

Candidate Race, White Crossover Voting, and Issue Strategy in State Legislative Elections

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Abstract

Previous research has demonstrated that white voters are less likely to support African American candidates (Reeves 1997; Terkildsen 1993; Citron et al 1990; but see Sigelman et al. 1995; Highton 2001). This paper examines the campaigns of African American state legislative candidates to assess under what conditions white voters will cast ballots for African American candidates in state legislative elections. Drawing on candidate and campaign centered theories of voting behavior, I argue that African American candidates who use deracialized issue strategies garner higher levels of white voter support than those who do not. More specifically, I contend that African American candidates who focus on economic and social welfare issues will be more likely to attract white voters to their campaigns. Ordinary Least Squares regression models show that African American candidates' issue strategy significantly influences white crossover voting. The results also confirm the positive impact of deracialization in majority white electoral districts.

Race has an enduring influence in American campaigns and elections. While African Americans have undoubtedly made important electoral gains since 1965, African Americans remain underrepresented among elected officials in the United States. At the state and local level in particular, the number of African American elected officials has increased dramatically, yet an overwhelming percentage of those elected win in jurisdictions where African Americans are a majority. 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, victories by African Americans in racially diverse districts and districts where white voters constitute a majority suggest that white voters' decisions to cast a ballot for African American candidates are influenced not only race but by campaign and contextual factors. Several studies have argued that the recent success of some African American candidates in these districts can be credited to candidates' willingness to pursue a strategy of deracialization in which candidates adopt issue strategies that mitigate the effects of race (also see Pettigrew and Alston 1988; McCormick and Jones 1990; Jones and Clemons 1993; Underwood 1997). By emphasizing substantive issues that have mass appeal, it is argued that African American candidates can send a message to white voters that "that there are no meaningful differences between constituents or policies on the basis of race" (Canon 1999, 48).

While there is a growing literature exploring white voter's approval of African American congressional candidates (see Reeves 1997; Sigelman et al 1995; Terkildsen 1993; Citron et al 1990; Highton 2001), there is little research about white voter support for African American candidates running in state legislative contests. Using precinct-level data from twelve biracial elections between 1996 and 2002 in South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia, this study examines the campaigns of African American state legislative candidates to assess under

what conditions white voters are willing to support African American candidates. Drawing on candidate and campaign centered theories of voting behavior, I argue that 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, African American candidates who use deracialized issue strategies will garner higher levels of white voter support than those who do not. More specifically, I contend that African American candidates who focus on economic and social welfare issues will be able to attract white voters to their campaigns.

Whether or not African American candidates can increase white voter support by focusing their campaigns around social welfare and economic issues carries significant implications for African American representation. For an overwhelming majority of African American candidates, winning a biracial election in a predominately white district is a difficult task, which is reflected by the small number of state legislative candidates that have been able to accomplish this feat. If these tactics, as part of a broader deracialization strategy, can attract white voter support, then deracialization should be viewed as an effective strategy for integrating more African Americans into political institutions.

Candidate Race, Stereotypes, and Candidate-Centered Campaigns and Elections

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. And as agents of information, campaigns are replacing parties as the primary source of information about the candidate (Salmore and Salmore 1989; Wattenberg 1991). When evaluating candidates, voters tend to rely on cognitive shortcuts that provide information about the candidate in a readily available form. Partisanship and incumbency are the most well known informational cues (Campbell et al. 1960; also see Ferejohn 1977; Popkin 1991; Rahn 1993). 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 and gender, may be more widely used in low information elections where voters know little about the candidates (Terkildsen 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; Sigelman et al. 1995; McDermott 1998; Banducci et al. 2003).

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 does 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 demographic 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). 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.

This theory of 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).

Much of the research on research on candidate race in campaigns and elections demonstrates that white voters do rely on stereotypes about African Americans and ascribe them to African American candidates (Bianco 1998). White Americans' negative stereotypes of African Americans have softened to some degree as part of a broader liberalization of racial attitudes (Jaynes and Williams 1989; Schuman et al. 1988). Yet negative racial stereotypes have not fully disappeared. By many accounts, African Americans are perceived by non African Americans as less intelligent, prone to violence, lazy, and possessing overall negative qualities (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Kinder and Mendelberg 1995; also see Gilens 1995). 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 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). African American candidates are often stereotyped as being more liberal than average, more concerned with racial issues, less experienced and capable of handling the task of office holder, and less likely to have personal attributes desired in elected officials, such as honesty and trustworthiness (McDermott 1998;

Reeves 1997; Sigelman et al. 1995; Williams 1990). Thus research suggests that white voters are significantly less likely to vote for African American candidates (Reeves 1997; Terkildsen 1993; Citron et al 1990; Lublin 1997; Gay 1999; Bullock and Dunn 1999; but see Sigelman et al. 1995; Highton 2001).

[Table 1 about here]

While voter centered theories of white voting are important to understanding 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. Voters generally have limited information about government and politics and can be influenced by the campaign, which offers vital information about the candidate to voters (Popkin 1991; Salmore and Salmore 1989). 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). 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). 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 issue component of the deracialization strategy is essential for African American candidates given the linkage between campaign issues and candidate race. Many issues, including crime, welfare, and affirmative action, are implicitly associated with racial minorities in the minds of many Americans (Tursky

et al. 1976; Esdall and Edsall 1992; Gilens 1996; Peffley et al 1997). Thus, the purpose of using a deracialized issue strategy is to make it more difficult for white voters to rely on negative racial stereotypes.

Recent research on the campaigns of African American state legislative candidates suggests that these candidates focus on economic issues as part of successful deracialized strategy. Using survey data to examine the campaigns of white and African American state legislative candidates between 1996 and 1998, Stokes (2004) finds that African American candidates are able to garner a significantly greater percentage of the general election vote when they run on economic issues.¹ This finding suggests 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). The study suggests that by focusing on issues like the state budgetary and economic development, African American candidates can project a conservative image that may help them mitigate the effects of stereotypical images that whites may hold of African American legislators, thereby increasing their chances of winning crossover votes.

Yet, it is likely that African American candidates, like female candidates, gain a strategic advantage when they stress issues that voters associate favorably with African Americans candidates (see Herrnson et al. 2003). Stokes (2004) also shows that African American state legislative candidates are able to garner a significantly greater percentage of the general election vote when they run on social welfare issues.² 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). With the exception of welfare, there is has continually been a great deal of support 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, for the most part, social welfare issues enjoy wide spread

support among the electorate. 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 Strategies: 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. In an effort to measure racial crossover voting, I use an ecological inference procedure developed by Gary King (1997) to estimate the percentage of African Americans and white who voted in precincts in four southern states: South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia.³ 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.⁴ 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 a total of 421 precincts (see Table 2).

[Table 2 about here]

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 3).

[Table 3 about here]

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 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 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. For example, relatively high levels of African American crossover voting in South Carolina's 11th district contributed to African American challenger 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 1 about here]

Model 1 in Table 4 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; Huckfeldt and Kohfeldt 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 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.

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 is 80 percent. It is also possible that the traditional group threat theory hypothesis 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).

[Table 4 about here]

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 the 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 in many cases, candidates with resources bring in professionals from outside the community and state to help them with their campaign.

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 candidate and campaign centered theories of voting behavior, 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 healthcare, social security, infant mortality, and education. *Social-cultural issues* include the environment and abortion and are the basis for comparison in the model.

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.⁵ 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 *Receipts* are positive and statistically significant.

Interestingly, *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, previous research has shown that campaign professionalism, while modest, has a positive and significant impact on the percentage of the vote received by general election state legislative candidates (see Stokes 2004). 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 choose [the candidate’s opponent] because of his humble, door to door campaign.’” This is troublesome for African American candidates who like most of 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.

Conclusion

This study 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.

This study is somewhat encouraging for those who are concerned about African American representation in this post-*Shaw* era. Beginning with *Shaw v Reno*, several Supreme Court rulings have steadily impeded the creation of majority African American districts. While there remain conditions under which the Court will uphold the creation of majority-minority districts, the future of these districts remains uncertain. It is likely that the limits have been reached in terms of the number of African American elected officials who have been elected in predominately African American districts. Thus, one could 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). If attitudes about race continue to place strategic imperatives on African American candidates as many scholars suggest, then it is indeed necessary to further investigate under what conditions African Americans can success in majority white districts. This study suggests that candidates’ issue strategy may be one way to ensure that the number of number of African Americans in state legislatures continues to increase. Focusing on social welfare and economic issues as part of a broader deracialization strategy, African American candidates can increase white crossover voting, ultimately increasing their chances of winning elections outside of predominately African American districts. Thus, deracialization can be an effective strategy for integrating more African Americans into political institutions.

Currently, 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. This study suggests that predominately and majority white districts can provide a fertile ground for future African American representation. By running in these districts, African American candidates can continue to increase the presence of African Americans in state legislatures. Thus, Carol Swain's (1993) argument that African Americans need not limit their political campaigns to predominately African American districts is an important one.

Finally, this study also carries implications for the nature of the electoral process. If deracialized campaign strategies can change how voters view African American candidates, then African Americans, who in the past have been constrained by race, face real possibilities of winning elections outside of minority-majority districts. The salience of campaign strategies in elections ultimately strengthens the argument that campaigns play important role in the electoral process - in effect, campaigns do matter (Holbrook 1996).

Notes

1. Several questions in the survey were open-ended questions which sought information about candidate's issue concerns. These questions allowed the candidates to define their own issue campaigns by naming the issue that was important in the campaign. Candidates' responses were coded by the author into nine broad categories. Economic issues included 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.
2. Social welfare issues generally refer to social services offered to the broader community and, in some cases, particularly vulnerable classes of persons. Social welfare issues included the following responses: 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 study is the campaign strategies employed by African American candidates and not those of white candidates, I chose not to separate these issues from the 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 use these issues to implicitly connect with African American voters in order to maintain their base of supporters.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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).

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TABLE 1
Percentages of Whites Giving Negative, Neutral, and Positive Responses to Racial Stereotype Items

Stereotype Item	Negative Response	Neutral Response	Positive Response
<i>African American Work Ethic</i>			
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
<i>African American Hostility</i>			
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.

TABLE 2
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
		11	20	20.5	27.7
		15	22	24.9	27.1
		43	19	24.6	24.0
		58	31	19.4	28.1
	2002	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.

TABLE 3
The Effects of Independent Variables on the Share of the Vote Received by African American Candidates

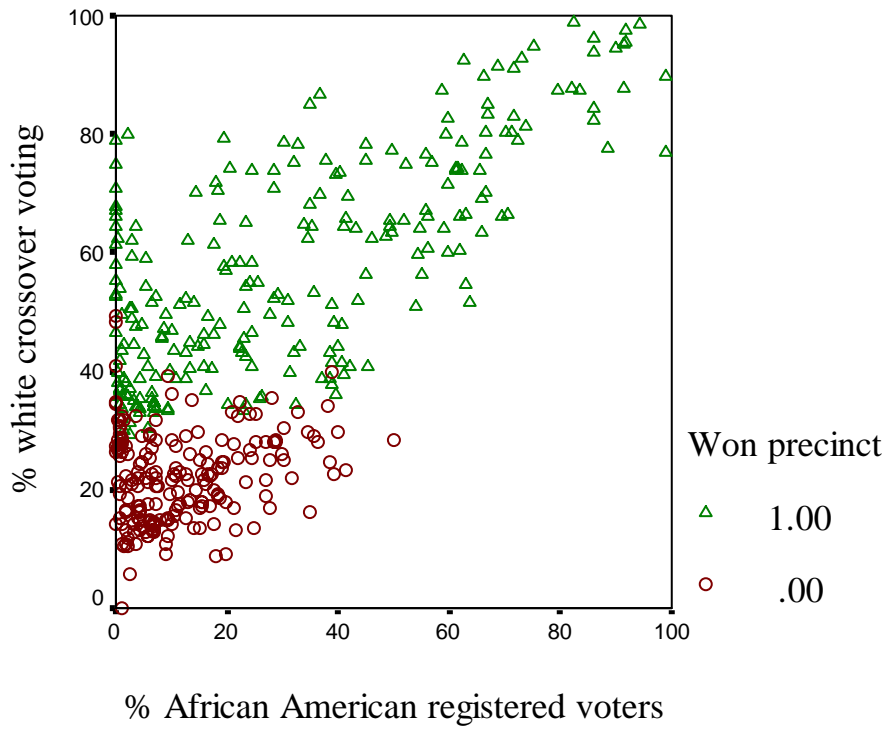
White Crossover voting	.77***
	(.01)
African American crossover voting	-.38***
	(.05)
African American turnout	.22***
	(.02)
Percent African American registered voters	.02*
	(.01)
Constant	.13
Adjusted R ²	.95
(N)	(421)

*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.

Figure 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.

TABLE 4
The Impact of African American Candidates' Issue Strategies on White Crossover Voting

	Model 1	Model 2
Incumbent	5.22 (4.25)	10.15** (4.23)
Open-seat candidate	19.64*** (2.21)	2.004*** (2.36)
Social welfare issues	-	35.74*** (4.11)
Economic issues	-	23.08*** (5.31)
Percent African American registered voters	.63*** (.03)	.67*** (.03)
Receipts	.01*** (.00)	.01*** (.00)
Campaign professionalism	-1.66** (.54)	-1.79** (.68)
Political experience	-5.20* (2.54)	6.35** (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.