"How Do I Look?" An Analysis of Television Advertisements for Black Candidates and Their Opponents, 1952-2000

Pilot Study (1992-2000 Senate races included)

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Following more than thirty years of research regarding various aspects of televised political campaign advertising, several conclusions are generally agreed upon. First, political advertising has measurable effects on its audience (Buzzi, 1968; Cavanaugh, 1995; Clark and Brock, 1994). Second, candidate image, rather than substantive political content, has become a candidate's major concern in advertising (Brendan, 1992; Sherrow, 1992; Postman, 1985). Third, there has been a steady increase in the use of negative advertising, and such ads have a significant effect on weakening the image of the target opponent (Kaid and Johnston 1991). Finally, it has been surmised that such negative advertising may have detrimental effects on the electorate (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). While much attention has been given to how political advertisements are produced in this regard, little attention has been given to the potential role a candidate or his or her opponent's race might play in political advertising spots. This study seeks to fill that gap by providing a comprehensive database and analysis of campaign television advertisements for black candidates who have run for federal office, as well as their opponents.

Theory

While framing and agenda-setting theories of political advertising dominate the extant literature, this paper utilizes Tony Schwartz's (1974) theory of resonance used more widely in research on commercial advertising. We believe that this theory provides greater explanatory value for the hypotheses we explore in this paper, as we focus on the tendency of candidates to focus on race in televised political advertising. We believe that while appeals to race are potentially pervasive in political advertising in which one of the candidates in the race is African American, such appeals are more often subtle rather than direct. That is, we believe that most advertising of this nature will be produced so as to resonate with an audience's lifetime experiences and beliefs regarding race, rather than making explicit appeals to vote for one candidate or another because of the negative aspects of a candidate's blackness or whiteness. To put it yet another way, most political advertising is based on rational appeals, while others, such as are those ads that deal with race, have a magical appeal. Where one advertisement is geared towards providing rational claims that can be evaluated by the audience, magical appeals have as their goal the identification of the audience with a particular product (or candidate in this instance) or with a particular mood or feeling surrounding them. As Schwartz (1974) puts it,

> The critical task is to design our package of stimuli so that it resonates with information already stored within an individual and thereby induces the desired learning or behavioral effect. Resonance takes place when the stimuli put into our communication evoke meaning in a listener or viewer. That which we put into the communication has no meaning in itself. The

> meaning of our communication is what a listener or viewer gets out of his experience with the communicator's stimuli. The listener's or viewer's brain is an indispensable component of the total communication system. His life experience, as well as his expectations of the stimuli he is receiving, interact with the communicator's output in determining the meaning of the communication. (24-25).

While we adopt this position as it applies to political advertising in which race is a factor, we diverge on one point. We agree with Kramer's (1988) criticism that political advertising does offer new information to viewers. Thus, it is the resonating experience, coupled with the information given about a particular candidate or opponent, that creates meaningful experience for the viewer. As such, both become a powerful way of communicating subtle, negative racial appeals.

Previous Research

In order to provide a context for our research, two areas of previous research are briefly considered. First, we consider the mainstream research on campaign advertising in the field of political communication. Second, we deal with research regarding the treatment and representation of African Americans in general, and African American politicians in particular, in mainstream media.

Political Communication

Current research on campaign advertisements tends to focus on the effects of so-called "negative" ads (see for instance, Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Kaid and Boydston 1987; and Lau, et al. 1999). Lau and Sigelman (2000) have found that more than fifty-five such studies have been conducted. Much of the discussion has been definitional. For instance, Jamieson, Waldman and Sherr (2000) argue that conflating "negative" and "attack" can cause problems of perception that do not accurately reflect the reality of modern campaigns. Specifically, they posit a new framework for classifying ads, so that there are distinct categories for "attack," "advocacy" and "contrast" advertisements. We acknowledge this new conceptualization, and include it in our analysis. Most important is the way advertisements fitting these classifications may have a unique effect on the viewer/potential voter in a contest involving at least one African American candidate.

The effect of media on political attitudes and behaviors can be traced back to Walter Lippmann's writings early in the twentieth century (1922). Since that time, the influence of the field of psychology has turned attention away from early hypotheses about direct media effects (the so-called "hypodermic model") to a more sophisticated understanding of the way news and other media-based stimuli can affect political attitudes. As a theoretical construct, framing is increasingly at the center of political communications research (Entman 1993). Seen as a "second level" of the broader agenda-setting model of media effects (McCombs and Estrada 1997), the concept has taken firm root in both political science and communication circles. William Jacoby (2000) writes that "framing effects occur when different presentations of an issue generate different reactions among those who are exposed to that issue" (751). Framing refers to the way individuals contextualize and process information, and the subsequent effects on (political) beliefs, attitudes and behavior.

Cognitive psychologists have conducted research on the effects of differing contextualizations on attitudes and decision-making (Kahneman and Tversky 1979, 1982, 1984; Tversky and Kahneman

1981). Results have indicated that individuals process information differently depending on how it is presented. This difference in information processing leads to observable and expected differences in actions taken or choices preferred, in accordance with the frames employed. Most of the political communications work on framing comes from the experimental research designs of Shanto Iyengar and colleagues who helped to define the agenda-setting function (Iyengar, Peters and Kinder 1982; Iyengar and Kinder 1987), and then moved to a more specific discussion of effects such as priming and framing (Iyengar 1991). The result is a new wave of important work that systematically analyzes the potential for political frames, whether placed by members of the media or by political elites, to impact mass attitudes (Caliendo 2000; Caliendo and Medvic 1999; Jasperson, et al. 1998; Jacoby 2000). We build off that work, focusing on the ways candidates use race in television advertising campaigns when running for federal office.

Race, Politics and Advertising

While many studies have been conducted to ascertain the ways in which political advertising spots affect various audiences, little research has focused on race as a significant variable in both the production of television advertising spots or the effects of such advertising. Accordingly, we appeal to research regarding the representation of African American candidates more generally in mainstream media outlets. Such research has established that popular media representations of African Americans have largely relied on stereotypical images (Marable 1997). Other research has demonstrated that the same has been the case in the treatment of African American political candidates. Print and television media in particular have been largely criticized for their stereotypical presentation of African American images. Beginning as early as Reconstruction, the images of black Americans were distorted and misrepresented. Widespread attention began to be drawn to this fact with the publishing of the findings of the 1968 report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders which purported that the media, by and large, were biased or racist in their coverage of African Americans (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968, 211). Given the news media's "obsession with race" (Gibbons 1993), it has been widely concluded by researchers that, "When the reality of blackness contradicts the stereotype of racism, TV producers, directors and corporate executives demand that that reality conform to their prejudices" (Marable 1997, 14).

Researchers have generally found that mediated presentations of blacks in television news, dramas and situation comedies, film, and various forms of print, have been extremely negative, typically signifying claims toward black mental inferiority (Coleman and Daniel 2000; Cose 1997; Gandy 1996; Greenberg and Brand 1998; McClean 1998), and black criminality (Drago 1992; Gibbons 1993; Gray 1996). These dominant types of presentations have extended beyond the social realm into the political, leading to African American Congressman William Clay's (1993) assertion that

> Politicians have long had a love/hate relationship with the media, though black politicians might say the scale is heavier with hate when they are the subject of the story. Historically, the rule more than the exception has been for the media to broadcast and publish images of black elected officials – and blacks in general – that are harmful, inaccurate, and negative (12).

In print media, presentations of black criminality have been seen to be projected via the spatial association of news stories about the political candidate. Gibbons (1993), in analyzing the media

during the 1998 presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson, pointed to several such instances. What is important to note about this, especially in the political arena, is that not only do these presentations occur in the media, but they have a tremendous impact in creating or, more likely, extending white stereotypes of blacks as generally inferior. Verifying this claim, in a national survey studying white and black perceptions of black politicians' electability, Williams (1990) found that most whites believed characteristics such as "intelligent," "a strong leader," "knowledgeable," "hard-working," "gets things done," "experienced," and "trustworthy" to be more applicable to a white candidate (25%-50%) than a black candidate (5%) (150-151).

While it has been established that African Americans often receive less-than-favorable treatment in the media, and that print news coverage of African American political candidates often works to produce an image of political inferiority, the presentation of blacks in televised political advertising has been left out of the realm of analysis. African American representation in federal elected offices is proportionately low, and is on the verge of dramatic decline due, in part, to redistricting without consideration of race, as well as racial block voting, which favors white candidates. With this existing and growing problem, the trend in negative political advertising takes on particular significance for the black community as a whole in the United States. Negative advertising has significant power to weaken the image of the target candidate and therefore reduce his or her chances of being elected. While this is a general problem in our electoral system, it creates increased difficulties when African American candidates are the targets of such advertising, and is likely to aggravate the existing crisis of representation of African Americans in elected federal offices. Such advertising not only threatens to reduce African Americans' chances at prevailing in elections, but also to discourage future African American candidates from pursuing a career in public service at the federal level.

Thus, an examination of the old adage of the "color line" in political advertising should not be ignored. Further, other scholars have recognized the undeniable power of ideological production given the medium of television (Hall 1981) and the fact that this power is especially influential in solidifying racial attitudes about African Americans in particular (Gray 1989).

The Project on Race in Political Advertising

This study is an initial segment of a larger project entitled*, The Project on Race in Political Advertising.* The purpose of this project is to research and document the nature and pervasiveness of televised political advertisements used to negatively impact minority candidates. In addition to inquiring into the severity of such practices, this project also aims to document the effects such negative advertising has had on minority candidates' election hopes. Still further, we inquire into the degree to which such effects on these candidates may dissuade other minority candidates from pursuing public service in federal government bodies in the future.

The research project has two initial components: a content analysis of all available televised political advertising spots of minority candidates for federal office and their opponents from 1952 – present, and an ethnographic component, which seeks to collect more detailed evidence regarding how the use of race in negative advertising has affected past minority candidates running for office (and its influence on future minority candidates attempting to pursue a career in public service at the federal level). The initial content analytic component will analyze all advertising spots of federal candidates in races involving a minority candidate, which includes approximately 600 candidates and 2,000 ads.

A composite list of persons for whom ads will be solicited will be derived by documenting every person who is a racial minority and who has been elected to federal office since 1952, and then tracing out each of their opponents in each year they ran for office, including both primary and general elections. We will then fill in the list with inclusion of gubernatorial contests. Advertising spots for each of these candidates will be compiled from amongst several political and media archives across the country. Those that cannot be obtained in this manner will be garnered through direct requests of the specific candidate or his or her media consultants. The subsequent coding and analysis of each of the advertising spots is aimed at producing general findings regarding the question: Does the form, content and style of political advertising used by both black and white candidates vary given the race of the opponent? Thus we address three main areas in our analysis of the aggregate of advertising spots: (1) the manner in which minority candidates present themselves in their own ads, (2) the manner in which white candidates present themselves and their minority opponent, and (3) the manner in which minority candidates present their opponents when the opponent is either white or a member of a racial minority group.

Given the previous research and the overall goals of this larger project, we test three hypothesis in this paper (which only examines African American candidates and their opponents):

H_1: A white candidate running against a black opponent is likely to attack his or her opponent's character, rather than making explicit or implicit appeals to race;
H_2: A white candidate in a race against a black opponent is more likely to invoke race as an "issue," either explicitly or implicitly, than the black candidate in the race; and
H_3: When making explicit appeals to race, a white candidate is less likely to picture his or her opponent in the ad.

Hypotheses one and three are justified given the theoretical frame of this paper which asserts that political advertising, in its dealing with race, will tend to be subtle, associative and seek identification, rather than provide explicit rational appeals built on the negativity of one's race. Hypothesis three is justified by making the reasonable assumption that the majority of research, which shows a constant and increased trend in the use of negative advertising, is based on the study of ads of candidates in general, most of whom are white.

Data and Method

The aim of the content analysis part of our larger project is to review and analyze all television political advertisements for African-American candidates for federal office (president, House of Representatives and Senate), as well as the ads for their opponents, from 1952-2000. Many of these advertisements are archived at the University of Oklahoma in the Political Communication Center's Julian P. Kanter Political Commercial Archive.[1] As mentioned above, the final project will contain some 2,000 advertisements. We have collected a non-representative sample of about ten percent of those spots for this paper, which is effectively a pilot study. We identified four black candidates (and their opponents) for the U.S. Senate between the years 1990 and 2000. All of the advertisements for

[1] Jamieson, Waldman and Sherr (2000) point out the limitations of this archive's collection. We are fully aware of these issues, and will be searching much more widely to complete our analysis as this project moves forward.

this paper were provided by the Kanter archive. The data include all available advertising spots (212) for these campaigns, both general and primary elections (see Table 1). Each spot was viewed and coded according to a number of descriptive variables.[2]

[Table 1 about here]

Of primary importance are the ad sponsor; the type of ad (advocacy, attack or contrast); whether either candidate appeared in the ad, and if so whether he or she was moving or speaking; whether race was explicitly or implicitly addressed; and whether either candidate's character was addressed. Each of these variables is briefly described below.[3]

We identified sponsors of political advertisements based on the disclosure tag that appears as text superimposed over the spot itself. Possible ad sponsors are: the candidate or candidate's committee, a political action committee (PAC), a national party, or a state or local party. In those instances where there was joint sponsorship between a party and a candidate's committee, we coded the candidate committee as the sponsor, since hard money would have had to be used to pay for the advertisement.

We follow Kaid and Johnston (1991), as well as Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) and others in using the spot as our unit of analysis.[4] Like Kaid and Johnston, we classified spots according to their focus, but we adopt Jamieson's (and others') insistence on the categories of *advocacy*, *attack* and *contrast*, as opposed to simply positive and negative, where contrast ads are those in which "the candidate makes claims both in favor of his or her own candidacy and in criticism of his or her opponent" (Jamieson, Waldman and Sherr 2000, 49).

An example of an advocacy ad is from Carol Mosley Braun's 1998 bid for re-election as U.S. Senator from Illinois. She ran a 30-second spot that featured a series of still photographs, presumably from the family album. Beginning with Braun as a baby, and tracing her growth in family pictures, the narration explains Braun's accomplishments, identifies her as a "tireless worker," and ultimately states that she is in office to help "working and middle-class families." A prototypical attack ad was used in North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms's 1990 race against Harvey Gantt. The ad begins with a picture of Gantt beside a list of tax increases he had been accused of favoring. Gantt then begins to speak, explaining that he did not favor these five tax increases, but rather, supported "revenues." Gantt's

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[2] While most of the variables are objective (Did the candidate appear in the ad? Was the candidate moving in the ad?), others are more subjective (Does the candidate's position match that of his or her party?), and will require examination by a second coder. While we did not replicate any coding or check for inter-coder reliability for this paper, we fully intend to do so in later stages of the project.

[3] We also recorded information such as the length of the advertisement, the election stage (primary, general or runoff), the party of each candidate, the number of substantive issues addressed in the spot and whether or not the candidates' positions matched those of their respective parties, and some physical characteristics of the African-American candidates. We do not test any hypotheses relating to these variables in this paper.

[4] Jamieson, Waldman and Sherr (2000) argue that their practice of analyzing either distinct arguments or "idea units" provides a sharper and fuller measure of the potential effects of an advertisement. We do not disagree, but we believe that taking individual advertisements as the unit of analysis is more appropriate for our goals. We are less interested in analyzing the intricacies of the advertisements and their potential effects as we are in providing an historical documentation of the path of African-American candidates and their opponents. We hope to provide a baseline from which scholars can either apply more highly developed political communication theories to these data, or generate new models or theories that more accurately reflect the realities of black candidates' campaigns.

picture is frozen (mouth open), and the narrator condescendingly proclaims, "They're called taxes, Harvey." The graphic then begins to replace the word "tax" with the word "revenue" on the list of increases, and the narrator states at the end (with corresponding text on the screen): "Harvey Gantt. . . extremely liberal [pause] with the facts" (underline in original). Finally, an example of a contrast ad can be found in the same race, where Helms ran an ad about the candidates' differing positions on abortion. After the narrator explains (Helms's view of) the contrasting positions, the narrator states (again, with corresponding text on the screen): "Harvey Gantt: extreme liberal values; Senator Jesse Helms: family values."

In addition to the ad classifications, we developed a series of variables designed to allow us to test the tendency for black candidates or their opponents to "play the race card." One aspect of this is to note whether or not the candidate appears in the advertisement, and whether or not he or she is moving or speaking. Correlations with these variables to those measuring the tendency to address racial issues and/or character issues will help to tease out racial implications from direct appeals to racial bias. For instance, even if a white candidate does not directly state that affirmative action programs hurt white Americans while helping black Americans, he or she may be able to get that same message across by having the ad address the general issue of equality and a slumping economy, while showing white folks on unemployment lines and black folks at work. This would be an example of what we consider to be an implicit racial message. In contrast, if a candidate directly states that he or she finds it to be unfair that black Americans are given preferences in hiring and education, that is an example of an explicit racial message.

Finally, there is always a great deal of discussion about the appropriateness of addressing a candidate's character in a campaign. We coded a spot as addressing character if there was mention of personal characteristics of either candidate. It is important to note that character and substantive issues are not mutually exclusive. Rather than trying to determine the primary focus of the advertisement, we instead created dummy variables for character of the candidate and character of the opponent, respectively, as well as a variable to indicate the number of substantive issues raised in the spot.

Findings and Discussion

While the low number of racially tinged spots makes it difficult to statistically test our hypotheses, we provide a descriptive analysis of the findings to this point in order to show trends with the four candidates and their opponents who are under consideration in this paper. We hope that constructive feedback in early stages will lead to a more efficient project, which will produce stronger and more comprehensive results.

Table 2 shows the types of advertisements that contained appeals to race. Almost all of the spots containing explicit mentions of race were either contrast or attack advertisements. Ads that have an implicit mention of race tend to be either advocacy or attack, while there is a relatively even distribution of candidate-sponsored ads that do not invoke race at all. It is not surprising that candidates do not employ race as a campaign tool in advocacy ads, as it would be awkward to argue that one is the better candidate because he or she is of a particular race. However, it is interesting to note that while majority of those with implicit racial themes are attack ads, the majority of ads with explicit racial themes are contrast. Perhaps candidates soften the perception of the ad by mixing positive attributes about themselves with the negative, racially charged assertions about their opponents. Similarly, the plurality of ads invoking character are also contrast, but here, advocacy ads

are also used, and contrast ads, while the least popular form to convey a character message, still account for more than one-fourth of the character spots.

[Table 2 about here]

An example of a character message in an advocacy ad is a spot Jesse Helms ran in 1990, as a black candidate, Harvey Gantt, was challenging him for his North Carolina seat in the U.S. Senate. The ad starts with a familiar close-up shot of a Chinese student standing in front of a tank during the standoff in Tiennamen Square. The narrator explains that the student is facing many tanks, not just the three or four that have been depicted in some pictures, and suggests that this is a sign of real courage. The narrator then goes on to equate Senator Helms with this student, suggesting that Helms has had the courage to fight the unpopular battles against "liberal critics," and has done what he feels is right for North Carolina.

Alan Wheat ran a contrast spot to get his character message across in his 1994 U.S. Senate race in Missouri. During the Democratic primary, he ran an ad accusing Marsha Murphy of mudslinging. At the end of the spot, Wheat, looking into the camera, proclaims, "While Marsha offers Missouri more politics as usual, I'll keep talking about our future." While this spot does have mention of issue positions, it does so for two reasons. The obvious reason is to convey Wheat's position on some key issues, but the other is to suggest that while he is issue driven and worried about Missouri's future, his opponent is a stereotypical "politician," who is more worried about winning a campaign than serving her constituents. Similarly, Senator Christopher Dodd ran an ad in 1998 that charged his Republican opponent, African American candidate Gary Franks, with running a smear campaign ("Now Gary Franks is running negative ads attacking Senator Dodd."). At the end of the spot, the narrator explains the difference between the two candidates: "Negative ads from Gary Franks . . . experience that works from Chris Dodd."

Finally, an example of an attack ad with character as its focus also comes from the 1990 U.S. Senate race in North Carolina. The ad begins with a picture of Gantt with his eyes raised in a sort of devilish manner and with a slight smirk on his face. The narrator says, "It seems that Harvey Gantt is running two campaigns – a public campaign and a secret campaign. And Gantt's friends with the liberal newspapers won't discuss his secret campaign." The ad continues to make mention of various acts Gantt undertook that show some support for the gay community, and ends with the same photo with which it began, along with the caption in red, "Harvey Gantt is <u>Dangerously</u> <u>Liberal.</u> Too liberal for North Carolina." This ad also invokes race, and serves as an example of the types of racial messages in which we are interested for this project.

There are several messages simultaneously being communicated in this spot. The most pressing issue is Gantt's support for gay rights, which is used to illicit fear amongst conservative voters. However, the link between character and race is made by the assertion that Gantt is doing things in secret, which generally connotes criminality or some other form of impropriety. And, the suggestion goes, not only is Gantt trying to cover up this secret, but he also has a cohort of powerful friends aiding and abetting his cover-up. The connotation is that he is up to something no good—that a good man would not keep secrets because he has nothing to hide. We subsequently see the significance of the words "dangerously" and "liberal" both being underlined at the end of the ad. Were Helms simply trying to make the case that Gantt is a liberal, he most probably would have both words with one underline. Yet the distinct underlining of each word separately calls attention to each word

separately; hence, Gantt is both dangerous and liberal, and to make things worse, he is "dangerously liberal." The connection to race is made simply by the picturing of Gantt, which reminds the viewer of his race, so that the viewer might make the link between his bad character and his race. This feeds into the frame of blacks as criminals, something on which the Helms campaign capitalizes, as it points out that Gantt is "too liberal for North Carolina."

In this and other spots from the Helms campaign, the word "liberal" often seems to be code for "black," so that the suggestion might very well be that Gantt is "too black for North Carolina." Evidence of this is a 10-second spot in which Jesse Jackson is seen handing Gantt an envelope. It is not even necessary that the Helms campaign say anything negative about Jesse Jackson—the assumption is that association with Jackson cannot possibly be a positive piece of information. The camera shot is voyeuristic, suggesting that as a viewer, we are peeking in on a covert activity. Again, this feeds into the frame of African Americans as criminals, and helps to tie Gantt to the most liberal and visible Democrats.

It is important to understand that the Helms-Gantt race may be providing us with some anomalous findings. A comparison of the statistical results with a qualitative look at the ads in all four races suggests that we would be hasty to make any sweeping conclusions based on this sample.

Our first hypothesis of the larger project is that a white candidate running against a black opponent is likely to attack his or her opponent's character, rather than making a direct appeal to race. There is some evidence of the validity of this assertion in Tables 3 and 4. Table 3 reveals that while white candidates in this sample generally do not invoke character in their ads, black candidates are just as likely to attack their opponents as to refrain from mentioning character at all.

Our second hypothesis is that a white candidate in a race against a black opponent is more likely to invoke race as an issue than the black candidate in the race. The data in Table 4, however, indicate that black and white candidates play the race card at roughly the same rates in this sample. While we must be reserved in considering such a small sample as any "test" of our expectations, it is important to note that these data do not point to support for the first two hypotheses.

[Tables 3 and 4 about here]

Our third hypothesis deals with the visual presentation of the advertisements, expecting that when making explicit appeals to race, white candidates will not picture the black opponent. The data in Table 5 reveal this to be true for this sample, but also show that the black candidates are not likely to picture their white opponents in racially charged ads, either. Further, none of the candidates tended to picture himself or herself in ads with racial content. Turning to Table 6, the weakness of the study is further revealed, as only a handful of racially tinged advertisements in this sample feature either candidate. It is therefore difficult to make any determinations of whether candidates tend to depict their opponents moving or speaking in these types of ads.

[Tables 5 and 6 about here]

The Helms-Gantt race provides an excellent example of what we think most white candidates running against black opponents would try to avoid. Helms is known for his unwavering stance in opposing minority (specifically African American) rights, so facing a black challenger in Harvey Gantt offers a unique look at the way race becomes a factor in elections. In 1990, Helms ran an ad that

begins with a close-up shot of a white man's hands opening a letter. The narrator's voice says: "You needed that job, and you were the best qualified. Too bad they had to give it to a minority because of a racial quota. Is that really fair? Harvey Gantt says it is." Gantt is then shown next to Ted Kennedy, moving but not speaking, as the announcer says and a caption below reads, "Gantt supports Kennedy's racial quota law, which makes the color of your skin more important than your qualifications…" The ad ends with a still photo of Gantt beside a still of Jesse Helms. The announcer's voice says, "You'll vote on this issue next Tuesday. *For* racial quotas: Harvey Gantt. *Against* racial quotas: Jesse Helms." In this ad, little is left to the imagination as Helms seeks to connect the unfairness of preferential treatment for blacks and minorities with Gantt, obviously an African American. The message is clear: if Gantt gets elected, his race will be an important factor in making sure white males get cheated out of jobs.

But this ad is an anomaly even within the set of spots we analyze here. Helms has a steady reputation for such views, and they had gotten him elected for many years. There is little risk taken. However, most white candidates, we assume, are not so lucky in this regard. Peter Fitzgerald is a white Republican candidate who beat Democrat and African American Carol Mosley Braun in the Illinois race for U.S. Senate in 1998. What happens in this ad is characteristic of many of the ads by white opponents running against black candidates. The ad shows Fitzgerald in differing scenes talking with Chicago citizens from across the state. Many of these people appear in the ad where Fitzgerald appears and is moving but is not talking. There is soft, but upbeat, background music as Fitzgerald talks to citizen after citizen. He is smiling and confident. At the same time, text on the screen displays quotes from newspapers across the state that endorse him and highlight his worthiness as a Senator. We considered this ad to have invoked an implicit appeal to race, because all the people shown in the ad, supposedly representative of the state's population, are white. There is not one African American or ethnic minority included. We argue that such an advertisement connotes an implicit appeal to race for several reasons. It is assumed that in choosing "people off the street" for an ad, a candidate would generally seek those who would be representative of the constituency. This would include, especially in a state like Illinois, people of different races, socioeconomic backgrounds, genders, etc. In fact, this is accomplished in many of the ads analyzed in this sample, and is characteristic of both black and white candidates of both major parties. It is also assumed that Fitzgerald and his advisors were aware of the significant African American population that exists in the state, and chose not to feature anyone representative of that group. The black community was strongly behind Mosley Braun, and was one of the driving forces behind her win in 1992.

The implicit message here is that Fitzgerald does not need, and will not cater to, the black population in the state. The ad suggests that all he needs is the whites of Illinois to vote for him, and that their numbers alone will get him elected. The message is implicit because it does not explicitly make such a claim, and does not provide any reason (such as the appearance of Mosley Braun) that such was the aim of the ad. Yet, blacks and whites alike are likely to notice, at some psychological level, the absence of a large population of the state in the ad (especially given the fact that most will see the commercial multiple times).

Conclusions

It is clear that while these data begin to move us toward a fuller understanding of how race comes into play in televised political advertisements, more work needs to be done. Simply analyzing four campaigns cannot serve as a representation of the hundreds of races for federal offices that have involved African American candidates since 1952. Besides the two presidential candidates (Jesse Jackson and Alan Keyes), there are have been many candidates for the U.S. House that are deserving of our attention.

As this project moves forward, we anticipate having the funding to do a more comprehensive search of advertising spots (allowing us to move beyond the limitations of the Kanter archives), and to bolster our content analysis with first-hand information of the decisions that were made in some of these campaigns. We will talk with candidates and campaign professionals who worked on these races, in an effort to get to the root of the way race and politics have been merged in television advertisements over the years. Have there been changes in the way race has been used in televised political advertisements over the past 50 years? Are racial messages intentional, or simply a by-product of a race-conscious culture? These and other important questions have hung in the air for many years, and this project seeks to move us toward a more complete understanding of at least some of these complex issues.

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