Pandering Politics: Examining the effect of positive, explicit racial appeals on support for political candidates

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During the 2016 presidential primary season, then-Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, appeared on the popular morning radio show, the Breakfast Club, to discuss her candidacy, policy positions, and more explicitly — to appeal to potential Black voters. An interesting turn happened near the latter part of the interview when co-host, Angela Yee asked Clinton, "What's something you always carry with you?" Pondering that question, Clinton answered, "Hot sauce." This appeared to be a reference to Beyonce's 2016 record 'Formation' thus prompting Charlemagne Tha God to ask Clinton, "Are we getting in formation now?" He then followed up, "Now listen. I just want you to know people are going to see this and say, "Okay, she pandering to Black people," to which Clinton replied, seemingly in jest, "Okay... Is it working?" Clinton quickly cleared up that she carried hot sauce due to health reasons, but the damage appeared to be done with that quick soundbite. That interview hurt her already weakening standing with the Black community. Despite the fact that past Democratic presidential candidates often enjoyed overwhelming support from the Black community, Clinton's support appeared more tenuous, partially due to the fact that she was plagued with accusations that she was not genuine and instead, only pandering for Black votes. What could she have done differently? When are positive, explicit appeals to the Black community seen as pandering? Does an endorsement from a Black elite lend credibility to white candidates' appeals amongst Black voters?

Here, we seek to better understand when explicit racial appeals are seen as pandering among Black voters. We draw on literature on Black political ideology and trust to develop expectations that white politicians' attempts to cater to the Black community may not be successful if they are not paired with an endorsement from a credible source. Without alignment to a credible source like a Black elite, Black voters will likely perceive the positive, explicit appeal as disingenuous pandering rather than genuine commitment. Theoretically, this highlights the influence that Black elites have on Black American voting behavior.

We test this expectation using an original preregistered experiment on Black Americans. We expose Black respondents to one of four news stories that cover the supposed candidacy of a white politician for governor. The respondents either read about (1) the candidate's positive, explicit appeal to Black voters, (2) the endorsement the candidate received from a Black elite, (3) *both* the candidate's pro-Black appeal and reception of an endorsement, or (4) coverage of the candidate without reference to race (the control).

We find that when exposed to the treatments, both positive, explicit appeals to the Black community *and* receiving endorsements from Black elites increase the white politician's ratings relative to the control condition. However, we do not find evidence that an endorsement from a Black elite is necessary to facilitate an increase in support, contrary to our expectation, in the full sample they do not adjudicate between the tactics. We do find that Black voters respond to positive, explicit appeals and endorsements differently based on their political ideology and level of linked fate. Black conservatives appear to withdraw support from the white politician in response to the endorsement, but their support remains for the positive, explicit appeal. Black conservatives are also more likely to support the politician when he receives an endorsement, as long as it is accompanied by a positive, explicit appeal as well. Thus, the only condition to which Black conservatives backlash against the white candidate is the endorsement-only condition. When it comes to linked fate, respondents with high levels of linked fate are likely to support the candidate across any of the three conditions. However, Black respondents with low levels of linked fate are most likely to support the candidate when he makes a positive, explicit appeal, and least likely when that appeal is combined with an endorsement.

These findings add to our understanding of the conditions under which Black voters will support white candidates (Dawson, 2001; Orey, 2004), but the mixed nature of the results leads us to more questions than answers. It appears that all of these tactics (appeals and endorsements) have the ability to mobilize support among Black voters, but that Black conservatives are actually most wary of endorsement-only approaches to a campaign. It is likely that Black conservatives see an endorsement from a Black elite as a signal that the candidate is likely liberal and thus, not one that they would support. Nevertheless, more work is needed to understand the dynamics at play in the reception of positive, explicit racial appeals among Black voters. The preliminary findings presented here amount to a pre-test of these expectations and thus, we hope to rework and re-field this survey experiment to better adjudicate the conditions under which positive, explicit appeals are seen as pandering. Below, we outline our broad theoretical framework that shapes our expectations, describe the pre-registered survey experiment, and present the preliminary findings.

Racial Appeals

Racial appeals are a longstanding feature of American political campaigns. Politicians engage both in *negative* racial appeals, disparaging a minoritized group to appeal to hostile racial attitudes of white voters, and *positive* racial appeals, which cater to a particular racial group with the intention of garnering support from that community (McIlwain and Caliendo, 2011). While most of the literature has focused on the way that white racism is mobilized through racial appeals (Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002), some have also considered the way that politicians cater to racially minoritized communities through positive racial appeals as well (McIlwain and Caliendo, 2011). Indeed, Stout (2020) argues, in the increasingly racially diverse U.S., politicians will need to make positive, explicit racial appeals to garner votes from minoritized communities and white voters with more egalitarian racial attitudes. This is seen throughout popular media, where political elites explicitly play up a connection with Black Americans and members of other racially minoritized groups. The relevance of this question, then, amidst a diversifying United States and increasingly polarizing racial attitudes (where white Democrats are increasingly reporting low levels of racial resentment (Engelhardt, 2021)), is paramount.

As a result, we focus this study exclusively on positive, explicit racial appeals directed at Black voters. *Explicit* racial appeals are those that directly mention race or a particular racial group with racial nouns, like "Black" or "race." This distinguishes them from *implicit* racial appeals, which cue a reference to a racial group subtlely, often through the use of code words (e.g., dog whistles) or race-neutral language combined with racial imagery (Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002; Hutchings and Jardina, 2009; Hutchings, Walton Jr and Benjamin, 2010; Christiani, 2021). Here, we only focus on *positive*, explicit racial appeals, thus centering our study on statements from politicians that use racial nouns (making them *explicit*), but in a complimentary, positive manner. For example, politicians saying that they "stand with the Black community" or that, "Black Lives Matter." Here, the politician is clearly identifying race (by saying "Black"), but they are characterizing this group positively, rather than invoking negative racial stereotypes. We saw this kind of behavior among politicians most prominently at the height of the George Floyd protests. For example, recall that Republican Utah Senator and former presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, made headlines by joining protesters. When interviewed, he said, "We

need a voice against racism. We need many voices against racism and against brutality. We need to stand up and say, 'Black lives matter."' Romney was explicitly invoking race, but doing so in a positive fashion.

We want to understand not only whether positive racial appeals can work to garner support, but also the conditions under which these appeals may be seen as pandering, and thus met with backlash. For the purpose of this study, backlash is defined as Black voters being less likely to support a white candidate and/or seeing him as inauthentic. When the racial appeal does not garner the expected positive effect, the backlash effect occurs, resulting in a net negative for the candidate (Hersh and Schaffner, N.d.). This kind of reaction is common. The anecdote opening this manuscript illustrated an instance where Clinton's attempt to appeal to the Black community was seen as inauthentic, ultimately hurting her popularity. Or, consider the 2020 presidential campaign, when then-candidate Joe Biden infamously said that Black voters "ain't Black" if they vote for Trump. Here, Biden was clearly making an *explicit* appeal, as he named *Black* voters specifically. And in a sense, this was a "positive" appeal to Black voters, in that he was hoping to reach out to this demographic to gain their support (of course, there are normatively negative connotations about his statement, including homogenizing and essentializing an entire racial group). However, his attempt at aligning himself with the Black community was not received well — as it was seen as pandering rather than genuine coalition building and outreach. This likely turned off Black voters, though not so dramatically that it derailed Biden's ascension to the White House (likely because of his opponent's consistent negative racial appeals and even more egregious failed attempts at positive racial appeals (e.g., "Oh look at my African-American over there!").

Positive Explicit Racial Appeals Or Pandering?

So, when do positive explicit racial appeals work to mobilize a community, and when are they seen as mere pandering? There are myriad of factors that matter to the extent to which an appeal is seen as disingenuous: setting, vernacular and euphemisms used, and the identity of the politician themselves, as a few examples. One important feature is the extent to which racial stereotypes are invoked by the appeal itself — as was the case in Clinton's gaffe, stereotyping Black Americans as liking hot sauce, or Biden's blunder, homogenizing Black Americans as a singular voting bloc that is

inherently tied to the Democratic Party. Stereotypes are often not received well, as they homogenize an entire group and assign particular characteristics to that group. Broadly speaking, scholars define stereotyping as the mental activity of processing information and using that information to pass judgment on a group of people (Stangor, Hammond and Jhangiani, 2014; Bouchard, 2022). This can be based on geography, gender, sexual orientation, and race. Much scholarship on racial stereotyping covers the political impact of whites' beliefs about Black Americans (Peffley and Hurwitz, 2009), though work is expanding to consider the varied stereotypes that exist about groups in a multiracial and diversifying U.S. (e.g., Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Pérez, 2010).

White candidates have a long history of aggressively playing into race-based stereotypes. Often, they have evoked these stereotypes to mobilize white resentment (Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002; Hutchings and Jardina, 2009; Valentino, 1999). However, there have also been times in which white politicians draw on these stereotypes in an attempt to show familiarity with cultural tropes. This is a delicate and fraught political move — and often, it falls flat, with the politician's caricatures making them appear disingenuous (i.e., pandering). Examples of these miscalculations abound. Recall then-presidential candidate, Joe Biden, collaborating with battle rappers, DNA and Charlie Clips to develop a Get Out the Vote battle rap PSA clearly targeted at Black Americans in urban areas. Trying to look "cool," engaging with rappers to mobilize Black voters, as an elderly white man, fell flat. Or consider the kente cloth scandal. Following the police murder of George Floyd, House Democrats led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi held a knelt for a moment of silence to remember Floyd while wearing kente cloth stoles. Wearing kente cloth, a traditional Ghanian textile, in order to honor Black Americans appeared more like cultural appropriation than honor. This, combined with no real policy response, despite Black Americans' demands for substantial gun and police reform in the wake of mounting police murders, felt hollow. As a result, Americans largely mocked and accused members of pandering for their poor attempts of aligning and ill-fated attempts to address the concerns of their constituents.

The above appeals fail due to their use of racial stereotyping. However, even well-meaning positive, explicit racial appeals that do not invoke racial stereotypes can still fail. White politicians may not appear genuine or authentic in their concern for the Black community, especially when they are only reaching out during an election. Politicians appear to be aware of this. When a political candidate makes a positive, explicit racial appeal on their own, their authenticity is typically called

into question by the group that they are trying to appeal to. As a result, that appeal is often made in conjunction with an appearance or endorsement from an elite from the in-group with whom the candidate is making the appeal to (talk show host, celebrity, clergy members, etc.). We saw this with the former president, Bill Clinton, during his second term with his symbolic gestures toward Black Americans that saw his approval ratings jump to the 90 percent amongst Black Americans. These ratings were bolstered with an endorsement from the author, Ishmael Reed. Reed, playing on Black stereotypes himself, called Clinton, "a white soul brother." Similarly, Pulitzer and Nobel-winning novelist, Toni Morrison said, "White skin notwithstanding, this is our first Black president" (Kim, 2002).[1] Here, a white politician received endorsements from Black elites to accompany his positive, explicit racial appeals, like his infamous appearance playing the saxophone at Arsenio Hall. There is no perfect formula, but Clinton's success suggests that endorsements are important in making positive, explicit racial appeals seem more genuine and less like pandering.

Black Political Ideology and (Mis)trust

Black American political ideologies have a strong influence on how they engage with and view political institutions and white people within those institutions. In this project, we seek to gain a better understanding of how Black political ideologies shape Black public opinion (Dawson, 2001) and the trust of white candidates when those candidates make positive explicit racial appeals.

Black Americans throughout U.S. history have reacted to racist exclusion and oppression by white Americans by building social movements and schools of thought that oppose racial oppression. Ideologies like Black Marxism, Nationalism, and Feminism have come to the forefront of Black political thought as a result (Dawson, 2001). Central to these ideologies is a lack of trust in white politicians and greater emphasis on descriptive representation in political spaces while acknowledging that it is only partial if those representatives do not truly align with black group

[1]Note that Toni Morrison further elaborated to clarify her point by saying it was not about Clinton's popularity with black voters but his treatment in the public arena, especially following the Monica Lewinsky scandal. In her clarifying statement, she actually played into white people's stereotypes about black people saying, "People misunderstood that phrase. I was deploring the way in which President Clinton was being treated, vis-à-vis the sex scandal that was surrounding him. I said he was being treated like a black on the street, already guilty, already a perp," (Morrison, 2008). This comment shows that Morrison was aware that Black people are typically on the wrong side of the justice system where they are considered guilty until proven innocent, thus attributing the same attributes to President Clinton. While this was a misunderstood comment, it only aided in bolstering Black Americans' support of Bill Clinton.

interests. Shayla C. Nunnally demonstrates this in her book, *Trust in Black America*, when she finds that Black people trust Black Democrats more than they do white and Democrats. Nunnally (2012) also finds that Black respondents were *more* trusting of Black Republicans than they were of white Democrats. She suggests that despite their outlying views about black group interest (Harris-Perry, 2004), Black Republicans still have sense of racial identification that white Democrats cannot relate to (Walton, 1985; Nunnally, 2012). Thus, even when they do not share the same partisanship, shared racial identity lends more confidence that the politician will look out for the Black community.

A desire for Black descriptive representation regardless of political party affiliation is nothing new. For example, Malcolm X, in his seminal speech, *The Ballot or the Bullet* says, "The time when white people can come into our community, and get us to vote for them, so that they can be our political leaders, and tell us what to do and what not to do? Is long gone" (X, 1964). However, it is also not the case that ideology and partisanship are unimportant, either. For instance, Malcolm X goes on to say, "By the same token? The time when that same white man, knowing that your eyes are too far open? Can send another Negro into the community, and get you and me to support him, so he can use him to lead us astray? Those days are long gone too." Indeed, it is not the case that *only* race or *only* ideology matter, but that they both do. Black people have worked toward descriptive representation, at least in part, because such representation *does* function to produce more equitable outcomes (Browning, Marshall and Tabb, 1984; Preuhs, 2006; Brookman, 2013). Thus, it is no surprise that descriptive representation is important to Black voters, and that they would approach white candidates with some amount of healthy skepticism.

White candidates know this and regularly seek out endorsements from Black elites in order to garner support from the Black community. Prominent examples include then-candidate Biden seeking endorsement from the former president, Barack Obama, Bill Clinton famously joining the Arsenio Hall show whose broadcast was primarily aimed at a Black audience with sunglasses and a saxophone, or former Illinois governor, and Bruce Rauner successfully winning the governor's mansion in 2014 by gaining endorsements from Black businesses and churches in the Chicago area. Endorsements are effective at garnering votes (Benjamin, 2017*b*,*a*; Benjamin and Miller, 2019), but they are not all that matter. When Black elites endorse white candidates rather than Black candidates, they can be seen as "selling out" or characterized as "coons," or "uncle toms" "Uncle

Toms." However, these accusations from Black Americans on Black elites are largely remedied if the white candidate being endorsed is a Democrat as opposed to a Republican (White and Laird, 2020).

Taken together, this leads us to propose that when white politicians attempt to cater to the Black community, their positive explicit racial appeal will not be successful unless they align themselves with a credible source. Without alignment to a credible source, Black voters will likely perceive the appeal as disingenuous pandering rather than genuine commitment (Nunnally, 2012; Dawson, 1994). Black voters, through their racial socialization experiences, learn to trust white Americans the least, as they are the group that has historically perpetrated the most discrimination against them Nunnally (2012). Thus, we expect that endorsements from a Black elite will be more successful in garnering support than positive explicit appeals — but that the combination of a positive explicit appeal and an endorsement may lead to the greatest gains in support. This leads to the following hypotheses:

1. A pro-Black explicit appeal combined with an endorsement from a Black elite will lead to the most support
2. A pro-Black appeal without an endorsement from a Black elite will lead to either no effect or a backlash effect (decline in support)
3. An endorsement from a Black elite without a pro-Black appeal will lead to an increase in support (but the support will still be lower than if it were combined with a pro-Black appeal)

Data and Methods

To investigate these questions, we turned to an original, pre-registered survey experiment of Black Americans (N = 408). We fielded the survey on Lucid, an online survey aggregator whose samples have been demonstrated to track well with US national benchmarks and suitable for experimental research (Coppock and McClellan, 2019). The pre-registration is presented in the appendix.

Respondents first answered a series of pre-treatment items, composed of demographic and ideological variables. In particular, respondents indicated their party identification, political ideology, religiosity, ethnicity, and level of linked fate. Linked fate is "the recognition that individual life chances are inextricably tied to the race as a whole" (Simien, 2005) originally proposed by Dawson (1994). We include these items pre-treatment as we expect that they may condition the relation-

ship between the treatment and outcome variables. After respondents answered the pre-treatment items, they participated in an attention check. Respondents were not dropped from the dataset due to failing the attention check, as these checks have been demonstrated to track with politically relevant characteristics (Berinsky, Margolis and Sances, 2014). Thus, we include attention checks and perform analyses with and without subsetting on those checks.

Once respondents finished the attention checks, they were asked to "please read the following excerpt from a news article and let us know what you think." The excerpt was fictional, which they were debriefed about at the end of the survey. Respondents were randomized into one of four conditions. The conditions all reported on a white candidate running for the Governor's seat. In one treatment, the candidate makes a positive, explicit appeal to the Black community (the "appeal condition"). In the second treatment, the candidate is endorsed by a Black elite (the "endorsement condition"). In the third treatment, the candidate makes a positive appeal to the Black community *and* is endorsed by a Black elite (the "appeal + endorsement condition"). The control condition features the candidate appealing to voters without a reference to race. The text never explicitly described the candidate for governor as white, but an accompanying image made it clear that he is white. The full text of each condition is in the appendix.

After respondents read the excerpt from the news article, they were asked: "What is your first impression of the candidate for governor, Mark Smith? Write 2-5 sentences describing what you think about him." Providing a space for open-ended reflection after a treatment can deepen treatment effects (Condon and Wichowsky, 2020) and the qualitative data can provide an insight into how respondents received the treatment. Then, respondents were exposed to several dependent variables. These variables ask that respondents evaluate the candidate for governor on a variety of dimensions. Respondents were asked:

- Based on what you read, if he was running in your state, would you vote for Mark Smith? (5-point scale)
- How authentic does the candidate for governor, Mark Smith, seem to be? (5-point scale)
- How trustworthy does the candidate for governor, Mark Smith, seem to be? (5-point scale)
- Do you think that the candidate for governor, Mark Smith, would support people like you if he got into political office? (5-point scale)
- Based on what you read, we want to get your impression of the candidate for governor, Mark Smith using a feeling thermometer. (100-point scale)

- Do you think that Smith stands with the black community? (4-point scale)

All of these variables are coded such that higher values indicate a more positive evaluation. Using these dependent variables, we are able to estimate the way that the white candidate's interaction with the Black community affected respondents' attitudes about him. Not only do we measure the extent to which the respondents would support the candidate electorally, but we also try to tap elements of "pandering," by asking about the extent to which the candidate seems genuine, authentic, and trustworthy. We also measure whether they believe that this candidate would support people like them, and the broader Black community, if elected to office. These varied measures allow us to capture a broad picture of the respondents' evaluation of this candidate. After respondents answered these items, they completed a manipulation check and were debriefed about the true purpose of the survey.

Analyses and Findings

With these measures, we turn to evaluating whether the treatment affected respondents' perception of the white candidate. Note that a manipulation check confirms that participants understood and retained information regarding the treatments — and balance tests indicate that randomization was successful. See the appendix for details of these tests.

First, we evaluate the effect of each treatment on the dependent variables by specifying a series of OLS models that use an indicator for treatment condition as the independent variable. These results are presented in Table 1. By and large, the treatment conditions tended to increase the respondents' evaluation of the candidate, relative to the control condition. Respondents in any of the three treatment conditions were more likely to say that they would vote for the candidate, that he was authentic, that he supports people like them, and that he stands with the Black community. Respondents in the endorsement condition were *also* more likely to say that he seems trustworthy — and respondents in the appeal condition were more likely to rate him highly on the thermometer. These findings demonstrate that making explicit appeals to the Black community and receiving endorsements do increase the politician's ratings relative to the control condition, but they do not adjudicate between the tactics.

To evaluate which strategies are most effective at increasing ratings for the politician, we

respecify the OLS models, omitting the control condition. Now, the appeal condition is the baseline and the other two treatments are compared to that condition. These models are reported in Table 2.

Table 1: Average treatment effects for the full sample

	Vote	Authentic	Trust	Support	Thermom.	Stands
(Intercept)	3.10***	3.29***	3.32***	3.13***	57.70***	2.70***
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(2.63)	(0.09)
Appeal	0.40**	0.39**	0.27*	0.49***	9.54**	0.25**
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(3.73)	(0.12)
Endorsement	0.32**	0.42***	0.29*	0.34**	4.65	0.29**
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(3.69)	(0.12)
Endorsement + Appeal	0.36**	0.38**	0.19	0.46***	5.52	0.29**
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(3.74)	(0.12)
R^2	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.02
Adj. R^2	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01
Num. obs.	408	408	408	408	404	408

$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$

Table 2: Average treatment effects for the full sample; excluding the control condition

	Vote	Authentic	Trust	Support	Thermom.	Stands
(Intercept)	3.50***	3.68***	3.59***	3.61***	67.24***	2.95***
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(2.67)	(0.09)
Endorsement	−0.08	0.03	0.02	−0.15	−4.88	0.04
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(3.74)	(0.12)
Endorsement + Appeal	−0.04	−0.01	−0.08	−0.02	−4.02	0.04
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(3.79)	(0.13)
R^2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00
Adj. R^2	−0.01	−0.01	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00	−0.01
Num. obs.	305	305	305	305	303	305

$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$

Here, there are no statistically significant effects across the conditions. That is, there are no differences in candidate ratings based on treatment condition when the treatment conditions are compared to one another, rather than to the control. The appeal, endorsement, and endorsement + appeal conditions all increased ratings for the candidate, but no condition was more or less effective at this. This amounts to a lack of evidence for hypothesis one, as we do not see a pro-Black appeal

combined with an endorsement leading to more support than either an appeal alone or endorsement alone. It also amounts to a lack of evidence for the second hypothesis, as we do not see that a pro-Black appeal without an endorsement elicits backlash. Finally, we do not have evidence for the third hypothesis either, as the endorsement does not increase support to a lesser extent than when combined with an appeal. On the whole, we do not find evidence that these strategies have differential effects on the population, at least when it comes to the full sample.

To investigate this further, we respecified OLS models with interaction effects for variables that we believed may moderate the effect of the treatments on the dependent variables. We included plans for testing for these moderation effects in our pre-registration (which can be found in the appendix). There were no statistically significant interaction effects between the treatment conditions and age, gender, party identification, identification as a Christian, or level of Christianity (identification as a Christian, plus the amount of church attendance). There was not enough variation to explore whether ethnic identity influenced the treatment (e.g., Black, African, African American, Afro-Latino, etc.). However, there were interaction effects for the two moderators: ideology and linked fate. Ideology interacted with the treatment across four of the six models, while linked fate only interacted with the treatment in one of the six models. Thus, the interaction effects between ideology and the treatments are the most consistent and robust.

Table 3: Ideology moderates the effects of the treatment, for the full sample

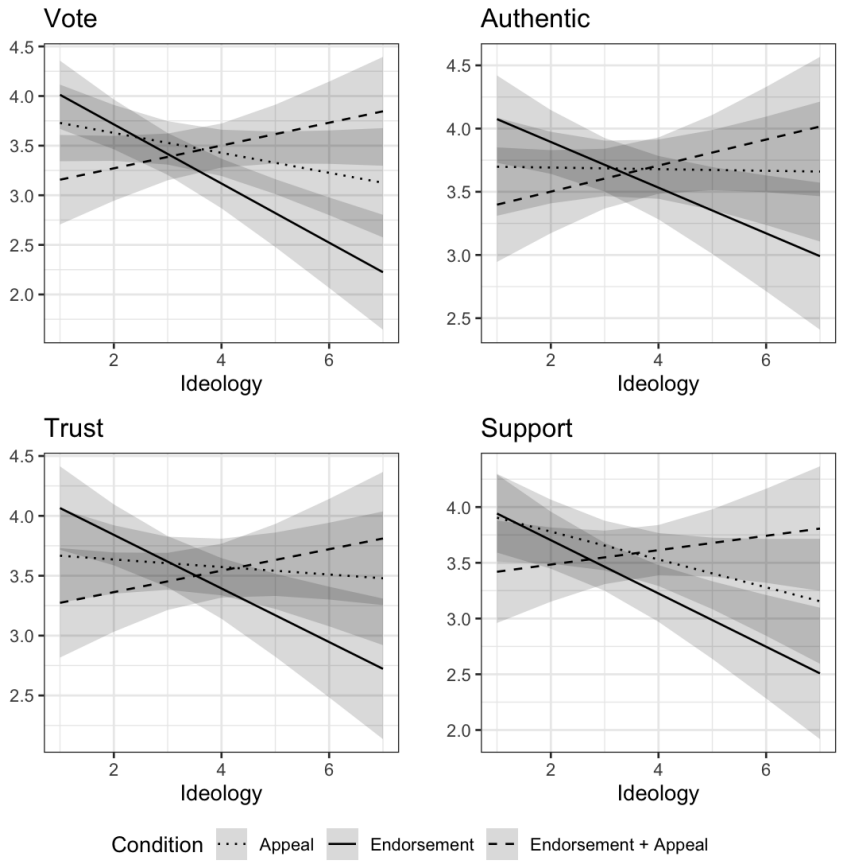
	Vote	Authentic	Trust	Support	Thermom.	Stands
(Intercept)	3.83***	3.70***	3.70***	4.03***	66.85***	3.04***
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(6.42)	(0.21)
Endorsement	0.48	0.55	0.59*	0.15	0.01	0.39
	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(8.59)	(0.28)
Endorsement + Appeal	−0.79**	−0.41	−0.51	−0.67*	−10.64	−0.25
	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(9.73)	(0.32)
Ideology	−0.10	−0.01	−0.03	−0.12*	0.12	−0.03
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(1.74)	(0.06)
Endorsement * Ideo.	−0.20**	−0.17*	−0.19*	−0.11	−1.61	−0.12
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(2.42)	(0.08)
Endorsement + Appeal * Ideo	0.22**	0.11	0.12	0.19*	1.81	0.08
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(2.56)	(0.08)
R^2	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.03
Adj. R^2	0.06	0.01	0.02	0.04	−0.00	0.01
Num. obs.	305	305	305	305	303	305

$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$

Table 3 present the results from a series of OLS regressions that interact the treatment indicator with a measure of political ideology — with the control condition omitted. Ideology interacts with the endorsement condition to predict the extent to which the respondent will vote for the candidate, believes he is authentic, and sees him as trustworthy. The endorsement + appeal condition interacts with ideology to predict the extent to which the respondent would vote for the candidate and the extent to which they see the candidate as supporting people like them.

To visualize the relationship uncovered here, we plot the predicted values for each of these dependent variables (vote, authentic, trust, and support) in Figure 1. As respondents become more conservative, the endorsement condition (solid line) depresses their evaluations of the candidate. The appeal condition (dotted line) does not have much of an effect; and the endorsement + appeal condition has a slight positive effect on evaluations.

Figure 1: Ideology moderates the effect of the treatment conditions on evaluations of the candidate



Note: higher values of ideology indicate greater conservatism.

When we respecify the models with ideology as a factor variable, so that it not constrained to a linear format, it becomes clear that it is *strong conservatives* who are driving this relationship (these analyses are presented in the appendix). That is, the treatments have no differential effect on evaluations of the candidate among Black respondents who identify as liberal — all of the treatments increase positive evaluations of the candidate, relative to the control condition. Relative to each other, there is no difference. However, for Black *conservatives*, the endorsement alone condition significantly *decreases* evaluations of the candidate relative to the appeal only and appeal + endorsement conditions.

Black conservatives move away sharply from the candidate when they read an article that only reports on the endorsement from a Black elite. However, when that endorsement is combined with a positive appeal, their evaluations of the candidate increase slightly. The decrease in evalua-

tions that results from the candidate only receiving an endorsement is starker than the slight uptick that the candidate receives when the endorsement is combined with a pro-Black appeal. But, it is interesting that the direction of these effects differ. While endorsements alone depress evaluations of the candidate for Black conservatives, endorsements combined with a positive, pro-Black appeal from the candidate heighten evaluations. On the one hand, it could be that Black conservatives read a Black Reverend as likely a Democrat, and thus take this as an ideological cue. However, that would not explain why the endorsement + appeal condition increases evaluations, even more prominently than the appeal alone.

In a way, these findings provide some evidence for the first hypothesis, which postulated that the endorsement + appeal condition would result in the most positive evaluations for the candidate. We find that this *is* the case, but only among Black conservatives. This provides some evidence, then, that combining an endorsement and a pro-Black appeal sends the strongest positive signal to voters, at least among Black conservatives.

These findings do not provide evidence for the second hypothesis, which postulated that a pro-Black appeal without an endorsement would lead to backlash. In fact, we find almost the opposite for Black conservatives. Endorsements alone appear to lead to backlash among Black conservatives, while appeals alone do not have much of an effect on their evaluations of the candidate. Finally, we find the opposite effects for hypothesis three as well, which postulated that endorsements would increase support (but to a lesser extent than when combined with a pro-Black appeal). In fact, endorsements alone *depressed* support among Black conservatives. Though the second part of the hypothesis — that the endorsement + appeal condition would outperform the endorsement alone condition, is evidenced among Black conservatives.

Next, we respecify the OLS models to include an interaction between linked fate and the treatment conditions. Again, the control condition is omitted. Table 4 reports the results.

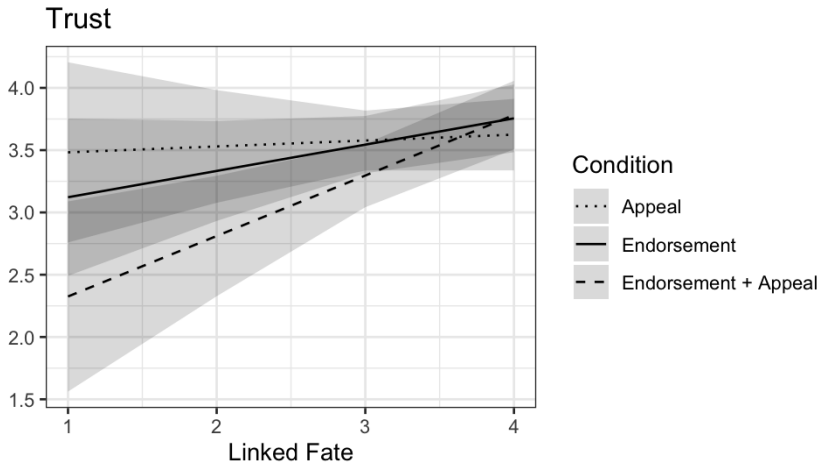
Table 4: Linked fate moderates the effects of the treatment, for the full sample

	Vote	Authentic	Trust	Support	Thermom.	Stands
(Intercept)	3.61***	3.23***	3.44***	3.38***	66.91***	2.90***
	(0.52)	(0.51)	(0.51)	(0.52)	(12.40)	(0.41)
Endorsement	−1.04	−0.57	−0.52	−1.14*	0.20	−0.34
	(0.69)	(0.67)	(0.68)	(0.68)	(16.41)	(0.54)
Endorsement + Appeal	−1.24	−0.71	−1.60**	−1.23	−24.92	−0.66
	(0.75)	(0.73)	(0.74)	(0.75)	(17.96)	(0.59)
Linked fate	−0.03	0.13	0.05	0.07	0.10	0.01
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(3.60)	(0.12)
Endorsement * LF	0.29	0.18	0.16	0.30	−1.52	0.11
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(4.77)	(0.16)
Endorsement + Appeal * LF	0.35	0.20	0.44**	0.35	6.07	0.20
	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.22)	(5.16)	(0.17)
R^2	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.02
Adj. R^2	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.04	−0.00	−0.00
Num. obs.	305	305	305	305	303	305

$^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$

There is only one statistically significant interaction amidst the six models, and thus, we should take this finding with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, the third model demonstrates a positive and statistically significant interaction between the endorsement + appeal condition and linked fate. To better visualize this relationship, we plot the predicted values of the dependent variable, "trust," in Figure 2. This demonstrates that for Black respondents with high levels of linked fate, there is no discernible difference between the treatment conditions. An appeal, endorsement, or both do not have differential effects on their evaluations of the candidate. However, for respondents low in linked fate, the appeal alone condition leads to the highest evaluations of the candidate, while the endorsement + appeal condition leads to the lowest evaluations. Perhaps Black respondents with low levels of linked fate are less persuaded by endorsements as they do not feel as strongly tied to their racial group. However, this would not explain why the endorsement alone condition fares better than the endorsement + appeal condition. Nevertheless, the fact that the appeal alone condition works best for Black respondents with low levels of linked fate is unexpected, as we anticipated that the appeal alone condition may elicit backlash if it is seen as mere pandering.

Figure 2: Linked fate moderates the effect of the treatment conditions on evaluations of the candidate



On the whole, we find that these treatments largely increase evaluations of the candidate, but only relative to the control condition. When we investigate whether there are differences between the conditions — that is, differences between only making a pro-Black appeal, only receiving an endorsement, or making a pro-Black appeal *and* receiving an endorsement, we do not find statistically significant differences in the whole sample. However, there are some meaningful subgroups differences. Most prominently and consistently, we find that Black conservatives are most likely to punish the white politician when he only receives an endorsement, and does not engage in a pro-Black appeal.

Conclusion

The findings from this pre-test represent a starting place for our investigation of the way that positive, explicit racial appeals from white politicians play out among the Black community. While the overall treatment effects indicate that Black respondents react equally positively to appeals, endorsements, or the combination, the moderating role that ideology plays tells a different story. Black conservatives back away from white candidates most prominently when that candidate *only* receives an endorsement from a Black elite. They are more inclined to the support the candidate, though, when he makes a positive explicit racial appeal stating his commitment to their community. We also find that linked fate may matter marginally — those with high levels of linked fate support

the candidate in all three treatment conditions but those with low levels of linked fate, similar to the Black conservatives, prefer the positive appeal to the endorsement.

In the future, we plan to learn from these results and retool this survey experiment so that we can sharpen our understanding of what is at work here. One challenge when it comes to measuring the extent to which a candidate is seen as *pandering* is that whether a candidate is pandering or not does depend on their previous history and engagement with the Black community. We need to know whether the candidate keeps the promises that he is making in this vignette. If not, the interaction was pandering but if so, perhaps the candidate approaches substantive representation for the Black community. Nevertheless, we hope a revised iteration of this experiment could better tease out the particular strategies, settings, or approaches that shape the extent to which an encounter is seen as genuine or inauthentic.

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