ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	THE QUEST FOR THE MULTIRACIAL MANDATE: AFRICAN AMERICAN CANDIDATES, WHITE VOTERS, AND CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES IN STATE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS
	Atiya Kai Stokes, Doctor of Philosophy, 2004
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Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the number of African American elected officials at all levels of government has increased significantly. These candidates have traditionally been successful in districts where African Americans constitute a majority of the population. However, in recent years, African American candidates have been successful in racial diverse and majority-white districts. Given these victories, some scholars suggest that the saliency of candidate race has decreased in American campaigns and elections.

While several scholars have researched the impact of race on elections, most attention to this subject has been devoted to congressional elections. As a result, we have little understanding of how race affects state legislative elections. Thus, this dissertation attempts to fill this gap by examining how candidate race, white voting, and campaign strategies impact the campaigns of African American state legislative candidates. White voters' dispositions toward race continue to place strategic imperatives on African American candidates (Reeves, 1997; Sigelman et al. 1995; Terkildsen 1993; Citron et al.

1990). Therefore, I argue that African American candidates who utilize deracialized electoral strategies are more likely to garner higher levels of white voter support and win state legislative elections. Using a multi-methodological approach including a national representative survey of candidates who competed in state legislative elections in 1996 and 1998, precinct level data to examine white crossover voting in twelve biracial elections in 2000, and qualitative interviews with state legislative candidates, I demonstrate that while African American and white state legislative candidates organize their campaigns in a similar manner, candidate race and campaign related factors, specifically issue and voter targeting strategies, influence the electoral success of African American state legislative candidates.

THE QUEST FOR THE MULTIRACIAL MANDATE: AFRICAN AMERICAN

CANDIDATES, WHITE VOTERS, AND CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES IN STATE

LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

by

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In his study of race and democracy in the United States, Gunnar Myrdal (1944) concluded that the issue of race posed a dilemma for American society because of the country's tragic legacy of prejudice and discrimination. Sixty years later, despite efforts to deal with the scars of the past, race continues to influence all aspects of American life, including electoral campaigns and elections. In several instances, white candidates running against African American candidates have famously interjected race into an election with their campaign messages, in hopes of arousing white racial fears and prejudice. Using negative advertising and scathing slogans, Bernard Epton attempted to frame the mayoral election in Chicago against Harold Washington around race and influence voters' perceptions of his African American opponent (Kleppner 1985). In one television ad, Epton warned voters to vote "Epton for Mayor….Before It's Too Late!" (Kleppner 1985: 210).

Racial appeals also made their way into the hotly contested 1990 North Carolina U.S. senatorial race between incumbent Jesse Helms and his African American opponent Harvey Gantt. According to Jamieson (1992), Helms ran race-cueing television spots, the most inciting being the "white hands" spot that

> "showed the plaid-shirted arms and white hands of a male, a simple gold wedding ring on the third finger of his left hand, opening, presumably reading, and then crumbling a rejection letter as the announcer says, 'You needed that job, and you were the best qualified. But they had to give it to a minority because of a racial quota. Is that really fair? Harvey Gantt says it is. Gantt supports Ted Kennedy's racial quota law that makes the color of your skin more important than your

qualifications. You'll vote on this issue next Tuesday. For racial quotas: Harvey

Gantt. Against racial quotas: Jesse Helms.'"[3]

And perhaps the best-known example of how candidates resort to subtle uses of

race to win elections is the 1988 presidential election between two white candidates: Vice

President George Bush and Democratic nominee and Massachusetts governor Michael

Dukakis. Willie Horton, an African American male and convicted felon in

Massachusetts's prison system, was given a weekend pass in June 1986. He later traveled

to Maryland where he brutally kidnapped and assaulted a white couple, stabbing the man

and raping the woman. Bush's campaign aides made Horton the centerpiece of the

campaign, discussing Horton in speeches, and featuring his mug shot on literature and

political advertisements (Jamieson 1992). Using Horton's image (which fit the stereotype

of African American criminality) while evoking issues of crime, Bush was able to play

the race card – he used Horton to make an implicit racial appeal, arousing racial

prejudices and sentiments of the white electorate (Mendelberg 2001; also see Reeves

1997).

Race also continues to influence social and economic aspects of American life,

and divide public opinion. American neighborhoods and cities are segregated by race,

due in large part to white flight from cities to suburbs and the termination of

desegregation plans as a means to achieving racial balance. As a result, urban public

schools have insufficient resources, creating great inequalities in education (Wilson 1987;

Massey and Denton 1993). Racial segregation has concentrated poverty in communities

of color, creating vast inequalities in wealth accumulation (Wilson 1987). African

American families on average have considerably lower levels of wealth than similar

white families (Oliver and Shapiro 1989; Conley 1999). Race not only influences one's quality of life, but also one's quality of care. A large body of medical literature documents wide disparities in health care, showing that racial minorities benefit the least from advances in medicine because they disproportionately lack access to vital treatments, and preventive screening measures (Gornick 2000).

African Americans and whites also have widely different views on racial issues, such as affirmative action, discrimination, and federal assistance to African Americans. According to a 2003 Gallup poll, 49 percent of whites surveyed oppose affirmative action programs for racial minorities as opposed to 21 percent of African American respondents.[1] Whites are also less likely to believe that African Americans face discrimination in society. Twenty-two percent of the white respondents agreed with this position as compared to 57 percent of African American respondents.[2] Even on seemingly non-racial issues, research has found that whites' political attitudes are influenced by perceptions of African Americans (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997). Public opinion surveys show that racial attitudes have changed drastically, as most "whites have steadily abandoned beliefs in the desirability of segregation and the notion that blacks are and should be second class citizens" (Smith and Sheatsley 1984: 50). Yet, despite this increase in racial tolerance, the strong relationship between whites' images of African Americans and judgments about political issues and public policy suggests that voting decisions are influenced by racial factors. Thus, there are limits to the public acceptance of African Americans into social and political life.

With issues of race often heightened in elections, it has been argued that voter discrimination toward African American candidates is certain (Terkildsen 1993; Perry

1996; Reeves 1997). Students of campaigns and elections point to the vast underrepresentation of African Americans among elected officials and the paucity of African American candidates who have been able to win outside of African American majority settings as evidence that white voters continue to vote along racial lines and are not yet willing to embrace African American candidates. African Americans are relative newcomers to American politics. Legal segregation and discrimination isolated African Americans from the political process until the late 1960s, when the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965) were passed by Congress and signed in law by President Lyndon Johnson. African American representation has increased dramatically since 1970, largely because of Civil Rights legislation but also because of racial redistricting which created majority African American districts.

There are those, however, who argue that the significance of race has declined and point to the small but growing trend of African Americans that have been elected from majority-white constituencies since the 1990s. Sharon S. Belton (1993), Ron Kirk (1995), and Willie L. Brown Jr. (1996) are just a few of the candidates who made history, becoming the first African American elected mayor in Minneapolis, Dallas, and San Francisco, respectively – cities with small African American constituencies. At the federal level, critics of majority-minority districts cite the victories of Julia Carson (IN), Carol Mosley-Brawn (IL), and the reelections of incumbents Cynthia McKinney (GA), Sanford Bishop (GA) and Corrine Brown (IN) as evidence that race no longer is an issue. Similarly, polls show an increasing willingness among white Americans to support African American candidates. The Gallop Organization found that from 1958 to 1969, those willing to support an African American presidential candidate increased from 38

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percent to 66 percent.[4] By 1999, the percentage of yes responses reached 95 percent. A similar 1992 poll found that 95 percent of whites indicated a willingness to vote for an African American mayoral candidate.[5]

Which hypothesis is correct? Does race matter? Despite the impressive gains that have been made over the last 40 years, issues of race continue to cast a dark shadow over American society and the American political system. Just as society is polarized by race, so too are political parties. Since the 1960s, African Americans have been strong supporters of the Democratic party and whites, particularly southerners, have shifted their allegiance to the Republican party. We also know that polls say little about citizens' true intent when they step into the privacy of the voting booth. In most social and political settings, overt racism is no longer acceptable (Schuman et al. 1997) and very few people are openly willing to admit that they will not vote for a candidate simply on the basis of race (Axelrod 1986; Reeves 1997). Past surveys of biracial elections show that white candidates have consistently done better on Election Day than predicted by polls.[6] Thus, we still live in a time where racial polarization precludes minorities from winning in majority-white electoral settings (Lublin 1997). Then how can we explain the rare but real victories of African Americans winning in districts with small African American populations? It is my contention that the growing success of African American candidates can be largely credited to candidates' willingness to adopt deracialization strategies that mitigate the effects of race and to voters who are willing to support such candidates. Seeking a multiracial mandate, African American candidates employ tactics designed to attract a sufficient degree of white voter support to win elections. In electoral politics,

strategy dictates success (Persons 1993; 227), and deracialization can be an effective strategy for integrating more African Americans into political institutions.

Integration is paramount if African Americans are to achieve both descriptive and substantive representation. Descriptive representation is the statistical correspondence of the demographic characteristics of representatives and those of their constituents (Pitkin 1967). African Americans remain underrepresented in elected offices. Two percent of all elected officials in the U.S. are African American, while African Americans make up over 12 percent of the population (Bositis 1998). Increasing limits placed on the creation of majority-minority districts has exacerbated this inequality in representation. The full incorporation of African Americans requires descriptive representation, as this type of representation satisfies psychological needs that, while intangible, are still important (e.g. Swain 1993: 211). The incorporation of African Americans and other minorities also provides the political system with greater legitimacy, showing that all are welcomed into the democratic process, and increases the likelihood that representatives will act "in the interest of the represented in a manner that is responsive to them" (Pitkin 1967; 209; also see Guinier 1994).

While some scholars argue that the race of the representative is not a prerequisite for substantive representation (Swain 1993), recent research shows that there is a clear connection between descriptive and substantive representation (Haynie 2001). While the connection between deracialized campaign strategies and the legislative behavior of African American representatives who use these strategies is outside of the scope of this study, it is possible that African American candidates who use these strategies may deracialize their legislative agendas when in office, and refrain from proposing race

conscious or race specific solutions (Barker and Jones 1994). Yet, we do know that the race of the legislator is a strong predictor of the propensity of a representative to introduce legislation of importance to African Americans (education, health, social welfare) than the racial composition of the legislative district (Haynie 2001; 30-31). Thus, it is possible that African American candidates who win office using deracialized strategies move beyond deracialization and use a middle ground approach that legislators to recognize the significance of racial difference and pursue an African American interest agenda while addressing issues of broader concern (e.g. Canon 1999).

Focusing exclusively on candidates' campaigns and elections, I argue that election outcomes and voting behavior in races involving African American candidates can partially be explained by campaign factors, mainly deracialization strategies. However, the use of these strategies is constrained by several factors, including the racial context of the district, whether race is a salient voting cue for most voters in the district, and whether voters have negative or positive racial predisposition toward African Americans. Overall, African American candidates who use deracialized issue strategies should run effective campaigns, increase their percentage of the general election vote and garnering more crossover votes.

African Americans in State Legislative Politics

Since the 1960s, states have changed dramatically in function and performance (Weber and Brace 1999). In response to national government mandates, state government have reformed their governance capacities and have take on additional responsibilities, becoming the nation's key service providers (Cigler 1993). As a result, state governments have transformed in to modern institutions with important policy making and economic

development responsibilities. They have also come to occupy an important role in American life (Van Horn 1996; Weber and Brace 1999). As power shifts from Washington to the states, state elections have become highly visible and competitive. State legislators now play a central role in public policy, making defining decisions about critical issues and providing new impetus for changes in public policy at the federal level. State legislative elections attract more ambitious and able candidates who use state legislatures as stepping-stone to higher offices (Salmore and Salmore 1996; Maestas et al. 1999). As a result of devolution, much is at stake during a state legislative election.

Existing research on race in state legislative politics has focused on the legislative experience of African American state legislators (Barrett 1995; Hedge et al. 1996; Button and Hedge 1996; Bratton and Haynie 1999; Haynie 2001). African American state legislators are surprising similar to white legislators (Button and Hedge 1993). However, there are striking differences in their legislative behavior, as African American state legislators are more likely to introduce and advocate issues pertinent to race and the material interests of African Americans (Whitby 1997; Canon 1999; Tate 1994). African American and white legislators also have very different perceptions of African American legislative life and racial equality (Button and Hedge 1993). African American legislators are also less likely to serve as committee chairs (Orey 2000), are underrepresented on prestige committees such as Appropriations, Budget, and Rules, and are less likely to pass legislation than are white legislators (Bratton and Haynie 1999; Haynie 2001).

Much of the literature examining the impact of race in elections has focused on congressional candidates. As a result, we have little understanding of how race affects state legislative elections. In an effort to fill the void in state legislative research, this

dissertation examines the campaigns of African American and white state legislative candidates to assess how candidate race, white voting, and campaign strategies influence the campaigns of African American state legislative candidates, and to assess under what conditions African American candidates, particularly those running in biracial elections in majority-white districts, can win elections. While most studies utilize voter-centered approaches to explain election outcomes, recent scholarship has stressed the salience of candidate and campaign centered theories (e.g. McDermott 1998; Holbrook 1996; McCormick and Jones 1993; Terkildsen 1993). Focusing on the personal characteristics of candidates and their campaign related activities, this alternative approach assumes that election outcomes are largely dependent on the performance of candidate and the candidate's ability to attract voters to the campaign.

Overview of the Study

In this dissertation, I present a systematic assessment of state legislative election campaigns to explore the extent to which candidate race and deracialized campaign strategies influence these elections. Do African American candidates' campaigns differ from white candidates' campaigns? Do African American candidates' campaign strategies influence white voting? These are the primary questions addressed.

This study draws information from a wide variety of sources including survey data collected as part of the Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project (Herrnson 2000a). The full data is nationwide sample of candidates who ran for federal, state, and local offices in 1996 and 1998 in 44 states.[7] The sample used this dissertation includes responses from 365 major-party state legislative general election candidates, of which 56 are African American and 309 are white.[8] The state legislative candidates in the sample

ran in twelve states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee. These twelve states contain districts where both African American and white respondents ran for office. The study also relies on precinct-level voter registration and turnout statistics collected from state and county boards of elections. The data provide information about twelve state legislative biracial elections in majority-white districts held between 1996 and 2002. The elections were held in four states: South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia.

To supplement the data, I discuss in detail the campaigns of several African American candidates to illustrate the generalizations drawn from the data. The campaigns include elections where African American candidates ran in majority African American districts, such as the 1998 campaign of incumbent Barbara Cooper in Tennessee's 86th district, who ran against George T. Edwards III. They also include contests between African American and white candidates who ran in majority-white districts, such as the 2002 race between Democratic candidate Johnnie Waller and Republican incumbent Harry Stille in South Carolina's 11th district and the 2000 open-seat contest between Democratic candidate Michael Murphy and Republican Jeff Roth in Michigan's 69th district. I also conducted interviews with twenty-five African American state legislative candidates and gathered information from newspaper clippings and constituency mailings.

Chapter Two discusses the pervasive impact of race on American politics, giving particular attention to the impact of negative racial stereotypes and attitudes on public policy and vote choice. Upon reviewing the literature on voting behavior and salience of

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voting cues in elections, I discuss the extent to which campaigns and campaign strategies influence voting behavior in elections.

Chapters Three and Four examine the anatomy of African American and white candidates' campaigns. In Chapter Three, I discuss the similarities and differences in African American and white candidates' campaign organizations, receipts, and contributions. I test the hypotheses that African American candidates raise less money from political parties than white candidates, and that African American candidates raise less money from PACs and interests groups (where legal) than white candidates. The chapter includes regression models that examine the impact of race in campaign fundraising. The results show that candidate race has a small but significant degree of influence on campaign contributions in state legislative elections. Chapter Four examines the issues and groups African American and white candidates target during their campaigns. In this chapter, I test the hypotheses that African American candidates are more likely to focus on social and social welfare issues and target minorities and women than are white candidates, and that African American candidates who use deracialized strategies are more likely to win the general election than those who do not. The chapter shows that African American candidates' campaigns are substantively different from those of white candidates. African American state legislative candidates are more likely to focus on social welfare issues and target racial and social groups. I also find that when African American candidates focus on social welfare issues and economic issues as part of a deracialized issue strategy they garner a greater percentage of the general election vote.

Chapters Five and Six focus specifically on the campaigns of African American state legislative candidates running in biracial elections in majority-white districts. Chapter Five explores the relationship between campaign issue strategies and voter turnout. Research suggests that by downplaying race, African American candidates running in predominately white districts are better able to attract white voters to their campaigns. At the same time, it is also important for these candidates to stress issues that enable them to maintain the enthusiastic support of African American voters in the district, who are then mobilized to vote. In this chapter, I test the hypothesis that African American candidates who use deracialized strategies are more likely to mobilize African American and white voters than those who do not. Multivariate analysis shows that African American turnout and white turnout increases when African American candidates focus on social welfare issues and economic issues. By focusing on these issues, white and African American voters are mobilized to participate and are significantly more likely to go to the polls. Chapter Six examines the campaigns of African American candidates to assess under what conditions white voters are willing to support African American candidates. Here I test the hypothesis that African American candidates who use deracialized strategies are more likely to garner higher levels of white voters' support than those who do not. The results demonstrate that white crossover voting in state legislative elections is influenced by the issue strategies candidates adopt.

In the final chapter, I summarize the findings from the previous six chapters and offer general conclusions about the role of candidate race and campaign strategies in state legislative elections. I also discuss questions that while beyond the scope of this research, are worthy of examination in future studies.

Chapter Two: Race and American Politics

Prior to 1965, few African Americans held elective office. The practice of slavery in the United States created deeply rooted and widespread notions about the inferiority of black slaves (Kolchon 1933). After the Civil War and Reconstruction period, the "Jim Crow" system of discrimination in the South and segregation and socially accepted discriminatory behavior in the North kept African Americans in an officially designated lower-caste status (Sears et al. 2000). African Americans were denied equal access to facilities and opportunities, and were denied civil liberties and rights guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment, including the right to vote. Thus, African American participation was extremely low, particularly in southern states, where devices like the grandfather clause, literacy tests, white primaries, and poll taxes were enforced to exclude African Americans from the electoral process (Perry and Parent 1995). In accordance with the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), "separate but equal" was the law of the land. Under this principle, America was split into two distinct and separate societies separated by race.

This pattern of segregation slowly began to erode after World War II, in 1954 with Supreme Court ruling in the case *Brown v. Board of Education* (Sears et al. 2000). Brown overturned the decision in the Plessy case, and declared the principle of "separate but equal" unconstitutional. This decision laid the legal framework for and begun the official process of dismantling the segregated society in the United States (Lowery and Marszalek 1992). Congress also passed legislation in the late 1950s, to address the differential treatment and political exclusion of African Americans. In 1957, Congress passed a civil rights act that empowered the federal government to use the Attorney

General to stop the "obstruction or deprivation" of voting rights, particularly in the South (Lowery and Marszalek 1992). The act also established the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice. In 1960, Congress passed another civil rights bill, which enabled federal judges to appoint referees to hear the claims of the disenfranchised and created a Civil Rights Commission. However, because southern congressmen opposed civil rights legislation were able to significantly weaken the power of these bills, they were ineffective and had had little social effect.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed one of the two most influential civil rights bills, the Civil Rights Act (CRA), into law on July 2. Using the Interstate Commerce clause along with the Fourteenth Amendment, the CRA created uniform standards for establishing the right to vote. In addition to increasing African American's access to vote, the law also provided African Americans legal access to public facilities, authorized the federal government to sue to desegregate public facilities and schools, cut off federal funding to districts not in compliance with *Brown*, and required the Census Bureau to gather voting statistics by race (Lowery and Marszalek 1992). The second law, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), ended the use of Jim Crow laws by southerners to disenfranchise African Americans. The legislation empowered the federal government to oversee voter registration and elections in counties that had used discriminatory tests or where registration or turnout had been less than 50 percent in the 1964 presidential election (Lowery and Marszalek 1992).

The central parts of the VRA, Section 2 and Section 5, not only prohibit tactics that weaken the voting strength of minorities, but also prohibit states or municipalities from enacting practices that deny minorities a fair chance to elect candidates of their

choice and require "covered" jurisdictions to obtain "preclearance" from the U.S.

Attorney General or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia for any changes

with reference to voting (Canon 1999; 67). These "covered jurisdictions" include

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and

Virginia and parts of California, Florida, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, North

Carolina, and South Dakota.

      With the passage of civil rights legislation, in addition to Supreme Court

decisions and the threat of federal enforcement, most all barriers to participation have

been dismantled (Kinder and Sanders 1996). As a result, African American electoral

participation has increased dramatically. Greater African American participation and the

creation of majority African American districts through reapportionment and court orders

has also increased number of African American elected officials, particularly at the state

and local level (see Figure 2.1). In 1970 there were 1,469 African American elected

officials in the U.S. During this same period, there were 169 African American elected

officials at the state level. As of January 31, 2000, the number of African American

elected officials reached 9,040. Dramatic increases have been made in state legislatures,

where the number of African American elected officials increased has increased to 585

(Bositis 2000).

Figure 2.1 - African American State Representatives and Senators: 1974-2000
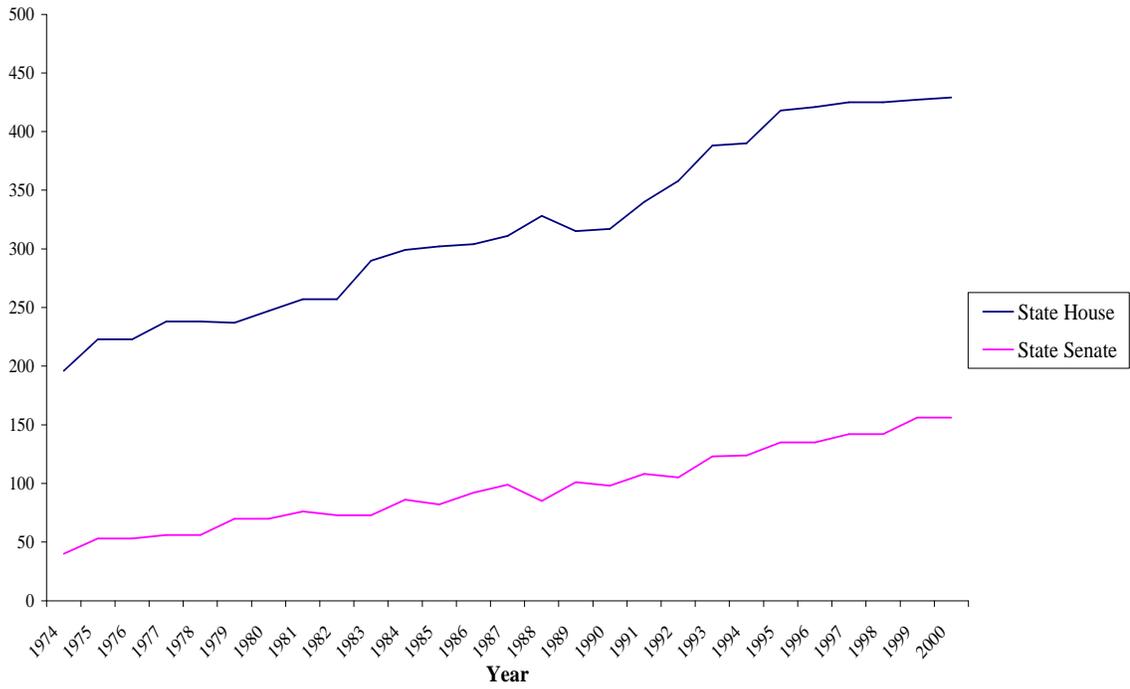
Source: Adapted from David A. Bositis, Black Elected Officials, A Statistical Summary. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Washington DC.

Although the number of African American legislators has increased enormously since 1974, many scholars conclude that African Americans still face serious obstacles when running for office, more so than white candidates, because race continues to play a role in the evaluation of candidates and in American society as a whole. Studies of congressional elections have shown that because Americans often cast their ballots along racial lines, African American candidates garner less support from white voters (e.g. Lublin 1997; Bullock 2000; Bullock and Dunn 1999; Gay 1999). Racially polarized voting makes it difficult for African American candidates to win elections. Subsequently, majority-minority districts, districts where racial and ethnic minorities constitute a majority of the population, were created to African American representation, virtually ensuring the election of an African American candidate (Canon 1999; Butler and Cain 1992).

How and why might race influence elections at the state legislative level? To reach a fuller understanding of why race remains a salient factor in campaigns and elections, this chapter will examine the evolution of racial prejudice and stereotypes in American society, as well as the nature of political campaigns. In modern day elections, personal qualities, characteristics, and issues compete with party labels as voting cues (Salmore and Salmore 1996). Thus, it is likely that stereotypes and racial attitudes influence vote choice.

Racial Prejudice, Stereotypes, and the Hierarchy of Race

What is race? How do individuals come to be defined as African American or white in American society? We now know race to be a social construction that attributes characteristics to individuals based on their color or other physical attribute (Ferrante

2000). However, race was first considered a biological concept used to separate and create a hierarchy of groups. The word "race" first appeared in European languages during the sixteenth century to describe descendents of a common ancestry, emphasizing kinship rather than physical characteristics (Fortney 1977; Feagin and Feagin 1999). Francois Bernier was one of the first scholars to group human beings into distinct categories, creating a hierarchy where white Europeans ranked highest and because Africans ranked lowest, in part because of their skin color and Africans were often known to Europeans only as slaves (Feagin and Feagin 1999). The work of Carol Von Linneaus (1735) also encouraged the classification of humans into groups defined by color. However, it was not until the eighteenth century when Emmanuel Kant used the phrase "races of mankind" that the first theory of race was developed, and the concept of race was used to describe biologically distinct categories (Feagin and Feagin 1999).

Throughout the eighteenth to the twentieth century, scientists relied on the classification of race as a biological truth separating groups. During this time, the concept of race was used to link real or alleged physical characteristics to personality or behavior and scientists throughout the world attempted to prove the innate inferiority of black peoples. Fick (1929) argued that blacks were so inferiority to Europeans, few would benefit from even rudimentary education. Lower scores by undereducated African Americans on standardized tests, adopted by American schools as a measure of intelligence, were also used to establish that African Americans were less intelligent than whites and therefore needed be educated in separate schools (Berry and Blassingame 1982; 351). Jim Crow, established in response to abolitionists' challenges to slavery, was founded upon this biological theory. Thus, much of white support for segregation (social

and legal) was based on belief that African Americans were innately inferior
(McConahay 1986; also see Fredrickson 1971; Myrdal 1944; Takaki 1979; Sears et al.
2000). Hitler's attempt to exterminate Jews in Nazi Germany forced many scientists to
move away from biological theories of African American inferiority (Fortney 1972).
However, the Supreme Court decision in *Brown* outlawing desegregation in public
schools triggered a resurgence in this type of research (Mead et al. 1968).

This formalized ideology of white racial superiority – often referred to as "old
fashioned prejudice" – encouraged whites to hold negative stereotypes of African
Americans. Whereas prejudice is "an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible
generalization….[that] may be directed at a group as a whole, or toward an individual
because he is a member of that group" (Allport 1954; 9), stereotypes are "cognitive
structures that contain the perceivers' knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about human
groups" (Hamilton and Trolier 1986; 133). Often negative stereotypes are motivated by
ethnocentric bias to enhance one's own group and denigrate out-groups (Peffley and
Hurwitz 1993; Sigelman and Tuch 1997). While a majority of white Americans once
opposed basic principles of racial equality and believed African Americans to be innately
inferior, most whites now reject these beliefs (Colleau et al. 1990; Carmines and
Champagne 1990; Schuman et al. 1985; Jaynes and Williams 1989; Schuman et al.
1988). According to Virtanen and Huddy (1998), only 10 percent of all respondents in the
1990 General Social Survey expressed extreme prejudice against African Americans.
However, only 22 percent of respondents did not endorse any of the items included in the
scale measuring old-fashioned prejudice, which suggests that some level of old-fashioned
prejudice still exists. In addition, there are those like Glayde Whitney, a tenured

professor at Florida State University, who continue to work to prove the biological

inferiority of African Americans.[1]

White Americans' negative stereotypes of African Americans have also softened

to some degree as part of a broader liberalization of racial attitudes (Jaynes and Williams

1989; Schuman et al. 1988). Research on whites' attitudes toward African Americans

conducted before and during the Civil Rights Movement revealed that most white

Americans held disparaging stereotypes of African Americans (Katz and Braly 1933;

Gilbert 1951; Karlins et al. 1969). Polls show that white's stereotypes of African

Americans have changed greatly since 1932 and that there has been a consistent decrease

in the frequency with which negative traits (i.e. lazy, ignorant, superstitious, stupid) are

used to describe African Americans (Dovidio and Gaertner 1986; 6). Yet, negative racial

stereotypes have not fully disappeared. Recent work shows that white Americans

continue to ascribe negative attitudes, opinions, and characterizations to African

Americans (Reeves 1997). African Americans are more likely than other racial and ethnic

groups to be perceived as lazy, poor, violent, unintelligent, and welfare dependent (Smith

1990). One study found that 31 percent of white respondents in a national survey

believed African Americans to be lazy, and 50 percent believed them to be aggressive

(see Table 2.1). While whites with positive images of African Americans constitute a

plurality, as many as one in every two white Americans, particularly those who are blue

collar workers, have low incomes, and work in mixed race occupations, embrace negative

characteristics of African Americans (Peffley et al. 1997; Virtanen and Huddy 1998).

TABLE 2.1
Percentages of Whites Giving Negative, Neutral, and Positive Responses to Racial Stereotype Items

Stereotype Item	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response
African American Work Ethic			
Lazy	31.1%	30.6%	38.3%
Determined to succeed	22.0	29.0	49.0
Hardworking	16.8	26.1	57.1
Dependable	13.0	31.6	55.4
Lack of discipline	59.7	0.0	40.3
African American Hostility			
Aggressive or Violent	50.0	27.4	22.6

Source: Adapted from Mark Peffley, Jon Hurwitz, and Paul M. Sniderman," Racial Stereotypes and Whites' Political Views of Blacks in the Context of Welfare and Crime." *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (1997); 35, Table 1.

Note: The 1991 Race and Politics Survey is a nationwide random-digit telephone survey of English-speaking adults living in the United States conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of California, Berkeley. Percentages are based on N's that range from 1,767 to 1,780.

Many scholars suggest that racial prejudice has taken a new form, which can explain whites' contemporary opposition to racial policies and African American candidates. Modern racism, symbolic racism theories, and racial resentment theories hold that Jim Crow racism is no longer useful predictor of whites' political preference (Sears and Kinder 1971). They also share other assumptions: 1) the socialization of negative affect and stereotypes about African Americans continues; 2) African Americans are perceived to violate traditional American values such as work ethic, self-reliance; and 3) whites believe that discrimination no longer is a barrier to African American advancement (Sears et al. 2000; 17). Whereas these theories best explains white conservative attitudes, the theory of aversive racism "reflected a type of racial bias of people who endorse the ideology of the political left" (Dovidio and Gaertner 1986; 22). Aversive racism theory holds that whites possess strong egalitarian values yet at same time have unacknowledged negative feelings concerning African Americans. Conflict between egalitarian values and anti-African American feelings lead them to discriminate against African Americans but in ways that do not threaten or challenge whites' nonprejudiced self-image (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986; Kovel 1970).

Why have negative racial stereotypes of African Americans endured? Socio-psychological analyses of racial prejudice show that socialization leaves individuals with strong, longstanding attitudinal predispositions (Sears 1993). Thus, the demise of legal segregation and discrimination cannot completely destroy the conventional socialization of white Americans. Mainstream media reinforces negative stereotypes about minorities (Entman 1990; 1992; Entman and Rojecki 2000). Racial images on television and other media reflect and influence whites' ways of thinking on issue of race (Bobo 1997).

Research shows that African Americans are often pigeonholed into narrow array of roles and traits – entertainer, sports figure, or object of discrimination (Entman and Rojecki 2000). Network news coverage more heavily features African Americans in stereotypical roles associated with crime and sports, and less frequently depicts African Americans in political or governmental roles (Entman and Rojecki 2000; also see Jamieson 1992; Entman 1992). The depiction of African Americans in contemporary magazine advertising also contributes to the perpetuation and reinforcement of racial stereotypes. Colfax and Sternberg (1972) found that a large proportion of the African Americans who appears in print advertisement were token African Americans, surrounded by whites or were children interacting with a white authority figure – often a teacher or counselor (also see Humphrey and Schuman 1984). They also found that African American males were often depicted in routine blue- collar occupational roles. Upon reviewing leading mass circulation magazines, Colfax and Sternberg concluded that "despite the obvious increase in the number of ads which depicted blacks over this period, blacks were being cast in roles which distorted black realities and confirmed racial stereotypes, rather than those which presented a full and more accurate picture of black America" (17). Other studies have found that African Americans portrayed on television were punished more harshly for negative behavior than were whites (McNally 1983).

It is also likely that limited contact with African Americans also leaves whites susceptible to stereotypes (Allport 1954; Kinder and Mendelberg 1995). According to the social contact hypothesis, racial proximity increases the opportunity to become acquainted with members outside of one's group, and reduces the likelihood that whites will rely on conventional stereotypes. Recent research suggests that when exposed to

racial stereotypes in the news, white respondents living in homogeneous neighborhoods express more negative stereotypic evaluations of African Americans, whereas white respondents from more mixed neighborhoods were less likely to accept negative stereotypes of African Americans (Gilliam et al. 2002; 22). Thus, interracial proximity can help to counter negative media images.

Prejudice and negative stereotypes of African Americans have significant implications for public policy. Negative images of African Americans greatly shaped whites' thinking on a range of racial and racially relevant issues. Old-fashioned prejudice increases white opposition to all racial policies designed to improve the conditions of African Americans, whereas those who endorse racial stereotypes endorse individualistic programs (Virtanen and Huddy 1998). White Americans who believe African Americans to be lazy are significantly less likely to favor means tested welfare programs (Gilens 1996). White Americans who stereotype African Americans as unintelligent and violent are also less likely to favor social integration (Smith 1990). If racial perceptions play such a significant role in whites' attitudes about public policy, might it be likely that racial stereotypes are influential in elections? Stereotypes have content from which voters can, rightly or wrongly, draw information (Stephan and Rosenfield 1982). Given the candidate-centered nature of today's campaigns and elections, it is likely that candidates enter an electoral environment that is influenced by voting cues and voters' perceptions of candidate characteristics.

Race and Candidate-Centered Politics

Modern campaigns and elections are characterized by intense focus on the candidate, rather than political parties. More so than in the past, candidates' campaigns

are self-sufficient organizations indirectly dependent on political parties. During the

"golden age" of parties, candidates were merely representatives of strong party

organizations who "had control over the nomination process, possessed a near monopoly

over the resources needed to organize the electorate, and provided the symbolic cues that

informed the electoral decisions of most voters" (Herrnson 2004; 11). Progressive

reforms, including the Australian ballot, civil service system, and the primary system, and

growing campaign technologies have all helped to usher in a new form of politics in

which candidates build their own campaign organizations and voters make choices based

more on their reactions to the candidates (Menefee-Libey 2000). At the state level,

revitalized party organizations play an important role in legislative races, providing

services to candidates, but their role is supplemental to candidates' own personal

campaign organization (Salmore and Salmore 1989; Bibby and Holbrook 1999).

In what way do candidate-centered campaigns influence voters' choices at the

polls? Extensive research has been conducted to learn how voters vote. Much of the

research on political behavior has focused on four theories of voting: socio-demographic

characteristics of voters, partisanship, issues and ideology, and economic conditions.

Early studies of electoral behavior, originated among sociologists, examined electoral

behavior in terms of the individual characteristics of voters. Personal characteristics

including age, gender, education, income, occupation, religion, and race are all

significant determinants of voting behavior (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954).

Campbell et al. (1960) also identify partisan identification and voters' attitudes toward

political candidates as determinants of vote choice. Using a socio-psychological

approach, Campbell et al. (1960) present voting as the outcome from a sequence of

influential factors. Illustrating this point through a "funnel of causality," they argue that while sociological factors are important, they are furthest back in time. Therefore, the most influential determinants of voting behavior are partisan identification (also see Wattenberg 1996; Miller and Shanks 1996; Rahn 1993), candidates, and issues.

Other scholars have focused on the link between voting behavior and issues. Theories of prospective voting contend that in an electoral contest, voters gather high levels of information regarding the policies and issue positions of candidates, which they then use to choose between the candidates, who are assumed to have different positions on issues. Retrospective and spatial models, which are more widely accepted as strong explanations of voting behavior, do not assume that voters have access to a great deal of information. In the spatial model, both voters and candidates are rational actors with limited information. Voters elect representatives that fit their personal interests. Voters rank preferences and always chooses the highest ordered preference (Downs 1957; 6). Candidates, in an attempt to maximize their share of the vote, take positions on issues that appeal to the medial voter (Downs 1957). Voters are also rational actors in retrospective models which predict that voters continuously evaluate the performance of candidates and parties, using candidates' previous policy decisions to predict candidates' future performance (Key 1966; Fiorina 1981). Thus, vote choice is viewed as judgements about the past.

Recent scholarship on issue voting has criticized the Downsian model and its assumption about how voters view and respond to issues. According to this directional theory, issues represent symbols and voters respond to political issues emotionally, not rationally. How voter feel about an issue is extremely important. Thus, voters are

therefore attracted to candidates who are on the same side of an issue as they are and who present clear and intense policy alternatives (Rabinowitz & Macdonald 1989).

Perceptions of the economy and economic conditions also influence voters' electoral decisions. Scholarly perspectives on economics and voting traditionally fall into two camps: sociotropic voting and pocketbook voting (Gomez and Wilson 2001: 901). Sociotropic voters assess political candidates based on the perceived health of the national economy and vote according to the country's pocketbook, not their own (Kinder and Kiewiet 1979). Pocketbook voters, swayed by the immediate and tangible circumstances of their lives, vote according to their personal economic interests (Kinder and Kiewiet 1979: 130; also see Campbell et al. 1960; Kramer 1971).

Ultimately, voters use cues that provide information about the candidate in a readily available form. Using social and political stereotypes acquired over time, voters can use cues to infer beliefs and policies to candidates in an election. For example, when faced with no information about candidates other than party affiliation, most voters assume that the Democratic candidate is a liberal who supports social welfare policies and the Republican is a conservative who favors low taxes and defense (Conover and Feldman 1989; Rahn 1993). In addition to partisanship, incumbency (Ferejohn 1977; Popkin 1991; Rahn 1993) and candidate demographics are influential cues. Thus, a fifth theory of voting, the theory of racially polarized voting, suggests that voting decisions are based on demographic factors such as race, particularly in elections where minorities run against white opponents.

The theory of racially polarized voting holds that race is a primary determinant of vote choice. The assumption is that voters cast their ballot along racial line, thus white

voters are expected to vote for the white candidate and minority voters are expected to

support the minority candidate. If attitudes about groups serve as central organizing

principles in the minds of voters when it comes to politics (Campbell et al. 1960;

Converse 1964; Conover 1984), then group stereotypes are likely to help shape voters'

assessments of the candidates (Sigelman et al. 1995). Voters will use candidate

demographics to ascertain the policy preferences, issue position, and political ideology of

candidates (McDermott 1998; also see Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Conover and

Feldman 1989). Voters also use candidate demographics to evaluate candidates when

they observe little difference in candidates' policy positions (Bullock 1984). If

longstanding attitudinal predispositions can be evoked by appropriate political symbols

(Sears 1993), it is indeed possible that for some white voters, the presence of an African

American candidate may evoke anti-African American sentiment (Sears et al. 1997).

In fact, most of the research on candidate race in campaigns and elections

demonstrates that white voters do rely on stereotypes about African Americans and are

reluctant to vote for African American candidates. McDermott (1998), using quasi-

experimental data, found that voters stereotype candidates ideologically. African

American candidates were viewed as more liberal than white candidates and were

thought be more concerned with minority rights as oppose to other issues. Electoral

simulations also show that race strongly influences voters' perceptions of candidates. An

experiment study of 409 white Americans in Kentucky found that white participants

evaluated the white candidate more favorably than the African American candidate and

were slightly more willing to vote for the white candidate (Terkildsen 1993). Another

study of 235 white Americans in Michigan concluded that there is a strong disinclination

on the part of some white voters to support African American candidates (Reeves 1997).[2] Thus, the prevailing wisdom is that white voters discriminate against African American candidates at the polls.

Recent studies of voting in congressional elections also support this conclusion. Lublin 1997 finds that minority representatives find it exceedingly difficult to win election from majority-white districts. He argues that race explains the persistence of racially polarized voting and remains an enduring feature of congressional elections. Bullock and Dunn (1999), examining congressional elections in the South between 1992 and 1998, found that white candidates received approximately 10 percentage points more of the white vote than African American candidates. Gay (1999), comparing Democratic support for African American and white Democratic candidates from the 1994 election cycle in five states, also found that that white support for African American candidates was about 10 percentage points lower than white support for white Democratic candidates.

Yet, some scholars, citing recent victories by African American candidates in non-majority African American districts, vehemently argue that there is less discrimination against African American candidates than conventional wisdom suggests. Several African American candidates running in majority-white districts were successful during the 2000 election cycle. In Florida, Joyce Cusack defeated her opponent, Representative Pat Patterson, in a district that is eighty-seven percent white. Despite raising approximately $100,000 less than her opponent, Cusack won 51 percent of the vote, campaigning on issues like health care, education, and the environment. African American candidates running in majority-white districts have also successful in several

southern states including North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. In 2000, Al Lawson became the first African American to win Florida's 3rd senatorial seat since Reconstruction. At the congressional level, Alan Wheat, Ron Dellums, Bill Clay, and Carol Mosley Braun ran and won in majority-white districts.[3]

Citing these victories, others argue that whites have transcended racial voting and that the saliency of candidate race has decreased in American campaigns and elections (Swain 1993; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997; Thernstrom 1987). Conducting an experiment similar to that conducted by Terkildsen (1993), Sigeleman et al. (1995) found the effects of candidate race to be insignificant. Voters in the experiment were no more or less likely to vote for African American or Latino candidates than white candidates. Colleau et al. (1990) also found no anti-black affect at work in the evaluations of African American candidates. Highton's (2001) recent study of white voting in U.S. House elections in 1996 and 1998, also reports no support for white voter discrimination hypothesis. He finds that white voters were not less likely to vote Democratic when the Democratic candidate was African American nor were they more likely to vote Democratic when the Republican candidate was African American. It has also been argued that rather than discriminate, white voters may overcompensate and go out of their way to vote for the African American candidate when race is a salient factor in the election (e.g. Colleau et al. 1990; McConahay 1983).

While it is unlikely that race plays no part in American campaigns and elections, it is probable that racially polarized voting in state legislative elections is motivated not simply by candidate race but also by contextual factors (Citron et al. 1990). Racial attitudes are strongly influenced by racial diversity. In his study of Southern politics,

V.O. Key (1949) observed that as the minority population in a community increased, whites were more likely to perceive the minority group as a threat and hold negative views about members of the minority group (also see Blalock 1967). Key also noted that the most racially conservative political candidates received their strongest support from whites living in areas with higher percentages of African Americans. At the state level, Huckfeldt and Kohfeld (1989) reach a similar conclusion, finding that lower income whites tend to abandon the Democratic party as the percentage of African American votes for the party increased. Hence, the presence of more African Americans in the population heightens the salience of race. Yet, recent research suggests that racial diversity no longer has a negative impact on white political behavior. Carsey (1995), examining the New York City mayoral election in 1989 and the Chicago mayoral election in 1987, found that the probability that a white voter casts a ballot for the African American candidate was positively influenced by the racial composition of the precinct. African American candidates received more white votes as the percentage of African Americans in the precinct increased. Carsey (2001) finds similar results in his study of the 1993 New York City mayoral election.

The impact of a candidate's race on voting also depends on the candidate's campaign style. Focusing on the 1982 California gubernatorial election between Tom Bradley and George Deukmejian, Citron and his colleagues (1990) found that Bradley's "color-blind" campaign style, designed to "lower the ethnic relevance of his candidacy for governor" led to relatively low levels of racial voting (94). Sonenshein (1990), comparing the campaigns of Tom Bradley, Edward W. Brooke (1966 Massachusetts U.S. Senate), and L. Douglas Wilder (1985), also stressed the importance of campaign

strategies to understand the degree to which race influences voting behavior. He concludes that while African American candidates cannot easily transcend the race question, they can win statewide elections if candidates have prior political experience and employ a crossover style of politics (also see Jeffries 1998).

In summary, while race is a central factor in American politics, candidate race, in and of itself, does not exclude African American candidates from winning elections. While voter and context centered theories are important in understanding the role of race in American politics, the recent (albeit few) successes of African American candidates in predominately white districts suggest that it is also important to explore the ways in which candidates and their campaigns influence elections. By adopting particular campaign strategies and tactics, African American candidates can make it more difficult for white voters to rely on negative racial stereotypes when evaluating their candidacies. Thus, it is necessary to explore candidates' campaigns and campaign strategies to assess the salience of race as a factor in today's electoral politics.

Candidate Race, Stereotypes, and Campaign Strategies

Campaigns, as agents of information, are replacing parties as the primary source of information about the candidate (Salmore and Salmore 1989; Wattenberg 1991). Voters generally have limited information about government and politics and can be influenced by the campaign, which offers information about the candidate to voters (Popkin 1991; Salmore and Salmore 1989). While racial stereotypes play a role in candidate evaluations, campaign information also plays an important role in shaping our views about candidates. It is possible that the type of campaign an African American candidate runs can have a significant impact on voting behavior.

Recent research shows that under certain circumstances, negative social stereotyping can be reversed with new information. Peffley et al. (1997) found that white respondents who held strongly negative perceptions of African Americans responded quite favorably to them when confronted with individuating information that clearly contradicts a stereotype. Whites who accepted the negative racial stereotype of African Americans as lazy were less likely to favor welfare programs for African Americans described as having a poor work history than for immigrants with the same troubled work history (46.8 percent compared to 61.7 percent). However, when African Americans were described as "wanting to work their way out of their own problems," white support for welfare programs increased to 92.8 percent (as compared to 71.9 percent for similarly described immigrants). When some African Americans appear to be an exception from the group, diverging from prior expectations, whites are more inclined to respond favorably to them. Individuating information that contradicts extant beliefs may be one of the few feasible means for "decoupling" racial stereotypes from welfare and crime policy judgments (Peffley et al. 1997). Thus, it is likely that group stereotyping and individuating information can shape voters' assessments of political candidates (e.g. Sigelman et al. 1995). The manner in which African American candidates construct their campaigns and frame issues may help mitigate the effects of negative stereotypes. Voters are responsive to the campaign information they receive, even in low information elections (Lodge et al. 1985). By disseminating certain kinds of information through the campaign, African American candidates can manipulate the degree to which particular attitudes are activated.

The implications of this research may well be reflected in the changing styles employed by American candidates since the late 1960s, when the Civil Rights Movement was at its peak. The predominant campaign strategy at that time was that one of insurgency – "direct challenges to prevailing political order; explicit attacks and criticisms on elected officials, institutional processes….resulting in mobilization of interests and bias in local political context" (Persons 1993; 45). Because insurgent campaigns are characterized by mobilization based on racial appeals, African American candidates garnered all African American vote with little white crossover vote (Bullock 1985; see Persons 1993; 45). Running in districts with large African American populations, candidates using this strategy gained entry to state and local positions.

Insurgent voting strategies have declined and deracialized campaigns have become more common (McCormick and Jones 1993). The concept of deracialization was first explored by Charles V. Hamilton (1977), who made the argument that the Democratic party needed to emphasize issues that appeal to a broad segment of the electorate across racial lines, to deny Republicans from using race as a polarizing issue in the 1976 presidential election. Years later, William Julius Wilson (1990) took a similar position with regard to public policy, suggesting that the Democratic party support race neutral public policy program as a means for winning presidential elections in the 1990s. In 1990, in papers presented by McCormick and Jones at a symposium sponsored by the Joint Center of Political and Economic Studies, the components of deracialization as a campaign strategy were explicitly outlined (McCormick and Jones 1993). From their work, it was established that African Americans' campaign strategies could be evaluated using three components: political style, issues, and voter targeting. Deracialized electoral

strategies encourage African American candidates to adopt a non-threatening image, emphasize substantive issues that have mass appeal and avoid direct appeals to minority voters. Candidates are encouraged to choose mainstream, more diffuse issues that allow a candidate to build a larger set of supporters and offend fewer segments of the population (Patterson 1993).

The rise of deracialized campaigns has been interpreted by some as a sign of the decline of race as a factor in electoral politics. Yet, deracialization is simply a tactic that recognizes how important race can be in elections and was adopted in an effort to combat the strength of racially polarized voting (Kraus and Swanstrom 2001). Campaigns "activate or deactivate racial predispositions in the mind, leading citizens to give greater or less weight to them" (Mendelberg 2001, 20-21). Intensive focus on issues of race can be potentially divisive and damaging to African American candidates, particularly when the general public is opposed to racialized issues like affirmative action, contract set-aside programs for minority businesses, and other government policies and programs established to ameliorate inequality (Tate 1994). Even rhetoric of racial pride and empowerment can be construed as divisive by white voters, and the volatile nature of these issues drives away potential supporters (Flanigan and Zingale 1998). This is particularly true for African American state legislative candidates running in majority-white districts who cannot depend on a base of minority voters to "deliver" the election. Running a racialized campaign may spark a white backlash and further decrease African American candidates' vote shares (Sonenshein 1990). Candidates who employ deracialized strategies to attract white voters also recognize that they must activate and mobilize their primary support base – the African American community. Successful

deracialization strategies help African American candidates "frame a campaign that maximizes the benefits of black mobilization while minimizing the risk of white countermobilization" (Citron et al. 1990). Whether a candidate decides to employ deracialization strategies and the degree to which they are employed will surely be influenced in large part by the racial context of the district in which the candidate runs. As strategic politicians, African American candidates can choose to employ these strategies to compensate for the tendency of Americans to vote along racial lines and to maximize their political strength (Metz and Tate 1995).

Summary

Race has been and continues to be a salient feature in American politics. Racial attitudes significantly influence public policy. In light of the candidate-centered nature of modern campaign and elections, it is necessary to explore the link between racial attitudes and yet another important social outcome – state legislative elections. I argue that in addition to candidate characteristics and voters' racial attitudes, election outcomes and voting behavior in races involving African American candidates can also be explained by campaign factors, mainly deracialization strategies. However, the use of these strategies is constrained by several factors, including the racial context of the district, whether race is a salient voting cue for an individual, and whether an individual has negative or positive racial predisposition toward African Americans.

This type of research has strong implications for African American representation and the nature of the electoral process. If using certain strategies can change how voters view African American candidates, then African American candidates, who in the past have been constrained by race, face real possibilities of winning elections outside of

minority-majority districts. Running and winning in these districts will help increase the presence of African Americans in state legislatures. At minimum, having candidates run in these districts will force some voters to reassess their racial attitudes and perceptions of African Americans. The salience of campaign strategies in elections also strengthen the argument that campaigns play important role in the electoral process - in effect, campaigns do matter (Holbrook 1996).

The remaining chapters will explore the ways in which candidate race, white voting and campaign strategies impact the campaigns of African American state legislative candidates. Chapters Three and Four compare the campaigns of African American and white candidates to see whether candidate race and campaign factors influence African American candidates' campaigns for financial resources and for votes.

Chapter Three: Campaign Organization, Receipts, and Contributions

Once a candidate has made the decision to run for office, the prospect of raising

campaign funds becomes one of the candidate's most salient concerns. Campaign

spending is positively related to election outcomes in state legislative elections (Caldeira

and Patterson 1982; Gierzynski and Breaux 1991; Welch 1976). Campaign funding can

give candidates a considerable edge over their opponent and is a significant predictor of

the vote, as candidates with higher levels of funding are generally more successful than

those with fewer resources (Jacobson 1980; Hogan and Thompson 1998). The campaigns

candidates wage for money and campaign assistance, significantly affects the campaign

for votes and the outcomes of elections (Herrnson 2004). Thus, each candidate must

seriously contemplate how much he or she will be able to raise and whether that amount

will be sufficient to be a serious competitor in the election.

Fundraising is especially important for challengers and open-seat candidates who

rarely win without spending a great deal of money (Jacobson 2001). Unlike incumbents,

challengers often lack name recognition and access to institutional sources, such as

franking privilege and paid staff, all of which makes it difficult for challengers to defeat

incumbents. Thus, the more money a challenger is able to raise and spend, the more

likely the candidate is to win. Candidates running in districts where there is no incumbent

also need to raise large sums of money because open-seats draw the attention and

candidacies of numerous strategic and well-qualified office seekers (Herrnson 2004).

Whereas candidates of the 19th century primarily relied on political parties to run

the campaign by framing the candidate's platform, providing funds, and delivering loyal

voters, modern campaigns are in many ways candidate-centered. Partisanship remains an

important predictor of voting behavior and political parties are indeed indispensable participants in American campaigns and elections (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Shea and Green 1996). Indeed, current research suggests that the impact of partisanship on voting behavior has increased in both presidential and congressional elections (Bartels 2000). Partisanship may be even more salient in state legislative elections, where candidates are likely not to be as well known by voters as candidates for federal offices. However, many candidates also run on their personalities, and personal stance on issues to appeal to potential voters (Salmore and Salmore 1989). In an effort to spread their message, candidates increasingly rely on newer and relatively more expensive technologies and techniques. In addition to traditional cost effective mediums like yard signs, bumper stickers and campaign buttons, campaigns with larger war chests can reach potential voters through radio, television, mail, telephone and the Internet. It is these technologies that enable candidates, especially those running in lower level races, to communicate their personalities, images, qualifications, and issue positions (Herrnson 2000b). Candidates that use these strategies and techniques are often viewed as more capable of running an effective campaign, and in turn are viewed as viable. Therefore, campaign fundraising is crucial to a candidates' success and candidates continually seek funds. Without financial resources, candidates are unable to assemble strong campaign organizations and are less likely to win elections.

Given the wealth gap among white and African Americans in the United States and the historical treatment and perception of African Americans, one might suspect that there are significant racial differences in African American and white candidates' ability to raise campaign funds. Racial and ethnic minorities generally have less personal and

disposable income than their white counterparts. The median income for white

households in 2000 was $45,904, approximately $15,000 more than the median income

for African American families (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). This gap is substantially less

than the gap in 1998, when the median income for white households was nearly twice as

much as the median income for African American families (U.S. Census Bureau 1998).

The steady decline in the income gap between whites and African Americans is largely

due to the increasing number of middle-class African American families. Yet, despite

these improvements, African Americans have not achieved parity with their white

counterparts in asset accumulation, and the net worths of African Americans are

significantly lower than those of whites (Conley 1999). Thus, most African Americans

are less equipped financially to contribute money to candidates and their campaigns, and

are largely absent in campaign giving.

In addition, African Americans have historically been stereotyped as possessing

overall negative qualities. As a result, white voters in the past have evaluated African

American candidates for office less favorably than their colleagues (Bianco 1998; Reeves

1997; Sigelman et al. 1995; Terkildsen 1993; McDermott 1998; Williams 1990). Just as

voters rely on race and candidate image to provide cues about a candidate's electability

and issue position, potential contributors use these factors to evaluate the viability of a

candidate (Flanigan and Zingale 1998). These perceptions may significantly lower

contributors' willingness to contribute financially to African American candidates.

While there is some evidence of funding disparities between congressional

African American and white candidates, there is little research about the impact of

candidate race on fundraising at the state legislative level (but see Hogan and Thompson

1998; Theilmann and Dixon 1994; Hadley and Nick 1987). Whilhite and Theilmann's study (1986) of campaign contributions to congressional candidates found that African American candidates faced consistent discrimination from political action committees (PACs), regardless of the candidate's visibility. At the state legislative level, Hogan and Thompson (1998) found that minority candidates were funded at a lower rate than white candidates, and that minority candidates raised a smaller percentage of their funds from political parties than did white candidates. Yet, analyses of campaign contributions to candidates in Texas and Louisiana found that influential African American candidates have been able to gain support from PACs (Theilmann and Dixon 1994; Hadley and Nick 1987). These last two studies suggest that perceptions of African Americans elected officials may be conditioned by their status in the legislature. It can also be argued that racist perceptions of African Americans have significantly declined since the Civil Rights Movement (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Wilson 1976), increasing the probability that African American candidates will attract funds from various sources, including individuals, political parties, and interest groups.

In this chapter I examine differences in African American and white candidates' campaign organizations, receipts, and contributions using data collected by the Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project (Herrnson 2000b). The data includes candidates who ran for office between 1996 and 1998 in twelve states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee. I hypothesize that African American candidates face some degree of discrimination when fundraising – overall, they raise less money than white candidates and receive less money from political parties and interest

groups and their PACs. I also examine the impact of candidate race on individual, party, and interest group contributions to determine whether there is a pattern of discrimination against African American candidates with regards to fundraising. Contributor discrimination has significant implications for state legislative campaigns and elections. If contributors are unwilling to contribute to African American candidates simply because of their race, then African American candidates may remain at relative disadvantage in their attempt to win office.

Campaign Finance and Organization

Compared to campaigns for higher office, state legislative campaigns are low visibility races where candidates raise considerably less money (Jewell and Morehouse 2000). Yet, the amount of money raised by candidates for lower offices is impressive nonetheless. In 1998 state legislative and statewide candidates in 42 states raised approximately $1.3 billion.[1] And, with each election cycle, the costs of mounting a viable campaign for the state legislature invariably increases. In 1998, major party candidates running for the North Carolina General Assembly spent $17.9 million ($9.7 million for NC House and $8.2 million for NC Senate). By 2000 and 2002, total expenditures increased to $20.2 million and $22 million respectively.[2] Furthermore, the average cost of winning a House seat in the state in 2000 was $69,000, a 27 percent increase in spending as compared to 1998.[3] The average cost of campaigns state Senate seats increased as well.

Preliminary research suggests that African American candidates raise and spend significantly less money than white candidates. A study of individual campaign contributions to state Senate candidates in Georgia conducted by the National Institute on

Money in State Politics found that white candidates during the 1992-1996 election cycles raised significantly more money than African-African candidates.[4] Figure 3.1 shows that African American state legislative candidates running for state House and Senate in twelve states in 1996 and 1998 actually spent $14,717 *more* than white candidates. This was the case for African American incumbents in particular, who spent approximately $15,000 more than their white counterparts. While this difference is not statistically significant, these numbers indeed challenge the common perception that all African American candidates face discrimination with regards to fundraising. Unfortunately, the absence of African American challengers in the sample does not allow for comparison between this group of candidates and white challengers. It is within this group of candidates that one might expect to find disparities between African Americans and whites to be greatest. Conventional wisdom suggests that challengers have the deck of cards stacked against them with regard to fundraising because they are running against incumbents, who often are able to raise large amount of money for their reelection efforts (see Herrnson 2004). This was true for Johnnie Waller, who raised $121,000 less than his opponent, incumbent Harry Stille. Even in state legislative elections, a large majority of incumbents outspend their opponents (Cassie and Breaux 1998). Previous research suggests that African American challengers are disadvantaged yet even further because of their race. Hogan and Thompson (1998) found that African American challengers raise less money than white candidates regardless of the racial composition of their districts.

Figure 3.1 - Mean Spending for State Legislative Candidates
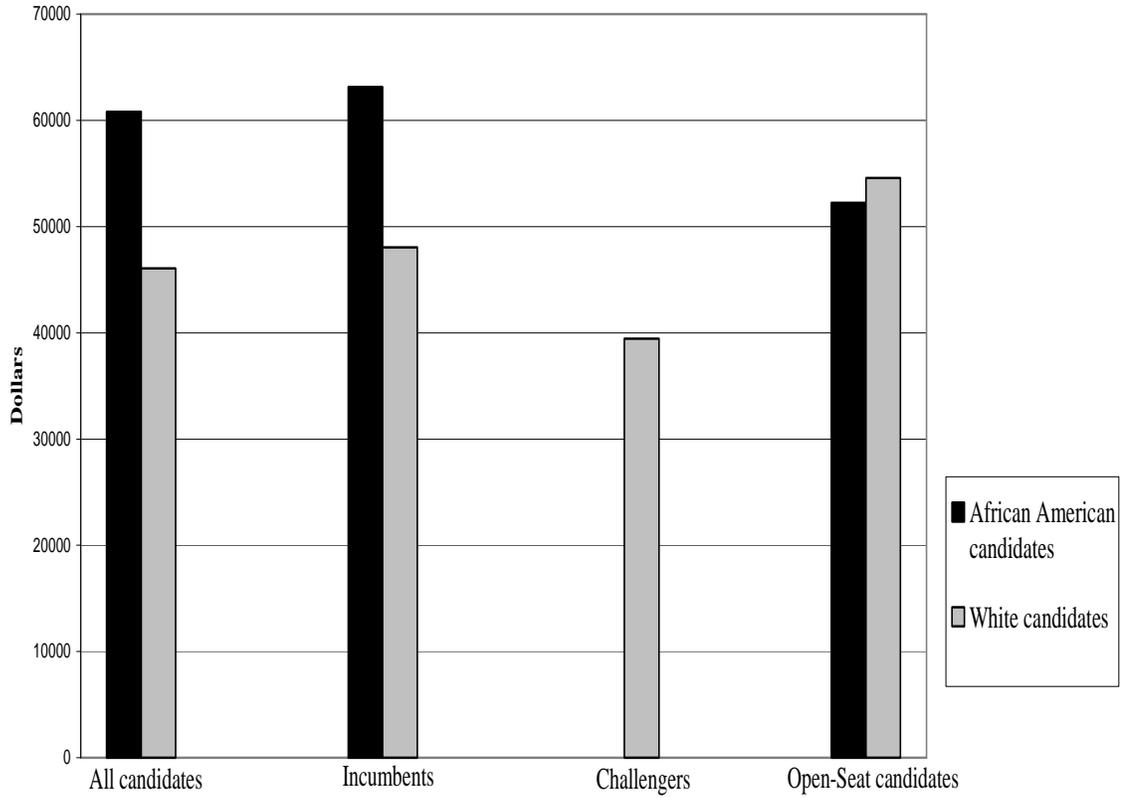
Source: Paul S. Herrnson, Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Data are from 1996 and 1998 elections in Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Contrary to expectations, Figure 3.1 also shows that campaign spending was nearly equal among white and African American open-seat candidates. This is somewhat inconsistent with Hogan and Thompson's study. They found that African American open-seat candidates running in non-Hispanic white districts raised more money than white candidates, whereas African American candidates running in majority-minority districts raised slightly less money than white candidates. Overall, these results suggest that candidate status may be a particularly salient factor in predicting contribution levels for African American state legislative candidates.

Often times much of the variation in campaign spending is a result of the population of the district (Hogan 2000; Gierzynski and Breaux 1991; Hogan and Hamm 1998). Candidates running in larger districts require more money than those candidates who must mobilize fewer voters. As previous studies have shown, there is indeed considerable variation in spending across states. In this sample, district level spending is highest in Alabama, with average spending of $1.64 per eligible voter, and lowest in the states in the sample with larger state populations, including Ohio and Pennsylvania, where the averages are $0.52 and $0.83. When the variation in funding based on state population is taken into account, I find that African American candidates spent more per eligible voter than white candidates (see Figure 3.2). This is particular true for African American open-seat candidates, who spent $0.64 more per person in the district than white open-seat candidates. This finding raises questions about Hogan and Thompson's (1998) research on candidate race and campaign contributions. Examining contribution patterns of candidates running for the state house between 1991-1992 in California, Illinois, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, they found that minority candidates (African

Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Filipinos) in these states raised and spent less per

eligible voter than white candidates. Hogan and Thompson's findings are consistent with

regards to African American incumbents in the sample, who spent $0.15 less per eligible

person in the district than did their white counterparts. However, thirty-three percent of

African American incumbents in the sample ran unopposed, as compared to eight percent

of white incumbents in the sample ($p < .001$). This difference may help to explain

decreased levels of spending among African American incumbents. It is possible that

because incumbents faced no opposition in the general election, they felt little pressure to

spend large sums of money.

Figure 3.2 - Mean Spending Per Eligible Voter
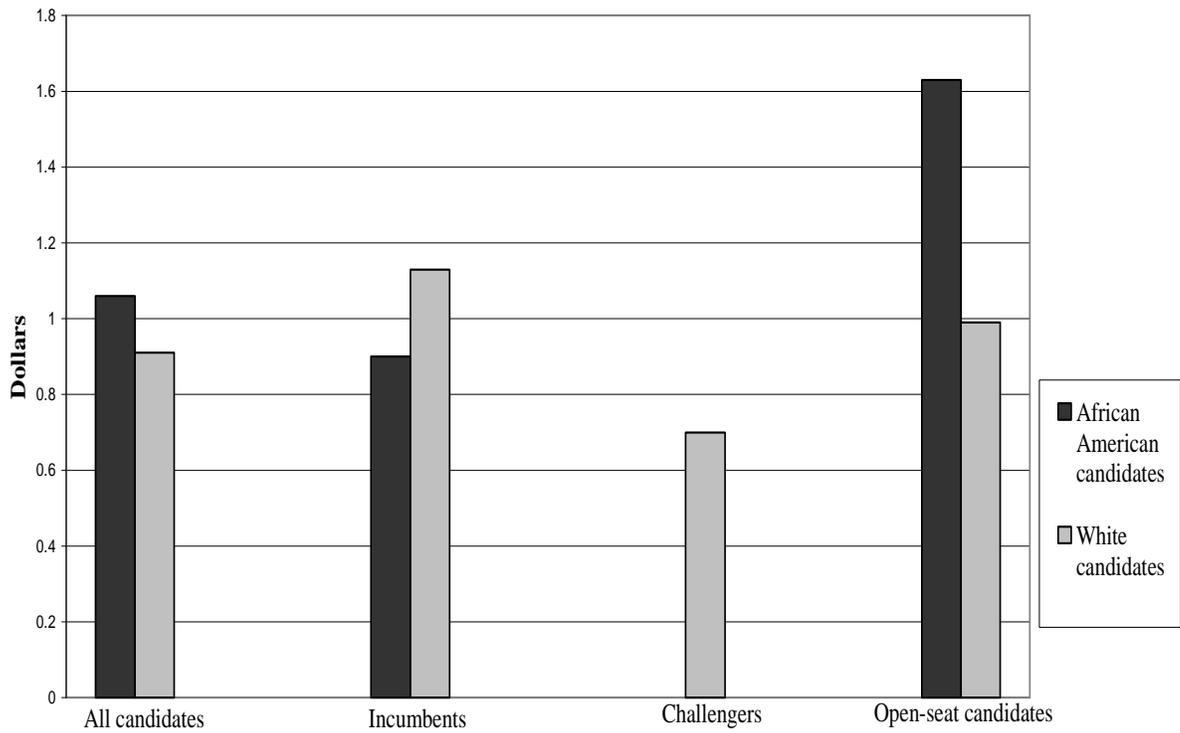
Source: Paul S. Herrnson, Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Data are from 1996 and 1998 elections in Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Most candidates raise campaign funds from a variety of sources. Individual

contributions have begun to play a larger role in state legislative elections, and this is

indeed the case in this sample of candidates. More than one-third of all candidates,

regardless of race, relied on contributions from individuals to wage their campaigns (see

Table 3.1). Candidates also contributed a sizeable portion of their personal funds to their

campaigns, however, white candidates were significantly more likely to dig into their

own pockets to fill their campaign coffers. African American candidates received

significantly more funds from labor unions, whereas white candidates, particularly white

incumbents, procured a greater percentage of their overall funds from business and trade

associations. Given that an overwhelming percentage of African American candidates

and elected officials are Democrats, these patterns are not entirely surprising. While

interest groups tend to pursue an access-oriented or legislative strategy, labor and

business groups and their PACs have distinct contribution patterns, aligning themselves

with a particular party, a narrow concern, or broad ideological positions (Hansen 1991;

Herrnson 1992; Gierzynski 1992; Cassie and Thompson 1998; Gopoian 1984). Business

groups and their PACs are the largest contributors and tend to favor Republicans,

whereas labor groups and PACs give predominately to Democrats (Cassie and Thompson

1998).

TABLE 3.1
The Financing of African American and White Candidates' Campaigns

	All candidates		Incumbents	
	African American	White	African American	White
Individuals	46	42	41	43
Political parties	9	10	7	7
Interest groups				
Labor unions	10	6**	12	6**
Business and trade associations	9	13**	11	25**
Other advocacy groups	8	6	11	9
Candidate	12	21**	16	12*
Other sources	4	2*	5	2
(N)	(52)	(294)	(40)	(97)

*Significant at p<.05; **Significant at p<.01

Source: Paul S. Herrnson. Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Notes: The figures include responses from general election candidates in major-party contested races. The figures for Interest groups include PAC contributions. The statistical significance of the difference between the groups was tested using t-tests. Some cases were dropped because of incomplete or missing data. Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

Candidates assemble campaign organizations to inform voters about their position on important issues of the day. Contemporary campaigns, particularly those for higher office, rely on costly paid staff and professional consultants (Dalager 1996). Yet, because state legislative campaigns tend to be less visible and expensive than campaigns for statewide office or Congress, state legislative candidates' campaigns more likely to be staffed by volunteers. There is little difference in the level of professionalism for African American and white state legislative candidates' campaigns; both employed paid staff and professional consultants to perform roughly two out of eleven possible campaign functions (see Table 3.2). However, African American candidates were more likely than white candidates to employ professionals for campaign management and accounting. The hiring of professionals for management of the campaign was particularly important for several African American candidates. One candidate running in a predominately white district spent a significant portion of his funds to hire a professional to develop literature that would convey a specific message to white voters. According to the candidate,

> "She was a white female consultant who, you know I mean….I'm always having to think, do we want this black guy……..she's thinking white voters are asking, do we want this black guy? Is he radical, is he Al Sharpton? And, you know, I know how to be an Al Sharpton. Her take on it is that we have to put to rest any fears that the majority voters may have about [name of the candidate]. They really don't know [name of the candidate]. So her job was to come up with a piece of literature that has about a thirty to sixty second life, before it's thrown into a garbage can or a television spot, that can get across that, the way she puts it, he's a hard worker, he's got the right values, and he'll serve this district right."

Some candidates, particularly those with little campaign funds, assembled very weak campaign organizations. This was the case for one African American one candidate who ran for Delaware's House of Representatives in 2002. The candidate, who ran against a three-term incumbent, raised approximately $1000 and hired no professionals to work on the campaign. The candidate lost the election, winning only 29 percent of the general election vote.

African American candidates were also more likely to hire professional staff or consultants for legal advice and for fundraising, which suggests that African American candidates may anticipate difficulties in raising campaign funds. During interviews, several candidates noted that raising money was perhaps their biggest obstacle. Another candidate, who also ran for the state house in a majority-white district commented that "it's was a great struggle raising money, especially given my courtbase, the African American community, and the black church. While the votes were generally there, especially in the general election, fundraising, most of my fundraising had to come from the majority of the community, interest groups, and political action committees. I needed these groups to raise the type of financial resources needed to be competitive." Several candidates, who happen to have ran in predominately African American districts, also expressed difficulties of raising money but emphasized the importance of friends, family, churches, and voluntary and civic associations to raise money. One candidate noted that "my money primarily comes from my sorority sisters, Delta Sigma Theta (one of the largest African American Greek letter organizations), my church, and of course my acquaintances over the years."

TABLE 3.2
The Professionalism of African American and White Candidates' Campaign Organizations

	All candidates		Incumbents	
	African American	White	African American	White
Campaign management	34%	29%*	29	15*
Media advertising	34	34	43	34
Press relations	11	18	14	13
Issue opposition or research	13	19	16	17
Polling	29	28	30	32
Fundraising	29	15**	32	12**
Direct mail	40	34	37	36
Mass telephone calling	23	17	14	19
Get-out-the-vote activities	16	15	7	11
Legal advice	29	14**	32	10**
Accounting	29	13**	30	13*
Mean number of activities performed by paid staff or consultant	2.8	2.2	2.2	2.1
(N)	(56)	(309)	(43)	(103)

*Significant at p<05   **Significant at p<.01

Source: Paul S. Herrnson. Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Notes: The figures include responses from general election candidates in major-party contested races. The statistical significance of the difference between the groups was tested using chi-square tests. The statistical significance between the average number of activities performed by paid staff or consultant was found using t-tests.

At first glance, African American candidates are not severely disadvantaged relative to their white counterparts. They raised greater levels of funds, employed roughly the same number of professionals to work on their campaigns, and raised more money per eligible voter in the district. However, because African American candidates received a significantly lower percentage of their funds from businesses and their PACs as compared to white candidates, there is evidence to suggest that there is some level of funding disparities among candidates. The remainder of this chapter develops models of campaign contributions to test hypotheses about discrimination against African American candidates.

Candidate Race and Campaign Finance: Predictors of Candidates' Per Capita Receipts and Contributions

If there are disparities in fundraising among African American and white state legislative candidates, then one might hypothesize that candidate race is a significant predictor of campaign contributions and, more specifically, that African American candidates receive less money than white candidates. Given that race and other personal characteristics like gender and religion influence voters' decisions at the polls, it is likely that candidate race influences contributors' decisions during the election.

Data from the Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project are used in this chapter to test the impact of candidate race on candidates' per capita receipts (See Table 3.1; Model 1). The dependent variable, candidates' total receipts, was collected from the National Institute on Money in State Politics. The receipt total was then divided by the district population (over the age of eighteen) to control for the effects of population on fundraising. Candidates running in districts with thousands of eligible

voters need to raise and spend more funds to get their message out to voters than those running in districts where the voting age population is significantly lower. The chief explanatory variable, *African American candidate,* is a binary variable that indicated the race of the candidate. The race of the opponent may also impact the amount of money a candidate is able to raise. Contributors may be more likely to use race as a deciding factor when the African American candidate faces a white candidate in the election. *White opponent* is a binary variable that is coded 1 if the candidate faced a white opponent in the general election and 0 if the candidate faced an African American or Latino opponent.

Model 1 also includes several campaign factors, district-level factors, and state-level factors that may influence candidate's contributions. *Campaign professionalism* is an additive measure that records the candidates' reliance on paid staff and political consultants for campaign management, media advertising, press relations, issue opposition or research, polling, fundraising, direct mail, mass telephone calling, get-out-the vote activities, legal advice and accounting.[5] Candidates who rely on professional staff to carry out specific campaign duties have the advantage of being more viable and are expected to raise more funds than those who do not (Herrnson 1992). *Political experience* is a binary variable where nonincumbents who currently or previously have held elective office (elected officials), and nonincumbents who have significant campaign political experience but who have never held elective office (unelected politicians) are coded as 1. Political amateurs are the base. I combine unelected officials with elected officials rather than amateurs because unelected officials have some degree of political experience, whereas political amateurs have no political experience (Herrnson 2004). I hypothesize that candidates with some degree of political experience will raise a greater

percentage of funds because they are more likely to have contacts, name recognition, and donor lists. *Leadership position* is a binary variable where incumbents who are Speaker of House, President of the Senate, or party leaders are coded as 1. I hypothesize that candidates with leadership positions are more likely to raise money because their influence in the legislature attracts contributions from political action committees (PACs), individuals, labor unions, corporate contributors, and interest groups (Box-Steffensmeier and Dow 1992; Grier and Munger 1993; Gierzynski 1998). *Competitive* is a binary variable where general elections decided by a margin of 20 percentage points or fewer are coded 1. I hypothesize that candidates in close races raise more money than candidates in uncompetitive races because in close races both candidates are viable. *Uncontested election* is a binary variable that indicates an election where an incumbent ran unopposed. I hypothesize that unopposed candidates raise less than those who run against an opponent. I also include binary variables to control for party affiliation (*Democrat*), candidate status (*incumbent, open-seat candidate*), and the year of the election (*1998*). We should expect to find that open-seat candidates raise significantly less than incumbents because of the advantages that incumbency provide. We should also expect to find that open-seat candidates raise more funds than challengers because open-seat candidates generally run in competitive races, whereas challengers generally are expected to lose (Moncrief 1998; Giles and Pritchard 1985).

I also include district level factors as district conditions can strongly influence campaign finance behavior. I hypothesize that candidates running in districts that have greater percentages of whites (*Percent white*) and in districts that are of higher socio-economic status (SES) are more likely to raise funds. *Percent white* ranges from nine

percent to one hundred percent white; the mean is seventy-eight percent. I use *Percent white* rather than *Percent African American* and *Percent Latino* to control for the racial composition of the district because I am interested in examining how the increased presence of white residents in the districts influences the level of contributions candidates receive. SES is operationalized as the percent college educated constituents (*Percent college*). I hypothesize that candidates running in districts with a greater percentage of college educated citizens will raise more money than those running in districts where a significant percentage of the population has no more than a high-school education. Citizens with a college degree are more likely to engage in political acts, including giving money to candidates and their campaigns (Verba et al. 1995). Eighty-three percent of congressional donors have at least a at least a college degree and 78 percent earn at least $100,000 a year or more (Francia et al. 2003). During the preliminary stages of the analysis I also controlled for district income. This variable was dropped from the analysis because it is highly correlated with education. In addition, education is a better predictor of mass political participation than income (e.g. Leighley 1995). I also control for the number of seats in the district (*multimember district*). Campaign costs tend to be higher in multimember districts because candidates running in multimember districts have larger constituencies (Gierzynski 1998; Hogan and Thompson 1998). I expect that candidate running in multimember districts will raise more money than those running in single member districts.

Finally, I also control for state-level factors. *Professional legislature* and *hybrid legislature* are binary variables that control for the professionalism of the state legislature (e.g. Kurtz 1990; Squire 1992). Amateur legislatures are the base. I expect campaign

contributions to be greater for candidates in professional legislatures, given that

professional legislatures are more capable of affecting policy. This should be particularly

attractive to contributors who wish to influence policy (Hogan and Hamm 1998;

Moncrief 1998). In addition, a legislative seat in a professional or hybrid legislature is

generally more valuable to the candidate. Thus, those candidates will be more likely to

seek out contributions to win or retain the seat. I also control for states where campaign

finance laws limit contributions to candidates' campaigns (*Contribution limits)* (Hogan

2000). I expect that in the absence of limits, candidates will raise more funds from

contributors and campaign spending will be higher.

I use regression with robust standard errors to test this equation. The model was

first run with Ordinary Least Square regression (OLS). However, the Breusch-

Pagan/Cook Weisberg test revealed that heteroskedasticity was present in the model ($\chi^2 =$

107.60, p<.001). Because the variance of the unobserved error was not constant, the

standard errors of the estimates were therefore biased. This effect was anticipated

because of the variation in the size of state legislative districts. Regression with robust

standard errors and OLS regression produce the same estimates of the regression

coefficient, however the overall F is lower and the individual standard errors are larger in

robust regression. While the classic approach to correct for heteroskedasticity is to use

weighted least squared regression (WLS), I use robust regression because robust

regression is suggested when dealing with data sets with a small number of observations

(Draper and Smith 1998; Wooldridge 2000).

The results presented in Model 1 confirm that African American candidates do

indeed raise significantly less money than white candidates. All things being equal,

African American candidates raised (and were able to spend) approximately $0.53 per person in the district, whereas white candidates raised $1.04 (see Table 3.3). It would appear that racial considerations influence campaign giving, and that these considerations have negative consequences on the amount of money African American candidates are able to raise and spend during the election. When controlling for other factors African American state legislative candidates are still underfunded.[6]

TABLE 3.3
The Impact of Candidate, Campaign, District, and State Factors on Candidates'
Per Capita Receipts

	Model 1	Model 2
Candidate- level factors		
African American	-.51**	.45
	(.21)	(.55)
White opponent	.02	.16
	(.17)	(.19)
African American X white opponent	-	-.74
		(.47)
Campaign Factors		
African American X Incumbent	-	-.94*
		(.54)
African American X Open-seat candidate	-	-.38
		(.60)
Campaign professionalism	.11***	.11***
	(.02)	(.02)
Political experience	-.08	-.11
	(.15)	(.14)
Leadership position	.04	.03
	(.21)	(.21)
Competitive election	.22	.25
	(.16)	(.16)
Uncontested election	-.15	-.11
	(.25)	(.24)
Democrat	.01	.03
	(.12)	(.12)
Incumbent	.75***	.82***
	(.21)	(.22)
Open-seat candidate	.35*	.29*
	(.13)	(.13)
1998	.51***	.50***
	(.16)	(.16)
District- level factors		
Percent white	.01	.01
	(.03)	(.03)
Percent college	.02	.02
	(.04)	(.04)
Multimember district	.04	.17
	(.26)	(.27)
State-level factors		

Professional legislature	-.09	-.08
	(.15)	(.14)
Hybrid legislature	.26	.21
	(.23)	(.22)
Contribution limits	-.38*	-.36*
	(.20)	(.21)
Constant	-.30	-.41
R^2	.22	.24
(N)	(360)	(360)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (one tailed)

Source: Paul S. Herrnson. Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Entries are robust regression coefficients. Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

The results for most campaign factors included in the model are significant and in the anticipated direction. Campaign professionalism is both positive and significant. A candidate who employs consultants to perform roughly ten out of eleven campaign functions will raise approximately $0.84 more per person in the district than a candidate who acquires paid staff and professionals for roughly two campaign tasks. As expected, incumbents raised significantly more money than both challengers and open-seat candidates. Open-seat candidates raised significantly more money than challengers. Of the statistically significant variables, candidate status – particularly whether the candidate was an incumbent – had the greatest impact on per capita receipts. Incumbents generally raised $0.75 more than challengers and open-seat candidates. This difference is greater than that for candidate race and campaign professionalism.

Interestingly, few district and state-level variables are significant predictors of candidates' per capita receipts.[7] However, I do find that contribution limits strongly influence campaign giving. Candidates who ran in states with contribution limits raised $0.39 less per person in the district than candidates in states where they are no contribution limits. Finally, candidates who ran in the 1998 election cycle raised significantly more money than candidates who ran in 1996. This pattern fits with what we know about the rising costs of elections each election cycle.

While candidate race, in itself, may have a negative impact on campaign contributions, it is likely that race interacts with other characteristics that may influence contributor's perceptions of African American candidates. To test this hypothesis, I replicate Model 1 and include three interaction terms that are believed to have synergistic effects on the amount of money a candidate raises (see Table 3.3, Model 2). Two

interactions test the combined effects of candidate race and candidate status (*African American X Incumbent*, *African American X Open-seat candidate*). Since incumbents tend to raise more money than both challengers and open seat candidates (Moncrief 1998), I hypothesize that African American incumbents will raise more funds than African American challengers and open-seat candidates.

It should be noted that in this sample, candidate race is highly correlated with the interaction between candidate race and incumbency.[8] This level of multicollinearity is not a result of model specification but due to the large percentage of African American incumbents in the sample. As previously mentioned, the response rate among African American incumbents was extremely high in the sample – seventy-nine percent of the African American candidates in the sample are incumbents as compared to thirty-four percent for the white candidates. Because I am interested in the impact of race in and of itself, and this variable is essential in modeling the "real world" effects of candidate race, the variable is included in the model. Yet, including the variable in the model is somewhat problematic because multiple regression assumes that the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other. It can be argued that there is always a certain degree of multicollinearity in statistical models, thus the model can be considered useful so long as independent variables considered critical in explaining the model's dependent variable are statistically significant and in the anticipated direction.[9] Moreover, I will interpret the coefficients for all variables included in the interaction together.

The last interaction tests the combined effects of candidate and opponent race (*African American X white opponent*). If contributors are prejudiced against African American candidates, then we might expect that contributors are significantly less likely

to contribute to an African American candidate when the candidate is running against a white opponent.

As anticipated, contributions to African American candidates are strongly conditioned by candidate status. Whereas African American candidates in general raised approximately $1.43, we see from the interactions that African American incumbents raised $0.98 and African American open-seat candidates raised $1.29, all things being equal. African American and white open-seat candidates raised similar amounts, yet, there are disparities in fundraising among white and African American incumbents. White incumbents out-raised African American incumbents by approximately $0.44.

As in Model 1, several control variables significantly impact the dependent variable. Campaign professionalism, candidate status (*incumbent*, *open-seat candidate*), and the year of the election are positive and statistically significant, whereas contribution limits significantly decrease the amount of funds a candidate raises. Interestingly, the variable testing the synergistic effect between candidate and opponent race is negative but yet just shy of statistical significance. Although opponent race does not appear to be influential in determining the level of funds African American candidates raise, this finding may be somewhat misleading given the contests in the sample in which an African American candidate ran against a white candidate. Of the African American candidates that ran against white candidates, every African American was an incumbent who ran in an uncompetitive election in a district with a near majority African American population. In this case, it would seem that discrimination on the basis of race is not a primary concern because the candidates have incumbency to work in their favor, they are running against weak opponents, and/or they have a large base of African American

voters who are likely to support them. This was indeed the case for one African American incumbent, who represented a majority African American district (54 percent) in 1998. The incumbent ran against a white challenger, who, at the time of the election, was a college student. The challenger was a political amateur, and rarely disagreed with the views and positions of his opponent. According to the legislator, the challenger entered the contest because

> "[Secretary of State J. Kenneth] Blackwell came to the University that the young man was attending and he got so turned on by what he said that he decided to run as a Republican. Even when we were going out campaigning, and people would ask a question and I would answer, then they would ask him a question, he would response that he agreed with [name of representative]. We have good relations, and after I won he called me and said, do you think you could get me an internship up in the state house? I responded that I would be glad to. His uncle called and stated to me that he's a third year engineering student and he wants his nephew to finish school. Please don't get him this job. So I called the student back and informed him that we didn't have any internships open at the time. About six months later, I wrote him a letter inquiring if he was still interested, and his reply was no."

Faced with little competition, the incumbent went on to win the general election with seventy-two percent of the vote.

It is likely that the salience of race, particularly opponent race, becomes important in elections where African American non-incumbent candidates are running against white candidates in districts where white voters constitute a majority of the population. While

the impact of candidate and opponent race (in contests with African American non-incumbents) on candidate receipts will not be examined in this dissertation, subsequent chapters will explore impact of race in biracial elections in white dominant state legislative districts.

Per Capita Receipts from Individuals, Political Parties, and Interest Groups

The same independent variables used in Model 1 and 2 are used to determine whether there are significant differences in individual, party, and interest group contributions to African American and white candidates. The dependent variables presented in Table 3.4 represent candidates' per capita receipts from individuals and political parties, whereas the dependent variables presented in Table 3.5 represent candidates' per capita receipts from labor unions and their PACs, and business groups and their PACs. Candidates were asked to report the percentage of their total receipts from individuals, political parties, labor unions, and businesses.[10] Each percentage was then multiplied by the candidates' total receipts and then divided by the district population over the age of eighteen.

We should expect that candidate status, party, and leadership status strongly influence interest group contributions (Cassie and Thompson 1998). Following a seat maximizing or electoral strategy, parties tend to allocate money to candidates in competitive races (Downs 1957; Schecter and Hedge 2001; Gierzynski 1992; Stonecash and Keith 1996; Gierzynski and Breaux 1991; Bibby and Holbrook 1999). On the other hand, interest groups are more likely to pursue an access-oriented or legislative strategy. Thus we should expect them to be more likely to contribute money to incumbents,

particularly those with influential leadership or committee positions (Box-Steffensmeier and Dow 1992; Grier and Munger 1993; Jacobson 1980).

To test these models, I use seemingly unrelated regression (SUR). After first running the models with OLS regression, I ran the model with seemingly unrelated regression to examine the correlation matrix of the residuals. The Breusch-Pagan test revealed a contemporaneous cross-equation error correlation; the residuals from the equations were not independent ($\chi^2 = 93.946$, p<.001). Seemingly unrelated regression allows simultaneous estimation of models that involve the same independent variables while taking into account the reality that the equations are related through the correlation in the errors (Baltagi 2002; Greene 1999).

The results in Table 3.4 show that candidate race does not have a statistically significant impact on the amount of contributions African American candidates raise from individuals or political parties. Controlling for all other factors, African American candidates raised slightly less money from individuals than did white candidates, respectively $0.29 and $0.43 per person in the district. African American and white candidates raised comparable amounts from political parties, $0.12 and $0.11 respectively. In addition, the amount of funds African American incumbents and open-seat challengers raised per person in the district from these sources is roughly equal to that which white incumbents and open-seat candidates raised.

TABLE 3.4
The Impact of Candidate, Campaign, District, and State Factors on Candidates'
Per Capita Contributions - Individuals and Political Parties

	Individuals		Political Parties	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Candidate- level factors				
African American	-.15	.13	.02	.09
	(.12)	(.51)	(.06)	(.26)
White opponent	.00	.10	-.06	-.04
	(.10)	(.11)	(.05)	(.05)
African American X white opponent	-	-.29	-	-.12
		(.24)		(.13)
Campaign Factors				
African American X Incumbent	-	-.31	-	-.05
		(.50)		(.25)
African American X Open-seat candidate	-	.07	-	-.04
		(.53)		(.27)
Campaign professionalism	.04***	.05***	.01*	.01*
	(.01)	(.01)	(.00)	(.05)
Political experience	.01	.00	.02	.02
	(.08)	(.08)	(.04)	(.04)
Leadership position	-.20	-.21	-.05	-.04
	(.13)	(.14)	(.06)	(.07)
Competitive election	.06	.08	.11***	.10***
	(.07)	(.06)	(.03)	(.03)
Uncontested election	.04	.02	-.05	-.07
	(.13)	(.12)	(.06)	(.06)
Democrat	.02	.02	-.04	-.03
	(.06)	(.05)	(.03)	(.03)
Incumbent	.18***	.37***	-.01	.06
	(.07)	(.08)	(.03)	(.04)
Open-seat candidate	.14*	.15*	-.01	.01
	(.08)	(.08)	(.04)	(.04)
1998	.09	.14	.02	.03
	(.15)	(.15)	(.08)	(.07)
District- level factors				
Percent white	.00	.00	.01**	.01**
	(.01)	(.01)	(.00)	(.00)
Percent college	.01*	.01*	-.02*	-.02*
	(.00)	(.00)	(.01)	(.01)

Multimember district	.21*	.26*	-.14*	-.14*
	(.13)	(.13)	(.06)	(.07)
State-level factors				
Professional legislature	-.12	-.10	.03	.03
	(.09)	(.09)	(.05)	(.05)
Hybrid legislature	-.02	-.01	.09**	.10**
	(.09)	(.09)	(.04)	(.04)
Contribution limits	-.07	-.12	-.00	-.03
	(.08)	(.08)	(.04)	(.04)
Constant	-.05	-.26	-.05	-.13
R^2	.18	.21	.12	.14
(N)	(358)	(358)	(358)	(358)

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001 (one-tailed)

Source: Paul S. Herrnson. Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Entries are seemingly unrelated regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

These findings are indeed encouraging for African American candidates, given the importance of individual contributions and party money in campaigns. State party organizations play an increasingly significant role in state politics (Moncrief 1998). Particularly in states where parties are more professional and well financed like their national counterparts, parties provide greater levels of assistance to their members and contribute to their campaigns (Rosenthal 1996). However, it should be noted that while candidate race is not a significant predictor, the racial composition of the district significantly impacts party contributions. Candidates running in districts with greater percentages of white residents receive more funds from political parties than other candidates.[11] It appears that race does in some manner influence how political parties distribute their funds.

Interest groups and their PACs contribute considerable amounts of money to state legislative campaigns. However, the amount of funds they contribute appears to vary based on candidate characteristics. African American candidates appear to have little trouble acquiring funds from labor unions. However, African American candidates were strongly disadvantaged with regards to business contributions, raising approximately $0.29 less per person in the district than white candidates. This is particularly true for African American incumbents. All things being equal, African American incumbents raised $0.06 per person in the district and white incumbents raised $0.37.

The contributions raised by incumbent Barbara Cooper, who ran in Tennessee's 86th district in 1998, largely fit this pattern. Cooper raised approximately $28,000 for her reelection campaign. She raised the most money from labor unions and their PACs, earning $0.10 per person in the district. Contributions from individuals were also a

significant portion of her funds; she raised $0.07 per person in the district. Largely because of her incumbency status, Cooper received little money from the party, only $0.03 per person in the district. Cooper also received little money from businesses and their PACs, who contributed $0.04 per person in the district to her campaign.

TABLE 3.5
The Impact of Candidate, Campaign, District, and State Factors on Candidates'
Per Capita Contributions – Labor Unions and Business

	Labor Unions		Business	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Candidate- level factors				
African American	.04	.05	-.29***	.17
	(.03	(.16)	(.07)	(.29)
White opponent	.01	.02	.04	.08
	(.03)	(.03)	(.06)	.06
African American X white opponent	-	-.09	-	-.16
		(.07)		(.14)
Campaign Factors				
African American X Incumbent	-	-.04	-	-.51*
		(.15)		(.29)
African American X Open-seat candidate	-	.00	-	-.34
		(.16)		(.30)
Campaign professionalism	.01*	.01*	.02**	.02***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.05)	(.05)
Political experience	-.03	-.03	.00	-.00
	(.02)	(.03)	(.04)	(.05)
Leadership position	.03	.02	.11	.11
	(.04)	(.04)	(.08)	(.08)
Competitive election	-.00	-.00	.03	.03
	(.02)	(.02)	(.04)	(.04)
Uncontested election	-.00	.00	-.07	-.06
	(.04)	(.04)	(.07)	(.07)
Democrat	.09***	.09***	-.01	-.01
	(.01)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
Incumbent	.04*	.05*	.31***	.34***
	(.02)	(.02)	(.04)	(04)
Open-seat candidate	.04	.03	.11**	.08*
	(02)	(.02)	(.04)	(.04)
1998	.04	.04	.11	.11
	(05)	(.05)	(.08)	(.09)
District- level factors				
Percent white	.00	.00	.00	.01*
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.00)
Percent college	.00	.00	.00	.00
	(.01)	(.00)	(.01)	(.01)
Multimember district	.04	.06	-.10	-.07

	(.04)	(.04)	(.07)	(.08)
State-level factors				
Professional legislature	.11***	.12***	-.08	-.07
	(.03)	(.03)	(.06)	(.06)
Hybrid legislature	.02	.02	.05	.04
	(.03)	(.03)	(.05)	(.05)
Contribution limits	-.00	-.00	-.16***	-.16***
	(.02)	(.03)	(.05)	(.05)
Constant	-.10	-.13	.06	.06
R^2	.17	.18	.27	.30
(N)	(358)	(358)	(358)	(358)

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001 (one-tailed)

Source: Paul S. Herrnson. Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Entries are seemingly unrelated regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

In addition to candidate-level factors, Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show that other campaign, and district and state level factors have a significant impact on per capita contributions. Campaign professionalism is significant and positive for all four types of contributions. Candidates who hire political consultants or paid staff are significantly more likely to receive contributions. Individual contributors, labor unions, and business groups were more likely to give money to incumbents, reflecting their access-oriented approach to contributions (Hansen 1991; Herrnson 1992; Gierzynski 1998; Cassie and Thompson 1998). Business groups and their PACs and individuals also gave significantly more money to open-seat candidates. Interestingly, it appears that in this sample, businesses did not favor Republican candidates (e.g. Cassie and Thompson 1998).

As expected, Democrats raise more funds from labor unions and their PACs, and political parties gave significantly more money to candidates running in competitive elections. Whereas party contributions decreased in districts with higher levels of college-educated constituents, the amount of individual contributions significantly increased in those districts. Education is a significant predictor of political knowledge about state politics (Delli Carpini and Ketter 1996). Given high correlation between education and income, it is likely that those who are more informed about state legislative candidates and their campaigns are more likely to get involved and contribute money to political campaigns. I also find that candidates running in multimember districts received significantly more money from individuals and less money from political parties. Finally, the professionalization of the legislature is positively related to party and labor union contributions, and candidates running in states with contribution limits raise less money from business groups and their PACs.

Summary

This chapter demonstrates that candidate race has some degree of influence on campaign contribution in state legislative elections. African American candidates received a significantly lower percentage of their funds from businesses and their PACs as compared to white candidates. Per capita receipts are strongly conditioned by candidate race, as African American candidates are significantly less likely to raise funds than white candidates. They are also conditioned by the synergistic effects of candidate race and status. Controlling for all other factors, African American incumbents raised significantly less funds that white incumbents. Per capita contributions to African American candidates are also conditioned by candidate status. Candidate race is jointly significantly with candidate status as a predictor of per capita contributions from businesses and their PACs.

Money plays an important role in American elections, as the amount spent by the candidate directly affects the share of votes the candidate receives (Gierzynski and Breaux 1993). Without financial resources, even highly qualified candidates have little hope of winning office. Most candidates face funding challenges, however this chapter shows that race-based perceptions of candidates can in some cases make fundraising somewhat more difficult for African American state legislative candidates.

While the disparities in fundraising remain a hurdle for African American state legislative candidates, winning is not unachievable, for African American candidates can focus their energies on yet another aspect of the campaign - issues and voter targeting. The next three chapters show that by strategically focusing on certain issues and targeting

various groups, African American candidates can still wage strong campaigns and win

elections, making the transition from candidate to elected official.

Chapter Four: Campaign Strategies: Issues and Voter Targeting

While campaign fundraising is essential to the success of modern campaigns, candidates also know that campaign factors such as issues and campaign cues can play an important role in voters' decisions at the polls. Scholars have long argued that campaigns play a role in determining election outcomes. Students of individual and aggregate voting behavior argue that voters' decisions are primarily influenced by partisan identification and retrospective evaluations of the economy and incumbent job performance (Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; also see Fiorina 1981; Lewis-Beck and Rice 1992; Holbrook 1996). Incumbency is also an important factor, as voters are hesitant to vote for candidates whom they know little about (Jacobson 2001: 110). Campaigns increase voters' knowledge of the candidates, change voters' perceptions of the candidate, and impact vote choice by providing meaningful information to voters through their message (Hershey 1984; Popkin 1991; Holbrook 1996). Campaign messages are also of increasing importance to issue-oriented voters, who are primarily concerned about one or a set of issues and vote for candidates whose views mirror theirs (Nie et al. 1976). By stressing certain issues during the campaign, candidates convey general attitudes and policy preferences to potential supporters. Campaigns also have an effect on voter turnout (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Wattenberg and Brians 1999; Freedman and Goldstein 1999; Ansolabehere et al. 1999; but see Lau et al. 1999).

Strategic candidates, having evaluated which groups are likely to be their strongest supporters, also exert a great deal of time and effort delivering their message to those groups. During the late 1960s and 1970s, African American candidates, particularly mayoral candidates running in cities with large African American populations, formed

issue coalitions with liberal whites and relied on their support in addition to the support of African American voters (Browning et al. 1984). The predominant campaign strategy for African American candidates at that time was one of insurgency – challenging established officials and calling for social and political reform (Persons 1993: 45). Marked by mobilization based on racial appeals, this strategy neither sought nor garnered African American candidates few white crossover votes (Bullock 1984).

Since the 1980s, there has been a major shift in tactics used by African American candidates from insurgency style politics to a deracialized campaign strategies marked by non-racial or race-neutral appeals. A central component of the deracialized strategy is to campaign in such a way that encourages white voters to shatter their assumptions about African Americans and judge them based on their competence. Negative and stereotypical images of African Americans in the media influence whites' perceptions of African American candidates (Hall 1997). As a result, whites are less likely to positively evaluate or vote for African American candidates regardless of their personal characteristics, experience, or issue positions (Terkildsen 1993). African American candidates use deracialized electoral strategies challenge this reality by emphasizing substantive issues that have mass appeal and avoid direct appeals to minority voters in order to attract white crossover votes (McCormick and Jones 1993). Using these tactics, African American candidates can send a message to white voters "that there are no meaningful differences between constituents or policies on the basis of race" (Canon 1999). At the heart of the deracialized campaign strategy is the assumption that issues and targeting strategies employed by candidates will increase the willingness of the white voters to vote for African American candidates. By focusing on broad, mainstream

issues, voters regardless of race can perceive the candidate to care about the issues that are important to them. Therefore, the manner in which candidates' conduct their campaigns may help to change voters' perceptions of the candidate and impact the outcome of election (e.g. Canon 1999).

In this chapter, I examine the issues and groups that African American and white state legislative candidates focus on during their campaigns using data as part of the Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project. I anticipate that African American candidates' campaigns are strategically and substantively different from those of white candidates. However these differences are most likely a result of the overwhelming Democratic partisan identification among African American candidates. I hypothesize that African American candidates are more likely to focus on social welfare and social-cultural issues because many of these issues are broad, non racial issues that resonate with all types of voters, particularly those supportive of the Democratic Party. I also hypothesize that African American candidates are also more likely to target minorities, social groups, and women than are white candidates because these voting blocs predominantly identify with the Democratic Party. Finally, I examine the impact of issues and voter targeting on candidates' vote share to determine whether voters can indeed be swayed by the strategic choices that candidates make.

Campaign Issues and Voter Targeting

Several studies have stressed the importance of candidates' issue positions on the vote. Past research has found that voters do indeed respond to the issues presented to them (Pomper 1972) and that salient issues are just as important in predicting vote choice as party identification (RePass 1971). In their study of presidential voting, Aldrich,

Sullivan and Borgida (1989) found that that the public has perceived clear differences between the candidates on foreign policy issues and domestic issues in recent elections, and that these issues are important influences on the choices voters make. Carmines and Stimson (1980) argue that when "easy" issues are present in the election, issue voting among the electorate increases. Easy issues are those which tend to be symbolic, ingrained in the political agenda for a long period of time, deals with a policy ends than means, and trigger voters' gut responses to candidates and parties (Carmines and Stimson 1980; 78-80). Voters also more likely to support candidates who run on issues that are traditionally associated with the candidate's party and are of importance to the voter (Abbe et al. 2003). Thus, under the right circumstances, issues are important in political campaigns and elections. Candidates can use issues not only to convey their positions on salient issues of the day, but also to present themselves to potential voters and convey impressions of competence and trustworthiness (Fenno 1978).

Several questions in the Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project survey were open-ended questions which sought information about candidates' issue concerns. These questions allowed the candidates to define their own issue campaign by naming the issue that was the most important in the campaign.[1] Candidates' responses were coded into nine broad categories: minority issues, economic issues, social-cultural issues, social welfare issues, government reform, candidate qualifications, local issues, partisanship/ideology, and miscellaneous issues.

Minority issues include two responses: civil rights and black/white relations. These are issues that are often perceived by the public as explicitly racial issues because African Americans are thought to be the primary beneficiary of these policies (Nelson

and Kinder 1996). While these issues may not appear to be as controversial as other racial issues like affirmative action, these issues are issues upon which African American and white voters have polarized views (e.g. Kinder and Sanders 1996: Chapter 2). In 2000, 40.8 percent of whites surveyed agreed that 'we have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country' as compared to 26.2 percent of African Americans. Approximately seventy-six percent of African Americans sampled believe that 'we don't give everyone an equal chance' as compared to 42 percent of white respondents.[2] In sum, whites are significantly more to believe that conditions have improved for African Americans.[3]

Economic issues include the following responses: taxes and tax reform, economic issues, jobs, unemployment, government debt and the budget, growth and development, business issues, spending, fiscal responsibility, and deregulation. As defined for this project, s*ocial-cultural issues* are issues that generally impact people in society and that are closely linked to the overall lifestyle and social behavior of citizens in society. The responses included in this category are: anti-abortion, pro-life, women's issues, pro-choice, abortion rights, gun control, crime and gangs, family issues, public safety, the drug war, marijuana and other drugs, marriage, same sex marriages, lesbian and gay issues, guns rights, the environment, right to life per assisted suicide, and gambling. *Social welfare issues* generally refer to social services offered to the broader community and, in some cases, particularly vulnerable classes of persons. The responses included in this category include: health care, the elderly and seniors, social security, welfare reform, and education and school finance. Two issues in these two categories, welfare and crime, are entangled with race and have often been used by white Republican candidates to convey implicit racial messages (Mendelberg 2001). Yet because the focus of this chapter

is the campaign strategies employed by African American candidates and not those of white candidates, I chose not to separate these issues from broader issue categories. However, I do assume that most African American candidates are aware of the connection in voters' minds between these issues and race, and that there is the possibility that African American candidates are using these issues to implicitly connect with African American voters in order to maintain their base of supporters.

Government reform includes the following responses: constitutional issues, reducing the size of government, incumbency-related issues such as term limits, campaign reform, and finances, privatization of government services, judicial fairness, government accountability, active representation, youth in politics, raising voter interest, and welfare reform and government corruption. Issues listed in the category, *candidate qualifications,* are issues that are directly related to quality and character of the candidate. The responses included are: personal values, ethics, character, integrity, honesty, qualifications and background, name recognition and image, full-time versus part-time politicians, and negative campaigning. *Local issues* includes the following responses: urban issues, geographic and community ties, property rights, transportation, local issues, infrastructure, housing and rent control, roads and highways and road construction, land use and ownership, utilities, rural concerns, farmers, water issues and flood control, and recreation. *Partisanship/ideology* includes conservative issues, one party domination, party affiliation, and "Republican issues". The last category, *miscellaneous issues,* includes responses that were too narrow to be categorized into the existing classifications, or were mentioned by a small number of candidates. These issues include privacy issues, tobacco issues, and issues candidates self-reported as "other".

Most candidates, regardless of race, should focus on issues that affect broad segments of the population in order to avoid alienating potential supporters. As the results in Table 4.1 show, this is indeed the case. Very few white candidates and none of the African American candidates surveyed focused on minority issues. This suggests that African American candidates are strategically aware that a racialized campaign is potentially divisive and damaging, and that to build the campaign around these issues would give an opponent the opportunity to win the ballots of voters who may feel threatened by explicitly racial rhetoric (e.g. Flanigan and Zingale 1998).

As expected, African American candidates were significantly more likely to focus on social welfare issues than were white candidates. Barbara Cooper, like most incumbents, made her legislative record on social welfare issues the central issue of the reelection campaign. Nonincumbents Johnnie Waller and Michael Murphy also made social welfare issues central to their campaigns. Waller, facing an incumbent who had recently left the Democratic party to run as a Republican, focused most of his campaign around education and health care, hoping that the traditionally Democratic issue would dismantle his opponent's Democratic base of support. Murphy, who had spent years serving on Lansing's city council, crafted an issue message that focused on his opposition to school vouchers, a popular concern in the district. He also heavily stressed his constituent service and experience.

Many of the issues listed in the social welfare category such as Social Security, health care, and education are "bridge issues" that can connect African American candidates with a larger electorate. Surveys of the American public continually reveal that there is a great deal of support amongst the American public for social spending in

the United States, particularly with regard to the elderly, health care, education, and child care (Gilens 1999; Flanigan and Zingale 1998). Thus, in most areas of social welfare, most Americans are "strong supporters of the welfare state, demanding more activity and higher levels of spending from their government" (Gilens 1999).

Public opinion on matters of government policy tends to be shaped in powerful ways by the attitudes citizens possess toward the group they perceive the primary beneficiary of the policy (Nelson and Kinder 1996). Many of the issues in social welfare category were not framed by the African American candidates in the sample as racial issues. Yet, while the issues in this category are not explicitly racial (thus they will not "scare" white voters away from the African American candidate), many of the issues in this category are of particular importance to core constituents of the Democratic Party – racial and ethnic minorities, and women. Between Reconstruction and the Depression, African Americans, when permitted to vote, strongly supported the Republican party (Kousser 1974; 1992). But, as social scientists Kinder and Sanders (1996) note, "the collapse of the American economy in 1929 signaled the beginning of the end of black Republicanism and the formation of a new Democratic majority" (208). Beginning in 1936, a growing majority of African Americans began to vote Democratic. By 1964, 80 percent of African Americans identified with and favored the Democratic party (Tate 1994: 52). This strong support, in addition to the sheer increase in numbers of African Americans who are now able to participate in the electoral process as a result of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, has allowed African Americans to become a sizable and influential constituency within the party (Kinder and Sanders 1996).

While no group is truly monolithic, it is clear that significant gaps between the races with respect to a variety of social welfare issues have led African Americans to be highly supportive of social welfare policies. For example, African Americans are almost twice as likely as whites to lack access to health care. Even when African Americans and whites have equal access to quality health care, African Americans are more likely to receive lower quality care than whites, and have less access to specialty care (Lillie-Blanton et al. 1996).

The racial achievement gap is also of concern for African American parents. According to a report issued by the U.S. Department of Education, eighty-eight percent of African American fourth graders scored below proficient on the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading exam as compared to 60 percent of white fourth graders.[4] Despite the growing size of the African American middle class, class divisions among African Americans are constrained by the perception of a linked fate. Because being an African American has such a profound impact on social and economic opportunities, African Americans are significantly more likely to perceive racial group interests to be individual interests. Thus, African Americans, regardless of social class are more likely to believe that the government has an obligation to help the poor, and help Americans get access to medical care (Dawson 1994: Brown 1999).

Women, who undoubtedly comprise a significant percentage of the Democratic Party, tend to be more liberal than men on social welfare issues, issues that happen to be the source of the gender gap among female and male voters (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Norrander 1999). Women tend to believe that government should do more to solve problems, and that it is important to preserve the

country's social safety net (Carroll 1988). White women also tend to be more liberal than men on a number of indicators of racial attitudes (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999). Therefore, African American candidates, regardless of their party affiliation, may be more inclined to focus on these issues in order to gain the attention and support of these voters.

TABLE 4.1
Most Important Issue in the Campaign

	African American	White	
		Democrats	Republicans
Minority issues	-	1%	-
Economic issues	12	10	27**
Social-cultural issues	8	8	12
Social welfare issues	60	52	34**
Government reform	-	7	4
Candidate qualifications	12	11	11
Local issues	-	5	6*
Partisan issues	-	1	1
Miscellaneous issues	8	5	4
(N)	(49)	(128)	(130)

*Significant at p<05   **Significant at p<.01

Source: Paul S. Herrnson, Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Each cell represents the percentage of African American and white candidates who mentioned each specific issue. Dashes equal less than .05%. The statistical significance of the differences between the groups was tested using chi-square tests. Some cases were dropped because of incomplete or missing data. Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

Further analysis suggests that this may indeed be the case. While there is no significant difference between the percentage of African American and white Democrats that focused on social welfare issues (60 percent of African American Democrats versus 52 percent of white Democrats), there are significant differences among Republicans. All six African American Republican candidates focused on social welfare issues whereas only 34 percent of white Republicans found this to be the most important issue in the campaign (p<.001). Therefore, it is likely that African American candidates focus on these issues regardless of partisan identification because they believe that doing so will encourage these constituents to support them.

While most governmental social welfare spending initiatives are broadly supported by American citizens, one social welfare program has generated a tremendous amount of controversy amongst Americans - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); formerly known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and most commonly referred to as "welfare." For most Americans there is an implicit connection between "poor' and "African American" because African Americans account for a disproportionate number of poor people in America. Most Americans perceive African Americans as numerically the most important group among welfare recipients, thus their attitudes toward welfare are more strongly influenced by perceptions of African Americans than by perceptions of other racial or ethnic groups (Gilens 1999). White Americans also believe that African Americans are less committed to the work ethic than are other racial groups. Thus while welfare attitudes are associated with a number of different aspects of racial views, the perception that African Americans are lazy is consistently the most powerful predictor of white Americans' opposition to welfare. In

fact, perceptions that African Americans are lazy and that welfare recipients are undeserving are the most important predictors of white opposition to welfare spending even when controlling for other significant predictors including age, marital status, family income, ideology, party identification, individualism (Gilens 1999; chapter 4).

During the time this survey was conducted, President Clinton, the most publicly recognizable representative of the Democratic Party, signed into law reform legislation in 1996 that closely resembled legislation proposed by Republicans in Congress. The new bill, TANF, eliminated AFDC, which provided cash assistance to poor families. Under AFDC states determined eligibility and benefit levels and received anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of the cost from the federal government. Under TANF, the federal government granted the states a fixed sum of money for cash assistance or social services. The new bill also introduced time limits on welfare recipients, work requirements for assistance, and gave state governments a great deal of autonomy to impose additional restrictions (Gilens 1999). Given the lack of support for welfare among the electorate, it seems likely that candidates who openly supported these reforms believed that they could do so without fear of retaliation at the polls. Yet, few white candidates and none of the African American candidates in the sample specifically mentioned welfare reform as the most important issue in the campaign.

Whereas African American candidates were more likely to focus on social welfare issues, white candidates, particularly white Republicans respondents were significantly more likely to focus on economic issues. White candidates are also more likely to focus on local issues than are African American candidates. Interestingly, few African American or white candidates focused on social-cultural issues, despite the

growing significance of these issues in elections at the federal level (e.g. Alvarez and

Nagler 1998). It is likely that many of these issues that have gained wide-spread attention

at the federal level (abortion, lifestyle issues) were not expressed by state legislators

simply because these were not the issues of greatest concern to their constituents. This

variation in the issues addressed at the state and federal level reinforces the prevailing

view "that state governments and their politics are [indeed] different from the national

government and its politics" (Gray et al. 1999).

Coalition-building is a vital part of campaign strategy, and all candidates must

pursue a broad range of voters to build a winning coalition. Candidates in the sample

were asked in an open-ended question to identify which groups they targeted most

heavily throughout the campaign.[5] Candidates' responses fell into nine broad categories:

racial and ethnic minority groups, social groups, economic groups, occupational groups,

geographic groups, partisan groups, other demographic groups, likely and absentee

voters, and miscellaneous groups.

Racial and ethnic minority groups includes Latinos, African Americans, and other

minorities. *Social groups* includes groups that focus on many of the issues included in the

social-cultural issues category including guns, the environment, homosexuality, religion,

health care, family values, abortion, and education. This category also includes groups

that are comprised of the following constituents: parents, and teachers. *Economic groups*

includes groups made of the following constituents: homeowners, taxpayers, businesses,

middle class, working poor, and those against taxes. *Occupational groups* includes

groups made up of the following constituents: blue-collar workers, labor union members,

farmers, white collar professionals, lawyers, and students. *Geographic groups* include

rural, local, and urban constituents. *Partisan groups* includes groups made up of the following constituents: Independents, Democrats, Republicans, liberals, Libertarians, party regulars, swing voters, and constitutionalists. *Other demographic groups* includes the elderly, those targeted by age, women, whites, and veterans. The eighth group consists of likely and absentee voters. The final category, *miscellaneous groups* includes dissatisfied/purged voters, and groups candidates specifically referred to as other groups.

The results in Table 4.2 show that African American candidates were significantly more likely to target minorities and social groups than were white candidates. This targeting strategy for African American candidates reflects the fact that both the candidates and many members of these voting blocs predominantly identify with the Democratic Party. Barbara Cooper, a retired teacher, heavily targeted African Americans and activists groups concerned about education in first election campaign. In 1998, Cooper broadened her targeting strategy to include senior citizens and independent voters.

While there is no statistical difference among the percentage of African American and white candidates who target other demographic groups, I do find that African American candidates were significantly more likely to target women than were white candidates (26 percent African American, 7 percent white Democrats, and 5 percent white Republicans; p<.001). Again, this difference can largely be attributed to African American candidates' and women's' shared partisan identification (see Delli Carpini and Fuchs 1993; Tate 1994). Several candidates noted during interviews the importance of targeting women's groups and attracting women to their campaign with their message. At the time Michael Murphy ran for office in 2000, a U.S. Senator and the governor were

women. Noting that "this district, this area elects women", Murphy adopted a pro-choice platform in an effort to attract female votes during the primary and general elections. South Carolina candidate Johnnie Waller also aggressively courted women in his Democratic-leaning district.

TABLE 4.2
Voting Blocs Targeted by Candidates' Campaigns

	African American	White	
		Democrat	Republican
Minorities	13%	3%	3%**
Social groups	23	15	13**
Economic groups	6	5	9
Occupational groups	17	13	12
Geographic groups	-	2	3
Partisan groups	-	12	27**
Other demographic groups	30	23	16
Likely and absentee voters	11	21	14
Miscellaneous groups	-	7	1**
(N)	(53)	(120)	(128)

*Significant at p<.05   **Significant at p<.01

Source: Paul S. Herrnson, Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Each cell represents the percentage of African American and white candidates who mentioned each specific group. Dashes equal less than .05%. The statistical significance of the differences between the groups was tested using chi-square tests. Some cases were dropped because of incomplete or missing data. Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

Candidate Race, Issues, and Voter Targeting: Predictors of Candidates' Vote Shares

If campaigns and campaign-related variables impact the outcome of the elections as some scholars have argued, then issues and vote targeting should have direct effects on candidates' electoral prospects. To test this hypothesis, I use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. The dependent variable is the percentage of the vote won by each candidate. Model 1 in Table 4.3 lists includes candidate-level, campaign-related, district-level, and state-level factors that may influence the dependent variable. The model excludes candidates that ran in uncontested races.

African American candidate is a binary variable that indicated the race of the candidate. The race of the opponent may also impact the percentage of the general election vote a candidate receives. It is likely that voters will be prompted to rely on race as a voting cue when an African American candidate faces a white candidate (e.g. Taylor et al. 1978). *White opponent* is coded 1 if the candidate ran against a white opponent, and 0 if the candidate ran against an African American or Latino opponent.

In addition to race and racial attitudes, contextual factors influence election outcomes (Citron et al. 1990; Williams 1987). *Social welfare issues, economic issues, and target minorities* are dummy variables that measure whether a candidate focused on social welfare issues, and economic issues, and whether a candidate specifically targeted racial and ethnic voters. These two issues and single targeting strategy are included in the model as independent variables to determine whether these issues give candidates a strategic advantage over their opponents in the general election.

Expenditure advantage is the candidate's spending minus the opponent's spending.[6] Some studies include both candidates' expenditures. However, inclusion of these variables often results in multicollinearity. This problem is avoided by using this variable. I expect that candidates who outspend their opponents by large amounts will garner more votes than those who are outspent, or spend similar amounts as their opponent. I hypothesize that candidates who wage professional campaigns, and have greater experience in politics garner more votes than those who do not. *Campaign professionalism* is an additive measure that records the candidates' reliance on paid staff and political consultants for campaign management, media advertising, press relations, issue opposition or research, polling, fundraising, direct mail, mass telephone calling, get-out-the vote activities, legal advice and accounting. *Political experience* is a binary variable where nonincumbents who currently or previously have held elective office (elected officials), and nonincumbents who have significant campaign political experience but who have never held elective office (unelected politicians) are coded as 1. Political amateurs are the base. I combine unelected officials with elected officials rather than amateurs because unelected officials have some degree of political experience, whereas political amateurs have no political experience (Herrnson 2004). Political experience and campaign professionalism should have an indirect effect on candidates' share of the general election vote. Both help candidates raise money and having a professional campaign helps candidate communicate their message more effectively to a wider audience (e.g. Fenno 1996). I also include binary variables to control for party affiliation (*Democrat*), candidate status (*incumbent, open-seat candidate*), and the year of the election (*1998*). We should expect that incumbents and open-seat candidates garner

significantly more votes than challengers, and that incumbents garner more votes than open-seat candidates. Incumbents should garner a higher a greater percentage of the vote because they typically run in uncompetitive contests where they often bury their opponents. Unlike incumbents, open-seat candidates tend to run in competitive, close contests that lower the percentage of the vote a candidate receives.

The model also includes three district-level control variables. *Percent white* is a continuous variable that measures the percentage of white voters in the district. I include this variable to control for the racial composition of the district. *Percent college* measures the percentage of college educated constituents in the district. While several studies have concluded that voters with more years of formal education are more likely to vote (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse et al. 1960; Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980), few studies have explored whether the education level in the district is significantly correlated to the percentage of the vote a candidate receives. Recall in Table 3.4 the education level in the district had a positive and significant impact on individual contributions. It is possible that the education level in the district may have an indirect effect on a candidate's share of the vote. If citizens with a college degree are more likely to engage in political acts, including giving money to candidates and their campaigns (Verba et al. 1995), then it may be that candidates running in districts with more college educated citizens raise and spend more money on the campaign than those who do not. I also control for the number of seats in the district (*multimember district*). We should expect that candidates running in multimember districts receive a smaller percentage of the vote because in these elections, all the candidates run against each other. Whereas a majority party candidate in single member districts compete against a single candidate for

the vote and the voters are permitted to choose one candidate, a candidate running in a district with three representatives competes against multiple candidates to win a seat. Voters can give their vote to three different candidates in the election, but often cast all their votes for one candidate. It is also necessary to control for the type of legislative district because African American candidates who run in single member districts are more successful than those who run in multimember districts (Moncrief and Thompson 1992; also see Grofman 1991; Grofman and Handley 1991; Bullock 1987; Bullock and Gaddie 1993).

Finally, I also control for state-level factors. *Professional legislature* and *hybrid legislature* are binary variables that control for the professionalism of the state legislature. The legislative professionalism may have an indirect effect on candidates' vote shares. Because professional campaigns are more capable of affecting policy and tend to be more valuable, candidates running in professional legislatures are likely to receive more campaign contributions than candidates running in amateur legislatures. These candidates, aggressive about retaining their seats, may also be more likely to actively seek out contributions that allow them to spend more on the campaign.

The results in Model 1 show that issues and targeting strategies have little impact on the outcome of an election. All three variables are statistically insignificant. It is indeed possible that issues discussed in the campaign and direct appeals to specific groups may spark voters' interest in the election. Yet, from this model, there is no evidence to suggest it is the issue or targeting strategy alone that motivates voters to cast votes for candidates.

The model also shows that candidate race has no impact on the percentage of the vote a candidate receives. However, the race of the opponent is significant. Candidates running against white opponents garner less than those who run against African American and Latino opponents. While these findings do not conclusively show that voters use race as a voting cue, these findings mask the reality that few African American candidates run against whites and vice versa. Six percent of white candidates and 11 percent of African American candidates ran against an opponent from a different racial or ethnic group. The remaining candidates ran against candidates who shared their racial or ethnic identity, or ran unopposed. In addition, the racial diversity of the districts in the sample must be taken into account. Seventy-six percent of the African American candidates in the sample ran in districts where African American voters made up 55 percent or more of the district. Ninety-four percent of white candidates ran in majority-white districts. Given that voters are likely to support the candidate with whom they share skin color (Murray and Vedlitz 1978)**,** it is unlikely that the voters in these districts use race to evaluate candidates.

TABLE 4.3
The Impact of Candidate Race, Issues, and Voter Targeting on Candidates' Vote Shares

	Model 1	Model 2
Candidate-level factors		
African American	3.60	14.65
	(4.46)	(9.73)
White opponent	-7.20*	-5.40*
	(3.17)	(3.34)
Campaign Factors		
Social welfare/safety net issues	-.74	-2.91
	(1.99)	(2.04)
African American X social welfare/safety net issues	-	19.55***
		(5.88)
Economic issues	.70	-1.40
	(2.61)	(2.60)
African American X economic issues	-	27.27**
		(10.56)
Target minorities	-4.36	2.60
	(4.29)	(5.43)
African American X target minorities	-	-16.50*
		(8.80)
Expenditure advantage	.03	.04
	(.01)	(.01)
Campaign professionalism	1.29***	1.17***
	(.36)	(.31)
Political experience	-1.40	-1.03
	(2.76)	(2.68)
Democrat	4.60**	4.45**
	(1.85)	(1.78)
Incumbent	23.23***	23.40***
	(2.34)	(2.26)
Open-seat candidate	8.62***	8.24***
	(2.41)	(2.32)
1998	-.05	-2.03
	(4.34)	(4.67)
District-level factors		
Percent white	.05	.12*
	(.06)	(.07)
African American X percent white	-	-.54***
		(.17)
Percent college	-.19*	-.16*
	(.08)	(.08)

Multimember district	-29.17***	-26.65***
	(3.79)	(4.03)
State-level factors		
Professional legislature	-6.08*	-5.95*
	(3.30)	(3.24)
Hybrid legislature	-3.71	-3.13
	(3.02)	(2.91)
Constant	47.63	42.11
Adjusted R^2	.61	.64
(N)	(321)	(321)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (one tailed)

Source: Paul S. Herrnson. Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project, 2000.

Note: Entries are OLS regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

While issues and voter targeting strategies proved insignificant in predicting the percentage of the vote candidates' receive, we can see that several campaign factors strongly influence the outcome of the general election. Candidates who ran professional campaigns received a modest increase in percentage points. As expected, incumbents and open-seat candidates fair better than challengers. Incumbents had a considerable advantage, garnering 23 percent more percentage points than other candidates, whereas open-seat candidates garnered approximately 9 percent more percentage points. Interestingly, party affiliation was a significant predictor of vote shares in the 1996 and 1998 elections. Democratic candidates faired better than Republicans, garnering almost 5 more percentage points. It is likely that this advantage might have been greater if the GOP had not made impressive gains in state legislatures in 1994. Prior to the 1994 mid-term election, Democrats controlled 25 state legislatures, Republicans controlled 8 and 16 were split among the two major parties. By 1996 and 1998 the number of Democratic-controlled legislatures dropped to 20. In 1996, Republicans controlled 18 state legislatures, and 1998 the GOP lost control of only one legislature.[7] The remaining campaign variables, expenditure advantage, political experience, and the year of the election all failed to reach statistical significance.

Several district and state level factors also significantly predict electoral success. As expected, candidates who ran in multimember districts garnered 29 percent fewer percentage points than candidates who ran in single member districts. It is interesting to note that candidates who ran in districts with higher percentages of college educated constituents garnered fewer votes than those who did not. Yet, while the variable is negative and statistically significant, the overall loss of percentage points is negligible to

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most candidates (with the exception of those candidates in extremely close races where every percentage point counts). The results also show that candidates running in professional legislatures garnered 6 percent fewer percentage points that those candidates running in hybrid and citizen legislatures. This finding may be explained by candidate status. We know that challengers fair worse than incumbents and open-seat candidates in the general election, and although candidate status and legislative professionalism are not highly correlated, cross-tabulations reveal higher percentage of challengers ran in professional legislatures as compared to hybrid and citizen legislatures. Of those candidates who ran for office in professional legislatures, forty-eight percent were challengers, whereas only thirty-four percent and twenty-four percent of candidates who ran for office in hybrid and citizen legislatures respectively were challengers (p<.001).

Overall, this model demonstrated that issues and targeting strategies alone have little impact on candidates' electoral success. Yet, it is most probable that issues and targeting strategies in conjunction with other aspects of the campaign significantly influence candidates' electoral prospects. Given the polarizing effect that race has in American society, it is likely that African American candidates can benefit from certain issue and targeting strategies. Drawing on deracialization theory and Petrocik's theory of party issue ownership (Petrocik 1996), I test the combined effect of candidate race and social welfare issues. The theory of party issue ownership holds that certain issues are positively associated with one party, and when voters are most concerned about those, that party's candidates tend to do better at the polls. When a candidate and voter both believe a particular issue to be most important in the election, the voter is more likely to vote for that candidate when the candidate's party "owns" the issue (Abbe et al. 2003).

Most Americans still believe that Democrats better handle most, if not all, of the issues in the social welfare category. For example, a poll conducted in 2000 shows that 51 percent of Americans surveyed thought that Democrats are better for health care whereas only 38 percent of those polled believed Republicans best handle this issue.[8] I hypothesize that African American candidates that focus on social welfare issues (*African American X social welfare issues*) garner a greater percentage of the vote than those who do because: 1) social welfare issues, with the exception of welfare, enjoy wide spread support among the American electorate, and 2) Democrats are perceived by the electorate to better handle social welfare issues.

An overwhelming percentage of African Americans run for elective office as Democrats. Thus, because social welfare issues are "owned" by the Democratic party, it seems likely that African Americans candidates would gain a strategic advantage when they stress issues favorably associated with Democratic candidates. Yet, it is also likely that African American candidates who do not run as Democrats still gain a strategic advantage when they focus on these issues because white voters tend to believe that African Americans are more liberal than other candidates. This perception of liberality is one of the reasons white voters in particular are reluctant to support African American candidates (Williams 1987; Tate 1994). Yet, it is possible that African American candidates, regardless of partisanship, who focus on these issues garner more percentage points because voters, relying on racial stereotypes, perceive them to be liberal and thus, more supportive of governmental social welfare spending initiatives (e.g. Sigelman et al. 1995). This is often true for female candidates who, regardless of their position on

compassion issues, are viewed by the electorate as more sympathetic to those types of issues (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993).

I also include an interaction variable to test the impact of candidate race and economic issues (*African American X economic issues*). This interaction also tests the main assumption of the deracialized campaign strategy: African American candidates can use certain issues and targeting to craft an image that will to appeal to voters - white voters in particular - and will increase their chances of winning the election. Perceptions of the economy and economic conditions, personal or national, influence voters' electoral decisions (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Gomez and Wilson 2001). Voters' opinions about which party best handles economic issues are mixed, but tend to favor Republicans (Petrocik 1996: 831). Yet, it has been argued that when used by African Americans, economic issues may send implicit racial message to white voters that the candidate is a "serious" candidate, who can focus on issues "that transcend the racial question" (Jones and Clemons 1993). It is also possible that in some instances, voters will judge an African American candidate more positively if that candidate takes what is viewed to be a moderate or conservative position on these issues (Sigelman et al., 1995). Thus, by focusing on budgetary issues and finance, African American candidates can address issues that affect all segments of the electorate and possibly mitigate the effects of stereotypical images that whites may hold of African American legislators, thereby increasing their chances of winning crossover votes.

The fourth interaction, *African American X target minorities* tests the combined effects of candidate race and targeting. It is expected that African American candidates who target minorities to the exclusion of other groups are likely to alienate white voters,

and will garner fewer votes. The last interaction tests the combined effects of candidate race and the racial composition of the district (*African American X percent white*). If white voters are reluctant to vote for African American candidates, then we should expect to find that African American candidates running in districts with increased numbers of white voters garner fewer percentage points than those who run in districts with a higher percentage of African American and Latino voters.

It should be noted that in this sample, candidate race is highly correlated with the interaction between candidate race and social welfare issues.[9] This level of multicollinearity is not a result of model specification but due to the large percentage of African Americans who mentioned social welfare issues as the most important issue in the campaign. As in Chapter Three, this variable is included in the model because I am interested in the impact of candidate race in and of itself and this variable is essential in modeling the "real world" effects of candidate race. The coefficients for all the variables included in the interaction will be interpreted together.

The results from Model 2 show that African American candidates gained a strategic advantage when they focused on social welfare and economic issues. African American candidates who focused on social welfare issues increased their percentage of the general election vote by approximately 16 percentage points.[10] Candidates who used these issues performed better than those who did not because they are able to tap into the advantage of party and win supporters who are also concerned about social welfare issues. The results also show that African American candidates who focused on economic issues garnered approximately 26 percent more percentage points than those who did not. This suggests that when African American candidates focus on economic issues, they are

perceived to be making race neutral appeals. In districts where the race of the candidate

has the potential to be a strong factor during the campaign, African American candidates

may prove wise to use economic issues to separate themselves from conventional images

of an African American candidate, thereby sending a message to voters that the candidate

is one who seeks to represent all interests, and not just African American or liberal

interests.

Economic issues proved helpful for one candidate who ran for the state House of

Representatives in 1998. The candidate focused on an array of economic issues during

the campaign including predatory lending, property taxes, and balancing the budget. By

focusing on the issue of predatory lending, the candidate was able to address an issue that

impacted both college students and African Americans in the racially diverse district:

> "One of them [campaign issues] had to do with predatory lending…….. predatory
>
> lending had gotten to be a big issue and I was against having each municipality
>
> come up with a law governing predatory lending. What I wanted was to see was
>
> the state come up with something that would deal with this problem regardless of
>
> where you were as opposed to having each community having to come up with
>
> restrictions on predatory lending and it being different. The other concern was
>
> because of the demographics of [the city in which the district is located]…..I liken
>
> [the city in which the district is located] to a sunflower being the brown part of the
>
> sunshine flower, with the suburb being the petals on the sunflower…….people
>
> have always complained that banks were redlining against lending minorities
>
> money, and that having [the city] come up a law regarding predatory lending
>
> would probably drive the lenders out to the suburbs and dry up loans to the inner

city. And of course, one of the reasons for people getting these types of loans was because they had bad credit and I thought that what we ought to be doing was educating people, starting even in junior high school, teaching Economics 101 to stop young people from going to Cash Mans and Rent to Owns, and taking loans out and not really understanding the ramifications………..And after looking at some of the statistic, particularly in the colleges in the state, we have more young people [predominately white students] dropping out of colleges because of credit card debt than we had dropping out for academic reasons."

This use of predatory lending as a campaign issue (and later as a legislative issue addressed by the candidate once in office) shows that it is possible for African American candidates to focus on broad ranging issues yet at the same time address an issue of concern in the African American community. In discussing the 2002 election, Jesse Jackson argued in the Chicago Sun Times that "African Americans and Latinos and other minorities do not need blatant racial appeals to be inspired to vote. They are the first and worst victims of the rising unemployment and declining wages of the Bush recession. They wanted to hear a strong message about how to create jobs, get the economy working, and put people back to work." Whether or not one agrees that failing economy is the fault of the Bush administration, the message embedded in this statement is clear. Racial and ethnic minorities have a stake in economic issues and are using these issues, just as any other American to help them to make political decisions.

The results also show that the joint effects of candidate race and targeting minorities are also significant. African American candidates who pursued racial and ethnic minorities to the exclusion of other groups garnered approximately 14 percent

fewer percentage points than those who target other groups. This confirms that African American candidates who reach out to voters who are not members of their own racial or ethnic group run stronger campaigns than those who focus their campaigns more narrowly. The results also show that African American candidates who ran in districts with increased numbers of white voters garnered fewer percentage points than those who ran in districts with a higher percentage of African American and Latino voters.

As before, candidate status exerts a significant and positive effect on state legislative elections. Incumbents and open-seat candidates win significantly more votes than challengers. Candidates with professional campaigns garnered more votes than those who did not hire professionals, and candidates who ran in multimember districts and professional legislatures garnered a smaller percentage of votes. Overall, the findings emphasize the salience of campaign strategy, and suggest that while voters use candidate race to determine vote choice, voters can be swayed by the strategic choices that candidates make.

Summary

This chapter demonstrates that African American state legislative candidates are more likely to campaign on social welfare issues and target racial and social groups as part of their campaign strategies. African American candidates gain an advantage when they focus on social welfare and economic issues, whereas African American candidates who focus their targeting strategy solely on racial and ethnic minorities garner significantly fewer percentage points.

These findings confirm that "voting behavior is constrained by the electoral context created by strategic decisions" (Jacobson 2001: 134). The strategic choices that

candidates make do matter and can impact the outcome of elections. While it appears that candidate race has little influence on vote choice, it is apparent that when African American candidates run in districts with increasing percentages of white voters, they receive a lower percentage of the vote. As some studies have concluded, it is possible that racial prejudice significantly reduces white voter support for African American candidates (Sears et al. 1987). The following chapters will more closely examine voting behavior in majority-white districts to determine the way in which candidate race and campaign strategies contributes to the vote choices made by white voters.

Chapter Five: Campaign Issue Strategies and Voter Turnout

Campaigns and elections are marked by vast inequalities among the candidates. Incumbents are significantly more likely to win than challengers because of the advantages incumbency provides. In open-seat contests, one candidate has an advantage over their opponent if the candidate is able to raise and spend thousands more on their campaign. Hence, candidates are rarely on an equal playing field. Just as candidate status and finance provide strategic advantages to candidates, so too does candidate race. Under one set of circumstances, an African American candidates may be significantly more likely to win against a white candidates. Yet, under another set of circumstances, the African American candidate may be strongly disadvantaged and have little hope of winning the election against a white opponent.

One electoral circumstance, the racial composition of the district, has been thought to have a great deal of influence on the electoral success of African American candidates. Despite the tremendous impact of the Voting Rights legislation passed in 1965, in the early 1980s many argued that African Americans, particularly those in the South, remained disenfranchised because racial discrimination by whites made it difficult, if not impossible, for African American candidates to successfully compete in elections. In 1982, Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act was amended by Congress. While the revised provision did not require proportional representation for racial minorities, it did establish that states were in violation of the Act if the political process was one in which members of a protected class had less opportunity to participate and elect representatives of their choice (Yarbrough 2002). This amendment was interpreted by the Justice Department to mean that majority-minority districts should be created when

possible so that African American voters would have a reasonable chance to elect African American representatives (Reeves 1997).

From the very beginning, majority-minority districts drew heavy fire from opponents on all points of the political spectrum. Conservatives, such as Representative Henry Hyde, argue that the districts promote racial segregation (House 1993; 3-5; also see Canon 1999; 5). Often referring to the districts as state sanctioned apartheid, conservative opponents voiced deep concern that whites could not be adequately represented in districts where African American voters compose a majority of the district population. Conservative opponents also contend that white Americans are more racially tolerant, less likely to discriminate against a candidate on the basis of race, and evaluate African American candidates by the same criteria as white office seekers (Thernstrom 1995). Thus, race need not be a point of consideration during the redistricting process. Moderates have expressed concern that these districts dilute African American representation because African American votes are wasted, which reduces the total number of districts African American candidates and sympathetic white Democrats can win (Canon 1999; 5). Finally, opponents on the left argue that these districts have little substantive value (e.g. Guinier 1991).

Despite convincing scholarly evidence that majority African American districts promote biracial politics, and that legislators in these districts do indeed address the needs of African American and white constituents (see Canon 1999), several Supreme Court rulings have begun to impede the creation of majority African American districts. The first major blow was the landmark decision *Shaw v. Reno* (1993). Looking specifically at congressional districts drawn in North Carolina, the Court ruled that majority African

American districts violated the rights of white voters if oddly shaped districts were created solely on the basis of race and ignored traditional districting practices of compactness and continuity (Canon 1999; Yarbrough 2002). Prior to *Shaw*, no opinion of the Court held that using race as a determining factor in redistricting could be challenged under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment (Canon 1999: 79). Since *Shaw*, additional Supreme Court rulings (*Miller v. Johnson* (1995), *Bush v. Vera* (1996), and *Abrams v. Johnson* (1997)) have narrowed the conditions under which majority-minority districts can be established by state legislatures. The *Miller* case, in particular, severely limited the ability of state legislators to create majority-minority districts by moving beyond the shape of the district (as in *Shaw*) to determine whether the Equal Protection Clause had been violated. *Miller* held that race could not be a predominant factor in redistricting. Furthermore, majority-minority districts could not be created to address problems of disenfranchisement and discrimination in jurisdictions with a history of past discrimination against African American voters.

While there remain conditions under which the Court will uphold the creation of majority-minority districts, the future of these districts remains uncertain. What is more certain is that for some time there will be considerably more predominately white legislative districts in this country and it is unlikely that these districts will be challenged on the basis of race. As a result, one might argue that "the greatest growth potential for increases in the number of BEO (black elected officials) will likely be in districts without black voting majorities" (Bositis 2002). Therefore, it is essential to understand under what circumstances African American candidates running in districts with a majority of white voters can win.

African American candidates running in majority-minority districts face very different electoral circumstances than those who run in white dominant districts. In these districts, it is imperative for African American candidates to look to white voters to support their candidacies on Election Day. Yet, at the same time, candidates must also activate and mobilize their primary support base – African American voters. Few studies of campaigns and elections have examined the ways in which African American candidates mobilize both African American and white voters. We saw in Chapter Four that strategic decisions can influence elections. Controlling for all other factors, African American candidates gain a strategic advantage when they focus on social welfare and economic issues. Yet Chapter Four also shows that as the percentage of white voters in the district increases, the percentage of the vote African American candidates receive decreases. To be truly effective, deracialization strategies should have an impact in the context where the issue of race is more likely come into play – when African American candidates run in majority-white districts.

In this chapter, I examine the campaigns of African American candidates in biracial elections in majority-white state legislative districts to explore the relationship between campaign information and voter turnout using precinct-level data from twelve biracial elections between 1996 and 2002 in four southern states: South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. I hypothesize that African American candidates mobilize voters when they implement deracialized issue strategies, focusing on social welfare and economic issues.[1] When building their campaigns, candidates choose issues that are favorable to voters (see Sellers 1998). By focusing on these issues, I hypothesize that African American candidates can draw voters into the political process and inspire people

to participate. The theory of deracialization assumes that by adopting issues that appeal to a broad segment of the population, African American candidates can maintain support from African American voters while attracting support from white voters. Thus, in order for a deracialized issue strategy to be successful, the issues employed by African American candidates should engage people in the electoral process and mobilize both African Americans and white voters.

Campaigns, Issues, and Voter Participation

Political participation has long been viewed as a prerequisite for representative democracy. For democracy to work at its best, citizens must be engaged in politics, and perform one of the simplest political acts, voting. Since the 1960s, we have seen a significant decline in participation. Although we are living in a time where most barriers to participation have decreased, Figure 5.1 demonstrates that a substantial percentage of Americans eligible to vote do not participate in presidential elections and even fewer vote in congressional elections (e.g. Jacobson 2001; Bibby 1992; Miller 1992; Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Cavanagh 1981; Shaffer 1981). As high visibility events, presidential elections draw a great deal of interest and attention from the media. People are often more knowledgeable of this "prestige" office, and will take time to vote for presidential candidates rather than congressional candidates. Because state legislative elections tend to capture little attention, turnout is also lower in state legislative elections. In the state of Maryland, the mean turnout percentage for gubernatorial general elections from 1990 to 2002 was 59 percent.[2] Turnout is even lower in states where state legislative elections do not coincide with congressional or presidential elections. For example, in Virginia, only 31 percent of eligible voters turned out to vote in the 2002 off year state and local

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elections (Shear 2003).

Figure 5.1 National Voter Turnout in Federal Elections: 1960-2000
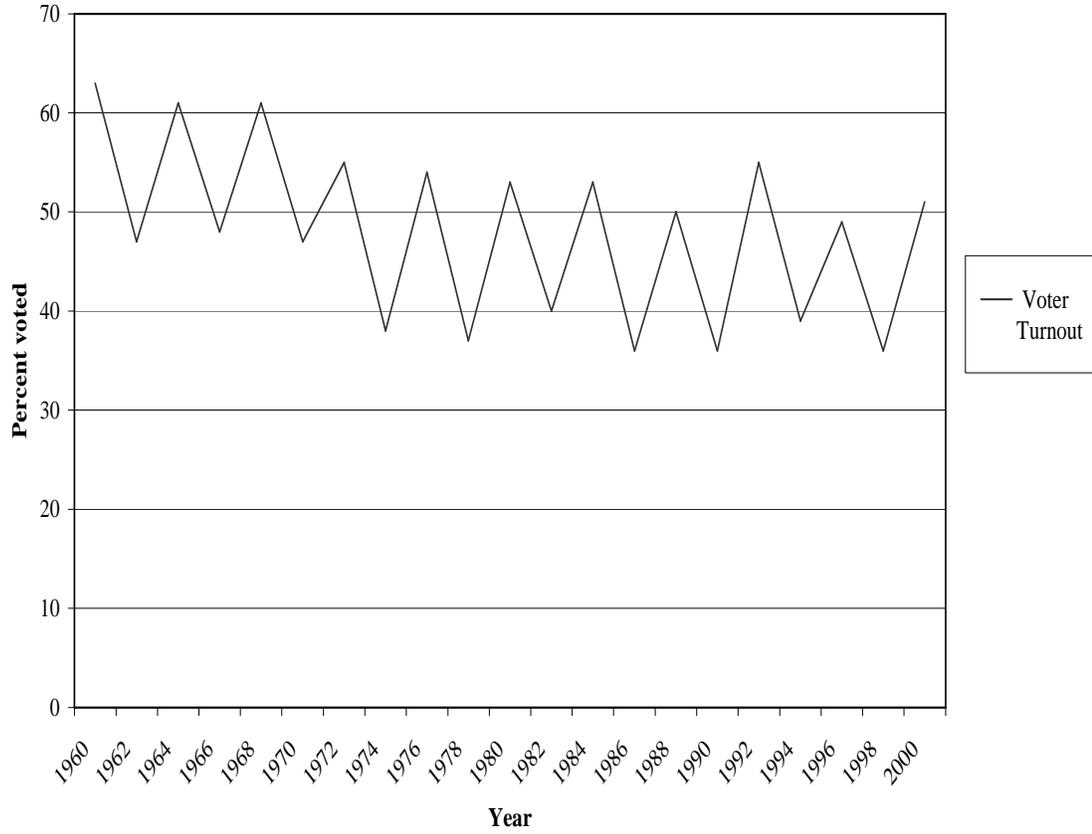
Source: Federal Election Commision.

The predictors of turnout have been well documented by social scientists. Seminal works on political participation focused on demographic explanations. Individual attributes including income, education, gender, and age are often identified as significant predictors of whether people participate in elections (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Milbrath & Goel, 1977). Education is the most important indicator of turnout, as well as other forms of political participation. Gender differences have leveled off, especially for working women (Andersen 1975). Education gives voters skills necessary to process information and experience that the non-educated populace lacks (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). We also know that race and ethnicity are significant predictors of turnout. Figure 5.2 shows that voter registration and turnout in federal elections is consistently lower among racial and ethnic minorities than among whites.

Voter Registration and Turnout in Federal Elections 1972-1998
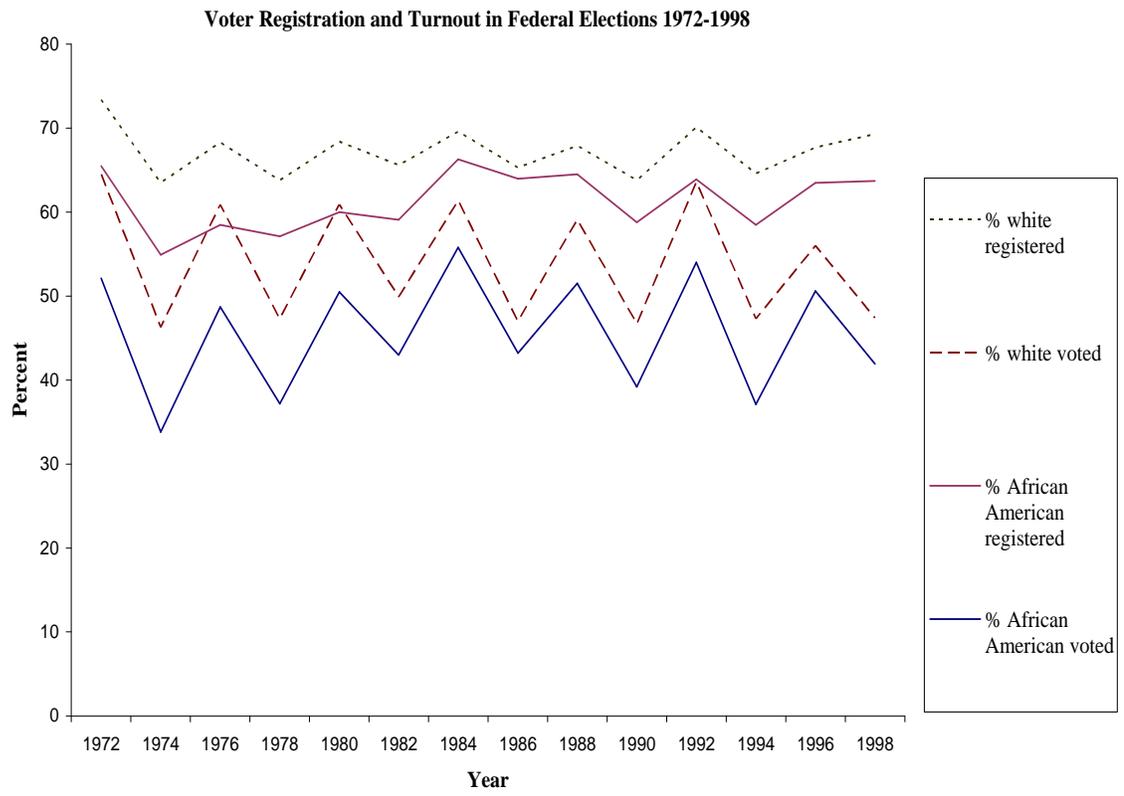
Source: Federal Election Commision

Other explanations for political participation include institutional and psychological factors (e.g. Ragsdale and Rusk 1995). The institutionalist perspective focuses on institutional reforms and restrictions that impact voting behavior. Reforms that shifted the responsibility of determining voter registration and requirements solely up to the states, non-mandatory voting, voter registration, and residency requirements are just some of the criticisms of the American voting system. Countries that have compulsory voting registration line Australia and Sweden have higher turnout rates than in the U.S. where voting is not compulsory (Polsby 1993). Other institutional arrangements, such as the primary system may place obstacles in the way of full voter participation. Primary rules vary by state. For instance, Maryland has a closed primary. Only registered Democrats can only participate in a Maryland's Democratic primaries. The same is true Republican primaries, so voters registered as independents lack the opportunity to participate. Residency requirements, although not as stringent as in the past, still exist and vary from state to state and can present a problem for persons (mainly college students) who have permanent residence in another state. Another key stumbling block to voting is the requirement to register after each move (Squire et al. 1987). The impact of moving is significant, because nearly one-third of the nation moves every two years (1987). The difficulty in registering causes some potential voters, particularly the less affluent and less educated, to not bother (Rosenstone and Wolfinger 1978).

Given the long exclusion of African Americans from politics, one might assert that legal and social barriers to voting have had a lasting effect on African American turnout (e.g. Tate 1994). Shortly after the Civil War, voting rights for African Americans were established by the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. Yet, restrictive devices including

poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses were used by state election officials, particularly in the South, to impede African Americans from voting. With the passage of the Voting Rights Act, the percentage of African Americans registering and voting in elections increased significantly, and African Americans participated in politics at higher levels than would be expected given their overrepresentation among the poor (Shingles 1981). Studies conducted between the 1960s and late 1970s also showed that African Americans were more politically active than whites of similar socio-economic status (e.g. Shingles 1981).

Greater African American participation is largely the result of group consciousness, which develops when members of a group recognize their status as being part of a deprived group (Miller et al. 1981), share a sense of commonality and collectivity, and have an overall commitment to act collectively to satisfy group interests (Antunes and Gaitz 1975; Gurin et al. 1980; Jackman and Jackman 1973; Miller et al. 1981; Wilcox and Gomez 1990). Ultimately, African American consciousness contributes to the combination of political mistrust and political efficacy, which induces political participation (Shingles 1981; 77). Furthermore, group based resources, including church membership and membership in African American political organizations, help to reduce the racial gap in political participation (Tate 1994: 105; also see Verba and Nie 1972). However, studies show that African Americans no longer participate at higher levels than whites of similar socio-economic status (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Bobo and Gilliam 1990) and African American voting lags behind white voting. This lag in voting is particularly true in southern states (e.g. Cavanagh 1979). Estimates of voter turnout in precincts in South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia between

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1996 and 2002 show that African Americans were less likely to vote than whites in state

legislative elections (see Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1
Estimates of Turnout

	White Turnout	African American Turnout
Mean	.6396 (.0035)	.5184 (.0096)
Lower	.5042	.1995
Upper	.7552	.8844
(N)	(421)	(421)

Note: Data are from biracial elections between 1996 and 2000 in South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. King's ecological inference technique was used to determine the point estimates, confidence intervals, and standard errors (King 1997). Standard errors are in parentheses.

Psychological factors that help explain low turnout in elections include increasing cynicism about government, a decrease in the sense that voting is a "civic duty," and an increase in people who are uninterested in and uninformed about politics (Campbell, et al. 1960). Those who are highly interested and involved in politics are significantly more likely to vote than their counterparts (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Individuals with higher level of political knowledge participate in politics at higher rates than those who are political uninformed (Junn 1991; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Participation in voluntary associations is also an important predictor of turnout (Putnam 1995).

In addition to these factors, recent studies have also focused on campaigns, in addition to political parties, interest groups, and the media, as mobilizing agents that may influence political participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Several studies show that campaign spending and electoral competition play an important role in elections (Caldeira and Patterson 1983; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Tucker 1986; Hogan 1999; Francia and Herrnson 2004). A great deal of attention has also been given to negative campaigning and its effect on voter turnout. Negative advertisements generally attack the candidate's credibility on issues as well as the image of candidate. Whereas some scholars have found that exposure to negative campaigning and advertising decreases voter turnout and political efficacy (Ansolabehere et al. 1999), others argue that this form of campaigning has little impact on electoral participation (Lau et al. 1999), or have argued that negative campaigning mobilizes voters to turnout (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Wattenberg and Brians 1999; Freedman and Goldstein 1999). Campaign events including conventions and debates can also influence public opinion and voting behavior (Holbrook 1996).

Campaigns rarely alter voters' issue preferences on policies, especially among those in the electorate who are attentive to politics (Flanigan and Zingale 2002: 174). However, campaigns and the issues candidates run on can encourage people to participate when those issues are of importance to the electorate (e.g. Jacobson 2001; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Patterson and Caldeira 1983; e.g. Key 1964). When used by candidates to convey a particular message to voters, issues can be political force that simultaneously shapes election outcomes and causes citizens to engage in the political process (see Lau et al. 1999: 852). Thus, as the result of significant issues being introduced into the campaign, participation should increase and result in higher voter turnout (Terchek 1979).

Certain issues, particularly those mentioned over time, are consistently important voters, and are often discussed by candidates. Voter support for social welfare policies has been relatively stable since the 1970s (e.g. Shapiro and Young 1989). Social welfare issues also became an issue of immediate concern when President Clinton's presidential campaign in 1992 cast a bright spotlight on social welfare issues, particularly universal social welfare policies. Following his campaign manifesto, *Putting People First*, Clinton proposed (and later attempted) to create a universal health care system. Voters also take the economy into consideration when voting in elections. Politically sophisticated voters tend to vote based on their personal economic well being, whereas less knowledgeable individuals tend to vote based on the perceived health of the economy (Gomez and Wilson 2001). As Table 5.2 shows, many social welfare and economic issues are commonly cited among the most important problems facing the nation by the electorate. Thus, it is likely that these issues will be important in explaining voting behavior and will

help African American candidates, particularly those running in majority-white districts,

deal with the unique challenge of running two campaigns – one to attract white voters

and one to mobilize African American voters.

TABLE 5.2
Most Important Issues for Voters 1996-2000

Rank	1996	1998	2000
1	Economy/Jobs	Education	Moral/Ethical Values
2	Medicare/Social Security	Economy/Jobs	Economy/Jobs
3	Federal Deficit	Social Security	Education
4	Education	Health care	Social Security
5	Taxes	Taxes	Health care/Medicare/Taxes

Note: Polls were collected from the following sources: Voter News Service National Exit Poll (1996), AFL-CIO Post Election Survey (1998), and the Los Angles Times National Exit Poll (2000).

Candidate Race and Issue Strategy: Predictors of Turnout in Majority-White Districts

To test the impact of African American candidates' campaign activities on turnout, it is necessary to estimate two dependent variables – the percentage of white and African American voters who turned out to vote in each precinct. Few states collect this type of data. States that collect voting information by race have been mandated to do so by the Justice department in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. However, even in states where election officials maintain registration statistics by race, few also observe by race the number people who turned out to vote during a particular election. In the absence of individual level data about voting in state legislative elections, aggregate level data can be used to infer individual level relationships. In an effort to estimate individual level electoral behavior, Gary King (1997) designed an ecological inference method that incorporates the deterministic method of bounds with maximum likelihood probabilities.[3] King's method provides accurate estimates and standard errors for those estimates (Voss and Lublin 2001; 1998; Burden and Kimball 1998; Liu 2001).[4]

Drawing individual-level inferences from aggregate data can lead to errors of ecological fallacy. To minimize the potential for errors and biases, I use precinct level data as oppose to district level data. State legislative districts are fairly large, heterogeneous units whereas precincts are smaller and more homogeneous. While some scholars have had success finding individual level data from national exit polls to examine voting behavior (see Highton 2001), unfortunately major survey efforts do not address voting behavior at the state legislative level.[5] Thus, in the absence of data that

evaluates individual level responses from state legislative elections, this technique is the best method to approach this specific research problem.

King's ecological inference technique is used in this chapter to estimate the percentage of African Americans and whites who voted in precincts in four southern states: South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. Voter registration and turnout statistics used to estimate the percentage of African American and white turnout (the total voting age population, the proportion of registered voters who are African American and white, and the proportion of the population who turned out to vote) were collected from state and county boards of elections. The data include twelve state legislative biracial elections between 1996 and 2002. Seven of the eleven African American candidates are challengers. In each election, African American candidates ran as Democrats and white candidates ran as Republicans. The unit of analysis is the electoral precinct and the data includes 421 precincts.

Model 1 in Table 5.3 tests the impact of campaign, candidate, and precinct level factors on white and African American turnout. *African American incumbent*, and *African American open-seat candidate* are binary variables that indicate the race and status of the candidate. African American challenger is the base. We know that in most contests, incumbents do not face strong competition from challengers, and run in uncompetitive elections. One might expect that the presence of an incumbent in an election decreases turnout, as voters may view the incumbent as a shoo-in for reelection, whereas turnout may increase in open-seat contests where the election will likely be more competitive and unpredictable (see Herrnson 2004; 24). Thus, I hypothesize that turnout will decrease when an African American incumbent is in the race, and turnout will

increase in contests featuring an African American open-seat candidate. However, given racial relations in the precinct, it is possible that presence of an African American candidate, regardless of position, may have a positive effect on white and African American turnout. A likely scenario would include a sizeable portion of white voters mobilizing to keep the African American candidate from winning the election. We might also expect African American voters turning out in high numbers to support one of their own, as the presence of an African American in the contest provide other African Americans an incentive to participate (e.g. Tercheck 1979).

That being said, the racial context of the precinct may also influence whether whites and African Americans turnout to vote. *Percent African American* and *Percent white are* continuous variables that measure the percentage of registered African American or white voters in each precinct. Recent research suggests that racial diversity is strong predictor of turnout. Hill and Leighley (1999) found that greater racial diversity in state electorates reduced turnout in elections from 1950 to the 1990s. It is possible that increased percentages of African American voters reduces white turnout, and vice versa. Several studies conclude that higher proportions of minorities are associated with greater levels of group level competition and anti-minority hostility (Key 1949; Blalock 1967; Wilson 1976; Citrin et al. 1990; Glaser 1994; also see Giles and Buckner 1993; Giles 1996). Thus, it is also possible that in precincts with larger African American populations, white turnout increases.

Financial advantage measures African American candidates' total receipts minus white opponents' total receipts. This information was collected from the National Institute on Money in State Politics. I use campaign receipts as opposed to candidate

spending because is a more reliable measure of campaign activity (Krasno et al. 1994). I

hypothesize that the relationship between financial advantage and turnout will be positive

and significant – thus aggressive and intense campaigning should mobilize voters,

increasing voter turnout (Patterson and Caldeira 1983; also see Caldeira and Patterson

1982; Tucker 1986; also see Cox and Munger 1989; Dawson and Zinser 1976).

Campaign professionalism is an additive measure that records the candidates' reliance on

paid staff and political consultants. *Political experience* is a binary variable where

nonincumbents who currently or previously have held elective office (elected officials),

and nonincumbents who have significant campaign political experience but who have

never held elective office (unelected politicians) are coded as 1. Political amateurs are the

base. I combine unelected officials with elected officials rather than amateurs because

unelected officials have some degree of political experience, whereas political amateurs

have no political experience (Herrnson 2004). Candidates who wage professional

campaigns, and have greater experience in politics should be able to effectively mobilize

voters, thereby increasing turnout (see Bibby 1992; Francia and Herrnson 2004). Lastly,

turnout may also be influenced by the intensity of the campaign (Bibby 1992; also see

Caldeira and Patterson 1982; Tucker 1986). *Competitive* is a binary variable where

general elections decided by a margin of 20 percentage points or less are coded 1.

      Model 1 in Table 5.3 shows that few of the variables in the model have a

significant impact on white and African American turnout. The r-squared for the models

for white and African American turnout are quite low. While statistically insignificant,

the direction of the coefficient for African American incumbent is negative for both white

and African American turnout, and it positive and significant for African American open-

seat candidates. This suggests the competitive nature of an open-seat election encouraged more white and African American voters to participate in the election. The results also show that political experience is statistically significant but negative. African American candidates with some degree of political experience have a depressing effect on white and African American turnout. Why might this be the case? It is possible that African American candidates with strong political credentials may appear to be an "outsider" to residents. Particularly, in southern, more rural areas, well-polished and politically sophisticated African American candidates may have a difficult painting themselves as a local – someone who can relate to the lives and experiences of people in the precinct and district. This was certainly the case for one candidate I interviewed, who ran in South Carolina in a district with numerous rural precincts. The candidate was born and raised in the area, and left for several years to attend undergraduate and law school. He then returned to serve as an assistant solicitor in the county. The candidate spent a lot of time trying to convince voters, African American and white, that he could relate to them and their experiences. The candidate, remembering a particular visit to a volunteer fire department in a rural community, recalled that "when I talked about my first practice, my first ground breaking, especially driving my tractor and wreck[ing] it for the first time, it really brings them in. Then they realized that I was one of them."

TABLE 5.3
The Impact of African American Candidates' Issue Strategies on Turnout

	Model 1		Model 2	
	White	African American	White	African American
Incumbent	-1.22	-.65	-7.99*	-7.70**
	(3.51)	(3.20)	(3.38)	(3.09)
Open-seat candidate	7.13***	5.72***	15.18***	13.08***
	(1.83)	(1.68)	(1.87)	(1.72)
Social welfare issues	-	-	40.05***	36.64***
			(3.25)	(2.98)
Economic issues	-	-	46.34***	42.26***
			(4.20)	(3.86)
Percent African American registered voters	-2.25	-	-.14	-
	(2.58)		(2.23)	
Percent white registered voters	-	-2.27	-	-2.38
		(2.33)		(1.97)
Financial advantage	.01	.01	.01***	.01***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Campaign professionalism	.18	.28	-2.68***	-2.32***
	(.45)	(.41)	(.53)	(.48)
Political experience	-7.23***	-7.79***	3.07	1.99
	(2.09)	(1.91)	(2.01)	(1.84)
Competitive	-.05	.06	-.63	-.68
	(1.24)	(1.13)	(1.06)	(.97)
Constant	63.88	55.79	7.99	4.84
Adjusted R^2	.07	.06	.32	.31
(N)	(421)	(421)	(421)	(421)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (one tailed)

Source: Collected by author from South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia state and county boards of elections.

Note: Entries are OLS regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Model 2 includes campaign issues to test the impact of African American candidates' issue strategies on white and African American voter turnout. Drawing from newspaper accounts of the campaign and interviews with African American candidates, issues identified as the most salient issues discussed by the candidate during the campaign were coded into three broad categories: *economic issues, social welfare issues,* and *social-cultural issues*. *Economic issues* include economic development, improving the local economy, and balancing the state budget. *Social welfare issues* include health care, social security, infant mortality, and education. *Social-cultural issues* include the environment and abortion and are the basis for comparison in the model. The coding schema used to code candidate responses into broad categories in Chapter Four was followed to code the data. We saw in Chapter Four that African American candidates in general gain a strategic advantage when they focus on social welfare and economic issues. Thus, it is likely the case that African American candidates running in majority-white districts benefit from these strategies. By focusing on these issues, they are able to mobilize both sets of voters.

The results show that turnout among white and African American voters does increase when African American candidates focus on social welfare or economic issues. White turnout increased by 40 percent and African American turnout increased by 35 percent when African American candidates focused on social welfare issues. White and African American turnout also increased by 46 and 42 percent respectively when African American candidates ran on economic issues. These findings suggest that when African American candidates employ these issue strategies, they mobilize both white and African American voters to participate, which results in higher voter turnout.

In spite of these significant results, it is important to note that increased turnout does not translate into votes for a particular candidate. One cannot conclude from this analysis that increased white turnout leads to greater white support for African American candidates. However, the increase in African American turnout is very important for African American candidates. Deracialization strategies are designed to help African American candidates attract white voters, but yet at the same time, it is imperative for these candidates to be able to activate and mobilize African American voters. The results suggest that an issue platform that is not explicitly racial resonates with African American voters. This is encouraging for candidates who want to keep a consistent message throughout the campaign. As one candidate put it:

> "I tried to keep it [message to the African American community and to white voters] general, consistent…..certainly there would be times where it was just primarily African Americans, but our theme was, I'm qualified, I have what it takes, I know the people here, and I care about the issues….Once they see the sincerity, they'll [all voters regardless of color] will support you. But yes, to African Americans, it was a matter of that you need to get out and vote. We have solid candidates, we don't have any mess. We are not telling you to vote for this person just because they are black. We're voting for this candidate because this is the best person for the job. Even thought there were different audiences, we did try to stay consistent, very consistent."

Several African American candidates engaged in mobilizing efforts to increase registration in the African American community. While most candidates noted the importance of churches and their open door policy toward African American candidates,

many stated that they received little to no assistance from the party with get-out-the vote efforts. Given what we know about the ability of parties to increase voter turnout (e.g. Crotty 1971; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Walters 1988; Weilhouwer 2000), the state party organization missed a golden opportunity to increase their candidates' chances of winning the election.

The results also show that once campaign issues are introduced into the model, several candidate and campaign factors have a significant impact on white and African American turnout. Controlling for all other factors, the presence of an African American incumbent in the election decreased both white and African American turnout by approximately 8 percent. The presence of an open-seat candidate in the contest increased white and African American turnout by 15 and 13 percent, respectively. *Financial advantage* is positive and significant, indicating that the amount of money a candidate has to contribute to the campaign influences voter turnout. Political experience was a negative predictor of turnout in Model 1. This is no longer the case when issues are introduced into the model. Rather, we find that campaign professionalism has modest but negative impact on both African American and white turnout. It is not quite clear why having an African American candidate with a more professional campaign organization would deter voters from participating in an election. As one candidate suggested, it could be that voters are put off by African American candidates with "slick" campaigns – particularly when the campaign brings in professionals from outside the community and state. Interestingly, it is highly possible that this may be a regional effect. Several candidates who ran in non-southern states with highly professional legislatures did not voice this concern.

Summary

This chapter demonstrates that white and African American turnout increases when African American candidates running in majority-white districts focus on social welfare issues and economic issues. By focusing on these issues, white and African American voters are mobilized to participate and are significantly more likely to go to the polls. These findings are encouraging, and suggest that most social welfare and economic issues may "cut through the electorate in such a way as to attract African American support without diminishing substantial white support" (Terchek 1979).

However, based on the results presented here, one cannot assume that increased level of turnout among white voters translates into white votes for African American candidates. It could be the case that the issues increasing white turnout are those that result in few votes for African American candidates. The efforts of the Civil Rights Movement are a prime example (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 193). During this period, the push for legal equality and full citizenship rights for African Americans had a significant effect on African American political participation, as participation in civil rights activities significantly increased turnout. Yet, in an effort to challenge the movement's efforts, turnout rates among Southern whites also increased. Using ecological inference estimates, the following chapter will examine whether African American candidates who use deracialized issue strategies receive a higher level of crossover votes.

Chapter Six: Campaign Issue Strategies and White Crossover Voting

It has been argued that while African Americans have made important electoral gains, race has an enduring influence in American campaigns and elections. Conventional wisdom suggests that racial discrimination by whites continues to shape white voting behavior, ultimately keeping African Americans from winning office (Lublin 1995; Davidson and Grofman 1994; Grofman and Handley 1989; also see Terkildsen 1993; Citrin et al. 1990; Williams 1990; Underwood 1997). However, recent victories by African Americans in racially diverse districts and majority-white districts suggest that white voters' decisions to cast a ballot for African American candidates are influenced by the race of the candidate and by the strategic decisions African American candidates make. Individual level data used in Chapter Four shows that African American candidates who focused on social welfare and economic issues significantly increased the percentage of the general election vote. However, contextual factors are also important. African American candidates who ran in increasingly white districts garnered fewer percentage points than those who ran in districts with more African American and Latino residents.

The findings in Chapter Five show that deracialized issue strategies built around social welfare issues and economic issues have a positive impact on white and African American turnout. One might argue that these strategies are important simply because they help to increase turnout in state legislative elections. Participation by the people lies at the heart of democratic politics, thus campaign efforts that inspire voters to engage in the political process are likely to be encouraged (but see Ansolabehere et al. 1999). But, for candidates, getting people to the polls is only important if those coming out to vote

cast their ballot in support of the candidate. At the end of the day, votes are what matter. Without votes, candidates cannot win the ultimate prize – a term in office. Thus, to know whether the issue strategies employed by African American candidates are truly effective in majority-white districts, it is necessary to look at how whites vote when given the chance to cast their ballot for an African American candidate.

In this chapter, I examine the campaigns of African American candidates in biracial elections in white dominant state legislative districts to explore the relationship between campaign information and white crossover voting using precinct-level data from twelve biracial elections between 1996 and 2002 in four southern states: South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. I hypothesize that white crossover voting increases when African American candidates focus on social welfare and economic issues. By focusing on issues, I hypothesize that African American candidates will be able to attract white voters to their campaigns.

Candidate Race, Campaign Issues, and White Voting

Recall that when evaluating candidates, voters use informational shortcuts like partisanship and incumbency. Whereas some cues like partisanship and incumbency require greater cognitive sophistication (Sniderman et al. 1991; Lau and Redlawsk 2001), candidate demographic cues, including candidate race, may be more widely used in state legislative elections. Elections at the state legislative level are low information elections where there is often little media coverage of the candidates and candidates have fewer resources to invest in the campaign than candidates running for high profile state and congressional elections. When the media pay attention to elections, often attention is devoted to candidates' personalities and the election horse race rather than the

candidates' positions on the issues (Graber 1980; Patterson 1980). Thus, in the absence of

media coverage or detailed information about a candidate's platform, voters will use

candidate demographics to ascertain the policy preferences and political ideology of

candidates (McDermott 1998; also see Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b). Voters also use

candidate demographics to evaluate candidates when they observe little difference in

candidates' policy positions (Bullock 1984).

Much of the research on political and social stereotypes of African American

candidates shows that white voters think negatively about African Americans as a group,

and ascribe negative stereotypes to African American candidates (Bobo and Kluegel

1993; Kinder and Mendelberg 1995; Gilens 1995; McDermott 1998; Reeves 1997;

Sigleman et al. 1995; Williams 1990). Although racial crossover voting occurs in

elections, most whites continue to cast their ballots along racial lines in elections

involving African American candidates (Reeves 1997; Terkildsen 1993; Citron et al.

1990; Voss and Lublin 2001; but see Sigelman et al. 1995; Highton 2001). Some white

voters have to overcome deep prejudices to vote for an African American candidate. For

example, when Representative Sanford Bishop Jr. ran for re-election in a rural

conservative majority-white district, several supporters noted that they liked him because

they "wouldn't have thought a black man would know enough to do the job" (Sack

1998).

While voter centered theories of white voting are important to understanding state

legislative elections, white voting behavior can not be fully explained without exploring

the ways in which candidates and their campaigns can influence the outcome of an

election. In addition to appearance and personal attributes, voters' perceptions of

candidates are also influenced by the messages candidates communicate during the campaign (Banducci et al. 2003). A candidates' choice of message is directly linked to that candidate's desire to win voters; thus most candidates emphasize issues that are viewed favorably by voters (Sellers 1998). Using a deracialization strategy targeted at white voters in their districts, African American candidates can make it more difficult for white voters to rely on negative racial stereotypes. By focusing on issues like the state budget and economic development, African American candidates are able to project a moderate image that helps them mitigate the effects of stereotypical images that whites may hold of African American candidates.

In addition, African American candidates, like female candidates, should gain a strategic advantage when they stress issues, like social welfare issues, that voters associate favorably with African Americans candidates (see Herrnson et al. 2003). By focusing on these issues, African American candidates may benefit from voters' stereotypes as well as the advantages of party affiliation (e.g. Sigelman et al. 1995; McDermott 1998; Petrocik 1996; Rahn 1993). Voters, relying on racial stereotypes, may be more likely to infer African American candidates to be more supportive of governmental social welfare spending because African American candidates are viewed as more liberal than their white counterparts (Williams 1990). In addition, an overwhelming percentage of African Americans run as Democrats, who are perceived by voters to better handle social welfare issues better than Republicans (Petrocik 1996). It is also likely that African American candidates gain a strategic advantage when they stress economic issues that convey a moderate or fiscally conservative message (Sigelman et al. 1995).

Candidate Race and Issue Strategy: Predictors of White Crossover Voting

If candidate race and campaign related variables impact the outcome of elections, then African American candidates' issue strategies should have a significant impact on white crossover voting. Moreover, if African American candidates are able to gain a strategic advantage by focusing on certain issues, then we should expect to find that African American candidates who stress economic and social welfare issues attract more white voters to their campaigns than those who stress other issues. King's (1997) ecological inference technique is used in this chapter to estimate the percentage of white voters who cast their ballot for the African American candidate. As in Chapter 5, voter registration and turnout statistics used to estimate the percentage of African American and white turnout were collected from state and county boards of elections in four southern states: South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia.[1] For the 421 precincts in the sample, mean percentage of white crossover voting was 42.8 percent.

TABLE 6.1
Election Statistics – African American State Legislative Candidates (1996-2002)

State	Election Year	District*	# of Precincts	Mean % of registered African American voters	Mean % white crossover voting
FL	2000	26	67	10.3	40.5
		3*	152	23.3	55.3
GA	1996	64	12	34.1	40.7
	1998	64	13	48.6	53.6
NC	1998	97	23	44.8	64.6
		92	21	6.3	23.1
SC	1998	16	19	28.1	33.9
	2002	11	20	20.5	27.7
		15	22	24.9	27.1
		43	19	24.6	24.0
		58	31	19.4	28.1
		86	22	26.2	27.8
(N)			(421)		

Note: * denotes Senate districts

Source: Collected by author from South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia state and county boards of elections.

In his study of biracial primary, runoff, and general elections in Atlanta between 1970-1982, Charles Bullock (1984) examined under what conditions whites vote for African Americans and vice-versa. Bullock found that while Atlanta voters usually vote for candidates of their own race, whites were more likely to vote for African American candidates if they were incumbents or had the backing of local newspapers. African American incumbents were almost three times as likely as African American challengers and open-seat candidates to receive the support of white voters. Bullock also found that African American candidates win larger shares of the vote when relatively few African American voters desert the African American black candidate, relatively larger numbers of whites vote for the African American candidate, African American turnout is high, and African Americans constitute a higher proportion of the registered voters (Bullock 1984; 249). These conditions hold true for the candidates in the sample (see Table 6.2).

TABLE 6.2
The Effects of Independent Variables on the Share of the Vote Received by African American Candidates

White Crossover voting	.77***
	(.01)
African American crossover voting	-.38***
	(.05)
African American turnout	.22***
	(.02)
Percent African American registered voters	.02*
	(.01)
Constant	.13
Adjusted R^2	.95
(N)	(421)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (one tailed)

Source: Collected by author from South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia state and county boards of elections.

Note: Entries are OLS regression unstandardized coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The coefficient for white crossover voting is the largest coefficient in the model. It shows that in contests where African American candidate run against white candidates, winning the support of white voters has the largest impact on the percentage of the vote African American candidates receive. This suggests that African American candidates who cannot win support from white voters have difficulty winning elections (Bullock 1984; 249). This is an important concern for the African American candidates, particularly those running in majority-white districts. The mean percentage of registered African American voters in the sample is approximately 23 percent whereas the mean percentage of registered white voters is 74 percent. In the absence of a large African American electorate, white crossover voting is critical for African American candidates to increase their share of the vote.

Figure 6.1 also highlights the importance of registered African American voters in the precinct. African American candidates clearly have far greater success when the percentage of African American registered voters and white crossover voting is high. As Table 6.2 indicates, it is also vital for African American candidates to win the votes of African American voters in their districts. The percentage of African American voters who cross racial lines to vote for the white candidate also has significant effect on African American candidates' success. Relatively high levels of African American crossover voting in South Carolina's 11th district contributed to Johnnie Waller's defeat in 2002. Waller won 5 out of the 20 precincts in the district. In those districts where he won, mean white crossover voting was 48 percent and African American crossover voting was 8 percent. In the precincts where he lost to his white opponent, white

crossover voting was only 20 percent and African American crossover voting was 13

percent.

Figure 6.1
White Crossover Voting and African American Victory (precinct)
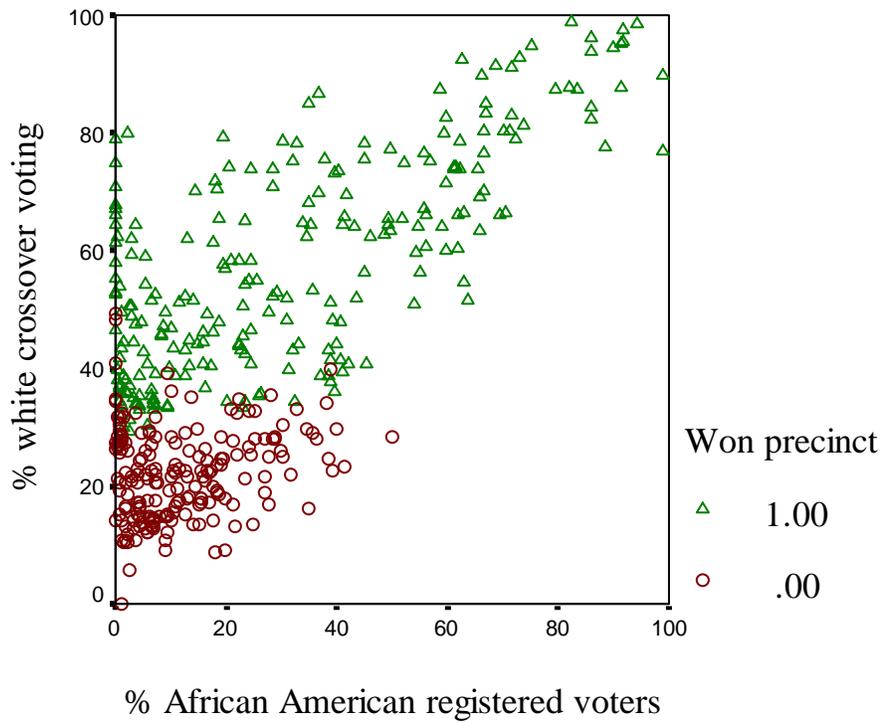
Source: Collected by author from South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia state and county boards of elections.

Model 1 in Table 6.3 tests the impact of campaign, candidate, and precinct level factors on white crossover voting. *Incumbent* and *open-seat candidate* are binary variables that indicate the status of the African American candidate. Given that incumbents enjoy extensive advantages over their opponents (e.g. Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1977; Ferejohn 1977; Jewell and Breaux 1988; Cox and Morgenstern 1993), it is expected that African American incumbents will draw greater support from white voters than African American challengers and open-seat candidates (Swain 1993; Bullock 1984).

The racial context of the precinct may also influence white crossover voting. *Percent African American* is a continuous variable that measures the percentage of registered African Americans voters in each precinct. Several studies conclude that as the size of the African American population increases, whites are more likely to perceive a racial threat, which leads whites to vote against African American candidates (Key 1949; Huckfeld and Kohfeld 1989). If this is the case, then we should expect to find that in precincts with larger African American populations, white crossover voting decreases. Yet a growing literature suggests that the racial context positively influences white political behavior (e.g. Carsey 1995, 2001; Voss 1996; Liu 2002). Thus, it is possible that greater contact and interpersonal interactions with African Americans will result in higher levels of crossover voting.

Financial advantage measures African American candidates' total receipts minus white opponents' total receipts. This information was collected from the National Institute on Money in State Politics. I hypothesize that white crossover voting increases when African American candidates raise and outspend their opponents' campaigns (e.g.

Jacobson 1978; 1990). *Campaign professionalism* is an additive measure that records the candidates' reliance on paid staff and political consultants. We should expect that candidates who raise more money and wage professional campaigns garner more votes than those who do not (Herrnson 1992). *Political experience* is a binary variable where African American nonincumbents who currently or previously have held elective office (elected officials), and African American nonincumbents who have significant campaign political experience but who have never held elective office (unelected politicians) are coded as 1. African American political amateurs are the base. I combine unelected officials with elected officials rather than amateurs because unelected officials have some degree of political experience, whereas political amateurs have no political experience (Herrnson 2004). We should expect that African American candidates with higher levels of political experience garner more crossover votes than those who have little political experience. Candidates with higher levels of political experience are those who have risen through the ranks and thus are able to highlight their expertise as they campaign.

TABLE 6.3
The Impact of African American Candidates' Issue Strategies on White Crossover Voting

	Model 1	Model 2
Incumbent	5.22	10.15**
	(4.25)	(4.23)
Open-seat candidate	19.64***	2.004***
	(2.21)	(2.36)
Social welfare issues	-	35.74***
		(4.11)
Economic issues	-	23.08***
		(5.31)
Percent African American registered voters	.63***	.67***
	(.03)	(.03)
Financial advantage	.01***	.01***
	(.00)	(.00)
Campaign professionalism	-1.66**	-1.79**
	(.54)	(.68)
Political experience	-5.20*	6.35**
	(2.54)	(2.54)
Constant	14.16	-39.01
Adjusted R^2	.64	.72
(N)	(421)	(421)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (one tailed)

Source: Collected by author from South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia state and county boards of elections.

Note: Entries are OLS regression coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The results in Model 1 show that most of the variables in the model have a significant impact on white crossover voting. African American open-seat candidates received 19 percent more percentage points than incumbents and challengers. The coefficient for African American incumbents is positive but falls just shy of statistical significance at the .05 level. Contrary to the group threat theory, there is little evidence that white voters mobilized against African American voters. The presence of African Americans in the precinct appears to have a positive impact on white voter's attitude toward African American candidate (Carsey 1995; Voss 1996; Liu 2002). All things being equal, white crossover voting for an African American candidate in a biracial election is 41 percent in a precinct where the percentage of registered African American voters is 20 percent. White crossover voting for an African American candidate in a biracial election is 79 percent in a precinct where the percentage of African American voters in 80 percent. It is also possible that the traditional group threat theory hypothesis is lacks explanatory power because these precincts form districts where whites are the numerically dominant group. Thus, it is likely that whites hold most major elected offices and white voters in the districts perceive little threat from African Americans (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2001: 311).

As expected, campaign spending has a positive and significant impact on white crossover voting. While the remaining variables are significant, the coefficients for these variables are negative. When African American candidates run professionalized campaigns and have political experience, white crossover voting decreases. This result is very surprising given they hypothesized relationship between these variables and white crossover voting. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is possible that voters view

candidates with strong political credentials as outsiders who lack a real or perceived connection to their community, and are reluctant to vote for them. White voters may have negative feelings about African American candidates who run professional campaigns because the candidates tend to bring in professionals from outside the community and state.

Model 2 includes two additional campaign variables to test whether the issues employed by African American candidates motivate white voters to cast votes for African American candidates. Building on the findings from Chapter Four, I hypothesize that white crossover voting increases when African American candidates focus on economic and social welfare issues. Drawing from newspaper accounts of the campaign and interviews with African American candidates, issues identified as the most salient issues discussed by the candidate during the campaign were coded into three broad categories: *economic issues, social welfare issues,* and *social-cultural issues*. *Economic issues* include economic development, improving the local economy, and balancing the state budget. *Social welfare issues* include health care, social security, infant mortality, and education. *Social-cultural issues* include the environment and abortion and are the basis for comparison in the model. The coding schema used to code candidate responses into broad categories in Chapter Four was used to code the data.

The results from Model 2 show that when African American candidates stressed economic issues, white crossover voting increased by 23 percentage points. Moreover, white crossover voting increased by 36 percentage points when African American candidates stressed social welfare issues. These results suggest that in elections where the

race of the candidate has the potential to be a strong factor during the campaign, African American candidates may prove wise to use these issues to reach out to white voters.

As for the control variables, *African American open-seat candidate* is both positive and significant, as is the variable measuring incumbency. In Model 1, African American incumbent was positive but shy of statistical significance. The introduction of social welfare and economic issues into the model also has an interesting impact on the political experience variable. In Model 1 white crossover voting decreased when African American candidates has some degree of political experience, yet the variable is positive and significant in Model 2. All things being equal, white crossover voting is 44 percent in a precinct when the African American candidate is an elected or unelected official, and 38 percent when the candidate is a political amateur.[2] This finding suggests that once issues are introduced in to the campaign, white voters are likely to support a qualified African American candidate (whose experience gives the candidate the appearance of someone who is prepared to handle the job of legislator) more so than an African American candidate with no political experience. As in Model 1, the remaining control variables are statistically significant. The coefficients for *Percent African American registered voters* and *Financial advantage* are positive and statistically significant.

As in Chapter Five, *campaign professionalism* is negative and significant. This finding is very interesting given what we know about campaign professionalism in state and local elections. Electoral politics at the state and local level is "relatively simple business"; most successful candidates are still able to run relatively amateur operations. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 4, campaign professionalism, while modest, has a positive and significant impact on the percentage of the vote received by general election candidates.

It appears that African American candidates in the sample are penalized by white voters when they run modern, technologically sophisticated campaigns. After losing the election by a close margin, it was suggested to one African American candidate by party leaders that his professionalized campaign might have hurt his chances of winning. "He said that voters chose [the candidate's opponent] because of his humble, door to door campaign." This is troublesome for African American candidates who like their white counterparts, are trying to adapt to changing nature of state legislative politics. It must be noted that the sample only features African American candidates who ran in southern states, so it is highly possible that this is a regional effect. Given that a significant percentage of African American candidates run in southern states, the impact of African American candidates' campaign professionalism on white crossover voting is worth further study. Overall, the findings from Model 2 emphasize the salience of campaign strategy, and suggest that African American candidates' issue strategy is a strong predictor of white voting behavior.

Summary

This chapter demonstrates that African American candidates' issue strategy is a significant predictor of white crossover voting in biracial elections. When African American state legislative candidates stress economic and social welfare issues during the general election, they are able to attract a significant percentage of white voters to their campaigns. I also find that the effects of race on white voting behavior are conditional – white voters do not display consistent bias against African American state legislative candidates (e.g. Voss and Lublin 2001). Yet, it should be noted that white crossover

voting decreases when African American candidates run in competitive elections against white opponents.

These findings are somewhat encouraging for those who are concerned about African American representation in this post-*Shaw* era. If the greatest growth potential for increases in the number of African American elected officials is indeed in districts without black voting majorities, as Bositis (2002) concludes, then this chapter shows that candidates' issue strategy may be one way to ensure that the number of number of African Americans in state legislatures continues to increase.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This dissertation examines the extent to which candidate race and campaign strategies influence state legislative elections. The principal goals of this study were to address two broad research questions. First, do African American candidates' campaigns differ from white candidates' campaigns? The answer is: yes, and no. African American and white state legislative candidates look to the same broad groups of contributors for contributions: individuals, political parties, and interest groups and their PACs. African American and white state legislative candidates also organize their campaigns in a similar manner, relying on a small number of consultants and paid staff to organize and run their campaigns. However, voters' dispositions toward race ultimately place strategic imperatives on African American candidates. Because of their race, African American candidates raise tend to raise less money than white candidates and receive less per capita contributions from businesses and their PACs. African American candidates also have difficultly winning elections outside of majority-minority districts because of racially polarized voting (Lublin 1997). In light of these challenges, African American candidates' campaigns are substantively different. African American candidates are more likely than white candidates to focus on social welfare issues and to target racial and social groups. White candidates, particularly white Republicans are more likely to focus on economic issues, and target partisan groups.

The second question is: do African American candidates' campaign strategies influence white voting? Yes, they do. When African American candidates focus on diffuse, mainstream issues, white voters, who historically have been reluctant to vote for African Americans, are significantly more inclined to do just that. This concluding

chapter summarizes the findings presented in the preceding chapters and discusses some of their implications for campaign and elections, as well as African American representation.

Race permeates American society and politics. While racial attitudes in the U.S. continue to liberalize, it is clear that some degree of prejudice and negative predispositions still abound. Chapter Three shows that candidate race has a small but significant degree of influence on campaign contributions in state legislative elections. African American candidates raised significantly less money per person in the district than white candidates. While African American and white open-seat candidates raised similar amounts, white incumbents out-raised African incumbents. Candidate race did not have a significant impact on the amount of contributions African American candidates raised from individuals and political parties. However, candidate race did influence the amount of money African American candidates raised from some interest groups and their PACs. African Americans state legislative candidates had little trouble raising money from labor unions and their PACs but were strongly disadvantaged with regards to contributions from businesses and their PACs.

Money is the mother's milk of politics and without it, all candidates, regardless of race, have difficulty winning elections. Yet facing this inequality, I have argued that African American candidates can use deracialized campaign strategies to increase their chances of winning the election. Thus, in addition to candidate race and voters' racial attitudes, election outcomes can also be explained by the strategies African American candidates employ. Chapter Four shows that when African American candidates gain a strategic advantage when they focus on social welfare and economic issues. By running

on these issues as part of a deracialized issue strategy, they garner a greater percentage of the general election vote. By focusing on social welfare issues, candidates are able to tap into the advantages of party affiliation and win the support of voters who believe that as Democrats, they are better able to handle those issues. By focusing on economic issues, American candidates send a message to voters that the candidate is one who seeks to represent the interests of all the voters in the district, regardless of race.

African American candidates running in majority white districts have the unique challenge of running two campaigns – one for white votes and one for African American support. Chapter Five shows that social welfare and economic issues, as part of a deracialized issue strategy, have a positive effect on African American turnout. This is important because although African Americans are not a majority in these districts, they are the candidate's primary support base and are most likely to vote for the candidate. The results in this chapter also show that both African American and white voters are mobilized to vote when explicitly racial issues are not the central focus of the candidate's campaign.

African American candidates running in majority white districts also need a significant percentage of the white vote to increase their chances of winning the election. Historically, white voters have been reluctant to vote for African American candidates. Chapter Six shows that the issues employed by African American candidates can motivate white voters to cast their ballots for an African American candidate. Deracialized issue strategies have a positive and significant impact on white crossover voting. Thus, in biracial electoral contexts where the race of the candidate has the potential to be a prevalent factor in the campaign, African American candidates can

increase their chances of winning by focusing the campaigns around social welfare and economic issues, in an effort to reach white voters.

Deracialization strategies and their impact on the outcome of an election have strong implications for African American representation. For an overwhelming majority of African American candidates, winning a biracial election in a predominately white district will be a difficult task, which is reflected by the small number of state legislative candidates that have been able to accomplish this feat. Using deracialization strategies, African American candidates now have a real chance of winning elections outside of predominately African American districts. Deracialized issue strategies have helped and can help many more African American candidates run successful campaigns. Not every candidate will win, but as the elections of Cusak and Lawson show, what was once thought impossible is now a political reality. Thus, Carol Swain's (1993) argument that African Americans need not limit their political campaigns to predominately African American districts is an important one.

African American candidates should run in predominately white districts not only because there is a real possibility that they could win, but because having African American candidates run in these districts may in some way help bridge the differences between the races. If we, as a society, are truly committed to a higher moral standard where we judge people based on content of character and not simply their color, we must have individuals who are willing to challenge the social order and conventional, stereotypical views. Without realizing it, African American candidates running in predominately white districts may help some whites abandon previously held stereotypes by simply meeting and discussing issues with them.

This is precisely what happened for the candidate who ran for state legislative office in Delaware during the 2002 election cycle. The candidate won the Democratic nomination to run in the predominately white district, but received little support from the state party. The candidate was very attentive with the people he met, often spending 20 or 30 minutes talking to a potential voter. The candidate shared with me that on several occasions, in parts of the district furthest away from the city, he met potential voters who told him that he was one of the few (if not first) African American they had spoken with, and they were very surprised at how polite, intelligent, and well spoken the candidate was. Another candidate, running in South Carolina, shared a similar experience, where a potential voter at a campaign event couldn't help but tell the candidate after the event how shocked he was by the intelligence and drive of the candidate. Obviously, this type of experience is rare, but does highlight the impact that one individual can have on racial stereotypes.

Since 1993, various Supreme Court rulings have made it apparent that there is little support for racial gerrymandering to create majority-minority districts. While it is not entirely clear as to whether the upper limits on African American representation from majority African American districts have been reached (Swain 1993), it is evident that predominately white districts can provide a fertile ground for future representation. By running in these districts, African American candidates can continue to help change challenge racial attitudes and stereotypes, and increase the presence of African Americans in state legislatures.

The Call for Future Research

While this research suggests that deracialization is a useful strategy, it is not a perfect strategy for every candidate. Ultimately, running a deracialized campaign requires candidate to walk a fine line, balancing the need for white votes with the need to maintain African American support. Thus, African American candidates must find a way to connect with white votes without alienating African American voters. Some candidates may struggle with this objective, ultimately choosing to follow a mixed strategy. Several candidates surveyed as part of the Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project did just that, choosing to focus on mainstream, non-racial issues but explicitly targeting the African American community. The candidates that chose this mixed strategy ran in predominately African American districts. I would argue that some African American candidates running in predominately white districts may find this mixed strategy to be useful but its success will likely be determined by the liberalization of racial attitudes in the district. Because the issues are not explicitly racial, whites with positive racial attitudes may view the explicit targeting of African Americans in the district in a positive manner because they see it more broadly as an effort to encourage voting among a group of Americans who vote at lower levels than whites. Those with less favorable racial attitudes may ultimately look upon the candidate as an African American candidate for African American voters, in spite of the candidate's deracialized issue strategy, because of the candidate's targeting practices. Unfortunately, none of the African American candidates running in predominately white districts in Chapters Four and Five choose a mixed strategy, pushing this research question outside the scope of this project.

This dissertation, while attempting to examine the effect of candidate race and campaign strategies in state legislative elections, raised many other research questions that were beyond the scope of the initial project. How does gender affect the usefulness of deracialization strategies? Are African American female candidates more likely to use deracialization strategies? Future research can explore the intersection of race and gender to determine whether deracialization is useful regardless of gender. Future research can explore the ways in which variations in candidate race and campaign strategies influence white crossover voting. African Americans of all shades and colors have won office at the state and local level, however, some research suggests that white voters respond better to lighter skinned African Americans (see Terkildsen 1993; Strickland and Whicker 1992).

Finally, an important next step in this research will be to examine the legislative behavior of African American candidates who win state legislative elections using deracialized campaign strategies. Thus, upon expanding our understanding of deracialization as a campaign strategy, the next step is to assess whether African American state legislators in majority-white districts provide substantive representation. While I conclude that deracialization useful for African American state legislative candidates, I have not addressed it consequences for governance. Do deracialized electoral strategies encourage a deracialized political agenda, undermining the representation of and the benefits delivered to African American voters? Theoretically, under a deracialized agenda-setting strategy, issues salient to African American voters would be presented in such a way as to win broad support, thus increasing the possibility that these issues would be addressed in the legislature (Persons 1993). However, there is

the fear on the part of some that African American legislators in majority-white districts will turn their backs on African American interests in order to appease white constituents. Thus, under this strategy, African American electoral success and incorporation into the political system may hinder the promotion of egalitarian programs and suppress the accountability of African American politicians to African American voters (Reed 1999).

While we have little research on this topic, David Canon's work on race and redistricting and conversations with African American state legislators who represent predominately white districts lead me to hypothesize that the latter argument is incorrect. Canon finds that African American candidates representing African American districts balance the needs of their diverse constituents (1999). Several African American state legislative candidates representing majority-white districts have made similar claims. Setting aside the possible consequences of deracialization, it is clear that it is undoubtedly easier for African American politicians to advance group causes and deliver actual and symbolic services when they hold a seat in the legislature. This study shows that in addition to a well-organized campaign, deracialized electoral strategies focused around social welfare and economic issues may be the key to winning and increasing African American representation in state legislative offices.

APPENDIX A

The Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project

Chapters Three and Four rely on data collected from the Campaign Assessment and Candidate Outreach Project. The data is a nationwide sample of candidate who ran for federal, state, and local offices in 1996 and 1998. Questionnaires were sent to 17,000 candidates who came from a pool drawn primarily of major-party candidates who faced major-party opposition in the general election. The data under-sampled minor-party candidates and primary losers to minimize responses from fringe candidates who had little impact of the elections.

This survey generated a response rate of 17 percent, but yielded a representative and unbiased sample of respondents in 44 states that closely approximated the underlying population on candidates' party affiliation, region, incumbency, election outcome, and district characteristics (see Table A1). The response rate is lower than those typically reported for public opinion surveys, however, it is typical of surveys of elite populations. A response rate of 15 percent is considered acceptable in marketing research that targets business executives rather than consumers (Tomaskovic-Devey, Leiter, and Thompson 1994; Baldauf, Reisinger, and Moncrief 1999). Response rates among officeholders tend to be particularly low because they receive many survey requests and they believe there is some risk that their answers might be used to harm their interests (Dexter 1964; Groves, Cialdini, and Couper 1992, 483). Previous studies of campaigns also report response rates lower than those typically received from surveys of the general public.

Within the full data set, responses from African American candidates were found in 12 out of the 44 states. Because I compare the campaign behavior of African American

candidates to white candidates, I believed it best to include those states in the sample where both African American and white respondents ran for state legislative office. Thus, the data used in Chapters Three and Four only includes responses from major-party state legislative general election candidates in twelve states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

APPENDIX B

Precinct-Level Voter Registration and Turnout Data

Chapters Four and Five rely on precinct-level voter registration and turnout statistics collected from state and county boards of elections. The data provide information about twelve state legislative biracial elections in majority-white districts held between 1996 and 2002. The elections were held in four states: South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. Under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, these states are four of the seventeen "covered jurisdictions" that are required to collect voting statistics by race.

Table A1
The Representativeness of the Samples

	Population (%)	Unweighted Sample (%)	Weighted Sample (%)	Twelve state Sample (%)
Race				
African American	5	4	6	15
White	91	96	94	85
Party Affiliation				
Democrats	53	48	53	57
Republicans	47	52	47	43
Election Outcome				
Winners	50	40	50	51
Losers	50	60	50	49
Region				
Northeast	26	24	26	11
South	33	25	32	74
Midwest	24	29	24	15
West	17	22	18	-
District Demographics				
Over 55 years old	17	21	20	21
College education at least 2 years	18	28	22	25
White	85	87	86	77
Mean district level spending	$83,303*	$87,838	$81,578	$ 48,328
Median district level spending	$32,213*	$35,000	$35,000	$30,000
(N)	(7,424)	(1,057)	(1,061)	(365)

*Notes: Population spending estimates are from Hogan and Hamm (1998). Northeast, South, Midwest, and West are defined using U.S. Census classifications.

NOTES

Chapter One

1. The Gallup Poll, conducted June 12-18, 2003.

2. ABC News/Lifetime Television Poll, conducted October 13-19, 1999.

3. Jamieson 1992: 97.

4. Newport, Frank, David W. Moore and Lydia Saad. 1999. "Long Term Gallup Poll Trends: A Portrait of American Public Opinion Through the Century." The Gallup Organization.

5. Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis poll, 1992.

6. Examples where polling has been inaccurate in biracial elections include: 1989 mayoral contest between David Dinkins and Rudy Giuliani, 1989 gubernatorial contest between L. Douglas Wilder and Marshall Coleman, and the 1982 gubernatorial contest between Tom Bradley and George Deukmejian.

7. For each research hypothesis, the null hypothesis is: H_o: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$.

8. The respondents in the full sample closely approximated the underlying population of candidates on party affiliation, race, region, and election outcome (see Appendix B).

9. Seventy-nine percent of the African American candidates in the sample are incumbents. The remaining 21 percent are open-seat candidates. As expected, a large percentage of the African American candidates in the sample are Democrats (90 percent). The remaining ten percent ran as Republicans. In the white candidate sample, 34 percent are incumbents, 41 percent are challengers and 25 percent are open-seat candidates. Unlike the African American sample, the partisanship among the white state legislative candidates is more even distributed – fifty-two percent of the white candidates ran as Democrats and 48 percent ran as Republicans.

Chapter Two

1. See "The Tenure Professor Who Teaches Black Inferiority at Florida State University" *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 24: 84-85.

2. Reeves, relying on the "Pettigrew rule of thumb" uses the fact that the percentage of undecided almost doubled as a sign that those voters will eventually cast their ballot for the white candidate (p.87). Highton 2001 challenges this assumption and states that Reeves conclusion that there is a strong disinclination on the part of some white voters to support an African American candidate is overstated.

3. African American Republicans Gary Franks and J.C. Watts were also elected to Congress from majority-white districts.

Chapter Three

1. National Institute on Money in State Politics; retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.followthemoney.org/database/stateview.phtml?s=all&y=1998&b=0.

2. SouthNow, "A Distinctive Legislature: the 2003-2004 General Assembly" (June 2003); retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://southnow.org/publications/ncdn/NCDataNet_June2003_FINAL.pdf

3. Democracy South, "Campaign Costs Are Skyrocketing Out of Control"; retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.democracysouth.org/nc/bigmoneyinpolitics/campaigncostsskyrocketnc.html

4. Ryan McPherson, Lauren Marks, Susan Anderson, Margaret Engle, and Randy Kehler, "The Color of Money" Public Campaign; retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.colorofmoney.org/toc/asp.

5. Respondents were asked, "For each of the following campaign functions, did you rely mostly on salaried campaign staff, paid consultants, party staff, union members, other outside groups, volunteers, or did you do them yourself or not carry out the function?" The activities are listed in Table 3.2. Campaign staff and paid consultants are coded as campaign professionals.

6. It should be noted that when the model is estimated using total receipts as the dependent variable and the population of the district as a control variable, the relationship between candidate race and receipts is negative but just shy of statistical significance at the .05 level.

7. When the model is run with *Percent African American* and *Percent Latino*, *Percent African American* is statistically insignificant and *Percent Latino* is negative and statistically insignificant. Candidates running districts with greater percentages of Latinos raise less funds than other candidates.

8. Correlation for African American and African American incumbent is .85. The VIF value for African American is 48 and the tolerance (1/VIF) is .02. The VIF value for African American incumbent is 38 and the tolerance (1/VIF) is .03.

9. It has also been suggested that when there are high levels of multicollinearity in the model, it may be best to retain only one of the correlated factors in the remaining analysis (see N.R. Draper and H. Smith, 1998).

10. Candidates were asked, "Approximately what percentage of your campaign's total receipts came from the following sources?" Empirically, the scale ranges from 0 (0% a

candidate's campaign receipts from a source) to 100 (100% of a candidate's campaign receipts from a source).

11. When the model is run with *Percent African American* and *Percent Latino*, *Percent African American* is negative and statistically significant and *Percent Latino* is statistically insignificant.

Chapter Four

1. The exact question wording is: "What were the most important issues in your last campaign?"

2. 2000 National Election Study.

3. 2000 General Social Survey.

4. U.S. Department of Education; retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/achieve/achievement_aa.html.

5. The exact question wording is: "Which demographic, occupational, geographic, or issue groups did your campaign target most heavily?"

6. Candidates were asked to answer the following questions: "Approximately how much money did your campaign spend in your most recent election?"; "Approximately how much money did your major opponent's campaign spend?"

7. National Conference of State Legislatures, Table of Partisan Control of State Legislatures, 1938-2003; retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legman/elect/hstptyct.htm.

8. Washington Post/Kaiser/Harvard, July 2000.

9. Correlation for African American and African American candidate running on social welfare issues is .73. The VIF value for African American is 7.5 and the tolerance (1/VIF) is .13. The VIF value for African American candidate running on social welfare issues is 4.1 and the tolerance (1/VIF) is .24.

10. This figure is based on the sum of two values: the decrease in the percentage of the vote for candidates who focused on social welfare issues (-2.91) and the increase in the percentage of the vote for African American candidates who focused on social welfare issues (19.55).

Chapter Five

1. While a candidate's focus on issues is only one component of deracialization, the linkage between issues and candidate race is particularly important given minorities are

implicitly associated with certain issues in the minds of white Americans (see McCormick and Jones 1993; see Gilens 1996; Edsall and Edsall 1992).

2. Maryland State Board of Elections; retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.elections.state.md.us/past_elections/2002/turnout/g_historical.html.

3. EI: A Program for Ecological Inference, versions 1.62 and 1.63 (King 2000), available at http://Gking.Harvard.Edu. The programs were run in GAUSS 3.2 for Windows and GUASS for Unix.

4. King's method, in particular, has drawn fire from statisticians who argue that two stage models using points estimated produced by the King ecological inference technique are at risk of logical inconsistency (see Herron and Shotts 2004; also see Gay 2001). King's program provides several features to analyze data for the possible violation of this assumption. In addition, Herron and Shotts (2000a; 2000b) created a specification test for logical consistency and offer scholars several options (including modeling the aggregation bias in the first stage) so that ecological data sets may be used properly.

5. The Voter News Service (VNS) provides individual level data from national exit polls for gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional elections. Had the data included state legislative candidates, this would be an appropriate dataset. However, there is some doubt about the extent to which respondents would answer truthfully to racially sensitive survey questions (Traugott and Price 1992). When asked whether any polls were conducted during an African American candidate's campaign, one consultant commented "in the midst of a campaign however, with a limited number of questions to ask, these particular questions [questions about race and attitudes toward candidates of a different race] wouldn't be used because I wouldn't know how much faith to put into the numbers."

Chapter Six

1. The voter registration and turnout statistics used to estimate African American and white turnout included: the total voting age population, the proportion of registered voters who are African American and white, and the proportion of the population who turned out to vote.

2. Initially, it was believed that the change in direction for the coefficient from negative to positive was a sign that there was multicollinearity in the regression analysis. However, further tests show that the VIF values for the variables in the model are well below 20 and the tolerance (1/VIF) is greater than .05 (see www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/modules/reg/multico.htm).

Appendix

1. Herrnson's campaign questionnaires (1988; 1995; 2000) achieved overall response rates of 52 percent, 42 percent, and 44 percent. This included responses from candidates,

campaign managers, and other members of the campaign. The response rates among only congressional candidates were 23 percent, 17 percent, and 13 percent, respectively.

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