Different (Race) Cards in the Deck: Directness and Denials in Racial Messaging

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ABSTRACT: This document contains the pre-analysis plans for an experiment conducted through Lucid. This experiment evaluates two primary things - the effects of implicitly and explicitly racial messages and the role of racial denials. The design includes a full crossing of these elements, including a control condition without any references to race - as a result, the experiment uses a 3 (control, implicit, explicit) by 2 (no denial, denial) design. The experiment involves a sample of 1800 white, American adults and was conducted online late in September of 2019. This document was posted after data collection but prior to any analyses. Our primary hypotheses touch on the validity of new findings in the racial messaging research and novel ideas about the role that partisanship, racial sensitivity, and racial denials play in understanding how citizens respond to elite messages about race.

Introduction:

Racial messages have played a prominent role in politics throughout the history of the United States. Nixon's Southern Strategy in the 1960s and 70s and the infamous 1988 Willie Horton ad are historical examples of racial messaging. More recently, candidates in 2018 sent messages like those imploring voters to 'not monkey [the election] up' by choosing an African American candidate, and politicians have used platforms like Twitter to describe nonwhite individuals as un-American and predominantly black areas as "a disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess" and a "very dangerous & filthy." Candidates, pundits, and the media broadly react and repeat these messages, sending cascading signals about race throughout American society.

Scholars have given a great deal of attention to the different types of these racial messages. Early work on their effects show that implicit, or subtle, messages about race activate racial attitudes, which then affect vote choice and policy attitudes. For years, studies have found support for the differing effects of implicit and explicit messages (e.g., Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Hurwitz and Peffley 2005; Hutchings and Jardina 2009; c.f., Huber and Lapinski 2006). However, recently the different effects of these messages have been called into question. In the current political environment, racial attitudes and norms may have changed and people may no longer be affected differently by implicit and explicit messages (Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek 2018). The current consequences of implicit and explicit statements about race are therefore in question, despite continued use of these kinds of messages by the media, political elites, and citizens.

An additional rhetorical tactic is often employed alongside these implicit and explicit messages when talking about race: political elites directly reject the racial content of otherwise racialized statements. The use of this strategy suggests that political actors worry about the

political and public fallout that may occur if their messages are perceived in a racial light – even when those messages are more implicitly racial. If a person makes a statement that may be viewed as racist, yet immediately denies that interpretation and provides an alternative perspective, they may be anticipating the negative reactions of their audience and fending off accusations of racism. And while researchers working on racial messaging have considered how those targeted by implicit appeals can neutralize those attacks (e.g., Tokeshi and Mendelberg 2015) and the consequences of calling out racial messages by other political figures (Banks and Hicks 2019), no work has considered how denials by those *providing the racial messages* enhance or undermine the racial consequences of these statements.

We build on this research by considering racial denials[1] in the context of implicit and explicit messages. We investigate two related questions: (1) Does the public respond differently to implicit and explicit messages? (2) Do denials of racial content affect the political consequences of implicit and explicit messages? The first question is a test of the recent findings about changes in public interpretations of racial messaging. We also add a theoretical explanation of existing findings that centers on partisanship instead of racial attitudes. The second question we investigate is an extension of existing studies to consider the role of denials. In the sections that follow, we describe our theoretical perspective, the design of the experiment testing these predictions, and our concrete analysis plans.

Theory and predictions

In considering the role of implicit and explicit messages about race, we draw from the original formulation by Mendelberg that has been applied extensively by others (Mendelberg 2001). When presented with racial statements from the media or politicians, individuals' own

[1] We use racial denials and rejections interchangeably.

ideas and attitudes about race are activated in the mind. However, messages that make direct reference of race also activate norms about racial egalitarianism and a corresponding process of self-censorship to limit the role of racial or prejudicial attitudes. Statements that make only indirect mention of race, on the other hand, fail to engage this racial norm and the suppression process that follows. A well-established body of literature in political science finds evidence for this process, concluding that implicitly racial statements link political evaluations to racial resentment and similar attitudes, but that similar explicit statements do not (Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Hurwitz and Peffley 2005; White 2007; Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010; c.f., Huber and Lapinski 2006).

However, a recent study failed to document this same pattern and found that racial attitudes were activated in individuals' political judgments regardless of the directness of the racial message (Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek 2018). While people recognized differences between the implicit and explicit statements (noting, for example, that the explicit message was more racially insensitive), racial considerations were linked to political evaluations regardless of the kind of messages people encountered. This research raises serious questions about norms about racial egalitarianism and reasons why the original implicit-explicit paradigm no longer applies in the United States.

Given this state of the literature, we first look to replicate the findings of Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek (2018) to more convincingly update the research on this topic. In this area, we expect to replicate their main findings, which is expressed in H1 below. Stated in other words, H1 expects a failure to find evidence of an interaction between message directness and pre-existing racial views.

> *H1: Racial attitudes (such as racial resentment) should be predictors of political evaluations and opinions regardless of the racial message subjects receive*

Failing to find evidence of an interaction effect (as discussed in the design and analysis sections of this document) will constitute evidence in support of the newer findings presented by Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek. Finding evidence of an interaction consistent with the original implicit-explicit framework, on the other hand, will suggest a need to return to the original theoretical orientation of this body of research.

To further explore the implicit and explicit distinction in light of current research in this area, we have two other predictions that consider the role of partisanship and sensitivity to race. First, one important possibility is that currently partisanship now acts as the key moderator of implicit and explicit racial messages rather than racial attitudes. Some studies of racial messaging find that commitment to the norm of racial egalitarianism varies among different groups (e.g., men vs. women, Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010). Along these lines, recent studies document that Republicans and Democrats have very different judgments of explicit and implicit racial messaging (e.g., Pew Research Center 2017; Tesler 2019). Given the historical and political connection between the two political parties and issues of race, partisanship may now play a large role in conditioning how people react to and recognize racialized statements.

Other work makes the connection to partisanship even more clear. Numerous social divisions, including race, have begun to converge with partisanship, reinforcing the role party attachments play in political and social life (Mason and Wronski 2018). Feelings towards the social groups that are attached to the major political parties has a strong relationship with *partisan* affective polarization (Robison and Moskowitz 2019), and race and party have long been linked to one another in powerful ways (Key 1949; Luskin, McIver, and Carmines 1989; Hutchings and Valentino 2004; Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Kuziemko and Washington 2018).

For many Americans, race and party are now so inextricably linked that triggering one identity automatically triggers another (Westwood and Peterson 2019).

There are other reasons to expect Republicans and Democrats to react differently to racial messages. In general, members of the public more readily associate racial minorities with Democrats and whites and racial prejudice with Republicans (Ahler and Sood 2018; Rothschild et al. 2019). Democrats are also dramatically more likely than Republicans to feel that racial discrimination is a persistent problem in the United States and that more needs to be done to ensure racial equality (Pew Research Center 2017). Recognizing and reacting to racial content in political messages therefore have different identity-based consequences for Republicans and Democrats. For Democrats, admitting that a statement has racial implications should be identity *affirming* as it relates to broader views among Democrats about the persistence of racial discrimination, the racial positions of the Democratic party, and the need for racial progress. As such, Democrats should recognize the racial content of both implicit and explicit racial messages and should not respond to them in different ways.

For Republicans, on the other hand, racialized statements should be *threatening* to their partisan identity. They bring up accusations of prejudice and discrimination for Republicans and racially divisive topics. As an attempt to avoid such threatening discussions, Republicans should be more likely to overlook or fail to acknowledge the racial content of implicit messages. For these respondents, then, Mendelberg's original formulation may hold – implicit message subtly prime race, whereas explicitly racial messages arouse competing norms of racial equality and fairness. The mechanism at work here, however, is different. The IE framework still holds for

Republicans because implicit messages threaten their party identity, as such they will be less inclined or less likely to perceive the racial content in these kinds of messages.[2]

These expectations are summarized in H2.

> *H2: Partisanship should act as a moderator of the effects of implicit and explicit racial messages. Republicans should respond differently to implicit and explicit messages; Democrats should not.*

We also explore a third hypothesis, related to individuals' willingness to acknowledge and see race in the world around them. Individuals vary in the extent to which they prefer to see the world in colorblind terms; that is, how much they acknowledge and see race and how much they attempt to overlook and downplay racial considerations (e.g., Mekawi, Bresin, and Hunter 2017). Those who actively seek to downplay race in the world around them should be less consciously attuned to the racial content of implicit messages; these individuals should be influenced more by implicit than explicit messages because these messages subtly activate race in ways unbeknownst to these individuals. Those who are more aware of and pay more attention to race should react to explicit and implicit messages in nearly the same way as they more readily recognize the racial content of both types of statements. These predictions are summarized in H3.

> *H3: Colorblindness/awareness of race should act as a moderator of the effects of implicit and explicit racial messages. Those who have a colorblind view, or who are less willing to see race, should respond differently to implicit and explicit messages; those who more readily perceive race or are more willing to see race should not.*

One area previous that research on racial messaging has not explored is how implicit and explicit statements about race change inferences about the source of such messages. For reasons mentioned earlier, people should be more likely to attribute a directly racial statement (as

[2] Whether this is done willingly or unwillingly (i.e. subconsciously) cannot be determined in this project. This is a question for future research.

opposed to an indirectly racial statement) to Republicans and conservatives due to stereotypes of Republicans and Democrats. H4 restates this prediction.

> *H4: Explicit statements about race should be more readily attributed to Republicans and conservatives than Democrats and liberals than implicit statements.*

Due to the identity-based implications of these attributions for Republicans and Democrats, we generally expect H4 to be more pronounced among Democratic respondents, as attributing racial language to Republicans is an identity-affirming experience. For Republicans, however, labeling a source of racial statements as Republican is an identity-threatening experience. The exact magnitude of these differences is unknown; however, we expect statistically significant differences between Democrats and Republicans on H4. This is expressed in H4a:

> *H4a: Democrats should show evidence of H4 in a stronger and more pronounced way than Republicans*

All of these hypotheses have focused on the differences between implicit and explicit mentions of race, and none have discussed the role of denials directly. In this area, expect denials to increase support for racially charged policy proposals among some respondents and not others. Such denials provide a rationale for racially hostile or racially ambivalent whites to support the policy in question. Those who are racially progressive, on the other hand, should find denial deceptive and manipulative, reacting with even less support than when such denials are absent. The denial of racism only stokes their existing concerns about race further (for a similar dynamic, see Banks and Hicks 2019). This is summarized in H5, below.

> *H5: Racial denials should have a different impact on individuals, depending on prior racial attitudes. Racially resentful individuals and those who think less attention should be paid to race should increase their support following a denial. Racially progressive people and those who think more attention should be paid to race, on the other hand, should react with lower support when racial statements are combined with denials.*

In a way parallel to H4, we expect that people will attribute a racial policy to Republicans more when a denial is involved than when such a statement is missing. The rationale for this prediction builds on the same literature and theory behind H4. Additionally, we expect H4a to be replicated here when considering racial denials, as reflected in H6a.

> *H6: Statements with denials about race should be more readily attributed to Republicans and conservatives than Democrats and liberals than statements lacking such denials*
>
> *H6a: Democrats should more readily attribute racial denials to Republicans and conservatives than Republicans.*

We evaluate these hypotheses with a survey experiment where we present subjects with a mayor's proposal to reduce crime. There are two dimensions to this proposal: reference to race and racial denial. The reference to race is an implicit or explicit mention of a racial group as the cause of crime within the mayor's statement. The racial denial is a rejection by the mayor that the statement referencing was racially motivated. By including implicitly and explicitly racial versions of this message, we answer our first set of hypotheses (H1-H4a) and help evaluate the current status of the original implicit-explicit racial messaging paradigm. By also including denials, we also evaluate our second group of hypotheses (H5-H6a) and explore a prominent political tactic often combined with racial rhetoric. We therefore provide a comprehensive examination of the current strength of implicit and explicit racial messages *and* the effects of racial rejections within the same framework.

Design

To replicate existing studies as faithfully as possible, we rely on a sample of non-Hispanic whites. The vast majority of research on racial messaging focuses on this racial and ethnic group due to their place in the racial hierarchy in the United States and their different reactions to implicit and explicit messages (Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010). Through Lucid, a platform for conducting online

survey and experimental research, we will conduct this experiment on a nationally diverse sample of 1,800 American, non-Hispanic white adults. Lucid has been reliably used to conduct survey experiments by political scientists as a way to use cost-effective samples while avoiding some of the issues present in platforms like Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Coppock and McClellan 2019). The Appendix contains additional details on the power analyses and rationale that underlie this sample size.

The experiment uses a design similar to many studies of racial messages. First, respondents are asked a series of pre-treatment attitude questions – perceptions of various groups, demographic questions, items on pre-existing racial attitudes, questions about support for a color-blind ideology, and a set of nonracial items about rural, urban, and suburban areas. We include the racial items to measure racial attitudes (and therefore their subsequent activation) and the nonracial items to limit priming race prior to the treatment. The nonracial items about geographical areas also link conceptually to the content of the treatment vignettes that follow. Question wording for all of these items can be found in the Appendix.

After these initial questions, subjects are blocked into three groups – Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. The divisions are created based on subjects' own self-identification in the demographic questions. Leaners (those who indicate they are independents but lean towards the Republican or Democratic Party) are grouped with partisans for the purposes of this blocking. The treatment randomization that is described in the next paragraph was applied independently within each block; this block-randomized approach allows us to evaluate our predictions about partisanship in as rigorous a way as possible. The same strategy was not used for pre-existing racial attitudes as the distribution of these attitudes in this sample

cannot be determined prior to the data collection itself. This blocking is done because we expect partisanship to moderate the effect of racial messages (see H2).

Following this blocking, all individuals are assigned to one of six treatment vignettes - the exact text and appearance of the vignettes can be found in the Appendix. In each condition respondents are told they will read an article about a recent statement made by the mayor of a local town. The article mimics the structure and style of major news sources; it also is modeled after stimuli used in other studies of racial priming. In the control condition, subjects read about the budget troubles of a town and calls from the Mayor to get spending under control. In the treatment conditions, the vignette depicts a town facing increased concerns about crime due to population increases from nearby cities. The mayor of the town is quoted asserting that crime has grown out of control and calls for heavier law enforcement and tough-on-crime policies in order to mitigate this crime.

Two elements of the vignettes vary in the treatment conditions - the explicitness of the racial message and the presence of a racial denial. In addition, we include a denial version of the control group. This creates six different vignettes, as shown below.

Table 1: Treatment conditions

	Explicit	**Implicit**	**Control**
Denial	C1: Explicit with denial	C3: Implicit with denial	C5: Control with denial
No denial	C2: Explicit w/o denial	C4: Implicit w/o denial	C6: Control w/o denial

The first element of our treatments is on the type of message. The implicit/explicit treatments vary only the reference to race in the news stories. Within the explicit conditions, the mayor will reference the racial group overtly – e.g., “predominantly black areas.” In the implicit conditions, the mayor will allude to the racial group through stereotypical language – e.g., “poor,

urban neighborhoods." In both implicit and explicit conditions, an image of a neighborhood with a black individual is shown at the end of the story. This language and set up matches existing uses of implicit/explicit messages (Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; White 2007; Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek 2018).

The second element is the presence or absence of a denial of racial content by the mayor. Respondents within the denial treatment groups will read an additional statement in which the mayor denies that race motivates his policy proposals. This statement is modeled after real political messages where political figures de-emphasize the role of race in solving policy problems. The use of the denial also builds on work about how targets of implicit messages can respond to those attacks - this research concludes that responding to implicit messages by calling to the racial content and providing nonracial justifications of the message undermines the racial effects of these messages (Tokeshi and Mendelberg 2015).

After reading their assigned vignette, all participants then evaluate items about their policy attitudes, racial sensitivity, perceptions of the Mayor, and items that serve as manipulation checks. The items that measure policy attitudes concern the policies proposed by the mayor of the town, issue priorities, and general punitive attitudes. The racial sensitivity items measure how racially motivated respondents are. The questions about the mayor ask subjects to evaluate the political and partisan views of the mayor; these questions evaluate how racial messaging and denials can shift perceptions of the political actors that use these tactics. Finally, the manipulation checks measure the effectiveness of the treatment and if people perceive the vignettes differently than intended. The full question wordings for the pre and post-treatment items can be found in the Appendix.

Measures and operationalizations

Before discussing the analyses, we first lay out how the different concepts in our hypotheses will be measured and operationalized in the statistical tests described in the following section. As much as possible, we include multiple measures of each construct to reduce measurement error and avoid item-idiosyncratic findings (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2008).

Prior racial attitudes

Like other work on racial messaging, we rely on a battery of four items about racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996). The exact wording of these items can be found in the Appendix; we have not modified them from their standard form. We will evaluate the reliability of these items using Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis; assuming good scale properties (α>0.65 and loadings on a single factor above about 0.40), we will average these questions into a single index.

The survey also includes feeling thermometer ratings of blacks and whites; as a robustness check on the conclusions for the racial resentment index, we will also use a difference measure of the rating for whites minus the ratings for blacks. We will use this variable, where higher values mean more pro-white feelings, to ensure that the same pattern of results emerges with the racial resentment battery and this additional measure of whites' ethnocentrism (Kam and Kinder 2012). Should we find differences between models using these two separate measures, we will note that and the implications of such differences in the study of racial priming and denials.

Partisanship

Our primary measure of partisanship is a standard, 7-point survey question (included in the Appendix). As is usually typical in this area, we will group individuals into three categories

based on these questions - Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. Leaners are grouped with partisans. This distinction, instead of a more continuous version of partisanship, is in recognition of the nonlinear nature of a seven-point partisanship question where leaners behave like partisans and not like independents (Keith et al. 1992; Klar and Krupnikov 2016). These same divisions are used in the block-randomization.

As secondary measures, we will use other questions about partisanship, specifically a feeling thermometer difference between Republicans and Democrats. This kind of measure is more continuous than the partisanship question and has closer ties to research on polarization. We will verify that these items and the partisanship question operate the same way in testing the hypotheses described earlier. If they do not, we will note any differences and the theoretical implications of such differences.

Colorblindness and racial sensitivity

Our pre-treatment measure of colorblindness is a single question, asking subjects how much they disagree or agree with the statement "Putting racial labels on people obscures the fact that everyone is a unique individual". This item comes from a battery of questions on colorblindness developed elsewhere (Knowles et al. 2009). On racial sensitivity, we combine two questions from the 2016 American National Election Study and ask subjects: "Should people these days pay less attention to discrimination against African Americans, more attention, or the same amount of attention they have been paying lately?" The answer choices for both questions can be found in the Appendix. These two concepts are related but may be empirically distinct. As such, we will evaluate how much they correlate with one another; if they are highly correlated

(r>=0.7), we will average them into a single index. If the correlation between the two items is lower than 0.75,[3] we will use the two measures separately and note any differences we observe.

We also included four items about belief in a colorblind ideology after the treatment; these are primarily involved in some of the exploratory analyses discussed in the last section of this document. They are drawn from two sources (Knowles et al. 2009; Wilkins et al. 2015); as such, we will verify that they cohere sensibly on a single dimension with factor analysis and measures of reliability (Cronbach's $\propto$). If they do seem to measure the same concept, all four will be averaged into a single index. Exact wording and response options for these questions can be found in the Appendix.

Policy support

The instrument also contains multiple measures of policy support, which we plan on using separately instead of combining into a single index. This is because of differences in the focus of the questions that make them substantively important on their own. However, we will verify that this is the case, considering how these different measures of policy support correlate with one another and if they seem to tap into the same underlying construct (through Cronbach's $\propto$ and exploratory factor analysis). If all of the policy variables seem to measure the same latent construct, we will run versions of the analyses that follow on an average of all of the policy questions. Given the differences in these items, we suspect that this is not the case, but we will verify this assumption empirically.

The first of these is how important the respondents' rate six different policies on a 7-point scale from "not important at all" to "extremely important", including both "Crime" and "Race

[3] This implies that more than half of the variation in one item is not explained by the other (0.75*0.75 = .563)

relations". The full list of policies and answer choices can be found in the Appendix. As one measure of policy support, then we will consider how important respondents rate crime, race relations, and the difference in importance across these two items. We emphasize these two items due to their direct connection to the policy proposal in the treatments.

We also include four other policy measures as distractor items. These policies are poverty, government spending, education and the environment. We will also consider how important respondents rate these policies. These policies are unrelated to the policy proposal in the treatment as a result, we expect that the treatment will have less of an effect on these measures. We do, however, expect the treatment effects to vary based upon the degree that each of the policies are racialized. Poverty and government spending are more racialized than education and the environment, as such we expect that the treatments will have a greater effect upon the importance of the former two policies. Including these kinds of items helps us to determine the boundaries of the effects from racial messages, a topic not generally considered by other studies.

Our second and third measures of policy support relate to the specific proposal by the Mayor in the vignette. One item measures how much the respondents indicated they approved of the measure proposed by the mayor (7 point scale from strongly disapprove to strongly approve - see Appendix for exact wording). The other asks subjects to rate how racially insensitive the proposal was, on a five-point scale from not insensitive at all to very insensitive (see Appendix). Both of these questions will gauge how individuals react to the specific proposal by the mayor, in contrast to the more general policy items about crime and race.

We also included two questions about criminal policy more generally. These items asked subjects how much they disagreed or agreed with two statements: "The justice system is too

lenient with criminals" and "We need tougher prison sentences for repeat offenders". The exact wording of the response options can be found in the Appendix; both items come from prior research on attitudes about criminal justice (King and Wheelock 2007). After verifying that the questions have a large (>0.5) and positive correlation, they will be averaged into a single index, where higher values indicate more punitive attitudes about criminal justice.

Impressions of the source/mayor

A final set of questions as respondents to make inferences about the mayor directly. One asks where subjects would place the mayor on a 7-point scale from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. The other measures if participants think the mayor is likely to be a Democrat, Republican, or neither. We plan on using these two items separately as measures of political impressions of the source of racial statements and racial denials. Exact wording of both questions can be found in the Appendix.

Analysis

The first step we will do in the analyses is a series of data quality checks. To do this, we will examine the overall time-to-completion for the survey, the amount of time spent reading the vignette, the amount of time spent completing an open-ended question prior to the treatment[4], and the kind of response provided to this open-ended item. For these variables, we will look for two things – (1) individuals who take implausibly short amounts of time (less than 3 minutes on the whole instrument, 15 seconds on the vignettes, less than 10 seconds on the open-ended item, and less than 3 characters on the open-ended item), and (2) the presence of clear outliers (e.g., those taking 2 SD longer or shorter than the mean to complete the survey). We will also mark nonsensical responses on the open-ended task (e.g., "lklkk" or "111111"). With all of these

[4] This question asked people to describe the suburbs in their own words and was not explicitly linked to race.

marks of data quality, we will compare intent-to-treat (ITT) effects with estimates that omit respondents with poor data quality. Our primary method of analysis will be the ITT estimates, but we will note when these alternative estimates differ from the ITT results.

The first comparisons we will make will be basic treatment effects on the policy and mayor perception items across the experimental conditions. While these do not correspond directly to our predictions, they help us evaluate the overall consequences of these kinds of measures. We will make two sets of comparisons: comparing the control, implicit, and explicit messages (C2, C4, and C6) and comparing the denial and no denial conditions (C1 to C2, C3 to C4, and C5 to C6) on the policy support items. At this stage, we will not yet incorporate the partisan blocking from the design.

Our method of analysis in is nonparametric combination (NPC), which allows researchers to consider treatment effects simultaneously across a number of theoretically-linked dependent variables (Caughey, Dafoe, and Seawright 2017). This method provides both a global, overall p-value, which tests the sharp null hypothesis of no effects, and p-values for specific p-values (adjusted for multiple comparisons). With both the overall and specific p-values, we plan to use two-tailed tests. We plan on reporting the actual p-values themselves rather than simply if the p-values meet the 0.05 threshold.

Next, we will more directly evaluate our hypotheses, which are summarized in table 2. This table also indicates what comparisons will be used to evaluate each prediction, using the condition numbers from table 1. The different hypotheses in table 2 refer to prior racial attitudes, colorblindness/racial sensitivity, and partisanship. A preliminary step of these comparisons, then is to evaluate how correlated those three measures are. We will note this correlation and its implication for the hypotheses - if, for example, all three variables are correlated at 0.85, we will

Table 2: Hypotheses and analyses

Hypothesis	Prediction	Comparisons
H1	Racial attitudes should be predictors of political evaluations and opinions regardless of the racial message subjects receive	C2 compared to C4; C2 compared to C6; C4 compared to C6 Interactions with prior racial attitudes
H2	Partisanship should act as a moderator of the effects of implicit and explicit racial messages.	C2 compared to C4; C2 compared to C6; C4 compared to C6 Interactions with partisanship
H3	Colorblindness/awareness of race should act as a moderator of the effects of implicit and explicit racial messages.	C2 compared to C4; C2 compared to C6; C4 compared to C6 Interactions with colorblindness/awareness
H4	Explicit statements about race should be more readily attributed to Republicans and conservatives than Democrats and liberals than implicit statements	C2 compared to C4; C2 compared to C6; C4 compared to C6
H4a	Democrats should show evidence of H4 in a stronger and more pronounced way than Republicans	C2 compared to C4; C2 compared to C6; C4 compared to C6 Interactions with partisanship
H5	Racial denials should have a different impact on individuals, depending on prior racial attitudes.	C1 compared to C2; C3 compared to C4; C5 compared to C6 Interactions with prior racial attitudes
H6	Denials about race should be more readily attributed to Republicans and conservatives than Democrats and liberals than statements lacking such denials	C1 compared to C2; C3 compared to C4; C5 compared to C6
H6a	Democrats should show evidence of H6 in a stronger and more pronounced way than Republicans	C1 compared to C2; C3 compared to C4; C5 compared to C6 Interactions with partisanship

note the overlap in these measures and how the analyses with each variable as a moderator should be similar. If, on the other hand, the correlation is lower (0.7, 0.5, 0.3, etc.), we will

discuss how considering all three moderators provides unique insight into the consequences of these messages and the larger implicit-explicit paradigm.

The tests of H1, H2, H3, H4a, H5, and H6a all involve interactions with partisanship, prior racial attitudes, or colorblindness. These interactive tests will be conducted in two ways, to ensure that idiosyncrasies of a particular test to do not drive any of our conclusions. The first is an NPC approach, which has the advantage of considering multiple dependent variables at once. It has the disadvantage, however, of not being able to easily incorporate interaction terms. Accommodating interactions within an NPC framework (at least one that is easily implemented in statistical software) requires us to estimate separate NPC analyses for different subgroups of the sample. The tests of H1 and H5, then, involve estimating the NPC for the conditions in Table 2 for those above and below the median in racial resentment and the alternative ethnocentrism item. We choose a median split here to allow for differences between those low and high in these racial attitudes while still ensuring we have sufficient power in these comparisons to reach accurate conclusions. We take a similar approach in testing H3, calculating the NPC for those above and below the median on our items of colorblindness and racial sensitivity.

To evaluate the appropriateness of this strategy, we will estimate parallel OLS models with interaction terms that correspond to the interactions in Table 2. We will use the *interflex* procedures in R developed by Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu to estimate these interaction models and evaluate the corresponding hypotheses (Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu 2016). Although this requires running more models since each dependent variable must be considered separately, this serves as a robustness check on the NPC-based analyses and is more true to the way previous research in this area has been conducted as all previous works use these interaction

regression models as their central form of analysis (Mendelberg 2001; Huber and Lapinski 2006; Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek 2018).

For the hypotheses in Table 2 that reference interactions with partisanship (H2, H4a, H6a), we rely on the block randomization of the experiment. Here we will estimate the NPC separately for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. This logic is similar to that used for the other interactive hypotheses; however, we are on more solid causal grounds due to the block randomization. Using our secondary measures of partisanship (the feeling thermometer items and presidential approval), we will employ the same approach as the one described for racial attitudes in the prior paragraphs.

One other factor we will consider is the degree to which subjects mention race in an open-ended question prior to the treatment. This item as subjects to explain, in their own words, what suburbs are (exact wording of the item can be found in the Appendix). As the treatment vignettes all discuss the suburbs, it is possible that those who already think of the suburbs in racial terms may react differently to the treatments than those who are not thinking in racialized ways. We will determine this by coding the open-ended responses for racialized language (see the Appendix for a dictionary of such terms); we will then consider if the results based on the previously described analyses differ for those who do and do not use such language. Our ability to conduct these analyses depends on how prevalent racialized images of suburbs are; without a sufficient number of racialized responses (>15% of the sensical responses), we will not be able to carry out these analyses.

Exploratory analyses:

In addition to the analyses described in the previous section, our data will also be used to do a number of secondary, exploratory analyses. These all depart from the previously described

hypotheses and are not related to theories about racial messaging and denials. These primarily involve three things: shifts in racial attitudes pre and post-treatment, measures of racial identity among whites, and how people think about different geographic contexts.

Unlike previous studies in this area, we included measures about racial attitudes (specifically belief in a colorblind ideology) pre and post-treatment. This allows us to explore more direct consequences of the racial messages on the racial attitudes themselves. Here we will first create a measure of pre- and post-treatment support for these ideas, and then subtract (within-subjects). We will then determine if any shifts pre- and post-treatment vary by experimental conditions. Although conceptually related to the main hypotheses here, existing work in the implicit-explicit paradigm has not spoken much about changes in underlying racial attitudes. As such, we consider treatment effects but do so in an exploratory way without clearly specified hypotheses.

For measures of white racial identity, we will compare various measures of white identity, including racial resentment, ethnocentrism, racial sensitivity, colorblindness, and white identity directly (as listed in the Appendix). Using different forms of psychometric analyses (including but not limited to latent profile analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and IRT), we will compare how much these items capture the same concept and where any empirical distinctions lie. This will help to inform discussions about what white racial identity is (e.g., Jardina 2019) and which measures capture different components of this concept.

The other set of exploratory analyses we will conduct involves a set of pretreatment items about different kinds of geographic environments. As described in the Appendix, these questions ask subjects about their perceptions of values of urban, rural, and suburban environments and the location where they themselves currently live. Further, they include an open-ended item about

what people think of when they think about the suburbs. Combined with zip code information from the survey vendor (Lucid), we will consider how people living in different locations think about the values of other groups, conceptualize the suburbs, and place themselves relative to more objective measures of urbanicity.

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Appendix

Power Analysis

The following are a series of power analyses conducted in R, evaluating the likelihood of observing significant treatment effects (if, in fact, such effects exist). These tests suggest that our experiment should be able to uncover basic treatment effects from the different kinds of racial messages. Incorporating guidelines from experimentalists who recommend quadrupling the sample size to consider interactions (Giner-Sorolla 2018; Simonsohn 2014), our sample size should be able to uncover large and moderately sized interactive effects (which are those found and hypothesized by previous research on implicit messages).The primary method we employ, NPC, is also useful when conducting studies with moderate to low levels of power, further bolstering the reliability of our analyses.

We also note that our proposed experiment will have more statistical power than most previous studies, which tend to use samples of 500 or significantly less (see, for example, Mendelberg 2001, 209; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; White 2007; Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010). Studies that have documented a lack of difference between implicit and explicit appeals (Huber and Lapinski 2006; Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek 2018) have used samples comparable to one requested here. As stated in the previous paragraphs, differences in statistical power are particularly important when considering the types of moderated relationships suggested by the original implicit-explicit distinction.

<u>High probability of detecting large effect</u>
Two-sample t test power calculation

n = 25.52458
d = 0.8
sig.level = 0.05
power = 0.8
alternative = two.sided
NOTE: n is number in *each* group

<u>High probability of detecting medium effect</u>
Two-sample t test power calculation

n = 63.76561
d = 0.5
sig.level = 0.05
power = 0.8
alternative = two.sided
NOTE: n is number in *each* group

High probability of detecting small effect
Two-sample t test power calculation

n = 175.3847
d = 0.3
sig.level = 0.05
power = 0.8
alternative = two.sided
NOTE: n is number in *each* group

Survey instrument and treatment text

1. On a scale from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest), how do you feel about the following people and groups?
    a. Whites
    b. Blacks
    c. Republicans
    d. Democrats
    e. Journalists
    f. The police
2. How often do you consume news media (watch news, read articles, etc.)?
    a. Never
    b. One day a week
    c. Two days a week
    d. Three days a week
    e. Four days a week
    f. Five days a week
    g. Six days a week
    h. Seven days a week
3. How often do you talk about politics?
    a. Never
    b. One day a week
    c. Two days a week
    d. Three days a week
    e. Four days a week
    f. Five days a week

g. Six days a week

h. Seven days a week

4. On a scale from disagree strongly to agree strongly, how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements:

	Disagree strongly (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Agree strongly (7)
Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class. (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites. (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. Should people these days pay less attention to discrimination against African-Americans, more attention, or the same amount of attention they have been paying lately?
    a. A great deal less attention
    b. Somewhat less attention
    c. A little less attention
    d. Same amount of attention
    e. A little more attention
    f. Somewhat more attention
    g. A great deal more attention
6. Please choose one or more races or ethnicities that you consider yourself to be (mark all that apply).
    a. White
    b. Black or African American
    c. Hispanic/Latino(a)
    d. Asian or Asian American
    e. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    f. Middle Eastern or North African
    g. American Indian or Alaska Native
    h. Other _____
7. How important is being white to your identity?
    a. Not at all important
    b. Not very important
    c. Somewhat important
    d. Very important
    e. Extremely important

8. On a scale from disagree strongly to agree strongly, how much do you disagree or agree with the following statement: “Putting racial labels on people obscures the fact that everyone is a unique individual.”
    a. Disagree strongly
    b. Disagree
    c. Disagree somewhat
    d. Neither disagree nor agree
    e. Agree somewhat
    f. Agree
    g. Agree strongly

9. How much confidence do you have in the U.S. military?

    a. None at all
    b. A little
    c. A moderate amount
    d. A lot
    e. A great deal

10. Do you disapprove or approve of the job the president is doing?
    a. Strongly disapprove
    b. Slightly disapprove
    c. Neither approve nor disapprove
    d. Slightly approve
    e. Strongly approve

11. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a(n)
    a. Strong Democrat
    b. Not so strong Democrat
    c. Independent leaning Democrat
    d. Independent
    e. Independent leaning Republican
    f. Not so strong Republican
    g. Strong Republican
    h. Other

12. On a scale of political views from liberal to conservative, where would you place yourself?
    a. Extremely liberal
    b. Liberal
    c. Slightly liberal
    d. Moderate, middle of the road

e. Slightly conservative
f. Conservative
g. Extremely conservative
h. Have not thought much about it

13. How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on TV, radio, printed newspapers, or the Internet?
    a. None at all
    b. A little
    c. A moderate amount
    d. A lot
    e. A great deal
14. In general, do you think most people who live in **RURAL** areas have values that are
    a. Very similar to your values
    b. Somewhat similar to your values
    c. Somewhat different from your values
    d. Very different from your values
15. In general, do you think most people who live in **SUBURBAN** areas have values that are
    a. Very similar to your values
    b. Somewhat similar to your values
    c. Somewhat different from your values
    d. Very different from your values
16. In general, do you think most people who live in **URBAN** areas have values that are
    a. Very similar to your values
    b. Somewhat similar to your values
    c. Somewhat different from your values
    d. Very different from your values
17. How would you describe the community where you currently live?
    a. Urban
    b. Suburban
    c. Rural
    d. Other _____

18. Many people mean different things when they talk about the suburbs, and we are interested in what you think.

    In at least a few sentences, what are the first things that come to mind when you think of the suburbs?

19. Now we'd like you to read an excerpt from one article in a series of news articles. Afterwards, we'll ask you some questions about what you read. *Subjects are randomized to one of the following six articles*

Vignettes
Control, no denial

NEIGHBORHOOD

Population growth worries elected officials

6-2-2019

The next two decades will see profound changes in America's suburbs, which seem to be growing at an ever-increasing rate. More and more people are moving from the cities to suburbs. The resources of many suburban communities are stretching thin as city administrators, schools, and recreational departments all struggle to keep up with the historic level of growth. The increase in population, some say, is also becoming a problem.

Many policymakers worry about how to keep up financially with dramatically increasing demands on city services. Mayor Dalton McKenzie has called on local officials to take drastic measures, recommending lawmakers restructure park resources, reduce services at recreational facilities, and privatize city-owned sports venues.

"Look, things just can't continue the way they are," Mayor McKenzie said in a recent press briefing. "We just don't have the money to keep up. I'm asking local officials: make these changes in our priorities, tighten your belts, cut out the fat, and focus on programs that matter until we can get the budget under control in our city."

A local area affected by changes to the neighborhood

Control, denial

NEIGHBORHOOD

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6-2-2019

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In response, some have called McKenzie's position racist because of how it disproportionately affects local black communities. However, the Mayor's office has stated, "Let's not play the race card. We could obsess about race as a spectacle or fodder for the media circus. If we do, we'll just talk past each other in circles. We need to talk about the real fact that this crisis is only about one thing: out-of-control spending."

A local area affected by changes to the neighborhood

Implicit, no denial

NEIGHBORHOOD

Demographic shift worries elected officials

6-2-2019

The next two decades will see a profound demographic shift in America's suburbs, which seem to be growing at an ever-increasing rate. More and more poor people are moving from the cities to suburbs. The resources of many suburban communities are stretching thin as city administrators, schools, and police departments all struggle to keep up with the historic level of growth. The increase in diversity, some say, is also becoming a problem.

Many policymakers worry about possible upticks in crime coming from nearby struggling inner-city areas. Mayor Dalton McKenzie has called on local officials to take drastic measures, recommending police departments double police patrols, proactively detain potential troublemakers, and prioritize tough law enforcement.

"Look, poverty-stricken, urban areas are rife with crime and drugs," Mayor McKenzie said in a recent press briefing. "We need to protect ourselves and our kids. I'm asking local officials: make these changes in the neighborhoods being flooded with criminals, drugs, and violence until we can keep other people's problems out of our city."

A local area affected by changes to the neighborhood

Implicit, denial

NEIGHBORHOOD

Demographic shift worries elected officials

6-2-2019

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A local area affected by changes to the neighborhood

Explicit, no denial

NEIGHBORHOOD

Racial shift worries elected officials

6-2-2019

The next two decades will see a profound racial shift in America's suburbs, which seem to be growing at an ever-increasing rate. More and more people of color are moving from the cities to suburbs. The resources of many suburban communities are stretching thin as city administrators, schools, and police departments all struggle to keep up with the historic level of growth. The increase in racial minorities, some say, is also becoming a problem.

Many policymakers worry about possible upticks in crime coming from nearby predominantly black areas. Mayor Dalton McKenzie has called on local officials to take drastic measures, recommending police departments double police patrols, proactively detain potential troublemakers, and prioritize tough law enforcement.

"Look, disproportionately black areas are rife with crime and drugs," Mayor McKenzie said in a recent press briefing. "We need to protect ourselves and our kids. I'm asking local officials: make these changes in the neighborhoods being flooded with criminals, drugs, and violence until we can keep other people's problems out of our city."

A local area affected by changes to the neighborhood

Explicit, denial

NEIGHBORHOOD

Racial shift worries elected officials

6-2-2019

The next two decades will see a profound racial shift in America's suburbs, which seem to be growing at an ever-increasing rate. More and more people of color are moving from the cities to suburbs. The resources of many suburban communities are stretching thin as city administrators, schools, and police departments all struggle to keep up with the historic level of growth. The increase in racial minorities, some say, is also becoming a problem.

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A local area affected by changes to the neighborhood

Post-treatment items

20. Now we'd like to ask you some questions related to what you just read.

21. From not important at all (1) to extremely important (7), how important are the following issues to you personally?

	Not important at all	Not too important	A little important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Crime (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Race relations (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Government spending (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Education (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poverty (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The environment (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

22. On a scale from disagree strongly to agree strongly, how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements: *(answer choices were disagree strongly, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and agree strongly)*
    a. The justice system is too lenient with criminals.
    b. We need tougher prison sentences for repeat offenders.

23. On a scale from disagree strongly to agree strongly, how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements:

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Agree strongly
I wish people in this society would stop obsessing so much about race. (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
People who become preoccupied by race are forgetting that we are all just human. (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When one group gets ahead, the others are held back. (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Decreased bias towards one group naturally means another group will experience more bias. (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

24. On a scale from strongly disapprove to strongly approve, how much do you disapprove or approve of the measures proposed by Mayor Dalton McKenzie?

a. Strongly disapprove
b. Disapprove
c. Somewhat disapprove
d. Neither disapprove nor approve
e. Somewhat approve
f. Approve
g. Strongly approve

25. How racially insensitive was the proposed plan by Mayor McKenzie?
    a. Not insensitive at all
    b. A little insensitive
    c. Somewhat insensitive
    d. Insensitive
    e. Very insensitive
26. Now we'd like to ask you a few questions about your perceptions of Mayor McKenzie's political views. Where would you put Mayor McKenzie on this scale?
    a. Extremely liberal
    b. Liberal
    c. Slightly liberal
    d. Moderate, middle of the road
    e. Slightly conservative
    f. Conservative
    g. Extremely conservative
27. Would you say that Mayor McKenzie probably belongs to the Democratic Party, Republican Party, or neither?
    a. Democratic Party
    b. Republican Party
    c. Neither

Open-ended coding of pre-treatment question 18

As mentioned in the text, we will code the open-ended responses about the suburbs (pre-treatment question number 18) for racialized language. The following dictionary will be used to mark responses as having racial content - these terms will all be considered in their stemmed varieties to avoid issues of plurals, verb tenses, etc.:

> race, racial, racist, white, white people, blacks, African, African-Americans, people of color, minorities, European Americans, Latinos, Latinas, Latino-Amerians, Hispanics, Hispanic-Americans, Asians, Asian-Americans, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chinese, Chinese-American, Indian, Indian-American, Japanese, Japanese-American, Korean, Korean-American.

The absence of these terms will indicate a nonracial response. Prior to testing any hypotheses, we will read a random sample of 100 responses that are marked as racial and 100 that are marked as

nonracial to ensure that the coding is working properly. We may modify the coding, depending on the results of this evaluation.

We will consider a version of this variable that is any reference to nonwhite groups and one that only references blacks and/or whites. This distinction is to explore the extent to which these dynamics operate on a white/nonwhite distinction or a white/black divide.