

Newspaper Content and its Impact on Attitudes toward a Counter-Stereotypical Candidate:
An Analysis of the 2006 Ohio Gubernatorial Election

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Introduction

Race, gender, ethnicity, and disability have been shown to play a role in human beings' decision-making processes. Despite the ethical implications, people often make knee-jerk judgments of others, and possibly even follow through to discriminate against them, through these hastily-garnered opinions rather than through more thoughtful approaches. Unfortunately, the election of local and national leaders is not immune to this stereotyping. Some politicians may face the superficial scrutiny of their constituents throughout their campaigns simply because of physical characteristics. The 2006 Ohio Gubernatorial General Election acts as a perfect canvas on which to test this idea.

The contest between J. Kenneth Blackwell and Ted Strickland could be considered one of the most unique elections in United States history. Not only did this campaign involve an African-American candidate running to become Ohio's first Black governor, but, unlike what many with little knowledge about the candidates might have presumed, the African-American candidate, Ken Blackwell, was the Republican, and the White candidate, Ted Strickland, was the Democrat.

Historically speaking, it is rather unusual for African-Americans to side with the Republican Party or identify themselves as conservatives. Because of this, a stereotype has been found to exist between a Black candidate and the label of "liberal" (McDermott, 1998). Although Black Republicans exist, African-Americans, and minorities in general, are much more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party in Ohio and

around the country. For instance, in 2004 the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 65% of Blacks and 40% of Hispanics identified with the Democratic Party, while only six percent and 20% respectively, identified with the Republican Party (Pew Research Center, 2004). The coupling of these statistics with the stereotype suggesting that all Blacks are liberal possibly made it difficult for Blackwell to attract Republican voters throughout his 2006 campaign.

The debate surrounding the effect of race on politics as it relates to this study should rest on four questions. The first question asks if the race of an African-American candidate is emphasized more often than the race of a Caucasian candidate within newspaper articles. More specifically, was Ken Blackwell's race emphasized more often than Ted Strickland's race. The second question asks whether rural Ohio newspapers include more race mentions than urban Ohio newspapers, or vice-versa. The third question asks, could racial cues lead a White voter to judge a Black politician in a racially intolerant way, even if the Black candidate is of his own political party or persuasion. For example, could race mentions within newspaper stories influence a White-Republican's opinion of a Black-Republican candidate? The fourth question involves Black Democrats and their knowledge of Blackwell's ethnicity. More specifically, is it likely that Blackwell attracted some of the Black-Democratic vote despite his party identification, simply because of his race, just as he could have lost some of the White-Republican vote for this same reason?

CONTENT

Printed press coverage of gubernatorial campaigns is typically heavier than the coverage of other state offices. In fact, content covering a governor's race has been found to be nearly twice as high compared to coverage of a statewide senate race (Kahm, 1995).

During the 2006 Ohio gubernatorial campaign, Blackwell's situation was the antithesis of the norm. Even if the amount of coverage during 2006 was comparable to prior gubernatorial election coverage, the content within those articles may have been more influential than in years past because of the race issue.

The Press and its Emphasis on Race

Statewide campaigns have been known to attract more press coverage than other state offices, possibly because, unlike smaller district campaigns, they affect the entire population of the state, rather than simply a subset. With more coverage comes a greater responsibility on the part of each campaign to not only encourage newspapers to print more stories about their respective candidate, but more importantly, the campaigns attempt to create more positive stories about their candidates. For African-American candidates, however, the press could possibly play an even more crucial role in the success of a campaign.

Judson Jeffries (2002) claims that Black candidates, particularly in statewide campaigns, typically have fewer monetary resources than their White counterparts. In fact, campaign finance reports filed just two weeks prior to the 2006 Ohio General Election reveal that Ken Blackwell had roughly \$3 million less than Ted Strickland late in the campaign

(Ohio Secretary of State, *Ohioans for Blackwell*, 2008; Ohio Secretary of State, *Strickland for Governor*, 2008). Because of this, utilizing the free publicity provided by the press is crucial for the campaign's success. However, these campaigns do not control the coverage as they would with a television commercial or print advertisement, so it is important that the stories accurately portray the candidate's attributes. If the information provided by the press is inaccurate, voters will lack the resources to accurately and intelligently assess the Black candidate's abilities (Jeffries, 2002). One way in which the Black candidate's abilities may be masked is by news coverage over-emphasizing race in the election. In the Virginia gubernatorial campaign involving Black candidate L. Douglas Wilder, the media covered him very positively. But, as Jeffries suggests, the constant reminders of his race may have inadvertently hurt his chances of winning (Jeffries, 2002).

As Terkildsen and Damore (1999) discovered, some Black candidates chose to "play the race card," while others attempted to avoid the issue all together (p. 682). Those who downplayed their race, made the decision to do so based on the demographic composition of their electorate. For instance, according to this research, Blackwell would have benefited from avoiding the mention of his race since the majority of Republican voters are Caucasian; however, because Ted Strickland is White, this concern of using race is non-existent to his campaign because being White is the norm. The researchers argue that, because of these factors, the media's attention to race carries an increased importance in the outcome of the election (Terkildsen & Damore, 1999).

In the newspaper reporters' defense, the researchers acknowledge that sometimes the writers inadvertently interject personal racial feelings, thus affecting the readership's attitudes toward the candidate (Terkildsen & Damore, 1999). At the same time, however, some reporters believe race to be a key factor in the campaign for their readership, so they continue to emphasize race for that reason (Terkildsen & Damore, 1999). In biracial political contests, such as the race between Blackwell and Strickland, this emphasis becomes even more influential (Terkildsen & Damore, 1999).

The research conducted by Terkildsen and Damore (1999) ultimately found that although Black candidates received more media coverage, this coverage tended to focus on race-heavy topics such as the racial composition of electorate and the race of the candidate (p. 690). Conversely, coverage of the White candidate never mentioned his or her race (Terkildsen & Damore, 1999). The researchers concluded that this type of imbalanced coverage may force race to become an issue in the campaign, which, as mentioned earlier, would be negative for candidates such as Blackwell (Terkildsen & Damore, 1999). Thus, we predict:

H1: Ken Blackwell's race will be mentioned at a proportionately higher rate than will the race of his White opponent, Ted Strickland.

Rural vs. Urban News Coverage

Racial diversity within a state can serve as an important factor in the overall popularity of candidates and the ultimate outcome of elections. In attempt to better connect with the voters in certain areas, statewide politicians are often trained to

craft their messages based upon their audience and where they are speaking in the state. For example, speaking to a group of union members in Youngstown, Ohio would probably be treated differently than speaking to a group of business owners in Cincinnati, Ohio. Similarly, political speeches given in the minority-rich inner city of Cleveland, Ohio would most likely focus on different issues than those speeches given in a rural farming community in Northwest Ohio. Because urban areas typically have more minorities than rural areas, it is expected that newspapers would follow in the footsteps of politicians and treat the audiences differently.

Ohio census data from 2006 indicates that the rural towns from which the newspapers were gathered for this study had an African-American population averaging 10.2%, while the urban cities had an African-American population averaging 41.7%. This census data illustrates a large difference in racial diversity between the two sets of populations.

In her book, *Making Local News* (1991), Phyllis Kaniss discusses how local news media, specifically newspapers, often fail to provide crucial information to the readers regarding local and state issues. The lack of racial diversity in rural areas coupled with less information-rich news content would possibly lead to more articles emphasizing the race of minority candidates. Thus, we predict:

H2: Newspaper articles from rural areas will contain a proportionately higher number of race mentions for Blackwell than newspaper articles from urban areas.

EFFECTS

Newspaper content is only relevant in campaign research if there is a relationship between it and voter attitudes. The following examines possible ways in which this content may have influenced Ohio voters' decisions in the 2006 election.

"Silent" Discrimination

Many would argue that, in a perfect world, there would be no prejudice, bigotry, or stereotyping, and judgments would be made solely on merit; however, the world is simply not this way. Despite the fact that the Civil Rights Movement took place in the 1960s, many Americans, namely Whites, remain skeptical of supporting minorities in the political arena (Bejarano & Segura 2007; Citrin et al. 1990; Kam 2007; Ramasubramanian & Oliver 2007; Terkildsen 1993).

Recent research conducted by Cindy Kam (2007) examines what she calls "implicit attitudes" of Whites and the effect these attitudes have on voting behavior (Kam, 2007, p. 344). Kam claims that by focusing on implicit rather than explicit attitudes, the researcher is able to measure the subject's discriminatory attitudes based on race without the subject's knowledge, thus the true impact of various racial cues can be more accurately measured (Kam, 2007). Similarly, Terkildsen (1993) found that nearly all White voters used racial cues as a voting heuristic, but those voters who exhibited more racial intolerance relied more heavily on this cue than other more racially tolerant voters. To explain this, Terkildsen cites Gaertner and McLaughlin (1983) by adding that negative attitudes regarding race are

immediately triggered once people are asked to evaluate an African-American person, even when the subject does not believe in this racial stereotype.

Possibly contributing to the discriminatory attitudes and this apparent non-electability of Blacks is a low percentage of minorities in various voting areas around the country (Grofman & Handley, 1989). In fact, Grofman and Handley (1989) found that when examining congressional races in electoral districts where the minority population was less than 50%, it was highly unlikely that a minority candidate would be elected. Although Blackwell was campaigning for a statewide office rather than a congressional election, it may be possible to assume that the same would be true if the percentage of Black Republican voters was below 50% of the total Republican voters in Ohio.

The Counter-Stereotypical Candidate

Not often is an African-American associated with the Republican Party, let alone as a candidate of the GOP. Rather, Democrats have been much more successful in gaining the support of Blacks, and Black politicians have themselves been much more likely to be Democrats than Republicans. For example, in 1996, Bob Dole received the most support from Black voters in 30 years, and this support was garnered from only 14% of these voters ("Black Republicans Making Strong Bids for Congressional Seats," 2000). Bejarano and Segura argue that this rift between minorities and the Republican Party was created due to three key factors: (1) historic racial animosity of the Republican Party toward Blacks during and after the Civil Rights Movement; (2) a racial threat hypothesis; and (3) racialized code

words and images increase the salience of race in politics and voting decisions by Whites (2007, p. 331). Because of the clear division between party and race, it is very likely that a Republican candidate, who would be considered a counter-stereotypical candidate, would have a difficult time identifying with key voters of his party (i.e. white voters) and as a result, would have trouble ultimately winning an election.

Additionally, Citrin et al. (1990, p. 91) found that “anti-Black feelings pushed one toward Republican candidates, even if registered Democrat,” and Bejarano and Segura (2007) concluded, “White voters frequently show reluctance to vote for non-White candidates,” (Bejarano & Segura, 2007, p. 332). Interestingly, researcher Sharon Wright (1995) found that with local government candidates, the best way for minorities to win elections is to attract large levels of White support. However, other research conducted suggests that, for higher political offices, Whites may become less supportive of Black office seekers (Jeffries, 2002, p. 680). Unfortunately for Ken Blackwell, all aspects of the aforementioned research suggest that he may have had a political handicap before he even announced his candidacy for Ohio governor. Thus, we predict:

H3a: Among White Republicans there will be a negative correlation between the exposure to newspaper articles mentioning Blackwell’s race and their attitudes toward Blackwell.

Role of the Black Voter

Research presented thus far has depicted Ken Blackwell’s political situation as only being hindered by his minority status. However, some might argue that his race acted as a

positive voting heuristic for Black Democratic voters in Ohio. To test this, research conducted by Kidd et al. (2007) which examined a similar situation in a 2004 Virginia Congressional race, is reviewed.

Studies have shown that Blacks tend to be very religious and socially conservative despite the fact that they overwhelmingly identify with the Democratic Party. Based on this knowledge, researchers examined the likelihood of typically-Democratic, Black voters crossing over to cast their ballot for the Black Republican candidate because of her race and social conservatism (Kidd et al, 2007). The social conservatism exhibited by Virginia's Republican Congressional candidate is very similar to Blackwell's socially conservative ideology expressed in his 2006 gubernatorial campaign. For example, both opposed abortion and gay marriage, thus making this research especially relevant and applicable to this study (Kidd et al., 2007).

The researchers found that, although the Black Republican Congressional candidate gained more support from Blacks than did the White Republican candidate for President, Black voters placed a much greater emphasis on their association with the Democratic Party than on their socially conservative ideology (Kidd et al., 2007, 173). Relating this to the 2006 gubernatorial election, it seems that while Blackwell may have attracted a small percentage of the Black-Democratic vote, most likely from Evangelical Christians, it is probable that his social conservatism was not enough to attract a large amount of support from other Black voters in Ohio due to the influence of the Democratic Party on minorities. Thus, we predict:

H3b: Among Black Democrats there will be no relationship between exposure to newspaper articles mentioning Blackwell's race and attitudes toward Blackwell.

Presence of a Party Cue

Kam's (2007) research examined implicit attitudes of voters and the effect these have on voting decisions. Directly related to Blackwell's circumstance in the 2006 election is Kam's finding that, "the presence of a party cue essentially eliminates the impact of ethnic group attitudes on political choice" (2007, p. 344). At first glance one would assume that, according to this finding, Ohio newspapers which cited Blackwell's race and political party affiliation would have less of an impact on White voters' desire to vote against him than those which solely mention his race. However, Kam found that "counter-stereotypicality...triggered systematic processing," meaning that the party cue would not have as great of an affect on the final judgment because the racial cue would override the party cue (Kam, 2007, p. 363).

For example, if Ken Blackwell ran as a Black Democrat and White Democrats were asked to offer their opinion of him, the party cue would allow the White-Democrat voters to assess him more accurately because they would assume that he is much like them in ideology, despite their implicit desires to judge him on race. On the other hand, in Blackwell's actual scenario, the fact that he was a minority running for a statewide Republican seat negated the positive affect of the party cue and possibly encouraged White

Republicans to vote for his White Democratic challenger, Ted Strickland (Kam, 2007; Bejarano & Segura, 2007). Thus, we predict:

H4: When combined with a race cue, the presence of a party cue (i.e. Republican, “R”, or GOP) within an article will have little affect on White-Republicans’ attitudes toward Blackwell.

Method

Content Sample

A content analysis of Ohio newspapers was conducted for this study. The newspaper content was acquired through NewsBank and Lexis Nexis, two electronic newspaper databases. Articles published between the dates of August 31, 2006 and November 15, 2006 from the 18 daily newspapers printed and distributed within the state of Ohio and available through these databases (See Appendix A) were searched for relevant content. Specifically, articles including at least one of the following terms were downloaded from these databases: “*vot**” or “Blackwell” or “Strickland.” This initial search produced a total of 13,733 articles meeting the inclusion criteria.

Content Analysis

WordStat 5.1 for Windows, a content analysis computer program, was used to create a dictionary of key terms relevant to the study. These terms were designed to capture any mention of the 2006 gubernatorial candidates, Ken Blackwell and Ted Strickland, as well as each candidate’s ethnicity, and party identification (see Appendix B). After developing the

dictionary, Simstat for Windows, a statistical analysis program, was used in conjunction with WordStat to determine the presence of the dictionary terms within the 13,733 newspaper articles. The data were then sorted to capture any mention of Blackwell and/or Strickland. Upon sorting, it was determined that 1,797 of the original 13,733 articles contained at least one mention of the words “Blackwell” and/or “Strickland.” Only these articles were used for later analyses.

For the purposes of this study, only newspapers from Ohio’s three major metropolitan areas (Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus) were considered urban, and all other newspapers were considered rural (see Appendix A). Rural newspapers were coded as 1 and urban newspapers were coded as 0. Although there was an imbalance in the number of newspapers classified as urban (4) versus rural (14), this was in some ways beneficial because the urban newspapers were larger and produced more relevant articles. Specifically, 891 of the 1,797 of the articles were from the 14 rural newspapers, whereas 906 articles were from the 4 urban newspapers.

Due to the inability of WordStat to effectively differentiate between the mere presence of a race term and the direct reference of race to a specific candidate, human coding was then conducted in order to ensure that the race mentions were accurately measured. The following phrases found within the articles were determined to indicate the race of a candidate.

- Blackwell is referred to as Black if “(Who) is Black” or “(who is) an African-American” directly follows or precedes the term “Blackwell.”

- Blackwell is referred to as Black if “(Ohio’s first) Black governor” or “(first) African-American governor” directly follows or precedes “Blackwell.”
- Blackwell is considered Black if he is referred to as Ohio’s Secretary of State and he then is referred to as Black.
- Blackwell is referred to as Black if the phrase “(first *or* only) Black statewide office holder” follows or precedes his name.
- Blackwell is referred to as Black if “Black GOP candidate”, “Black Republican”, or “Black conservative” is used to describe him.
- Blackwell is referred to as Black if “Black businessman” is used to describe him.
- Strickland is referred to as White if “who is White” or “(who is) a Caucasian” directly follows or precedes the term “Strickland.”
- Strickland is referred to as White if “may be White...” directly follows “Strickland.”

Because the content analysis was intended to capture race mentions as directed toward each candidate, two variables were created describing the number of relevant race-mentions for each candidate (i.e., Blackwell race mentions and Strickland race mentions).

In order to test H1, McNemar’s test was conducted which compared the total number of articles in which Strickland’s race was mentioned to the number of articles in which Blackwell’s race was mentioned. Only those articles containing at least one mention of each candidate were used for this test. H1 would be supported if there were significantly more race mentions for Blackwell than Strickland. In order to test H2, a Pearson’s chi-square test was conducted comparing the number of articles in rural versus urban newspapers mentioning Blackwell’s race, and the data set was split between those newspapers mentioning Blackwell and those not mentioning Blackwell. H2 would be supported if there

were a significantly higher proportion of race mentions in rural papers than urban papers for Blackwell.

Public Opinion Sample

In order to test the relationship between the newspaper content captured through the content analysis and public opinion toward Blackwell, public opinion data gathered after the 2006 Ohio General Election were used to make these comparisons. The data used were the post-election cross-sectional component of a larger, three-wave panel study conducted by the University of Oklahoma's Public Opinion Learning Laboratory for the Ohio State University (i.e., The Ohio Political Survey, or TOPS). Data were collected via telephone surveys (N=547), and the questions in the telephone survey were designed to gather Ohio residents' opinions on various issues after the 2006 general election. All interviewers were trained prior to conducting the telephone surveys, and also were provided scripts to be used during the interviews. In addition, the interviewers were compensated for their work based on the number of surveys they completed.

The sample used for the study was purchased from Survey Sampling, Inc. and was derived through a random telephone sample of Ohio residents. Businesses and non-working numbers were removed by Survey Sampling, Inc. in order to save time in the surveying process by ensuring only residential numbers were called. The computers used in this study allowed for 18 dialing attempts to each selected number, and if the respondent wished to be

called a different time, the interviewer would then instruct the computer to automatically re-dial the appropriate phone number at the requested time.

Overall, a total of 6,999 telephone numbers were included in the sample and 26,159 dialing attempts were made to those numbers. In the end, 500 complete interviews and 47 partial interviews were obtained, making the overall response rate 18.7%.

Demographic characteristics of the sample were compared to Ohio's demographics as collected through 2006 updated census data and voter data collected by the Ohio Secretary of State after the 2006 Primary Election. Respondent characteristics examined included race, age, gender, household income, education, party affiliation, and for whom the respondent voted in the 2006 Ohio gubernatorial race (see Table 1).

Regarding gender, the public opinion survey sample slightly over-represented women, as 60.6% of respondents were female while in the 2006 census data found only 51.3% of Ohio's population to be women (see Table 1). In the category of age, the public opinion sample was nearly identical to the census data when considering those respondents between the ages of 18 and 64; however, because the public opinion survey sample does not include those under the age of 18, the 65 and older group is seemingly over represented by 10% (see Table 1). Regarding the category of race, both Blacks and Whites are somewhat under represented in the public opinion survey data. Whites account for 78.8% rather than 84% as described in the census data and Blacks account for 5.1 percent in the public opinion survey data rather than 11.8% as described in the census data. Education comparisons show

that high school graduates and those holding a bachelor's degree or higher are somewhat over represented in the public opinion survey data. Possibly related to the education differences in data regarding respondents holding at least a bachelor's degree, the median household income of the public opinion survey respondents is approximately \$16,000 higher than the 2006 census data. In regards to party affiliation, Democrats are over represented in the public opinion data sample by approximately 12%, while Republicans are under represented by about 12%. Finally, the comparison of votes cast for the gubernatorial candidates was fairly close to what was reported by the Ohio Secretary of State, in that the votes cast for Blackwell by the survey respondents is approximately five percent lower than that reported by the Ohio Secretary of State. This difference could be attributed to the over representation of Democrats within the public opinion survey sample.

Public Opinion Analysis

Race was asked as an open-ended question in the survey. Any respondent mention of terms such as "Black" or "African-American" was coded into a variable to identify respondents who considered themselves to be Black. Similarly, any mentions of "White" or "Caucasian" were combined to construct a variable identifying those respondents considering themselves to be White.

Party affiliation was measured by first asking respondents to indicate whether they thought of themselves as "a Republican, Democrat, and Independent, or what?" For those who responded Republican or Democrat, they were asked to indicate if they were strong or

not very strong in their party identification. Those who claimed to be Independent were asked if they leaned toward one of the two major parties. For our purposes, we employed a simple dichotomous variable in which Republicans were coded as 1 and Democrats were coded as 0; others were excluded from the analysis.

These two variables were combined to construct two key variables indicating either being a White Republican (1) or not (0) or being a Black Democrat (1) or not (0).

Respondents were asked to approximate how much attention they had paid to the Ohio gubernatorial election. Again, this was meant to allow simple differentiation between those respondents who paid a great amount of attention to the race compared to those who paid little or no attention. Another simple dichotomous variable was created where respondents who paid no to some attention were coded as 0 and those said to pay quite a bit of attention to a great deal of attention were coded as 1.

The survey asked two questions to tap attitudes toward Ken Blackwell – whether respondents thought he was trustworthy and whether respondents thought he was responsible (both on 5-point Likert scales from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The relationship between these two questions was very strong ($r = 0.784$; $p < 0.005$) so it was decided to create a new variable averaging the two.

Respondents who reported reading a newspaper at least one day per week on average during the campaign were asked to name the newspaper they read on a regular basis. Using this variable, several new variables were created in the public opinion survey dataset. First,

we provided for each respondent the number of race mentions for Blackwell and Strickland in the paper they read. We also included the combination of race and party mentions in the respondents' newspaper. Respondents who did not read a newspaper, or who reported reading a newspaper for which we did not have content data, had missing values for these variables. Overall, there were 299 respondents for which we did not have data, either because they failed to provide a newspaper or because the newspaper provided was not captured in the database searches.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b were tested using partial correlation tests. We estimated the correlation between Blackwell attitudes and newspaper race mentions while controlling for attention to the gubernatorial campaign, separately for White Republicans (H3a) and Black Democrats (H3b).

H4 was also tested through the use of a partial correlation test. But, before conducting the correlation it was necessary to combine two variables into one by merging the party mentions variable with the Blackwell race mentions variable. Similar to the test for H3a and H3b, the correlation between Blackwell attitudes and Blackwell race and party mentions were estimated. Again, the correlation was controlled for attention to the gubernatorial campaign and was then separated so attitudes of the White-Republican respondents would be isolated.

Results

Content

The first phase of this study was conducted with a goal of determining differences in newspaper content as it relates to the race of gubernatorial candidates Ken Blackwell and Ted Strickland. Results illustrated in Table 2 show that there was a significant difference between the number of times that Blackwell was directly associated with his race and the number of times Strickland was associated with his race (McNemars Test = 0.000: $p < 0.005$; $\chi^2 = 113.2$). Blackwell was directly associated with his race in 35 different articles, or 3.7 percent, while Strickland was directly associated with his race in only five articles, 0.05 percent. These findings support H1. Table 3 illustrates the findings for H2, which predicted that rural newspapers would have a higher proportion of articles emphasizing Blackwell's race than urban newspapers. In fact, the urban papers actually emphasized Blackwell's race slightly more often than the rural newspapers, but the difference between the two was not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.390$; $df = 1$; $p = 0.532$). Thus, H2 was not supported.

Effects

The second phase of this study was conducted in attempt to apply the findings from the content analyses to actual public attitudes and to determine if these attitudes were influenced by the relevant content.

Hypotheses H3a and H3b predicted that there would be a negative correlation between the number of articles mentioning Blackwell's race and the attitudes held by

White-Republican newspaper readers of Blackwell, but that Black Democratic voters' attitudes would not be influenced by Blackwell race mentions

Results illustrated in Table 4 show that among White Republicans, there was a slight positive correlation between the number of race mentions and attitudes toward Ken Blackwell. That is, with more race mentions present, the attitudes held by White-Republican readers toward Blackwell became more positive. But, the partial correlation tests were not significant ($r = 0.143$; $p = 0.195$). Findings from the partial correlations testing the Black-Democrats' attitudes toward Blackwell were also not statistically significant ($r = -0.193$; $p = 0.437$), so H3b was supported, but it is interesting to note that the correlation among Black Democrats was in the opposite direction of the White Republicans. That is, more articles referring to Blackwell's race led to more negative attitudes toward Blackwell from Black Democrats.

Hypothesis H4 was tested to determine whether the addition or exclusion of a party cue, in this case something denoting the Republican Party, would have an impact on the White-Republican readership and their attitudes toward Blackwell. Once again, findings from the partial correlation testing found that there was not a significant impact of the party cue. However, the attitudes expressed by White Republicans toward Blackwell when both race and party were mentioned was identical to the attitudes expressed when race was mentioned because a party-cue was present for every race mention ($r = 0.143$; $p = 0.195$).

Discussion

Research on race effects, specifically in the political arena, has received greater attention as more minorities have become public officeholders. One key finding that seems to be reoccurring across several studies is the media's attention to the race of minority candidates compared to a Caucasian candidates. Perhaps it is this finding that drives researchers to examine this trend, which is occurring forty years after the Civil Rights Movement. These seemingly simple findings serve as a constant reminder that race remains to be a major issue in American society, and perhaps Americans have a long way to go before overcoming this divide. This study contributes to existing research by focusing on a counter-stereotypical candidate rather than what has been more commonly studied, a Black Democrat. Additionally, by conducting both content analyses and correlations between those findings to public opinion survey data, this study does not merely count race mentions in media content. Rather, it attempts to determine effects that content may have had on voters' opinions of Ken Blackwell.

The study began with two hypotheses solely concerned with the newspaper content and its emphasis on race. First, it was expected that the frequency of Blackwell's race mentions would be much higher compared to Strickland's race mentions. This hypothesis was supported. While 35 out of 941 articles containing both a Blackwell and Strickland mention included direct race mentions of Blackwell within their text, only five of those 941

included a race mention for Strickland. The difference in content was significant, and it is believed that this trend would hold true among a larger sample of newspapers.

This significance may be due to the fact that the majority of Ohio's politicians are White, thus to emphasize race would be unnecessary. Only when the norm is challenged is it compulsory to highlight something such as race within news coverage. Another noteworthy finding from this section of the study is that Strickland's race was only mentioned if Blackwell's race was first mentioned. So, theoretically speaking, there would never be race mentions within newspaper articles if two White candidates were running against one another.

The second content-based hypothesis focused on differences regarding coverage in rural versus urban areas, and that the lack of racial diversity in rural areas would encourage newspapers in these areas to emphasize Blackwell's race more often than their urban counterparts. It was determined that the difference in coverage was not significant. However, it was found that urban newspapers mentioned Blackwell's race more regularly than rural newspapers. Conversely, rural newspapers emphasized Strickland's race slightly more often than urban newspapers.

One possible explanation for this finding is that more minorities live in urban areas than rural areas, and perhaps urban newspapers emphasize Blackwell's race in attempt to draw connections between the readers and the candidate. The opposite could be said for Strickland, as more whites live in rural Ohio than urban Ohio.

A second explanation for this finding rests on simple math. Results illustrated in Table 3 show that Blackwell had eight more race mentions in urban newspapers than rural newspapers and Strickland had one more race mention in rural newspapers. However, there were 100 more articles mentioning Blackwell in urban newspapers than rural newspapers and 28 more articles mentioning Strickland in the rural newspapers than urban newspapers. This allows for the possibility that the minor difference in race mentions between the two areas was caused by the difference in overall mentions.

The second portion of the study examined the effects newspaper content may have had on Ohio voters' attitudes on the counter-stereotypical candidate, Ken Blackwell. The first two effect-based hypotheses (3a and 3b) were the antithesis of one another, and will be discussed together. The tests of H3a and H3b were non-significant. However, the findings still raise interesting questions regarding the influence of race on voter attitudes. We found that White-Republicans' attitudes of Blackwell became slightly more positive as the number of race mentions increased. Regarding Black Democrats, their attitudes became slightly more negative as race mentions increased. There are a few possible explanations for these findings.

First, Ken Blackwell was relatively well-known before running for governor in 2006. In fact, 47% of the public opinion survey respondents recognized Ken Blackwell as Ohio's Secretary of State, 46% referred to him as being conservative, and nearly 85% knew he was the African-American candidate. It is possible that prior positions in various political offices played a role in the attitudes toward Blackwell of both White Republicans and Black

Democrats. For example, because he is known for being so conservative, perhaps even those conservative White Republicans who may have been more prone to judge Blackwell based on implicit race attitudes (Kam, 2007) understood his politics well enough to instead base their attitudes on his political record. Similarly, it is possible that there was a sentiment among Black Democrats that Blackwell embodied the prime example of an “Uncle Tom.” That is, he generally supported less progressive and more conservative policies which are commonly rejected by African-Americans. These scenarios would cause White Republicans to hold more favorable opinions of Blackwell while Black Democrats would hold more negative attitudes toward him.

Another possibility for the minor (and statistically non-significant) contradiction of H3a and H3b with the results is based on an additional partial correlation test, which examined overall newspaper readership to attitudes toward Blackwell, while controlling for attention to the 2006 gubernatorial election. When dividing the correlation into Democrats and Republicans, there is a slight, but statistically significant, negative relationship between newspaper readership and Blackwell attitudes among Democrats ($r = -0.139$; $p = 0.037$). Attitudes among Republicans were essentially unchanged ($r = -0.002$; $p = 0.979$). Although race was not factored into this partial correlation test, these results show that Democrats typically held unfavorable opinions of Ken Blackwell if they were exposed to more newspaper content, while Republicans’ attitudes were not influenced by this exposure.

Similarly, because results from the test of H4 were identical to the results from H3a, perhaps the party identification cue was more powerful than the race cue. That is, even for a counter-stereotypical candidate, it is possible that party affiliation played a more significant role in voter preference than race, which contradicts the findings of Cindy Kam (2007).

When considering political party affiliation and ideology, our society is arguably becoming more and more polarized. Based on the possibility of such a trend, it might be assumed that any mention of party affiliation would deepen a positive attitude of a reader toward a candidate of his or her political party despite a mention of race. So, if the White Republicans were reminded that Ken Blackwell was a Republican before or after being informed of his race, their attitudes may have become more positive because they were identifying with their political party above anything else.

Limitations

This study involved various limitations, most of which resulted from the newspaper collection process. Unfortunately, the NewsBank and Lexis Nexis databases did not have a complete representation of Ohio newspapers – only 18 out of the 168 Ohio newspapers were indexed in these databases. Because of this, it was somewhat difficult to apply the content analyses findings to the public opinion research data. When asked what newspaper was read on regular basis, 82 of the participants named newspapers not collected through the database searches. Because the sample of the public opinion research was fairly low (N=547), a rather

significant portion of respondents (15%) were excluded because of this limitation. This does not even include the remaining 217 participants who were exempt from the correlations because they failed to offer a response. Had the newspapers offered by the 82 respondents been available during the content analysis process, the results from the partial correlation tests may have been impacted.

An additional limitation that arose with the use of these databases was that they could not provide photographs included within a newspaper article. Technically, any photograph of a candidate which showed skin color would be considered a legitimate racial cue within an article. Because the photographs were not included with the articles compiled through the electronic database, readers may have been exposed to a direct racial cue even if the races of the candidates were not referenced within the article's text.

Finally, the scope of this study only considers content found within a relatively small number of newspaper articles. It does not take into account the exposure the respondents had to television news, political commercials and advertisements, or even knowledge of the candidates gathered prior to the 2006 General Election. For instance, Ken Blackwell was the Ohio Secretary of State, the Ohio Treasurer of State, and also a Cincinnati City Council member for years before running for governor. Similarly, Ted Strickland was an Ohio Congressman for several years, which often put his face and name in media. It is likely that many Ohio voters had some knowledge of each candidate prior to participating in the study,

and based on the design of the study, there is no way to measure how much influence the newspaper articles had compared to other forms of media.

Conclusions

Overall findings of this study found that Ohio's newspaper editors view the presence of a minority candidate in an election to be an important factor in campaigns, as newspaper content emphasizing race was overwhelmingly attributed to the minority candidate. Urban newspapers were more likely to emphasize minority candidate race, possibly due to the more diverse composition of their readership. Results measuring the affects of the coverage on White Republicans, however, were contrary to what was originally anticipated, as they were not significantly influenced by the race mentions. But, although non-significant, testing revealed that Black Democrats were negatively influenced by race mentions and White Republicans were positively influenced. However, this finding may have been more greatly influenced by the presence of a party cue than the mere presence of a race mention.

In closing, we encourage further research involving lesser-known Black-Republican candidates, which may provide voters the opportunity to judge the candidate on race rather than political record or reputation. Also, the examination of a primary election between a Black Republican and a White Republican, such as the 2006 Ohio Republican Primary between James Petro and Ken Blackwell, could possibly act as a better test to assess the impact of race on Republican-voter attitudes. Furthermore, we encourage the examination

of race mentions of politicians belonging to other minorities, classified by race and gender. This would allow for a comparison to be drawn between Asian-Americans, Latinos, African-Americans, etc. Additionally, the examination of gender would allow race-based counter-stereotypicality among candidates to be compared to gender-based counter-stereotypicality. More specifically, because names alone do not usually indicate race but do often indicate gender, would the impact of counter-stereotypicality increase for female candidates compared to racial minorities with names not indicative of their ethnicity? Finally, we suggest that future studies incorporate photographs printed with articles, which would likely result in the collection of a more comprehensive dataset prior to the conduction of the content analyses.

Tables

Table 1: Sample Demographics Compared to Ohio Census Data		
CATEGORY	OHIO DEMOGRAPHICS	SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS*
Gender	*Female: 51.3% *Male: 48.7%	Female: 60.6% Male: 39.4%
Age	*18-64: 75.8% *65+: 13.3%	18-64: 76.5% 65+: 23.5%
Race	*White: 84.0% *Black/African American: 11.8%	White: 78.8% Black/African American: 5.1%
Education	*High School Graduate+: 86.2% *Bachelor's Degree+: 20.2%	High School Graduate+: 94.8% Bachelor's Degree+: 29.1%
Income	*Median: \$44,532	Median: \$60,000
Party Affiliation**	**Republican: 49.9% **Democrat: 50.1%	Republican: 37.7% Democrat: 62.3%
2006 General Election Vote for Governor**	**Blackwell: 36.7% **Other: 63.3%	Blackwell: 31.3% Other: 68.7%

#N = 547

*U.S. Census Bureau (2006). *Ohio Fact Sheet*. Retrieved April 12, 2008, from <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

**Ohio Secretary of State (2006). *2006 Election Results*. Retrieved April 12, 2008, from <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/ElectionsVoter/results2006.aspx>

Table 2: Blackwell and Strickland Race Mentions			
RACE MENTIONS	Strickland – No	Strickland – Yes	TOTAL
Blackwell – No	901	0	901
Blackwell – Yes	35	5	40
TOTAL	936	5	941

McNemar's Test = 0.000; $p < 0.005$; $\chi^2 = 113.2$

Table 3: Race Mentions in Urban & Rural Newspapers						
	BLACKWELL*			STRICKLAND**		
	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Candidate without Race Mention [§]	745	653	1398 (96.4%)	628	655	1283 (99.6%)
Candidate with Race Mention [§]	30	22	52 (3.6%)	2	3	5 (0.4%)
TOTAL	775 (53.4%)	675 (46.6%)	1450 (100%)	630 (48.9%)	658 (51.1%)	1288 (100%)

*Blackwell Race: Rural vs. Urban Paper: $\chi^2 = 0.390$; $df = 1$; $p = 0.532$

**Strickland Race: Rural vs. Urban Paper: $\chi^2 = 0.160$; $df = 1$; $p = 0.690$

Table 4: Blackwell Attitudes Based on Race				
	Blackwell is Trustworthy/Responsible	Race Mentions	Correlations	Significance
White Republican [#]	Mean = 3.92	Mean = 6.39	0.143	0.195
Black Democrat [^]	Mean = 3.11	Mean = 7.52	-0.193	0.473

[#]N = 85; [^]N = 17

Appendix A: Newspaper Coding Assignments

NUMBER ASSIGNED	NAME OF NEWSPAPER*	RURAL or URBAN
1	Akron Beacon Journal	Rural
2	Bucyrus Telegraph-Forum	Rural
3	Chillicothe Gazette	Rural
4	Cincinnati Enquirer	Urban
5	Cincinnati Post	Urban
6	Cleveland Plain Dealer	Urban
7	Columbus Dispatch	Urban
8	Coshocton Tribune	Rural
9	Dayton Daily News	Rural
10	Fremont News Messenger	Rural
11	Lancaster Eagle-Gazette	Rural
12	Lima News	Rural
13	Mansfield News Journal	Rural
14	Marion Star	Rural
15	Newark Advocate	Rural
16	Port Clinton News Herald	Rural
17	Toledo Blade	Rural
18	Zanesville Times Recorder	Rural

**Newspapers gathered through NewsBank and Lexis Nexis*

Appendix B: Dictionary of Terms

CANDIDATE TERMS	PARTY ID TERMS	RACE TERMS
Blackwell	Democrat	African-American
Blackwell's	Democrats	African-Americans
Strickland	Democrat's	African-American's
Strickland's	Democrats'	African-Americans'
	"D"	Black
	Republican	Blacks
	Republicans	Black's
	Republican's	Blacks'
	Republicans'	Caucasian
	"R"	Caucasians
	GOP	Caucasian's
	GOP's	Caucasians'
		White
		Whites
		Whites'
		White's

Appendix C: Public Opinion Survey Questions

2006 Election

Do you think Ken Blackwell is liberal, moderate, or conservative on most political issues?

Do you happen to know which governor candidate is the Ohio Secretary of State?

Which governor candidate is African-American?

In the race for Governor of Ohio, for whom did you vote?

Party Identification

Now turning to another topic, generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Do you think of yourself as a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

Do you think of yourself as a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

Blackwell Attitudes

Do you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree that Ken Blackwell is trustworthy?

Do you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree that Ken Blackwell is responsible?

Newspaper Readership

During the campaign, about how many days each week did you read a print newspaper?

When you read a newspaper, which newspaper do you read most often?

Attention to Gubernatorial Campaign in Newspapers

During the campaign, how much attention did you pay to newspaper stories about the campaign for governor of Ohio - a great deal, quite a bit, some, very little, or none?

Race

What racial or ethnic group do you consider yourself a member of?

Demographics

In what year were you born?

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Approximately what was your total household income from all sources before taxes for 2005?

Is the area you live in mostly urban, suburban, or rural?

Indication of respondent's gender

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