

Web Appendix

Playing a Different Race Card: Examining the Limits of Elite Influence on Perceptions of Racism

Abstract:

This appendix contains background material related to the paper “Playing a Different Race Card: Examining the Limits of Elite Influence on Perceptions of Racism.” Our paper uses an experimental study to investigate elites’ ability to shape the public’s interpretation of an alleged incident of police misconduct. We find that elites’ ability to play the liberal race card is constrained by racial and partisan stereotypes.

The following parts are included in this appendix:

I. Study Description and Sample Characteristics

II. Multivariate Analysis of Beliefs about the Incident, Analysis of Judgments of Politician’s Motives

III. Questionnaire

I. Study Description and Sample Characteristics

We sampled members of the Columbus, Ohio community for our study, aiming for roughly equal representation by Blacks and Whites. Nonstudent adults were solicited through fliers and newspaper advertisements or were approached in public places such as the public library, bus station, and city marketplaces. Participants were invited to take part in a “community survey about law enforcement.” They read a news story and filled out a paper and pencil questionnaire. Data collection proceeded in two phases. The first data collection took place between December 2002 and March 2003, and the second in November 2003. The experiment remained the same in phase 2, but we asked respondents additional questions to shed light on the mechanisms by which the elite cues mattered. There were 224 respondents in the first phase and 229 respondents in the second phase. The procedures were identical in both phases. After respondents completed the survey, they were debriefed and informed that the news story was fictitious.

Respondents were asked to read a short news story about the shooting death of an 18-year-old Black male by a White police officer in Baltimore, Maryland. The story and the incident it described were fabrications, but were patterned closely after coverage of actual confrontations between White officers and young Black citizens. The article explained some crucial details while preserving overall ambiguity.

We included a labeling manipulation at the very end of the article. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of six experimental conditions. In the control condition, there was no label of the incident. In the other five conditions, this quote appeared at the end of the article: “We cannot tolerate this kind of racist behavior from our police officers.” In the anonymous condition, the article states that the person making this comment “did not wish to be identified.” In the remaining four conditions, which serve as our main source of inquiry, the statement is attributed to “Richard Kirby, a candidate for city council.” We manipulated this Speaker’s race by describing Kirby as Black or White, and also this Speaker’s party by describing him as a Republican or Democrat. These manipulations thus resulted in four conditions in which the person making the racism accusation is named and described.

After reading the article, respondents filled out a questionnaire asking about their perceptions and judgments of the incident, as well as their general political views and background. In order to shed light on the mechanisms by which the elite cues mattered, participants in the second wave of data collection were asked additional questions. Respondents were asked to rate four categories of politicians (Black Republican, White Republican, White Democrat, Black Democrat) on several dimensions and to make judgments about possible reasons for the speaker’s description of the officer’s behavior as “racist”. Both versions of the questionnaire (phase 1 and phase 2) are included in this appendix.

Our study has the advantage of using a non-student sample. But we do not claim our sample is representative of the general population. The ages of our participants range from 18 to 78; incomes range across all five offered income categories (less than \$25,000, through over

\$100,000). Compared to 2000 Census data, our sample resembles the county in terms of median age and income. Our participants have a somewhat higher level of educational attainment. Our sample is unlike the county population in that the sample is more male and more Democratic. Finally, our sample over-represents African American participants by design. Participants were compensated a token amount for their time.

Our combined sample of 453 respondents includes 177 African American respondents and 213 White respondents. The average age of the respondent was 36. About 22% of the sample had completed high school, 35% completed some college, 27% graduated from college, and 12% had postgraduate education. Fifty-six percent of respondents were male and 44% female.

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Education	445	4.18	1.07	1	6
Income	426	2.18	1.22	1	5
Woman	442	.44	.50	0	1
Age	433	36	13.15	18	78
Black	439	.40	.49	0	1
White	439	.49	.50	0	1
Party Id.	432	2.47	1.03	1	5
Ideology	436	2.64	1.06	1	5
Symbolic racism	450	3.01	.84	1	5

Education ranges from 1 to 5 (middle school through postgraduate education)

Income ranges from 1 to 5 (less than \$25,000, through over \$100,000)

Party id. ranges from 1 to 5 (strong Democrat to strong Republican)

Ideology ranges from 1 to 5 (very liberal to very conservative)

Symbolic racism ranges from 1 to 5 (with higher values indicating greater resentment)

Table A2: Sample Characteristics by Experimental Condition

	Control	Anonymous	Black Dem.	Black Rep.	White Dem.	White Rep.
Party Id.	2.24	2.34	2.53	2.47	2.67	2.58
Ideology	2.61	2.61	2.56	2.69	2.73	2.62
Symbolic racism	2.95	3.13	3.08	2.96	3.04	2.93

Party id. ranges from 1 to 5 (strong Democrat to strong Republican)

Ideology ranges from 1 to 5 (very liberal to very conservative)

Symbolic racism ranges from 1 to 5 (with higher values indicating greater resentment)

Chi-square tests reveal that there is no statistical relationship between condition and each of the three independent variables.

II. Multivariate Analysis of Beliefs about the Incident and Analysis of Judgments of Politician's Motives

Table A3 presents the results of multivariate analyses of beliefs about the incident.¹ We asked respondents whether the shooting reported in the news article was racist, whether the officer was racist, and whether the incident was an act of police brutality (*Officer racist, Incident racist, and Brutality*). The four response categories on these questions ranged from “definitely racist” (or “definitely an act of brutality”) to “definitely not racist” (or “definitely not an act of brutality”).

As we hypothesized, Blacks were more likely than Whites to believe the shooting was racist and that the officer was racist as well. Blacks were also more likely to believe the incident was one of police brutality. These racial differences persist when we take other individual characteristics into account (see Table A3). In model 1, we use ordered probit to estimate the effect of demographic characteristics, party identification, and ideology on judgments of the incident. Education ranges from 1 to 5 (middle school through postgraduate education); party identification ranges from 1 to 5 (strongly Democratic to strongly Republican); ideology ranges from 1 to 5 (very liberal to very conservative).

Even controlling for other characteristics, race is a significant predictor of these judgments. The modal response among Black respondents was that both the shooting and the officer were probably racist and that the incident was probably an act of police brutality; among Whites the modal response was that the shooting and the officer were probably not racist, and that the incident was probably not an act of police brutality. Thus Blacks and Whites read the same news story, but arrived at different conclusions about the nature of the incident.

The second half of the table shows that this racial gap is eliminated once we take into account the respondent's general beliefs about race and the criminal justice system (CJS). Model 2 includes respondent beliefs about the general fairness of the CJS, expectations of racial unfairness in the CJS, and racial resentment. Hurwitz and Peffley (2005b) have documented the importance that fairness judgments about the CJS play in the interpretation of specific law enforcement incidents. We find, as well, that the racial gap in judgments is largely due to the general belief among Blacks that police brutality against Blacks is a serious problem.

Table A4 provides summary statistics from the analyses of variance for judgments of the politician's motives for describing the incident as “racist.”

¹ Analyses were conducted in Stata 7.

Table A3: Modeling Black and White Judgments of the Incident

	Shooting racist (1)	Officer racist (1)	Police brutality (1)	Shooting racist (2)	Officer racist (2)	Police Brutality (2)
African American	.474** (.134)	.459** (.139)	.658** (.134)	.154 (.148)	-.028 (.158)	.239 (.150)
Sex (female)	.130 (.123)	-.005 (.128)	-.150 (.124)	.070 (.128)	-.121 (.137)	-.275* (.130)
Age	-.004 (.005)	-.004 (.005)	-.009 ^a (.005)	-.001 (.005)	.001 (.005)	-.003 (.005)
Education	-.019 (.060)	-.051 (.062)	.021 (.060)	-.035 (.062)	-.094 (.066)	-.011 (.062)
Party id.	-.168* (.065)	-.149* (.068)	-.034 (.065)	-.151* (.067)	-.128 ^a (.071)	-.007 (.067)
Ideology	-.092 (.061)	-.173** (.064)	-.170** (.061)	-.048 (.064)	-.099 (.068)	-.116 ^a (.065)
Fairness of CJS	--	--	--	-.028 (.075)	.082 (.079)	.017 (.075)
Police brutality against blacks is a problem	--	--	--	.432** (.085)	.591** (.094)	.562** (.087)
Racial resentment	--	--	--	-.047 (.085)	-.109 (.090)	-.039 (.085)
Cutpoint 1	-2.216 (.398)	-3.248 (.443)	-2.550 (.400)	-1.241 (.580)	-2.052 (.635)	-1.172 (.578)
Cutpoint 2	-.520 (.381)	-.991 (.397)	-.735 (.378)	.558 (.570)	.636 (.609)	.830 (.573)
Cutpoint 3	.953 (.384)	.655 (.395)	.478 (.377)	2.109 (.582)	2.404 (.618)	2.155 (.580)
N	344	342	342	337	333	335
Initial log likelihood	-376.93	-328.86	-389.62	-369.47	-321.60	-382.15
Final log likelihood	-358.59	-310.33	-368.72	-335.68	-273.80	-335.18
LR chi2 (df)	36.68** (6)	37.06** (6)	41.81** (6)	67.59** (9)	95.60** (9)	93.94** (9)

^a p≤.10, * p≤.05, ** p≤.01

Cell entries are estimates from an ordered probit model. The dependent variables are coded such that higher values indicate the respondent believed the incident was definitely racist (or definitely police brutality). The analyses include Black and White respondents only.

Table A4: Summary of Statistical Tests for Judgments of Politician Motivations

Effect	Sincere belief		Political gain		Knows about incident		Believes police are racist	
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Politician race	3.57	.06	16.21	<.001	.21	.65	3.88	.05
Politician party	1.62	.21	1.12	.29	.96	.33	.42	.52
Participant race	.85	.36	3.96	.05	3.25	.07	7.70	.01
Politician race * participant race	.81	.37	1.17	.28	.39	.53	.16	.69
Politician party * participant race	.16	.69	1.98	.16	7.70	.01	2.79	.10
Politician race * politician party	1.29	.26	.05	.82	.05	.83	1.37	.25
Politician race * politician party * participant race	.15	.70	.13	.73	.11	.74	.06	.81
N	120		119		118		119	
Adjusted R ²	.03		.15		.04		.08	

Note: The results obtained from the SPSS General Linear Model – Univariate procedure.

Degrees of freedom are: *sincere belief* (1, 112); *political gain* (1, 111); *knows about incident* (1, 110); and *believes police are racist* (1, 111).

III. Questionnaire

NOTE: Items marked with an asterisk only appeared in the second phase of data collection (fall 2003).

Law Enforcement Survey

Fall 2003

Thank you for participating in today's study. Our study concerns attitudes toward law enforcement. We would like you to read a short article that recently appeared in the *Washington Post* about an incident involving the police. After you read the article, we would like you to complete a short questionnaire.

Please keep in mind that your participation today is voluntary. We hope that you will feel free to provide honest and complete answers. If, however, you come across any questions that you cannot answer or would prefer not to answer, please leave them blank. You should be aware that the news article contains descriptions of crime and violence. If you would prefer not to continue participating, you may leave without penalty. Also keep in mind that the information you provide today is strictly confidential. No one -- not even the researchers -- will know exactly which answers **you** provide.

If you have any questions, please ask them now. When you are ready, please turn the page and read the article.

Baltimore Youth Killed by Police

BALTIMORE, MD, September 15 (AP) – Brad Jones, an 18 year-old black male, was shot and killed by police early Sunday morning. Officer Peter Simon of the Baltimore Police Department fired his weapon and hit Jones while responding to a robbery at the Royal Food Mart on 110 N. Douglas Street. Jones was pronounced dead a short time later at Mercy Hospital.

Jones was a student at Franklin D. Roosevelt High School. Officer Simon, who is white, joined the force in 1998.

A Police Department spokesperson said that the shooting is being investigated, as is routinely done whenever an officer discharges a weapon. Today, the Medical Examiner's Office said it will not release the autopsy results for Jones until the investigation is finished.

Many of the incident reports are still coming in, the Police Department spokesperson said, and investigators are still seeking a statement from Officer Simon and his partner.

Douglas Street is located in a middle-class, multi-ethnic neighborhood on the city's West Side. Royal Food Mart is adjacent to a hair salon and a 24-hour laundromat, and across the street from the Amazing Grace Tabernacle Church. Shortly after 12:45 a.m. on Sunday morning, Allen Koutsky, the store clerk, reported a robbery. According to Koutsky, a man entered the store demanding that he empty the contents of the cash register. The man fled with an undisclosed amount of cash. Police arrived minutes later.

No one is known to have witnessed the shooting itself. The Police Department has not disclosed whether a gun was recovered from the scene.

Officer Simon is on paid leave until an investigation is completed. The investigation is expected to take a month.

Richard Kirby, a Democratic candidate for city council, who is black, said in response to the shooting, "We cannot tolerate this kind of racist behavior from our police officers."

We would now like you to answer some questions concerning your reactions to the article, along with some of your other beliefs and opinions. For each question, please check the box next to the answer that comes closest to your own belief or feeling. Please try to respond to every question, even if you do not feel completely certain about your answer. Do not turn back to the article when answering these questions.

Do you recall the race or ethnicity of Officer Simon, the police officer who did the shooting?

- Black White Asian Hispanic Article did not say

Do you recall the race or ethnicity of Brad Jones, the young man who was shot?

- Black White Asian Hispanic Article did not say

Do you believe that the shooting reported in the news article was racist?

- Definitely racist Probably racist Probably not racist Definitely not racist

In your opinion, is Officer Simon racist?

- Definitely racist Probably racist Probably not racist Definitely not racist

Do you believe that this incident was an act of police brutality?

- Definitely was an act of brutality Probably was an act of brutality Probably was not an act of brutality Definitely was not an act of brutality

Do you believe that Brad Jones, the young man who was shot, was involved in some kind of illegal activity?

- Definitely was involved in illegal activity Probably was involved in illegal activity Probably was not involved in illegal activity Definitely was not involved in illegal activity

To what degree were Officer Simon's actions affected by Brad Jones's race?

- Not at all affected Slightly affected Somewhat affected Greatly affected

What kind of punishment, if any, is appropriate for Officer Simon?

- None at all Temporary suspension from the police force Removed permanently from force Prosecuted in criminal court

Do you recall if Brad Jones was carrying a gun?

- Yes, he was carrying a gun No, he was not carrying a gun Article said it is not known if he was carrying a gun Article did not say

The article ends with a quote from a man who calls the police shooting "racist". How fair do you think this man's comment is?

- Very unfair Somewhat unfair Somewhat fair Very fair

In your opinion, how serious is the problem of police harassment and brutality against black people?

- An extremely serious problem A fairly serious problem Somewhat of a problem Not a problem at all

Do you think that most blacks who complain about the treatment they receive from the police are justified, or do you think that they are not justified?

- Definitely are justified Probably are justified Probably are not justified Definitely are not justified

Do you think that it is appropriate for the police to pay attention to the race of a suspect in the course of their work, or should the police pay no attention to the race of a suspect?

- It is often appropriate to pay attention to race It is sometimes appropriate to pay attention to race It is rarely appropriate to pay attention to race It is never appropriate to pay attention to race

Some people say that criticism about racial harassment makes it harder for the police to do their job. Others say that such criticism does not make it harder for the police to do their job. What is your opinion?

- Criticism does not make it harder for the police to do their job Criticism makes it slightly harder for the police to do their job Criticism makes it somewhat harder for the police to do their job Criticism makes it much harder for the police to do their job

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the next four statements.

Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

- Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Most blacks who receive money from welfare programs could get along without it if they tried.

- Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less of the good things in life than they deserve.

- Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Black should do the same without any special favors.

- Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

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

- Black, African-American White, European-American Asian, Asian-American Hispanic Native American
 Arab, Arab-American Mixed, Multi-ethnic (please specify) _____

How often do you think about being a member of this racial or ethnic group and what you have in common with others in your group?

- Hardly ever Sometimes Fairly often Quite a lot

Rate how important your membership in this group is to the way you think about yourself.

- Not important Somewhat important Fairly important Extremely important

	not trustworthy on problems of racial discrimination and prejudice					very trustworthy on problems of racial discrimination and prejudice	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Black Republican politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Republican politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Democratic politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Democratic politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	not knowledgeable on problems of racial discrimination and prejudice					very knowledgeable on problems of racial discrimination and prejudice	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Black Republican politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Republican politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Democratic politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Democratic politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the next two statements.

You can generally trust the people who run our government to do what is right. *

- Strongly agree
 Somewhat agree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Somewhat disagree
 Strongly disagree

This country would be better off if the media didn't give so much attention to claims about racial discrimination. *

- Strongly agree
 Somewhat agree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Somewhat disagree
 Strongly disagree

Are you male or female?

- Male
 Female

What is your age? _____

What is the highest level of education that you have finished?

- Middle school
 Some high school
 High school graduate
 Some college
 College graduate
 Postgraduate

How would you describe your general political views? Would you call yourself a liberal or conservative?

- Very liberal
 Somewhat liberal
 Moderate
 Somewhat conservative
 Very conservative

What about your political party preference? Do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent?

- Strongly Democratic
 Somewhat Democratic
 Independent
 Somewhat Republican
 Strongly Republican

How often do you read the newspaper or follow the news on TV?

- Never Once or twice a week Three or four days a week Five or six days a week Every day

What is your occupation? _____

What is your approximate annual family income before taxes?

- Less than \$25,000 \$25,000–\$50,000 \$50,000–\$75,000 \$75,000–\$100,000 More than \$100,000

Please tell us how you found out about this study.

- Classified ad in The Dispatch Poster Advertisement in community paper Approached by the researcher Other (please describe)

Thank you for your help with our research. Please return the survey now for payment.