Asian American voters supportive of campaigns for other minority candidates prioritizing social justice and equal rights, such as Jesse Jackson and Lee Brown, but also that "between-group factors" among different Asian-American communities offers a reason to examine a pan-ethnic identity despite the diverse origins of many different Asian communities. Moreover, as work highlights how income, partisanship, perceived discrimination, and involvement in Asian-American politics all contribute to the formation of an Asian-American pan-ethnic consciousness (Masuoka 2006), other scholars find that pan-ethnic Asian-American identity is far more malleable and less stable than research suggests of blacks (Junn and Masuoka 2008). For Asian Americans and Latinos, the role of group consciousness is com-

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plex as both acculturation and attachment to homeland culture must be considered when seeking to understand pan-ethnic identity and political engagement (Lien 1994).

A discussion about race and campaigns is incomplete without tackling the historic election of Barack Obama, the nation's first non-white president. In both the 2008 primary and general election, African Americans turned out and supported Obama in record numbers, numbers that continued to swell during his 2012 campaign. Even as some research suggests that growing inequality has increased the role of social class in determining black and Latino vote choice (Hochschild and Weaver 2015), black evaluations of Obama were significantly higher than their evaluations of other candidates (such as Hillary Clinton), suggesting that racial group pride and solidarity remain central to our understanding of politics today (Abrajano and Burnett 2012; Stout and Le 2017). Moreover, in experimental tests challenging blacks to prioritize self-interest over group solidarity, blacks are consistently constrained by racialized social pressure (White, Laird, and Allen 2014), offering even more credence to the power of group identity. Therefore, it is no surprise that work utilizing official turnout data for African Americans further validates the positive relationship between African American lawmakers and aggregate black voter turnout, and increases in black representation even produce increases in turnout as well (Whitby 2007).

As national data around Obama's election allows for the examination of descriptive representation unlike ever before—at a presidential level, Obama's campaign is often described as deracialized. In, *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Decline of Black Politics*, Fred Harris (2012) argues that Obama's victory depended on him distancing himself from a strictly black politics identity. Unlike black politicians vying for the admiration of a largely black district or city, Obama embraced a "race-neutral" campaign strategy to win over a coalition of black and white (and Latino) voters across the country. Yet, even as Obama ultimately deprioritized race in his campaign, scholars suggest that the power of racial group identity still largely connected voters of color to Obama because of his descriptive nature. Although racial group identity was not central to Obama's national campaign, Democratic Party leaders were able to offer messages that were especially "persuasive and consequential" to black communities because Obama sat atop the Democratic ticket (Philpot et al. 2009).

Using survey data to explore the relationship between racial group identity and black turnout in 2008, Philpot and her co-authors (2009) find that the activities of the Democratic Party were more of a factor in turning out the black vote than "an amorphous, media-driven buzz surrounding Obama's charismatic and historic candidacy" (1012). Philpot et al.'s work not only speaks to the complexity of understanding the power of racial group identity, but also reinforces the work of previously mentioned scholars that put personal campaign contact and specialized messages at the center of understanding outreach to communities of color. In sum, while political strategies around how (and how much) to prime race vary depending on the candidate and the racial make-up of the constituents, it

is clear that appeals to racial group identity are essential in garnering widespread support from communities of color.

Conclusion

As we opened this chapter, we suggested that race in American politics is at least as important now as it has ever been. This is not simple matter, for there are various and sundry ways in which race and racism continue to influence American politics. This should come as no great surprise to anyone, but the frequency with which scholars continue to write about American democracy but seem to elide race (Achen and Bartels 2016; Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012; Page and Gilens 2017) is alarming. A review of the literature, provided here, illustrates the fact that race (and racism) is key to understanding American democracy—if political engagement is at least partially definitive of democracy, American or otherwise. Race (and racism) is deployed both implicitly and explicitly as a means of motivating turnout and political preferences. Further, race governs the effectiveness of racial appeals and is a way forward for those who seek public office in the ever-changing American society. Last, but certainly not least, perceptions of representation are at least partially conditioned by race. No matter how one chooses to view it, from political campaigns to representation, race remains central to American politics.

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Notes:

(1.) https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/03/12/4-4-million-2012-obama-voters-stayed-home-in-2016-more-than-a-third-of-them-black/?utm_term=.6bcd23cb79db.

(2.) <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/10/opinion/sunday/obama-trump-voters-democrats.html>.

(3.) However, see Huber and Lapinski (2006) for several qualifications concerning the implicit-explicit model. These scholars do not find broad support for the model but rather show the effects are conditional on respondent education level.

(4.) In *Behind the Mule* (1994), Michael Dawson convincingly posits that black voters prioritize what is perceived as best for their racial group over their individual interests when evaluating politicians and politics in general.

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