



## 2.2 The Race Left

### Key building blocks

The point of this video is to explore the limitations of the Race Left’s “challenge white racism” approach. This is a “yes, and” video. Yes, progressives should condemn white racism, and they should challenge racism as a class weapon. The larger question—which we take up further in Level 3—is when to take which approach.

- The **Race Left** refers to those who believe progressives should condemn white racism even if it costs some support.
- A key point is that **race-class** is itself a route toward racial justice (rather than an effort to build enthusiasm among whites by sacrificing communities of color).

### THE Race Left

1. The Race Left think it’s worth calling out racism directly, even if it means losing some support. Why might they think that?

Again, this is one of those questions that asks people to reflect on their assumptions:

Many progressives believe we have only two choices: challenge white racism, or ignore it. (The whole point of the race-class approach is to offer a third way)

The Race Left tends to believe that people who agree with dog whistle messages are self-conscious racists. Calling them out for their racism seems appropriate. Relatedly, because the Race Left often assumes that those they are alienating are themselves racists, they are fully prepared to see them leave the progressive coalition.

	As it turns out, most people who agree with dog whistle messages are not Klan members, and labeling dog whistle politicians “bigots” backfires with wide swaths of people, including people of color. See video 2.1
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**FROM ANALYSIS TO STRATEGY**

<p>1. Ian talks about sharing the Race Left’s views but then shifting. Do you recall why and how he shifted?</p>	He was researching racialized mass incarceration, and came to realize it wasn’t about white racism in general. The root cause was dog whistle politics. (This point was developed earlier in video 1.3)
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<p>2. Why does it matter that racialized public policies are primarily caused by dog whistling rather than overt racism?</p>	This insight offers an additional strategy for racial justice. When we see clearly that dog whistle politicians are the main source of harm to communities of color, it makes it easier to recognize that racial justice depends on building coalitions with other groups to drive those politicians out of office.
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**HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE CHALLENGE WHITE RACISM MESSAGE?**

<p>1. How did the Race Left “challenge white racism” message perform among white people? Latinx people? Black people?</p>	In the survey undertaken in July 2020, it lost among white people, performed fairly well among Latinx people, and did the best among Black people
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<p>2. How were these results out of the ordinary? What was happening at the time?</p>	Over several years of testing, this was the best performance for a challenge white racism message. This may reflect the fact that the survey was conducted in early July 2020, at the height of the Black Lives Matter protests.
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<p>3. What is the typical reaction to a Race Left message?</p>	<p>A challenge white racism message typically triggers negative reactions from white people, who may feel implicated as racists. In addition, it typically also alienates many people of color, who are uncomfortable with a message that tells them they are locked into conflict with white people.</p>
<p>4. How does the Race-Class message perform compared to a Race Left message?</p>	<p>Race-Class messages actually do better than a challenge white racism message at building support for racial justice reforms. Among white people, it moves racial justice from a message that loses to the opposition message to one that beats it. Among people of color, it generates higher levels of agreement than the challenge white racism approach. (We will explore more fully why and how the race-class approach works in Level 3.)</p>

### The challenge white racism message that we tested

Some people might want to know more about the message we tested. Below is the full text of the message. More information is available at [ProjectJuntos.us](https://ProjectJuntos.us).

There's been a horrible explosion of hate in this country. Certain politicians promote xenophobia, racism, and division. And it's not just their words. It's their policies, too. We see it in how they rip families apart at the border. And in how the police profile, imprison, and kill Black people, and use excessive force against people marching for justice. Right now, communities of color are suffering the greatest numbers of deaths from COVID-19, but have the least access to affordable, quality health care. To end the racism and reform immigration and policing, we must elect new leaders who truly believe that all of us are created equal and deserve to be treated that way.