

**Demise of Dominance:  
Group Threat and the New Relevance of White Identity for American  
Politics**

by

Ashley Elizabeth Jardina

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Ted Brader, Co-Chair  
Professor Vincent L. Hutchings, Co-Chair  
Professor Donald R. Kinder  
Professor Michael W. Traugott  
Professor Nicholas A. Valentino

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*To my mother, for the time and support she gave to get me here*

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## CHAPTER 1

### Reconsidering Racial Identity among White Americans

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous novel, *The Great Gatsby*, one of the central characters, Tom Buchanan, remarks to his wife, "[t]he idea is if we don't look out the white race will be – will be utterly submerged... It is up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things." Fitzgerald's book is set at the beginning of the Roaring Twenties, in the aftermath of World War I, and following intense domestic racial tensions resulting in the race riots of 1919's Red Summer. It was published in 1925, just after the passage of the American Immigration Act of 1924, which slowed down to a trickle the massive waves of European immigrants who had arrived during the previous two decades. The Act established strict immigration quotas, sharply curtailing "non-white" immigrants from Asia and Southern and Eastern Europe. Many of proponents of this draconian law embraced the argument espoused by Tom Buchanan; they were supremely interested in controlling the ethnic composition of the United States (U.S.) population and believed in the racial superiority of Northern Europeans. They also saw the law as part of a larger effort to establish a distinct American identity—an identity that was biased toward Anglo-Saxon culture and that privileged "whiteness" (King 2002). While these events occurred more than 85 years ago, the sentiments surrounding them are familiar. Indeed, they are uncannily echoed in places like Samuel Huntington's infamous *Who Are We? Challenges to America's National Identity*, published in 2004.

Huntington argues that American is a nation defined by an “Anglo-Protestant” culture, which is being weakened by Mexican immigration and the “Hispanization” of the U.S. (Huntington 2004c). Like the American Immigration Act of 1924, this book follows a decade’s worth of mass immigration to the U.S., although this time mostly from Latin America. And just as in the 1920’s, immigration is at the forefront of national public debate. Across the country, state governments have passed stringent immigration legislation.

Coinciding with these laws, public dialogue has once again shifted toward the implications of the changing racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. Debates about language, citizenship, and race have been renewed in the past several years and even more so in the wake of the election of America’s first non-white president, Barack Obama. What these changes mean for the status of white Americans has not gone unnoticed by the popular press; today’s media headlines ask question like, “Are whites racially oppressed?” (Blake 2011) and is this “The End of White America?” (Hsu 2009). Following the 2012 reelection of Barack Obama, political pundits discussed the end of the “white establishment” and questioned the future of “the white vote” (Robinson and Robinson 2012).

There are several important characteristics to note about this dialogue. First, it reflects an apparent anxiety about the racial composition of the U.S. Second, it reveals concerns about racial and ethnic conflict in which the dominance of whites, as a racial group, seems to be in jeopardy. What remains to be seen, however, is whether these considerations are mirrored more broadly in the American public. Do white Americans actually feel some sense of anxiety about the status of their racial group? Do they even



identify with their race, and does this identification have political consequences? For most of the past 50 years, the answers to these questions among political scientists have usually been “no.” When it comes to considerations of race and ethnicity, whites, previous findings suggest, are driven primarily by hostility toward members of racial outgroups. Because of their numerical majority and political dominance, whites do not, by and large, possess their own sense of racial identification, and they do not feel consciously compelled to protect some sense of group interest.

Today’s political and social climate in the U.S., however, suggests a need to reconsider our existing understanding of intergroup relations, particularly with respect to race. Two decades of mass immigration to the U.S., the election of America’s first black president, and the nation’s growing nonwhite population have dramatically changed the political and social landscape. Such changes may signal an end to the security of whites’ dominance, which has previously allowed the group to take their racial identity for granted. Furthermore, much of the existing work on race relations was developed to explain conflict between blacks and whites, and changing racial dynamics suggest that existing theories may not adequately explain contemporary race relations. Thus, this dissertation reconsiders existing models of prejudice and group cohesion, and it argues that racial identity is in fact become a meaningful antecedent of whites’ political behavior.

In particular, I challenge the conventional argument that white racial identity is inconsequential and argue that previous work has overlooked the possibility that this identity’s significance is conditional. When the dominant status of whites relative to racial and ethnic minorities is secure and unchallenged, white identity likely remains

dormant. When whites perceive their group's dominant status is threatened or their group is unfairly disadvantaged, however, their racial identity may become salient and politically relevant. For many years, there was little doubt that whites constituted an overwhelming numerical majority of the American population and fully controlled government institutions at all levels. Recent social and political trends—including an erosion of whites' majority status and the election of America's first black president—have signaled a challenge to the absoluteness of whites' dominance. Under these conditions, white identity may play a powerful role in political preferences.

The theory developed here furthers our understanding of intergroup relations by explaining the conditions under which a group identity becomes salient for members of a dominant group.<sup>1</sup> It also provides insight as to when this identification becomes politicized and explores the political implications of this identity. I argue that scholars have failed to find compelling evidence linking white racial identity to whites' political preferences because they have looked during the wrong time, in the wrong place, or with suboptimal measures of identity. In a departure from most previous efforts, I measure identity at the national level, among representative samples of whites, using a broader range of survey measures.

I bring to bear evidence from four national surveys, including a number of time-series studies from the American National Election Studies (ANES) spanning over twenty years, three diverse open-ended surveys, and two original experiments to show that a majority of whites do in fact identify with their racial group in the contemporary U.S. Furthermore, I demonstrate across each of these datasets that when whites perceive

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<sup>1</sup> A dominant group is one which possesses a disproportionate share of a society's privileges, resources, and power (Knowles and Peng 2005).

that their status as the dominant group in the nation is in jeopardy, white racial identity significantly informs their political attitudes. As I will discuss more fully below, these results have important implications for our understanding of racial conflict broadly; they suggest that the politics of race today is not exclusively about outgroup hostility and elite efforts to exacerbate or quell such sentiments. Instead, disputes may be just as much about maintaining power and privilege. And if the circumstances that I argue are responsible for awakening white identity persist, race relations in the U.S. may be increasingly defined by whites' desire to protect their ingroup interests.

## A Look Ahead

The landscape of existing theories on racial attitudes and intergroup relations spans over seventy years, yet very little of it touches on how dominant groups conceptualize their own group's interests. Instead, most work focuses squarely on *outgroup* attitudes among dominant groups, like white Americans, and on ingroup attitudes among racial and ethnic minorities. In Chapter 2, I describe how the literature came to be defined by this paradigm and flesh out the ways in which existing theories can aid our thinking about racial identity among whites. The key to understanding the formation and import of identity among dominant groups, I argue, is in perceptions of threat; for such groups, identity becomes salient in reaction to beliefs about the relatively threatened or waning status of the group. White Americans, in particular, are responding to the threat of population changes and the electoral success of non-white candidates like Barack Obama.

Lack of prior evidence for white racial identity can be attributed, in part, to a lack of adequate measures of this identity on public opinion surveys. When good measures

were available, they were often used only on surveys conducted among regional or convenience samples. Chapter 3 tackles these challenges directly. When employing a measure that captures the degree of centrality of this identity among a national sample of whites, a very different account emerges. An impressively large proportion of white Americans *do* identify with their race in the contemporary United States. Importantly, this measure of identity is not simply racial animus, egalitarianism, or another well-established attitudinal or political predisposition by another name. White identity is its own politically meaningful construct. Furthermore, it seems that the propensity to adopt such an identity may be more likely among individuals with particular personalities—those that have a preference for social hierarchy and who endorse authoritarianism.

Whites who adopt a strong racial identity also share a number of important beliefs about national identity, racial conflict, group competition, and group privilege. These beliefs contribute to the content of white identity, which Chapter 4 describes in more detail. High white identifiers tend to possess more exclusionary views about American identity, perceive greater competition between their own racial group and others, and possess a greater sense of racial alienation—the belief that their group has been or is currently being treated unfairly in society. At the same time, white identifiers recognize and enjoy their group’s privileged status and express little collective guilt. Meanwhile, a noteworthy proportion of individuals reject the notion that their racial identity is important, and their rationale for doing so offers further insight into our understanding racial attitudes; many of these low white identifiers describe their racial identity as inconsequential on grounds that reflect a subscription to colorblind racism.

White identity is politically powerful. In Chapter 5, across twenty years of the American National Election Studies Time Series, and among four additional cross-sectional datasets, I provide robust evidence that white identity is often the most meaningful predictor of political preferences in a number of domains. Higher levels of white identity are associated with more restrictive views on immigration, and in what is a testament to the striking impact of this identity in the present day, higher levels were also significantly associated with opposing Barack Obama in the 2012 presidential election. This chapter also illustrates where white identity matters and where it does not. White identity is very much ingroup oriented; it predicts support for policies that benefit whites—as some social welfare programs like Social Security and Medicare are framed as doing—and opposition to policies that threaten whites’ privileged status. White identity, however, it is not a proxy for outgroup attitudes in domains like welfare, federal spending on aid to blacks, and other racialized policies generally associated with outgroup animus.

To what extent does group-threat moderate the effect of white identity on evaluations? The experiment described in Chapter 6 tests the claim that high identifiers are sensitive to threats directed at their group. When reminded of looming population changes, in which whites will no longer hold a majority status in the U.S., white identifiers respond with anger and fear. In other words, they report feeling genuine emotions on behalf of their group, a finding which lends further credence to the notion that white identity is a meaningful construct. At the same time, the threat of population displacement does little to forge relationships between identity and political constructs, in

part because powerful associations already exist. White identity may in fact be *chronically* salient in the present political milieu.

One explanation for the lack of evidence for white identity in earlier research is the notion that proclaiming such an identification may have been seen as taboo at one time. White identity, after all, has been associated with extremist hate groups who embrace white supremacist beliefs. Thus, Chapter 7 examines the possibility that efforts to measure white identity are vulnerable to social desirability biases. And in fact they are, to some extent, but not enough to diminish the power of this identity. More interestingly, however, are the results of an experiment in which the effort of whites to organize on behalf of their group—in this case, a story based on a real attempt on the part of a college student to establish a white student union on a university campus—is associated with white supremacy. When such a connection is made, white identifiers do not reject their identity. Instead, they become measurably more liberal in their policy preferences. These results support the claim the white identity is not a construct limited to a small subset of marginalized and radical whites; rather, a significant proportion of whites have adopted this identity without readily associating it with extremism.

The concluding chapter summarizes findings, considers their implications, and grapples with what the future holds given the apparent import of white racial identity. Racial conflict in the U.S., it seems, can no longer be characterized primarily by white animosity toward blacks. Amidst a rapidly shifting racial landscape, in which immigration and trends in birth rates have brought Hispanics into the fray across the nation, whites' concerns over their ingroup's power and privileges are also a driving force in racial conflict. Furthermore, these same trends are not limited to the United

States. Large influxes of immigrants have also challenged the political, social, and numerical dominance of whites in Western Europe, and I speculate in Chapter 8 about the extent to which the findings in this project may extend across the Atlantic Ocean. This much seems clear: racial identity, at least in the U.S., is not a phenomenon limited to subordinated groups. White Americans do indeed identify with their racial group, and the factors that gave rise to the salience of this identity are likely to increase in magnitude in the coming years. Thus, the work here revises our existing understanding of racial conflict, and provides important evidence for the way in which racial attitudes will likely influence political outcomes in the future.

## CHAPTER 2

### A Theory of Dominant Group Identity

Over its history, the nature of scholarship on intergroup relations has been influenced by the social and political milieu (Huddy 2004). Pioneers of this work focused on how membership in and identification with socio-demographic groups influenced individuals' political beliefs and behavior (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). Much of this work coincided with observed political homogeneity along occupational, religious, and racial lines in the U.S., and scholars argued that campaigns effectively strengthened the relationships between group ties and political preferences. Then, beginning in the early 1950s in the wake of Nazi Germany and the mass genocide of Jews and other groups, work on intergroup relations shifted from a focus on political cohesion to an emphasis on conflict and prejudice (Adorno et al. 1950; Allport 1954; M. Sherif 1958). During this time, social scientists were responding to outcries from intellectual and political elites who argued that Americans needed to confront domestic racial and ethnic inequalities in order to denounce sincerely the doctrines of racial superiority promoted by fascist and Nazi ideologies (Montagu 1942; Myrdal 1944; Wolsko et al. 2000). By the late 1970s, the study of intergroup relations had shifted once again. An interest in both ingroup solidarity and intergroup conflict emerged out of the civil rights era and the modern women's



movement, where considerable group cohesion on the part of blacks and women characterized political conflict (Gurin 1985; Miller et al. 1981; Olsen 1970; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1974; Verba and Nie 1972).

Today, the extent to which research focuses on either ingroup solidarity or outgroup hostility is a function of the group whose behavior is of interest. Indeed, just as scholarly attention to group cohesion or conflict has shifted in response to political realities, the perspectives regarding the study of intergroup relations have also varied depending on the specific group being studied (Jackman 1994). For some groups, much of the focus is distinctly ingroup oriented. For example, a great deal of the work on class and gender focuses on group consciousness and collective action among the working class and women, with limited research directed toward group members' outgroup attitudes or animosities. For other groups, attention has been primarily directed at outgroup attitudes and prejudice. This divide is perhaps most apparent with respect to the study of race in the U.S., where work on whites as a group deals almost exclusively with racial prejudice and the relationship between these attitudes and whites' political preferences. Research on African Americans and other racial or ethnic minority group members, however, is characterized by an interest in cohesion and group identification. These different theoretical emphases are not simply the result of normative interests in eradicating racial conflict and promoting equality; rather, they are born out of empirical realities. For groups like African Americans, group cohesion and identity are easily measured and politically impactful. For white Americans, evidence of widespread solidarity along racial lines has often seemed scant in existing public opinion data. As a

result, many scholars have dismissed the notion that racial identity among whites plays an important role in political attitudes or behavior.

## The Concept of Identity

Interest in group cohesion among certain groups has led to the development of an extensive field of study surrounding the concept of *group identity*. Since the 1970s, social scientists have been increasingly interested in the behavioral consequences of group identity, which is generally defined as a psychological, internalized sense of attachment to a group (Conover 1984; Huddy 2003; Lau 1989; Miller et al. 1981). For political scientists, group identity has long played an important role in theories of political behavior. Indeed, one of the central and persistent findings of research in this domain is that subjective group loyalties can be powerful predictors of political preferences. We know that group identifications are significant because they provide important cognitive structures through which individuals navigate and participate in the political world. They can serve as cues for political preferences, and they may promote political engagement.

Group identity has certainly played a particularly important role in our understanding of political behavior among African Americans. Starting generally with the work of Matthews and Prothro (1966), who named “an interest in and identification with other members of the race” as a prerequisite for black leadership, scholars have paid significant attention to racial identification among blacks in the U.S., and with good reason. There is substantial empirical evidence that racial identification has important political consequences for blacks. Strong racial identities lead them to participate in politics at greater rates (Miller et al. 1981; Olsen 1970; Verba and Nie 1972), as well as

to be more supportive of both redistributive policies beneficial to their group and government intervention on behalf of their group (Bobo 2004; Dawson 1995).

This attention to identity has not been extended to whites when it comes to race for two primary reasons. First, the overwhelming focus of research on racial conflict has been driven by normative efforts to study *outgroup* hostility among whites. This reason alone does not sufficiently explain the direction this work has taken, however, especially since many theories of intergroup relations suggest that ingroup identity is an important and necessary element for the existence of outgroup derogation (see Brewer 1999 for a review). Rather, contemporary work rarely investigates the impact of white racial identity because previous attempts to document such effects have come up empty. The apparent lack of evidence for ingroup identity among whites has been attributed to the group's dominant status. As Sears and Savalei explain,

In general, whites remain dominant in American society—numerically, social economically, and politically—and overt, explicitly racial conflict is now relatively rare. As a result, whites' whiteness is usually likely to be no more noteworthy to them than is breathing the air around them. White group consciousness is therefore not likely to be a major force in whites' political attitudes today (2006, p. 901).

In other words, the experience of being white in the U.S., and the privileges and advantages white individuals incur as a result of their objective race, make it unlikely that their race comprises a salient identity. Compared to members of a racial or ethnic minority group, white individuals are less likely to experience prejudice, discrimination, or disadvantages as a result of their race. Furthermore, white Americans live in a cultural environment where their group is considered “mainstream” by way of the group possessing the dominant status in society (Doane 1997). Thus, “to be white in America is not to have to think about it” (Terry 1981, p.120). It is perhaps not surprising then, that

our understanding of intergroup relations with respect to white Americans is dominated by theories that focus on outgroup attitudes.

Yet the conditions I just outlined describe a state of the world that may not always be true. Consider the public discourse during the 1920's with respect to race and immigration, the Civil Rights Era, and today's sharp political divide over immigration and changing demographics. These are points in time in which race *is* salient, when who is part of the ingroup and who is not—when who is white and who is not—is more likely to be recognized consciously. Moreover, consider potential differences in individual experiences, where some whites live in racially diverse communities where white is not the “norm” or others for whom the experience of “whiteness” and racial differences are part of a cultural and regional socialization, as may be the case for many individuals born and raised in the southern part of the U.S. The purpose of this exercise is to suggest that just because racial identity is not routinely relevant for white Americans does not mean that it is never relevant.

The argument I put forth here is that white identity—and by identity I mean a conscious, psychological attachment to one's racial group and belief the group has shared interests—has periodically become a salient and important factor with respect to whites' political attitudes and evaluations under certain conditions—namely, when whites perceive that their status as a dominant group, and the privileges that accompany such status, are somehow threatened. As I described in Chapter 1, in the contemporary political environment, a number of factors have potentially presented a threat to whites' dominance including population changes, immigration, and the election of Barack Obama. Thus, it is important to reconsider under what conditions racial identity does

matter for whites and to examine whether white identity is in fact presently a meaningful group identity.

## Theories of Intergroup Relations

In order to understand the nature of a dominant group identity, it is important to consider existing knowledge of intergroup relations more generally. Both ingroups and outgroups are attended to broadly across the theoretical landscape, but especially with respect to those theories specifically designed to explain racial conflict. Such theories generally fall into two categories: those that focus on individual-level predispositions that influence attitudes and behavior with respect to outgroups and those that focus on identity, group categorization, and group interests. With respect to race relations in particular, included among the former set of theories are symbolic politics theory, racial resentment theory, and ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam 2009; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears 1993). At the core of each of these theories is the assumption that symbolic predispositions, acquired early in life through socialization, exert strong influences over adults' political attitudes and behavior. These theories do *not* propose that group categorization or attachment to particular groups serve as driving forces in explaining prejudice or general group conflict. In particular, symbolic politics theory and racial resentment theory posit that in the post-Civil Rights era, whites' opposition to policies benefiting blacks is driven no longer by a belief in racial inferiority; instead whites perceive blacks as insufficiently adhering to American values like hard-work and patriotism (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1993).

These theories do not suggest that ingroup identity influences or cultivates attitudes toward outgroups, or that contextual factors affect the level and salience of an

identity. Rather, these beliefs are based on early-acquired (or perhaps genetically acquired) predispositions, which serve as enduring influences on adults' political attitudes, with the most salient political symbols determining which predispositions are actually evoked. According to these theories, such predispositions are more crystallized, politically powerful, and negative than other political attitudes.

Kinder and Kam (2009) argue that another predisposition—ethnocentrism—undergirds group conflict. They define ethnocentrism as “a predisposition to divide human society into in-groups and out-groups” (2009, p. 31) and claim that it is a fundamental characteristic of individuals, acquired through genetics, social learning, personality, and education. This ingrained preference for one's ingroup, coupled with dislike for outgroups writ large, plays an important role in shaping public opinion. But like racial resentment, ethnocentrism is viewed as a stable disposition, whose levels do not fluctuate within individuals depending on context.

These individual predisposition-based theories dominate our understanding of whites' race-related political preferences, and for good reason. There is substantial evidence that racial outgroup animosity of whatever brand, be it symbolic racism, racial resentment, modern racism, or ethnocentrism, is an important predictor of whites' political preferences (Kinder and Kam 2009; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears 1993). Yet there are also important reasons to reconsider whether these theories can broadly and comprehensively account for race relations in contemporary politics. For example, symbolic racism and racial resentment were originally designed to explain racial attitudes among whites toward blacks in the context of the historical experience between blacks and whites. As Sears and Savalei argue, “because of the long history, salience, rigidity,

and categorical nature of the racial color line,” whites’ prejudice toward blacks is a result of powerful predispositions that influence political attitudes. How well do these predispositions apply to intergroup relations in a dramatically changing racial landscape, where the traditional black and white biracial divide is being revised by Hispanics and Asians? Furthermore, and more central to my argument in this dissertation, is whether these theories offer a panacea-like explanation for whites’ attitudes when the conditions thought to make racial identity among whites irrelevant no longer apply.

Pointing out these limitations is not to say that individual predispositions and general outgroup animus do not play an important role in understanding today’s political phenomena in a multi-racial country. Rather, these predispositions may be part of a more complicated portrait of intergroup race relations in which identity plays an important role for whites as well as racial and ethnic minorities. As Bobo (1983) argues, racial attitudes are likely multidimensional, and which factors matter depends on the issue at hand or the object of evaluation, in addition to context and circumstances.

In contrast to predispositional theories, group-identity theories suggest that people have psychological tendencies to form groups and to exercise ingroup favoritism and outgroup animosity (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1974). Theories falling within this domain include social identity theory, realistic group conflict theory, group position theory, and social dominance theory. These theories focus on the role that group categorization, attention to ingroup interests, and identification with a group has in driving behavior. Many of these theories, like social identity theory, suggest that to some extent, group categorization is automatic and inevitable (Duckitt 2003; Huddy 2003; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1974)(Duckitt 2003; Huddy 2003). In fact, in a series of

studies, which encompass what we now know as the minimal group paradigm, Tajfel and his colleagues demonstrated that merely categorizing individuals into arbitrary groups in a lab setting is sufficient to elicit ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Yet these group-oriented theories often fail to generate much traction when it comes to understanding the racial attitudes and racially motivated behavior of whites. In part, they generally overlook the notion that group identities matter for some groups but not others, or that the political and social relevance of a group identity may be conditional. At other times, they fail to test and empirically demonstrate whether ingroup identity exists among relevant groups at all. But I argue that the basic premise of many of these theoretical accounts—that ingroup identity and favoritism is implicated in understanding intergroup relations, even among whites, is indeed true, under certain conditions. That is, ingroup identity does not explain whites' race-related political preferences all the time; identity becomes relevant when whites feel like their dominant status is in jeopardy. I argue that this conditional relevance likely applies most to dominant groups—those that possess the greatest control over social, economic, and political institutions within a society—more broadly (Doane 1997). Thus, in describing the theoretical landscape of group-oriented theories in the pages that follow, and in laying a framework for understanding racial identity among whites, I propose that many of the claims made could apply to other dominant groups across societies.

In making this argument, I draw on a number of components central to each of these group-based theories. In the pages that follow, I describe how each offers important insights regarding the development and import of group identity more broadly, and I



discuss how these points may apply specifically to the development and relevance of dominant group identity, especially with regards to racial identity among white Americans. I also speak to the ways in which each of these theories falls short of individually offering a broad theoretical framework that can account for the way in which white racial identity affects political preferences, and I attempt to fill in some of these gaps with a revised theoretical account.

Two of the foundational theories in the study of intergroup relations are social identity theory (SIT), and its close cousin, self-categorization theory (SCT). These theories begin with the assumption that ingroup bias can emerge under even the most minimal conditions. According to the SIT approach, a need for positive self-regard or enhanced self-esteem motivates such bias; when individuals feel that the group to which they belong is positively distinct from outgroups, their self-image as a group member is subsequently enhanced (Abrams and Hogg 1988). The authors of these theories, Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979), also argue that individuals' beliefs about the nature and structure of relations between social groups in society is what promotes group-oriented behavior in the first place. Namely, systems characterized by marked stratification move individuals away from interacting as individuals on the basis of interpersonal relationships and instead toward engaging as members of social groups with certain orientations toward other groups.

Central to this approach—and to others, as I will describe in more detail below—is the observation that the hierarchical arrangement of groups, coupled with the relative security of a group's position, are important elements in the expression of identity. In particular, according to social identity theory, groups are more likely to express hostility

toward outgroup members when their place on the social hierarchy is unstable and resources are scarce. In fact, the security of a group's position is considered to be a more proximal predictor of bias than are levels of personal self-esteem (Hornsey 2008). This latter point is especially relevant when it comes to dominant identities. Often, by nature of their high-status position in society, dominant groups like white Americans enjoy an unthreatened, privileged status. As a result, social identity theory might predict that expressions of ingroup bias and outgroup hostility are often minimized. It would also expect that animus and derogation directed toward outgroups are more likely to occur when the dominant group's power is challenged.

There is a nuanced but especially important clarification to be made here, however. Social identity theory predicts a reciprocal relationship between ingroup bias and outgroup hostility, regardless of whether the status of a group is a dominant or subordinate one. This expectation is problematic when it comes to explaining behavior among white Americans. In some instances, and counter to the expectations of social identity theory, expressions of outgroup hostility (e.g., racial resentment) among whites seem to occur quite often without an accompanying ingroup bias or an expression of ingroup identification of any sort (Kinder and Winter 2001; Sears, Laar, and Carrillo 1997; Sears and Savalei 2006). Furthermore, I argue that ingroup bias does not necessarily give way to outgroup hostility among whites. Whites may very well be concerned with their ingroup and desire to protect its status without expressing resentment toward outgroups or by subscribing to negative stereotypes about such groups.

Social identity theory, like other work situated in the group-identity framework, falls short in offering an account of the development and relevance of dominant group identity in one other important regard—it devotes little attention to explaining individual differences in identity acquisition. In fact, social identity theorists assume that group identities develop uniformly across group members and usually regard the relevance of a particular identity as an all-or-none phenomenon. As I will discuss further, however, there is considerable variation in who identifies as white and in the propensity to adopt a group identity more generally. Thus, social identity theory does not account for ingroup variation in the strength of identification or its potentially conditional relevance (Huddy 2001). Factors like personality differences, the length of time one has been an objective group member, and vulnerability to threat all might explain individual differences in the propensity to adopt a dominant group identity. In other words, even when conditions are ripe, not all whites will report that their racial identity is salient and significant.

Another group-based theory—social dominance theory (SDT)—does account for individual variation in the adoption of strong group identities. SDT argues that humans possess a general tendency to form and maintain group-based social hierarchies (Jim Sidanius and Pratto 2001). Individual variation in the desire for group-based dominance is, in part, a function of one’s social dominance orientation (SDO)—a personality trait which embodies the extent to which an individual prefers hierarchy and tolerates inequality (Pratto et al. 1994). Levin and Sidanius (1999) argue that higher levels of SDO are associated with stronger ingroup identifications among high-status group members. Furthermore, individuals who strongly identify with their group are more likely to support attitudes and policies that reinforce their group’s dominant status (Levin et al.

1998). This framework is appealing for understanding why some dominant group members possess stronger levels of ingroup identification, and it seems reasonable to expect that whites who possess higher levels of SDO might also identify more strongly with their racial group.

But this theory also has a number of important and relevant shortcomings when it comes to understanding racial identity among whites. For one, SDT adopts a static view of intergroup relations; SDO is portrayed as a stable predisposition that is normally distributed across individuals, and levels of SDO are not supposed to fluctuate. Except levels do vacillate among individuals (Levin and Sidanius 1999), suggesting that there is contextual variation in the expression of SDO that scholars have yet to explain and that is inconsistent with the SDT framework (Huddy 2004). Furthermore, because SDO is believed to be a stable predisposition, SDT does not make claims about why the adoption or relevance of a particular ingroup identity should shift over time. In fact, Sidanius, Pratto, and their colleagues argue that members of the dominant group should *all* consistently possess a greater sense of ingroup favoritism, but this is clearly not an empirical claim born out in public opinion data (Jim Sidanius, Pratto, and Mitchell 1994; Jim Sidanius et al. 2004). For instance, SDT would predict that men, members of a high status group, should all possess relatively high levels of SDO, but scores vary widely among both men and women, and they do so over time. Indeed, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, there is also considerable variation across whites in the extent to which they possess a racial identity. Lastly, SDT cannot adequately explain why some group members become more accepting of apparent outgroup members over time, like when whites become more tolerant of immigrant groups like Italians and Jews (Huddy 2004).

Thus, while social dominance *orientation* may indeed be a fundamental personality trait that captures an important set of attitudes regarding inequality, egalitarianism, or support for a hierarchical arrangement of groups within a society, it seems that social dominance *theory* does not fully account for important conditional or contextual effects in the application of social dominance orientation.

Other theories do not offer an explanation for individual-level variation in the strength of a group identification, but they do account for contextual factors. Group position theory, in particular, offers a useful framework for thinking about the import of racial identity among whites under certain conditions. According to Blumer, intergroup conflict does not simply arise from individual orientations, negative feelings, or socialized predispositions toward outgroups. Instead, hostility and perceptions of competition emerge through beliefs developed over time about the position in the social hierarchy that ingroup members should rightfully occupy relative to outgroup members (Blumer 1958; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). Central to the establishment of a sense of group position is the belief that ingroup members are superior, an assumption that the ingroup has a proper claim over certain rights and privileges, and a perception that outgroup members desire a share of these rights and resources.

It is important to note that according to group position theory, beliefs about the position of one's group relative to outgroups, as well as perceptions of threat, are part of long, collective, social and historical processes. In their extension of this theory, Bobo and Hutchings (1996) argue that these same collective historical experiences also engender racial alienation—or a sense of disenfranchisement and deprivation—especially among subordinate groups. The greater the dominance or security of a group relative to

outgroups, the less alienated and threatened group members feel. When dominant group members feel that their status is waning relative to subordinate groups, however, hostility ensues.

Existing work on group position theory has largely assumed that identities develop uniformly across racial groups. Yet we know that within groups, some individuals possess higher levels of identity than others. Thus, I add a straightforward but important clarification to the theoretical expectations born out from group position theory: it is the individuals who most identify with their ingroup that ought to be the most attuned to and responsive to threats to their groups' status. In short, it is the high identifying whites who should feel alienated and who will be most likely to perceive racial and ethnic minorities as competitive threats.

Other work also assumes that group identity exists among both dominant and subordinate groups, and that such identification plays an important role in intergroup conflict. In particular, realistic group conflict theory argues that perceptions (either objective or subjective) of zero-sum competition between groups over real or symbolic resources fuels intergroup hostility (Bobo 1983; J. W. Jackson 1993; Muzafer Sherif et al. 1961). Integrated threat theory takes a similar position, but includes realistic and symbolic threats, in addition to threats stemming from intergroup anxiety and stereotyping (W. G. Stephan et al. 2002). Relatedly, work under the umbrella of the "power-threat" hypothesis presumes that whites feel increasingly threatened when living in proximity to a sizeable portion of racial and ethnic minorities (Blalock 1967; Key 1949; Nagel 1995). Minority visibility increases whites' perceptions that they are engaged in competition over scarce resources with such groups, leading whites to express

more prejudiced or hostile attitudes and to oppose policies that would benefit racial outgroups (Corzine, Creech, and Corzine 1983; Giles and Evans 1985a; Reed 1971).

The majority of these resource-competition theories take the existence of ingroup identity for granted. They presume that whites conceive of their racial group as a meaningful entity, and that whites are collectively concerned about the social and economic position of their group. Thus, most of the empirical examinations of the hypotheses under the umbrella of group position theory, realistic group conflict theory, and the power-threat hypothesis do not measure ingroup attachment or identity. Instead, they measure individual-level perceptions of threat and competition, or they examine whether levels of outgroup animosity vary with either these perceptions of threat or with the racial composition of an individual's locale. They largely leave untested whether whites actually possess an ingroup identity, and whether threat does indeed moderate the relationship between identity and political preferences. As a result, this work essentially sidesteps the fundamental critique levied by proponents of predispositional theories like symbolic racism—namely that whites do not possess a salient attachment to their racial group.

It seems clear that individually, none of these group-oriented theories offers a comprehensive framework for understanding ingroup identities among dominant groups. Many assume identity exists, but never measure it. Most offer no account for potential fluctuations in the levels or salience of this identity, and still others say little about individual variation in identity among group members. Collectively, however, they offer important insights when it comes to hypothesizing about the way in which, and under what conditions, dominant group identities become salient predictors of political

preferences. Social identity theory describes the important psychological benefits ingroup identities provide. Furthermore, social identity theory, social dominance orientation, and group position theory make strong cases for the way in which individuals are organized within groups in stratified, hierarchical societies. Social dominance theory also offers one potential explanation—personality—individual variation in the propensity to adopt a group identity.<sup>2</sup>

### The Role of Threat

Perhaps most importantly, what many of these group-oriented theories have in common is that they emphasize the importance of threat in either strengthening ingroup identity or in moderating the relationship between identity and attitudes. Indeed, authors of some of the earliest work on intergroup relations noted that threat to the group and intergroup competition are some of the most powerful forces in identity formation (Coser 1956; LeVine and Campbell 1972; Muzafer Sherif et al. 1961).

There have been several proposed psychological explanations for the relationship between threat and identity salience. Experimental work in the 1950's and 1960's demonstrated that stress increases cooperation, group integration, and solidarity. According to this early research, group cohesion is instrumental in nature; some have argued that it provides psychological comfort in the face of anxiety (Mulder 1963; Schachter 1959; Weller 1963), while others suggest that cohesion is the result of group

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<sup>2</sup> To be clear, this reading of the theory is a bit of a stretch beyond what the architects of SDT claim. They suggest that most members of a dominant group should possess similarly high levels of SDO, but I argue that this point seems overstated (Jim Sidanius, Pratto, and Mitchell 1994). What seems more likely is that individual variation in SDO across and within groups is likely a function of differences in levels of ingroup identification.



members' efforts to resolve a problem in which cooperation is required (Berkowitz, Levy, and Harvey 1957; Deutsch 1949; Hamblin 1958).

It is this work that led to more recent studies conducted under the auspices of realistic group conflict theory, which focus on group cohesion amidst competition over control of political, economic, social, and cultural structures (Blumer 1958; Coser and Rosenberg 1957; Giles and Evans 1985a). And while most of this research either assumes but does not measure ingroup identity among dominant groups like whites, or instead focuses primarily on group cohesion among racial and ethnic minorities, some work in this vein has in fact explored the impact of threat on group identity among dominant groups. For instance, Baker (1975) demonstrates that solidarity among whites in South Africa was driven by threats to their cultural distinction. Giles and Evans (1985), using data from the 1972 American National Election Study, find that white respondents who perceived blacks as too influential and believe that the civil rights movement was moving too quickly, were more likely to rate whites positively on the white feeling thermometer.

Threat is important because not only does it serve as an important element in identity acquisition, but it also increases the link between an identity and politics. It does this first by increasing the salience of the identity in the public domain, and then by orientating the group toward political solutions to the threat. The political environment sends a variety of signals with respect to threat and identity, and several scholars have shown that identity salience in the political world can strengthen identities generally. Lau (1989), for instance, finds that liberals and conservatives felt much closer to their ideological group when residing in a district with a contested election. Politicians can also increase the salience of an identity by publicly making group members aware of their

grievances, which in turn reinforces group identity and its connection to political preferences (Huddy 2003). The authors of *The American Voter* found that a group member running for political office strengthens the salience of the group and political issues relevant to the group (Campbell et al. 1960), although this relationship is likely different for members of a dominant group. Because most politicians are white, a member of an ingroup running for office is not novel; it is simply a reassertion of the status quo. It is more likely, then, that a member of a racial outgroup running for office will strengthen the salience of ingroup membership. This event serves both as a threat to the group's dominance and makes the ingroup more salient by forcing a comparison to the outgroup.

The politicization of an identity does not simply affect the salience of an identity. It may also change the nature of the identity itself, shifting it from a simple attachment to the group to a politicized attachment. Scholars refer to this concept as group consciousness, which entails identification with a group, a political awareness of the group's position in society, and a commitment to collective or political action aimed at benefiting the interest of the group (Miller et al. 1981). Previous work has concluded that group consciousness is generally lacking among whites, but as I will discuss in more detail in chapter 5, the same changes in the political and social environment that have led to the increased salience of white identity suggest a need to reexamine levels of white racial consciousness.

## Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate

When theories of intergroup relations have examined ingroup identification, they have often been concerned with the relationship between ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation. In fact, the two constructs are often studied interchangeably, with the assumption that positive ingroup attitudes are reciprocally related to negative outgroup evaluations (Muzafer Sherif 1958; Sumner 1906). Yet some of the earliest researchers of intergroup conflict were not convinced that such relationships are inevitable. For example, in his classic treatise on prejudice, Gordon Allport explained, “while a certain amount of predilection is inevitable in all in-group memberships, the reciprocal attitude toward out-groups may range widely” (1954, p.42). Others have corroborated this view, arguing that ingroup favoritism and outgroup prejudice are distinct, separable phenomena with different origins (Brewer 1999). Understanding the relationship between two two phenomena is especially important when considering the implications of the development and increased salience of ingroup identity.

Brewer (1999) argues that we are more likely to observe a positive correlation between ingroup favoritism and negative outgroup attitudes under certain conditions. First, she suggests that when ingroups become large and depersonalized, the customs of the ingroup take on the character of moral authority. Digressions on the part of outgroups from the moral order are then viewed with intolerance and contempt. These negative evaluations do not inevitably lead to intergroup hostility and conflict, however. Rather, changes in the social order that might foster integration or close contact between ingroup and outgroups serve as key catalysts likely to kindle animosity or even “ethnic cleansing” directed at outgroups. Brewer adds that moral superiority serves as justification for group

domination. This framework seems to describe very closely the hierarchical relationships between whites and racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. By nature of their dominance, whites have coopted the mainstream and archetypal representation of “American.” Failure on the part of non-white groups to assimilate to these norms is met with disapproval. Relationships with non-whites are defined by segregation, and increased contact or integration is viewed as a threat.

Brewer also posits that the reciprocal relationship between ingroup identity and outgroup animus may be limited to circumstances in which groups are engaged in competition over physical resources or power. Under such conditions, identification and interdependence are directly associated with fear, anxiety, and hostility directed toward the threatening outgroup or groups. Both of these scenarios—threats to moral superiority or competition over resources—seem likely when it comes to characterizing intergroup relations between whites and racial and ethnic minorities. Thus, we might expect to observe a strong relationship between white ingroup identity and negative attitudes toward outgroups, or between white identity and opposition to policies that benefit outgroups.

Duckitt and Mphuthing (1998), however, provide a very important clarification to the reciprocal relationship between ingroup and outgroup attitudes. They confirm that ingroup and outgroup attitudes seem to be associated primarily under conditions of intergroup competition. But in their analysis of black Africans’ attitudes toward whites, they find that ingroup identity was associated only with hostility toward Afrikaans whites—the group with which they were specifically thought to be engaged in intergroup conflict. Higher levels of ingroup identity among black Africans were *not* associated with

hostility toward English whites or whites in general. One interpretation of these results is that ingroup identity does not foster hostility toward all outgroups; rather, it is specifically directed toward the group viewed as the source of threat. This latter point is especially important as it helps distinguish white identity from ethnocentrism and clarifies the likely relationship between identity and attitudes. Essentially, Duckitt and Mphuthing's findings lead to the proposition that when white identity is made salient in response to threats, the subsequent relationship between identity and attitudes will not necessarily be one of widespread animosity; instead, negative reactions among high white identifiers are likely to be directed specifically at the source of the threat.

### A Theory of Dominant Group Identity

The existing literature on intergroup relationships provides important insights when thinking about the development, activation, and application of ingroup identity among dominant groups. When groups are arranged hierarchically in society—as is the case with respect to racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.—dominant status uniquely shapes group identity. In particular, I argue, like Doane (1997), that dominant group identity and its assertion is reactionary in nature. Such an identity becomes relevant when the dominant group feels provoked to defend politically and ideologically its position within a system of stratification

Because dominant groups usually coopt the cultural mainstream of the larger society, their group identity is often taken for granted or seen as invisible. In fact, this identity usually because subsumed under the umbrella of a national identity. As I will discuss further in subsequent chapters, however, dominant group members often prefer a particular flavor of national identity—one that mimics the particular customs and culture

of the dominant group often at the expense of subordinate groups (Theiss-Morse 2009). Thus, when the dominant group's power is secure and unchallenged, their group-specific identity will be largely latent across the dominant-group population. For this reason, we would expect that throughout certain periods of American history, white identity will be politically and socially inconsequential. Threats to the group's status and dominance (either objective or subjective), however, may serve both to strengthen this identity and to make it salient. For whites, such challenges may come in a variety of forms, including population changes, demands on the part of racial and ethnic minorities for increased equality, and large influxes of immigrant groups who, before assimilation, import new customs and cultures that threatens to displace Anglo-protestant American culture, potentially serve as threats to whites' dominance. Furthermore, perceptions of economic competition or the electoral success of non-white political candidates may also serve as tests to the status quo. Such threats may be short-lived, only temporarily priming ingroup identity. But when threats are persistent and significant over a period of time, they may make ingroup identity *chronically salient*.

If white identity is chronically salient, then we would expect first to observe that a substantial portion of whites across the U.S. report that they strongly identify with their group. These high identifiers should be more sensitive to threats directed at their group, and they should be more likely report perceptions of competition with outgroups. This identity should then be significantly related to policies that benefit whites and aid them in maintaining their dominance, policies that reduce threats to whites' status, and to policies, groups, and political figures associated with threats. An important clarification here, in keeping with Duckitt and Mphuthing's (1998) findings, is that threats to whites

should *not* generate broad hostility toward all outgroups. Thus, we would not expect white identity to be associated with policies that benefit racial and ethnic minorities but that are otherwise unrelated to threats to whites. I will test these propositions in the chapters that follow.

Unfortunately, existing work does not offer a comprehensive understanding of sources of individual variation in the propensity to adopt a group identity. For this reason, throughout most of this dissertation, I remain agnostic about the adoption or acquisition of ingroup identity among whites. I also do not have the longitudinal data needed to best measure identity acquisition over time. Part of my efforts in this study, however, are exploratory in nature with respect to these distinctions, and many of the conclusions I draw should spur further theorization and research on the development of white identity. Furthermore, some existing work does indicate that individuals with certain personality types and of certain ages, levels of education, and socioeconomic status are more likely to identify with groups, especially dominant groups. Other work also hints at the possibility of contextual factors. I explore all of these possibilities in the next chapter.

## Previous Work on White Identity

Most of the published work specifically examining the relationship between white racial identity and political preferences has been undertaken by proponents of predisposition-based theories who have set out to demonstrate that group-oriented theories do not explain whites' racial attitudes. Frequently, these scholars examined identity using the proximate measures available on public opinion surveys. Generally, this means that they have been limited to using a single item roughly measuring ingroup affect at a single point in time. Kinder and Winter (2001), for example, operationalized

white ingroup identification using a measure of closeness to the group from the 1992 American National Election Study (ANES).<sup>3</sup> They found that ingroup identity is much lower among whites in the 1992 sample than it is among blacks. Furthermore, they argue that ingroup identity among whites is of little consequence for the black-white racial divide in public opinion on the majority of race-related matters. Yet Wong and Cho (2005) demonstrate that average responses to the closeness question on the ANES can fluctuate dramatically.<sup>4</sup> In 1992, only 45% of whites indicated that they felt close to whites, but by the year 2000, 75% of white respondents said they felt close to whites.<sup>5</sup> These rapid changes suggest racial identification is relevant among whites. This identity and its political consequences may wax and wane depending on social, economic, and political circumstances.

In other work, many of these same scholars have found evidence for white identity, but have often prematurely rejected it as inconsequential because it does not approach the levels blacks possess. For example, Sears and Savalei (2006) find that when given the choice, 20% of white Americans in their sample would prefer a hyphenated “White-American” identity. The authors dismiss this figure since it is not nearly as great as the level of blacks who claim to prefer an African-American identity (50%), but 20% is arguably a consequential percentage. Other work has shown that whites’ perceptions of group conflict with blacks is a meaningful predictor of whites’ opposition to some racial policies, but despite a substantively and statistically significant regression coefficient, this

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<sup>3</sup> A closeness measure asks respondents to indicate whether they feel close or closest to their own racial group out of a series of listed groups.

<sup>4</sup> Identification among blacks, on the other hand, does not fluctuate much over time.

<sup>5</sup> It’s important to note that the 2000 data reported in Wong and Cho (2005) are from face-to-face respondents only and those provide comparability to the other years by eliminating any potential survey mode differences.



variable is written off by the researchers because the magnitude of the coefficient is not as great as that of symbolic racism (Sears and Henry 2005).

Despite the lack of evidence for white racial identity marshaled by authors of predispositional theories of intergroup relations, there are some hints of the import of white racial identity in both the political science and social psychology literatures. For example, Hutchings et al. (2006), using data from the 2004-2005 National Politics Study, found that whites who preferred an identification with their racial group were more likely to view relations with blacks, Latinos and Asians in zero-sum terms. Sears and colleagues (2001) found that white UCLA students who strongly identified with their ethnic group were more inclined to vote for an ingroup member and to demonstrate and sign a petition on behalf of a group-related cause.

Others, like Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer (2007) find that white Americans assigned to think about white privilege expressed greater levels of modern racism than those assigned to think about white disadvantage or a non-race related topic. Winter (2008) finds that whites who rate whites warmly on the ANES feeling thermometer are more supportive of spending on social welfare programs that benefit whites, like Social Security. These findings hint that when it comes to whites, behavior and preferences may be driven by factors beyond predispositions and that ingroup favoritism might play an important role.

Other fields have also considered the importance of racial identification among whites. Indeed, primarily within sociology there exists a line of work on white identity, although from an entirely different perspective than the psychological sense of ingroup identity and preference I focus on here. Research under the auspices of “whiteness

studies” has focused, from a normative perspective, on critiquing the reproduction and maintenance of systems of racial inequality (Hartigan 1997).<sup>6</sup> A great deal of this research has focused on the invisibility of whiteness or the notion that whites do not think about their racial group in a meaningful way (Delgado and Stefancic 1997; Lipsitz 1998; Perry 2001). Ethnographic work has consistently found that individuals described being white as “nothing” or “normal” (R. L. I. Jackson and Heckman 2002; Perry 2002, 2007). Yet some of these same scholars are revising their understanding of whiteness as invisible in light of the shrinking size of the white population and the increased presence of non-whites in the U.S. (Frankenberg 2001).

“Whiteness” studies also focus on the construction of social privilege and power from which whites primarily benefit, all while whites deny that such stratification has a racial basis (Frankenberg 1993). Some of this research explains how whites actively try to minimize or deny their privileged status, often through subscription to ideologies like color blind racism (Doane and Bonilla - Silva 2003; Lipsitz 1998; Lowery, Knowles, and Unzueta 2007). Other scholars have been extremely critical of this link between identity, privilege, and racism, so much so that they have started a “new abolitionist movement” aimed at eliminating “whiteness” (Ignatiev and Garvey 1996; Mazie et al. 1993; Roediger 1994). Work under this vein emphasizes whiteness as a means by which to justify systems of oppression and privilege and argues that this identity should be deconstructed and eliminated.

Social psychologists have also tackled the issue of whiteness, although less through the lens of a constructed ideology and more by recognizing whiteness as a

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<sup>6</sup> See McDermott and Samson (2005) for a comprehensive review.

distinct racial identity. This work was largely pioneered by Helms (Helms 1984, 1995), who developed a five-stage model of identity formation. Her model led to the construction of the White Racial Attitude Identity Scale (WRAIS).<sup>7</sup> Unlike the way in which I describe racial identity throughout this dissertation—as a conscious favoritism for one’s ingroup and recognition that one’s group has shared interests—Helms defines racial identity as progression from abandonment of racism to the adoption of a nonracist, positive identification. In other words, this identity is viewed as a normative, psychological process resulting in a “healthy nonracist identity.”<sup>8</sup> This scale has been primarily used by psychologists as a way to understand how behavioral predispositions produce psychological counseling outcomes.

The common thread tying together much of this work is an emphasis on the need for whites to become aware of their racial identity and the privileges that accompany being white as part of a move toward social justice and change. As I will discuss more in Chapter 4, much attention has been paid to measuring whites’ perceptions of their own privilege (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer 2007), and even of a subscription to collective guilt (Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2003; Swim and Miller 1999). This work has important goals, but it addresses white identity in a very different manner than what I present in this dissertation. Nevertheless, it is worth attending to at least briefly here, as much of what these scholars observe about the privileged place of whites has important

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<sup>7</sup> The particulars of Helms' theory and scale have been subject to noteworthy debate and criticism (Leach, Behrens, and LaFleur 2002; Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson 1994)

<sup>8</sup> Some work responding to Helms has discussed the development of “white racial consciousness” (LaFleur, Rowe, and Leach 2002; Leach, Behrens, and LaFleur 2002). These scholars do not define consciousness in a politicized sense (Miller et al. 1981), however. Instead, they define consciousness as the common constellation of attitudes whites hold about racial outgroup members.

implications for thinking about how and when white ingroup identity matters in the first place.

Other bodies of research have touched on constructs related to white racial identity. Sociological research throughout the twentieth century spent considerable effort studying *ethnic* identity (Alba 1990). As European immigrants flooded into the U.S. during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, identity was organized less around race and more around national origin. But by the 1990s, European immigrants had essentially completely assimilated into American society. Indeed, a significant number of whites in the U.S. can trace their roots to residence in the U.S. for more than four generations, and do not clearly identify with any specific European ancestral group (Alba and Chamlin 1983). Moreover, data from the 1980 General Social Survey (GSS) showed that a sizeable portion of whites select “American” as their ethnicity or reported no ethnicity at all (T. W. Smith 1982; White and Stephan 2000). In the present day, European ancestral origins have little impact on most Americans political and social attitudes (McDermott and Samson 2005). Thus, while white racial identity may be partially rooted in Europeanism, it is a pan-European identity not entrenched in the culture or heritage of any one specific ethnic group.

Finally, previous attention to white identity has at times focused on more extremist views, including white supremacy. When I discuss white racial identity, I mean a broad identification across the white population, and not a marginalized, extremist identity that is often associated with white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, skinheads, and militia movements. A rise in these movements, which overtly engage in the production of a white, masculine, patriarchal ideology, may indeed be

fueled by some of the same threats that motivate whites more broadly to identify with their group (Ferber 1998). But the extremism adopted by these hate groups is not what characterizes the white identity I describe throughout this dissertation.

This point is not intended to sidestep what may be a more sinister side to the rise in white identity discussed here. In fact, Swain (2002) and Swain and Nieli (2003) have suggested that the large influx of nonwhite immigrants arriving in the U.S. in the 1980s and 1990s and the prospect that whites may soon become a minority, coupled with white hostility over affirmative action, and the ability for whites to access, via the Internet, communities that might promote ideologies disregarded by the mainstream media, have led to an environment ripe for a white nationalist movement. They argue that this phenomena is *not* limited to marginalized groups, and their point is worth quoting at length:

But we believe that the image of the night-riding Klansman—or of his more contemporary reflection in the figure of the tattooed skinhead spewing forth vile epithets against Mexicans, Jews, and blacks on the TV talk show circuit—is one of very limited usefulness in trying to grasp the nature and appeal of contemporary white nationalism in America. For white nationalism is seeking to go mainstream. And in going mainstream, it has found it necessary to eschew most of the images and tactics of the older racist right, as well as some of its more bizarre rituals and beliefs. While some of the leaders of the newer racial advocacy organizations were once active in Klan organizations, many of the key personalities involved in the leadership of the movement bear little resemblance to the kinds of people we normally associate with the traditional racist right in America. Most are better educated, more moderate in their language, and generally more appealing as human beings than most of the racist figures with whom we have become familiar through our history books or through contemporary television (Swain and Nieli 2003, p.6)

Their work suggests that a rise in white identity might coincide with elite efforts to capitalize on whites' discontent. It is therefore especially important to understand the character and implications of white racial identity in contemporary America, because such an understanding it prepares us for predicting what is to come as demographic shifts

alter the racial dynamics of the nation and provides important insight into recognizing the root of racial conflict in the contemporary U.S.

In the pages that follow, I test empirically the theoretical framework presented here, and demonstrate some of the ways in which white identity informs individuals' political preferences. These efforts are in part guided by the previous work described here; the empirical tests are designed to distinguish between ingroup and outgroup evaluations, as well as to explore the extent to which attitudes in these two domains differentially predict political evaluations. This work also pays careful attention to beliefs about privilege and guilt, as well as to associations with extremist white supremacists. As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, beliefs about privilege are an important component of white identity, although not in the way that whiteness study scholars expect. Furthermore, whites who identify with their race do not endorse white supremacism. As we will see, these whites adamantly rejection such associations, an outcome which has an important effect on their political evaluations.

## CHAPTER 3

### Who are the White Identifiers?

The concept of identity has garnered significant attention across the social sciences over the past six decades, as scholars, especially in political science, have come to recognize the powerful role identities play in shaping attitudes. Indeed, Smith (2004, p.3 02) declared identity “among the most normatively significant and behaviorally consequential aspects of politics.” Despite agreement regarding the importance of identity, however, there is considerable lack of consensus over its definition and measurement. What *is* identity? How do we determine who identifies with a group and who does not? How do we understand the content of particular identities? The answers to these questions are at times murky, inconsistent, and incompatible across fields.

This lack of conceptual clarity has led a number of scholars to refer to identity as a “slippery” concept (Abdelal et al. 2009a; Citrin, Wong, and Duff 2001b; Lichterman 1999). But the notion of *identity* is not difficult to grasp simply because of the disparate ways it has been addressed across disciplines; it is also hard to define the concept because of its very relative and seemingly incongruent nature. As Citrin, Wong, and Duff explain (2001b, p. 73), identity is “an assertion of both sameness and difference.” Identities, such as an understanding of racial group belonging, are formed by drawing boundaries around those who are like us and excluding those who are not. That is, they develop, in part, through the process of social comparison. This process can be especially elusive for

dominant group identities. Sometimes social boundaries are “us” and “them,” but other times, when a group is dominant and has coopted what it means to be mainstream in a society, those boundaries might instead be “not-them” and “them”.

Despite identity’s slipperiness, most work recognizes this relational nature of group identities across both dominant and subordinate groups. Individuals perceive themselves as similar to some and different from others, and they pursue their goals through membership with the groups with which they identify. In this chapter and what follows, my aim is to describe the formation and content of racial identity among white Americans. As we will see, the nature of this identity is especially rooted in the preservation of advantage and privilege, and less so in comparisons or derogation of outgroups.

Considerable agreement also exists among scholars that group identities are multidimensional (Cameron 2004). Most work (Klandermans et al. 2002) differentiates between at least the cognitive and affective components of identification.<sup>9</sup> The cognitive dimension refers to the simple act of self-categorization. It answers the question, “Who

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to the cognitive and affective dimensions, a handful of researchers have also identified an evaluative dimension. When scholars of Social Identity Theory write under this paradigm, however, there seems to be a great deal of slippage when it comes to the definitions of these dimensions. For example, some argue this dimension captures an assessment of the group’s position relative to that of others (Klandermans et al. 2002). Hinkle et al. (1989) refer to the evaluative dimension as instead describing “the value group members place on such membership” (p.307). Jackson (2002) claims this dimension entails the positive or negative attitudes members have toward the ingroup. Cameron (2004) describes a different set of dimensions entirely: centrality, ingroup affect, and ingroup ties. His definition of centrality most closely relates to the affective dimension described above, while “ingroup affect” most strongly relates to Hinkle et al.’s (1989) definition of the evaluative dimension. The “ingroup ties” component is consistent with a sense of interdependence - another characteristic of identity described by scholars, sometimes as a dimension (see Jackson (2002)) and sometimes not (Citrin and Sears 2009). Gibson (2006) acknowledges the three dimensions laid out by Klandersman et al. (2002), but then describes identity as having six components, most of which do not clearly fit into the three dimensional framework. My task here is not to reconcile these discrepancies, however. I point them out primarily to say that while the work on identity is indeed slippery, there remains significant agreement that a dimension of this identity, beyond mere categorization, captures the strength and centrality of identity. Most importantly, it is this dimension which ought to be most closely related to political cohesion. The other dimensions, however they are defined, are less relevant for my task at hand.



am I?” Does an individual think of herself as a black or white person? Or as a male or a female? As a Catholic or a Jewish person? The ability to answer these questions satisfies the cognitive dimension of identification.

But, as Citrin and Sears (2009) explain, “identifying *as* is not the same as identifying *with*” (p.147). It is this latter sentiment that characterizes the affective dimension of identity.<sup>10</sup> This component describes the strength and centrality of, emotional significance toward, and psychological attachment to a group. Most importantly, the affective dimension serves as the most powerful predictor of the relationship between ingroup attachment and individual behavior (Ellemers 1993; Klandermans et al. 2002). We know that stronger identities are associated with greater political cohesion, including a propensity to internalize normative group beliefs (Conover and Feldman 1984; Hyman and Singer 1968), a greater likelihood of adopting pro-group policy positions (Tate 1993), and a proclivity to demonstrate or protest on behalf of one’s group (Klandermans et al. 2002; Sears et al. 2003; Simon et al. 1998). As I describe in more detail below, this project improves on some previous efforts to measure white racial identity by capturing the affective dimension. Doing so is not necessarily a straightforward task. If some skeptics are correct and whites do *not* possess a racial identity, this dimension should be the most difficult to assess since it presumes that the racial identity is readily acknowledged and meaningful among a large proportion of the white American population.

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<sup>10</sup> Social Identity Theory posits that mere self-categorization can give way to positive affect and a tendency to act on behalf of the group (Tajfel 1978), but outside of laboratory settings, researchers have had less success in documenting the effects of simple group membership on political cohesion (Huddy 2003).

Whatever scholarly consensus exists with regards to the multidimensionality of identity, it quickly disappears when it comes to measurement. Surveys have been primarily used to measure identity because of their centrality to research on public opinion and political behavior, yet there have been few efforts to cross-validate survey measures of identity or to establish a standard approach.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, some have complained about the sheer number of different measures used to assess racial identification among African-Americans and other racial or ethnic minorities (Sniderman and Piazza 2002). What this lack of standardization means in practice, is that there is no one particular source from which to draw when implementing a survey measure of racial identity, let alone racial identity among whites. Existing work does provide some guidance, however, when it comes to developing and employing a measure of identity that captures the affective dimension.

Some work has relied on the “closeness question,” which has appeared frequently on the American National Election Study (ANES), and is usually worded as follows: “Here is a list of groups. Please read over the list and tell me the letter for those groups you feel particularly close to—people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things.” Respondents who select more than one group are asked to indicate the group to which they feel the closest.

Wong and Cho (2005) employ this item to measure identity among blacks *and* whites, in one of the few previous efforts to broadly consider the relationship between

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<sup>11</sup> I focus on survey measurements in this dissertation, but other work has advocated for measuring identity through processes like content analysis, cognitive mapping, ethnography, experiments involving implicit attitude tests (see Knowles and Peng (2005) for implicit measures of white identity) and minimal group assignments (Abdelal et al. 2009b). Psychologists have also developed a “White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale” (Carter 1990), but questions regarding its reliability and validity have emerged (Behrens 1997; Ottavi, Pope-Davis, and Dings 1994; Swanson, Tokar, and Davis 1994). Furthermore, the fifty-item question battery is impractical for use on most public opinion surveys.

white identity and political attitudes. They find that racial identity is mostly unrelated to a number of policy preferences among whites, and only sporadically related among blacks. One possible explanation for the tepid link between identity, measured with the closeness item, and political preferences, is that the closeness item only weakly taps the affective dimension of identity. In fact, the option on a survey to check the many groups to which one feels close may mean that this item actually better assesses self-categorization, which is not typically a predictor of political evaluations. Further, because the closeness item only roughly distinguishes degrees of identity (the crude distinction between close and closest), it does a poor job of capturing the strength of identification, and only does so for some group members (the ones who pick race as the identity they feel closest to out of all other possible identities listed) (Huddy 2003).<sup>12</sup>

Other work has employed “feeling thermometer” measures to approximate ingroup identity (e.g., (Conover 1988; N. J. G. Winter 2008). These thermometer items are usually presented as a series of questions on a survey, and respondents are asked to evaluate a number of different groups on a scale ranging from zero to one hundred. Values between zero and 49 indicate “cold” or negative feelings toward a group, and values from 51 to 100 indicate “warm” or positive feelings. Evaluations at 50 represent a neutral point. When it comes to gauging ingroup identification, this measure is an improvement over the closeness item in that assesses the strength of group attitudes. Furthermore, all respondents generally have the opportunity to complete a thermometer

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<sup>12</sup> Transue (2007) uses a measure that asks respondents “[h]ow close do you feel toward your racial or ethnic group?” and features response options that more precisely assess degrees of closeness. Because it asks about “ethnic group,” however, this measure has the potential to confound white identity with national-origin or ancestral identities (e.g., Italian, Irish, etc.), toward which many Americans do not feel close (T. W. Smith 1982; C. Stephan and Stephan 2000). He also looks only at a narrow range of political dependent variables among a regional sample, but he does find that identity is linked to opposition to particularized policies framed as benefitting minorities.

evaluation, regardless of whether the group they are evaluating is the one to which they feel “closest” or with which they identify most. This measure is not without its shortcomings, however.

First, the thermometer more accurately assesses group affect, rather than actual identification.<sup>13</sup> Respondents may report feeling warm toward the group into which they are objectively categorized (or to a range of groups beyond their own), but positive affect is not a precise assessment of identification, nor do warm feelings toward one’s ingroup provide a sense of the centrality of that group to an individual. There is, however, often a strong empirical link between ingroup affect or favoritism and ingroup identity (Brewer 1999; Herring, Jankowski, and Brown 2009; Levin and Sidanius 1999; Perreault and Bourhis 1999). In addition to this substantive concern, other work has raised some methodological concerns about the inter-comparability of the thermometer items across respondents (Brady 1985; N. J. G. Winter and Berinsky 1999) . With the preceding caveats in mind, I employ the feeling thermometer as a proximate measure of identity in some of the analysis presented here, as it is the best measure of identity available across a number of pre-existing opinion surveys. I supplement with more central measures, when available, and demonstrate that results are consistent with analysis conducted using the thermometer.<sup>14</sup>

In an effort to move beyond the closeness and thermometer measures of ingroup identity, I turn to existing work in order to find a straightforward survey measure of racial

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<sup>13</sup> Group affect here is not to be confused with the “affective dimension” of group identity defined by Social Identity theorists. Here, group affect describe positive feelings or orientations toward a particular group, and differs from the features of the “affective dimension” ideally captured by a measure of identity, like centrality and salience.

<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that some researchers have measured white identity implicitly (Knowles and Peng 2005). While this work is informative, I argue that their results mostly capture whites’ implicit ingroup bias, rather than a conscious, subjective identification with their ingroup.

identity that more closely captures the affective dimension. Fortunately, some of earliest survey work on public opinion provides a foundation for such a measure. In 1976, political scientist Hooper drew on the work of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan with regards to measuring party identification. He adapted the structure of their partisanship measure to create a survey item that would assess individuals' level of identification with any number of social groups by asking respondents how *important* it is for them to identify with a particular group (Hooper 1976).<sup>15</sup> The benefit of this measure is threefold: First, it takes into account the cognitive dimension of identity—self-categorization. Respondents are only asked about groups that they have previously placed themselves into earlier on a survey. Second, it asks about the centrality or importance of an identity and assesses the degree to which that identity is central. Finally, it is a single, straightforward measure and therefore easily included on public opinion surveys. In the following years, variations of Hooper's measure have been used to evaluate identification with an extensive range of social groups, including nationalities (Citrin, Wong, and Duff 2001a; Huddy and Khatib 2007), ethnicities (Junn and Masuoka 2008), religious groups (J. A. Winter 1996), and artificially assigned groups in laboratory settings (Patterson and Bigler 2007).<sup>16</sup>

Thus, throughout this and subsequent chapters, I employ a measure of racial identity among whites that similarly evaluates the degree of importance of this identity. I bring to bear evidence from three national surveys, conducted between 2010 and 2013, in

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<sup>15</sup> The exact wording used by Hooper (1976) is as follows: "Is it important to you to think of yourself as a [group name placed here]?"

<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that in his exploratory analysis, Hooper (1976) actually finds a "White Race" identity. He does not, however, explore the relationship between any of the social identities he measures and political preferences.

which samples of white, non-Hispanic adult citizens were asked, “How important is being white to your identity?” Response options ranged from “not at all important” to either “very important” or “extremely important” depending on the survey. As I will demonstrate in the pages that follow, across time and surveys, this measure consistently predicts whites’ attitudes toward a number of political preferences. Furthermore, substituting alternative measures of identity, like the closeness item or a measure of linked fate, does not yield comparatively consistent results. Therefore, because of both the attributes of the measure and its predictive power, the racial identity importance item is an optimal means by which to measure racial identity among whites.<sup>17</sup>

## The Importance of White Racial Identity

In order to test whether white identity is a significant and meaningful antecedent of whites’ political attitudes across multiple domains in the present day, I draw on survey data from three studies. The first two were conducted among nationally representative samples of white adults, including a 2010 survey conducted by Knowledge Networks (KN), and the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES). KN recruits participants using an address-based probability sampling frame, and participants receive free Internet access and a computer, if needed, in exchange for responding to the firm’s surveys.<sup>18</sup> This method produces high quality national probability samples, and includes households that did not initially have internet access or a computer. This KN study included an original survey among U.S. citizens with an embedded experiment conducted with my colleagues at the University of Michigan in late June and early July of 2010.

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<sup>17</sup> Croll (Croll 2008) examines white racial identity, using this measure, among a national RDD sample. He looks at a limited number of dependent variables, however.

<sup>18</sup> Knowledge Networks was subsumed under the GfK brand after this study was conducted.

The 2012 ANES allows me to replicate and extend the results provided by the KN data using what is arguably the best public opinion survey data available among a nationally representative probability sample of American citizens. The inclusion of the racial identity importance item marks the first time racial identity among whites was measured so directly on a nationally representative face-to-face survey. Furthermore, in 2012, the ANES included both the usual face-to-face study, as well as a companion Internet study using KN's panel, which allows me to make comparisons across modes. In most analyses conducted here, I examine these samples separately unless otherwise noted.

The third survey was carried out among a non-probability but nationally diverse sample recruited by the firm Survey Sampling International (SSI) in July of 2013. SSI recruits individuals to their Internet-based panel via opt-in methods, and provides a census-balanced sample by sampling based on demographic attributes within their large panel.<sup>19</sup> I independently designed the SSI study in order to assess a number of different relationships between identity and attitudes using items unavailable on either the 2010 KN surveys or the 2012 ANES.<sup>20</sup> In designing this study, I had the opportunity to buttress the importance measure of identity with a second survey item that more directly assesses the *strength* of racial identity. Respondents were also asked how strongly they identified with other white people. Response options ranged from “extremely strongly” to “not at all strongly” on a five point scale. This item was scaled with the importance item.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> SSI's panel closely matches the characteristics of the larger white, adult, American citizen population based on 2010 Census data. For more information on this sampling approach see Berrens, Bohara, Hank, Silva, & Wiemer (2003) and Best, Krueger, Hubbard, & Smith (2001).

<sup>20</sup> As I describe in Chapters 6 and 7, this study also included two experimental components.

<sup>21</sup> The Cronbach's Alpha for the two items is a respectable .70.

Throughout this dissertation, I replicate all of the analyses, when possible, across each of these datasets. I present the results to demonstrate the generally powerful and striking consistency with which white racial identity predicts certain attitudes and evaluations in recent years. But I also do so with the caveat that house effects, mode effects, and differences in the distribution of key variables in the sample can artificially skew relationships. These confounding factors will matter more, as you will see below, when it comes to considering the demographic factors that predict racial identity, and less when it comes to the relationship between identity and key political evaluations. In Chapter 7, these differences, especially with regard to mode, are a strength in that they allow me to test for potential social desirability effects. With these qualifications in mind, I proceed by first considering the distribution of racial identity across each dataset.

### The Distribution of White Racial Identity

Table 3.1 shows the distribution of responses to the identity importance item across the three surveys.<sup>22</sup> Notice that between 58 percent and 70 percent of whites reported that their identity is at least moderately important.<sup>23</sup> Approximately 20 percent indicate it is “very important.” And between 11 and 20 percent say that this identity is “extremely important.” These results demonstrate that when a national sample of white Americans are asked about their racial identity, a solid majority indicate that their race is at least somewhat central to their identity. This finding that runs counter to earlier work in political science and sociology predicting that whites, largely unaware of their racial

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<sup>22</sup> The KN survey question had only four response options, rather than five.

<sup>23</sup> This distribution of results is similar to those obtained by Croll (2008) using the American Mosaic Project Survey - a nationally representative random-dial telephone survey conducted in the summer of 2003.



identity, report low levels of identification (Doane 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Sears and Savalei 2006). This large percentage is also noteworthy in that a much greater percentage of whites are willing to adopt a white identity than we would expect if this measure were simply a proxy for more radical beliefs like white supremacy or old-fashioned racism. Thus, it appears that in recent years, a sizeable portion of whites claim that their racial identity is indeed important.

**Table 3.1 The Distribution of the Importance of White Identity**

	KN (2010)	ANES Face-to- Face (2012)	ANES Internet (2012)	SSI (2013)
Not at all important	8%	23%	22%	19%
A little important (KN = "Not very important")	27	18	20	12
Moderately important (KN = "Somewhat important")	38	25	28	28
Very important	27	20	19	21
Extremely important	-	14	11	19
Observations	752	860	2387	797

Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES (face-to-face sample), 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Entries are percentages of respondents. KN & ANES data are weighted.

If the distribution of the importance item across these three surveys reveals noteworthy proportions of high white identifiers, then why have previous empirical studies of white identity rejected it as invisible or inconsequential? Sears and Savalei (2006), for example, use data from the Los Angeles County Social Survey (LACSS) from 1994 to 2002 to examine the distribution of the same racial importance item, as well as a number of different questions they argue should tap different dimensions of racial group

consciousness. They find that across each of the measures, levels of identity among whites are relatively low, and far fewer whites report any identification when compared to blacks. They subsequently conclude that racial identity is not a meaningful concept for whites.

Fortunately, I am able to compare the LACSS data to more recent measurement efforts. My colleagues and I asked the same battery of questions on the 2010 Knowledge Networks Study that Sears and Savalei examine in the LACSS. Table 3.2 compares the distributions that Sears and Savalei report in their 2006 article (using data from 1994 to 2002) to the distributions found among the 2010 KN sample. The differences are striking. A much greater proportion of whites in the KN sample report that their racial identity is “very important” (27% compared to 15%), significantly more indicate a strong degree of linked-fate (35% compared to 16%), and many more prefer identifying as both American *and* white (44% compared to 20%). Large differences do not emerge with respect to only a single item—a preference for identifying mainly as white, which is not surprising given the strong relationship between dominant identities and national identities that I explain in more detail in the next chapter.

**Table 3.2 Comparing Whites’ Responses to Identity Questions from the Los Angeles County Social Survey and a 2010 Knowledge Networks Survey**

	LACSS 1994-2002	2010 Knowledge Networks Survey
How important is being white to your identity? (“very important”)	15%	27%
Do you think what happens to whites will affect what happens in your life? (“a lot”)	16	35
Identify “mainly as white”	5	2

Identify “both as an American and as a white”	20	44
N	1,478-2,021	752

Source: Los Angeles County Social Surveys, cumulated 1994-2002 & 2010 Knowledge Networks study. Data are weighted.

It is not possible to definitively explain the different distributions of these data, but there are a number of reasonable possibilities. First, unlike the KN sample (whose distribution looks very similar to the ANES and SSI surveys), the LACSS was conducted among citizens of a particular metropolitan area, rather than in a national sample. It is possible that levels of racial identity are lower in this particular area. In the 2012 ANES, the number of white respondents from Los Angeles County is too small (even after pooling the face-to-face- and internet samples) to draw strong conclusions about the distribution of white identity there in the present day, but it is still worth a quick examination. Out of the 60 respondents, only three (5%) indicated their identity is extremely important. Ten (approximately 17%) said it is very important.<sup>24</sup> These values are in fact much lower than what we observe nationally in 2012. Thus, levels of racial identity may in fact be lower in Los Angeles County than elsewhere in the nation.

Second, identity in the LACSS was measured in the 1990s and early 2000s. It is possible that changing demographics and other threats to whites’ status lead to not only an increase in the salience of a pre-existing white racial identity, but also an increase in identification itself. Indeed, there is evidence that threat does elevate levels of ingroup solidarity (Cosser 1956; Giles and Evans 1985b; LeVine and Campbell 1972). Thus, levels

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<sup>24</sup> 19 (approximately 32 percent) said their racial identity is moderately important, 9 (15% said it is a little important), and 19 (approximately 32 percent) indicated it is not important at all.

of white identity might have increased significantly since the LACSS data were collected. Unfortunately, existing data do not allow me to explore this hypothesis empirically.<sup>25</sup>

The differences in these distributions suggest that both measuring identity importance at the national level and at different points in time can yield dramatically different results. The fact that many whites, across multiple surveys conducted within the past three years, report identifying with their racial group, however, supports the notion that in the contemporary political environment, this identity may have become more politically relevant. I test that proposition directly in Chapter 5. Next, I turn to a discussion of the discriminant validity of this identity measure, an examination of the antecedents of white identity, and a review of other attitudes and evaluations correlated with white identity.

### The Correlates and Discriminant Validity of White Identity

I argued in Chapter 2 that white identity is not simply racial resentment or ideology by another name. It is an independent identity based on the belief that whites, as a group, have collective interests. If white identity is in fact a separate and distinct construct, it should not be interchangeable with other political predispositions or identities. To see whether this important prediction bears out, I examine the correlation between white identity and a number of social and political predispositions across the 2010 KN, 2012 ANES, and 2013 SSI datasets using the racial identity importance item.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> House or mode effects may also be contributing to the differences observed, as the LACSS data were collected via RDD surveys. Racial identity was measured in 2003, however, among a nationally representative sample using RDD for the American Mosaic Project Survey described by Croll (2008), and in those data, 37 percent of whites report that their racial identity is “very important.” Thus, it seems unlikely that the RDD mode alone is contributing to the large differences observed here.

<sup>26</sup> In the case of SSI, I use the two-item measure combining the importance item with the strength item.

I begin with the most central and significant political predisposition—partisanship.<sup>27</sup> Political science scholarship has long recognized party identification as a durable, stable attachment, and most Americans think of themselves as either Democrats or Republicans (Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 1998). Because party identification plays an important role in informing Americans’ political preferences, it will therefore be included in many of the analyses of public opinion throughout this dissertation. Accordingly, it is important to know that the role white identity plays in informing political preferences is indeed independent of partisanship. Is white identity just another manifestation of Republican or Democratic identity? As Table 3.3 reveals, partisanship and white identity are not strongly correlated. To be sure, across each survey, white identity is positively correlated, and sometimes significantly so, with Republican identification. The correlation coefficient, however, hovers around 0.1. By these measures, then, partisanship and white racial identity are not one in the same.

What about the relationship between white identity and ideological identification? Many Americans describe themselves in these terms, and these identifications are politically meaningful.<sup>28</sup> Conservatives tend to favor the free market, are more concerned with national security, and adopt more racially conservative attitudes. Liberals favor redistributive policies and equality (Conover and Feldman 1981; Levitin and Miller 1979). Perhaps white identity is simply another expression of an individual’s ideological position. Table 3.3 shows the correlation between political ideology and white identity. White Americans who claim their racial identification is important to them are more

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<sup>27</sup> Across each survey, partisanship is a seven point scale, recoded from zero to one, with zero representing “strong Democrat” and one representing “strong Republican.”

<sup>28</sup> In every survey ideology is measured with a seven point scale ranging from zero to one, with zero representing “extremely liberal” and one representing “extremely conservative.”

conservative on average, although just as was the case for partisanship, these differences are rather small.

**Table 3.3 The Relationship between White Identity and Political and Social Predispositions**

	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN	SSI
Party Identification (Republican)	0.07 (852)	0.01 (2386)	0.17* (750)	0.11* (797)
Ideological Identification (Conservative)	0.07* (814)	0.05* (2380)	0.19* (742)	0.16* (714)
Limited Government	-0.04 (856)	-0.07* (2382)		-0.08 (796)
Egalitarianism	0.05 (860)	0.00 (2387)		-0.03 (797)
Racial Resentment	0.13* (859)	0.14* (2387)	0.28* (745)	0.31* (796)

Note: Table entry is the Pearson correlation coefficient. Number of observations appears in parentheses. \* $p \leq 0.05$  Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES (face-to-face sample), 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Entries are percentages of respondents. KN & ANES data are weighted. SSI analysis uses the two-item measure of racial identity.

Is white identity more strongly associated with views about the size and role of the government? Americans tend to endorse the notion of a more limited government, and attitudes about the scope of government correspond to opinions across a range of policies (Markus 2001). Again, we can see from Table 3.3 that the relationship between the two constructs is underwhelming. Higher levels of white identity are associated with *less* support for limited government, but the correlation is small and insignificant in two out of the three datasets in which the measure was available.

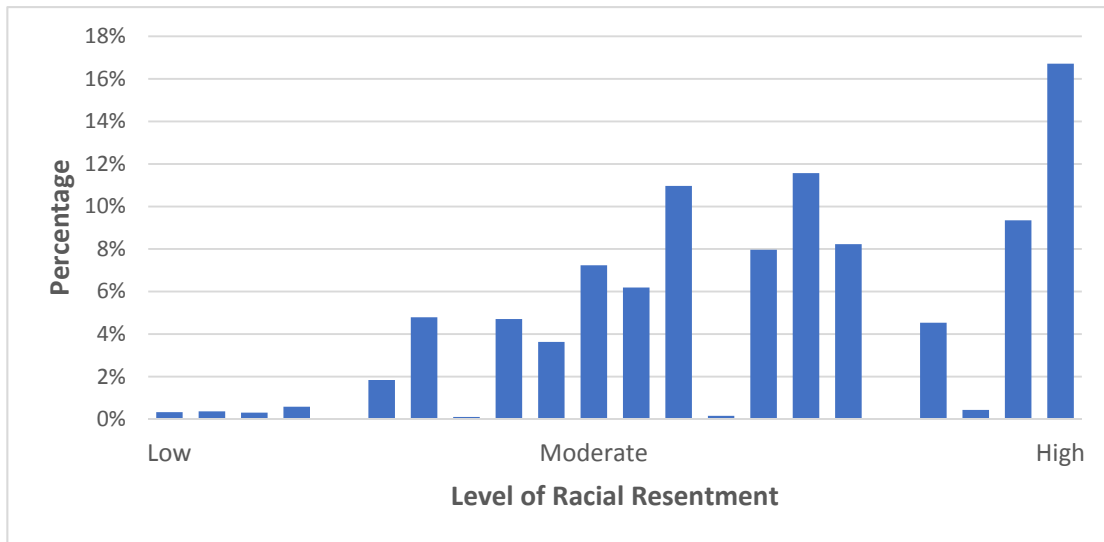
Perhaps racial identity among whites is significantly related to egalitarianism—that is, for the idea of equality of opportunity (Feldman 1988). Scholars have argued that egalitarianism is the value central to the debate over social welfare policy (Feldman and Zaller 1992), and others have suggested that beliefs about white’s power and status might

be significantly related to concerns of equality (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer 2007). As the coefficients in Table 3.3 reveal, however, white identity is not significantly related to egalitarianism. The coefficient is statistically indistinguishable from zero in each sample.

Finally, is white racial identity simply an expression of outgroup animus? Is it primarily capturing dislike for racial outgroups? The last row in Table 3.3 confirms that white racial identity and racial animus, here measured with racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996), are not one and the same. While white identity is significantly and consistently correlated with racial resentment, such that high identifiers tend to possess more resentful attitudes, the correlation is not so strong as to conclude that these measures are capturing the same underlying construct.

Because there is considerable debate in the group identity and conflict literature over the extent to which ingroup favoritism begets outgroup animus (Brewer 1999), it is worth looking more closely at the relationship between racial identity and racial resentment. Figure 3.1 presents the distribution of racial resentment among high white identifiers (individuals in the top quarter of the scale, that is, those scoring at .75 or 1 on the identity scale coded to range from zero to one).

**Figure 3.1 Distribution of Racial Resentment among High White Identifiers**

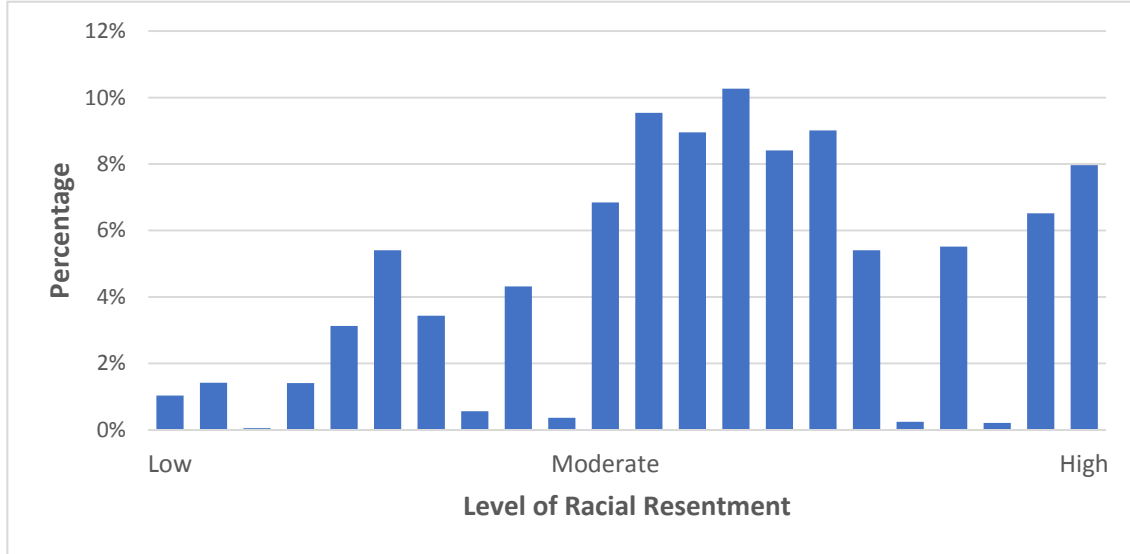


Source: 2012 ANES (face-to-face sample). Data are weighted. Bars represent percentage of white respondents. N=290

The graph illustrates that the distribution is skewed slightly left, such that a greater proportion of high identifiers do indeed score moderately high to high on the resentment scale. The skewness is not especially dramatic, however. There is still a sizeable proportion of high identifiers who are in the moderate to low-range of resentment. Furthermore, if we look at the distribution of racial resentment among the moderate to low white identifiers (those scoring at .5 or below on the identity scale coded to range from zero to one) in Figure 3.2, we can see that a significant proportion of these individuals also possess high levels of racial resentment. These graphs illustrate quite clearly that white identity does not directly map onto expressions of racial animus. A significant number of low white identifiers possess high levels of racial resentment, just as a significant number of high white identifiers report moderate to low levels of resentment.



**Figure 3.2 Distribution of Racial Resentment among Moderate & Low White Identifiers**



Source: 2012 ANES (face-to-face sample). Data are weighted. Bars represent percentage of white respondents. N=356

Partisanship, political ideology, attitudes toward the scope of government, egalitarianism, and racial resentment are considered important components of public opinion. The analysis presented here provides evidence that white identification is not simply one of these other constructs by another name. White identity is a separate and distinct concept, which has, as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, a significant impact on whites’ political preferences above and beyond these other factors.

### White Identity and Other Political Attitudes

In order to better understand the political implications of white identity, it is important to examine how this identity is related to other political attitudes and evaluations. How do these individuals orient themselves toward the political world? Are they more or less engaged or more or less knowledgeable than their counterparts? Knowing the answer to such questions may help us predict how an increase in the salience of white identity might affect political outcomes. First, I consider the

relationship between white identity and evaluations of the major political parties. Do white identifiers have a preference for the Democratic or Republican Party? To find out, I examine the relationship between white identity and whites' evaluations of the two parties on the 101 point feeling thermometer measure. The results, presented in Table 3.4, show that generally, white identity is associated with warmer evaluations of the Republican Party. There is, however, a slight positive relationship between identity and evaluations of both parties among respondents in the ANES Internet study, suggesting that the preference for Republicans generally is not necessarily a particularly strong one.

**Table 3.4 The Relationship between White Identity and Political Evaluations**

	ANES Face-to-Face		ANES Internet		KN	
	Democrats FT	Republican FT	Democrats FT	Republican FT	Democrats FT	Republican FT
White Identity	0.004 (0.031)	0.111*** (0.029)	0.047** (0.024)	0.081*** (0.024)	-0.014 (0.128)	0.167* (0.086)
Constant	0.491*** (0.017)	0.465*** (0.016)	0.421*** (0.012)	0.434*** (0.013)	0.484*** (0.091)	0.400*** (0.060)
Observations	841	839	2382	2382	112	112
R-squared	0.000	0.023	0.003	0.009	0.000	0.041

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks Study, 2012 American National Election Study, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

Are white identifiers more or less knowledgeable about politics? To see, I regressed political knowledge on the measure of white identity using both the ANES and SSI studies. In the ANES, political knowledge was measured using a scale constructed of counting the total correct number of political offices respondents were able to identify out of four individuals, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Vice President. The SSI was similar, except respondents were asked to correctly identify the

offices for John Boehner and John Roberts, in addition to correctly indicating which political party currently had the majority of seats in the U.S. Senate.

The results of the model in which white identity predicts political knowledge are presented in Table 3.5. Perhaps unsurprisingly, white identity is associated with *lower* levels of political knowledge, a relationship consistent with the lower than average levels of education generally possessed by high identifiers.

**Table 3.5 The Relationship between White Identity and Political Knowledge**

	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	SSI
White Identity	-0.077*** (0.029)	-0.087*** (0.025)	-0.152*** (0.048)
Constant	0.421*** (0.017)	0.538*** (0.014)	0.733*** (0.031)
Observations	860	2387	797
R-squared	0.011	0.008	0.012

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2012 American National Election Study, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

Are white identifiers more interested in politics or more likely to participate? To find out, I examine the relationship between identity and both political interest and participation in the 2012 ANES. Political interest was measured by scaling together two questions. The first asked respondents how interested they were in the political campaigns so far that year. The second asked how often they pay attention to what’s going on in government and politics (alpha=.78). Political participation was measured by taking an average of the total number of political activities in which the respondent reported participating, including attempting to influence anyone to vote for a party or

candidate, attending political rallies, working for a political party or candidate, wearing a button or a sticker in support of a candidate or party, donating money to a political campaign or party, discussing politics with friends and family, writing a letter to a government official, or voting in the election (alpha=.66).

The results of the regression model presented in Table 3.6 indicate that white identity is not associated with higher levels of interest or participation. White identifiers are, on average, neither more nor less engaged in politics.

**Table 3.6 The Relationship between White Identity and Political Interest & Participation**

	Political Interest		Political Participation	
	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet
White Identity	-0.021 (0.036)	0.007 (0.024)	-0.038 (0.025)	-0.021 (0.016)
Constant	0.629*** (0.020)	0.307*** (0.013)	0.622*** (0.013)	0.316*** (0.008)
Observations	860	860	2387	2387
R-squared	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.001

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2012 American National Election Study.

## The Antecedents of White Identity

How do identities develop, and who is more likely to adopt a group identity? The authors of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) argued that the strength of an individual’s group identification is primarily a function of the length of his or her time as a group member. Since their writing, scholars have explored a plethora of additional factors that may contribute to the development of strong group identities.

Some work has suggested that there is significant individual variation in the propensity to identify with a social group. In particular, personality traits—rooted in our

genetic makeup (Bouchard 1997) and generally stable throughout our lives (Caspi, Roberts, and Shiner 2005)—may play a fundamental role in the process of identity acquisition. Existing work has hinted at the possibility that qualities like the need for certainty (Mullin and Hogg 1999), cognitive complexity (Neuberg and Newsom 1993), and other dimensions of personality may be related to the development of ingroup identification and bias. Duckitt (1989), for example, argues that authoritarian personalities are related to the tendency of some individuals to identify with dominant social groups. Similarly, Perreault and Bourhis (1999) find that higher levels of authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and a personal need for structure were all significantly correlated with stronger ingroup identifications among group members assigned to artificially created groups in a laboratory setting. Furthermore, some personality research—which in recent years has grown under the consensus that core personality traits can be conceived of along five dimensions (the Big Five)—has found that some aspects of personality are associated with a stronger sense of self (Lounsbury and Levy 2007) as well as with social identities like partisanship (Gerber et al. 2010). These findings imply that there might be a fundamental inclination among some individuals to possess a strong sense of ingroup favoritism and to identify with their racial group.

Other factors implicated in identity formation have to do with the nature of an identity. In particular, one important feature is the identity's *salience*. Because the groups to which individuals belong and may potentially identify with are numerous, the extent to which an individual strongly identifies with a particular group may be a function of its distinctiveness. The clarity or separateness of a category helps increase the salience of that category, and individuals ought to be more likely to adopt identities that are visible

and accessible (Turner et al. 1987). Existing work often points to the importance of category salience when it comes to group identity among individuals who find themselves in the minority (Brewer and Brown 1998). For example, ethnic minority children in a classroom are more likely to describe themselves in terms of their ethnicity (McGuire et al. 1978) and children in families where their gender is of the minority are more likely mention their gender when describing themselves (McGuire, McGuire, and Winton 1979).

The importance of category salience suggests that context matters when it comes to racial identity formation. Specifically, individuals who reside in areas where they are the racial minority, or where the racial composition of their locale is more diverse, may be more likely to develop a strong racial identity. A similar prediction also emerges out of the racial threat literature, albeit with slightly different theoretical underpinnings. Research under the umbrella of the “power threat hypothesis” suggests that whites are more likely to feel that their group’s power and privileges are threatened when they reside in close proximity to sizeable minority populations (Allport 1954; Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Giles and Evans 1985b; Key 1949; LeVine and Campbell 1972; Nagel 1995). In other words, rather than mere category salience, the apparent presence of racial outgroup members may increase identity salience by fueling perceptions of group threat.

With these factors in mind, I examine empirically a number of possible antecedents of white racial identity. I begin first with elements likely to be most distal to the development of identity, including fundamental individual characteristics like personality. Then, I consider more proximate demographic characteristics and finally, contextual factors that may explain higher levels of identity.

Psychologists argue that core personality traits—which can be organized and measured along five dimensions widely referred to as “the Big Five”—serve as important lenses through which people experience and respond to stimuli in their environment. Big Five personality traits predict a wide range of attitudes and behaviors, including health (Goodwin and Friedman 2006), income (Borghans et al. 2008), political ideology, policy preferences, partisanship, and political behavior (Gerber et al. 2010, 2011; Mondak 2010). Furthermore, as Gerber et al. (2011), argue with respect to partisan identification, cognitive and affective factors can help shape group attachments. Certain personality traits are likely to make the affective and cognitive benefits of group identity more appealing, as affiliating with a group provides a cognitive framework to help organize the world. It can also yield social benefits, like a sense of belonging. Furthermore, personality traits are, arguably, a precursor to the other attitudes and predispositions that might contribute to the adoption of racial identity. Thus, I analyze how the personality dimensions of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience affect the strength of racial identity among whites using data from the 2012 ANES.

Like much of the work in the domain of personality research, this analysis is largely exploratory, as there is, as far as I am aware, no prior work on the relationship between the five factor model of personality and the proclivity to adopt a social identity (except for the work of Gerber et al. (2011) on partisanship, described above). There are, however, a few predictions to be made about the potential relationship between each dimension and strength of racial identification. First, extraverted individuals tend to be more sociable and assertive. The sense of belonging that a social identity provides,

coupled with the high-status of whites, might therefore make a white identity more appealing to extraverted whites. When it comes to agreeableness, individuals who score high on this dimension are also likely to be drawn in to pro-social behavior. But, as Mondak (2010) argues, agreeable individuals desire to maintain positive relations with others, avoid group conflict, and tend to express lower levels of prejudice. If identifying as white is rooted in group conflict and perceptions of threat, then we might expect agreeableness to be negatively related to a strong sense of ingroup identification.

Emotionally stable people tend to be calm, relaxed, and exhibit greater self-control. Individuals at the opposite end of this dimension (also referred to as neuroticism), tend to be anxious and nervous. If stronger white identities are associated with the maintenance of privilege and activated in response to threat, then individuals more sensitive to threats may be more likely to cling to their racial identity. Thus, we would expect emotional stability to be negatively related to white identity. Next, individuals who score higher on the openness to experience dimension are more likely to seek information and exposure to culture and to try new activities and meet new people. It seems reasonable that individuals with these traits may be less threatened by other racial groups and by circumstances like demographic changes. Therefore, we might expect this trait to be negatively associated with white identity. Finally, conscientious individuals tend to be organized, reliable, and favor personal responsibility and tradition. Because such tendencies seem consistent with traditional Anglo-Protestant values potentially most associated with whiteness, it is possible that conscientiousness is positively related to stronger white identities. This prediction is rather tenuous, however, and it seems more likely that this dimension is not correlated with identity.



In addition to the Big Five personality dimensions, I also consider whether two other constructs of personality—authoritarianism and social dominance orientation—are associated with stronger levels of white racial identity. Building off the work of Adorno and his colleagues (Adorno et al. 1950), Stenner (2005) conceives of authoritarianism as a “relatively innate and enduring trait” (p. 326) characterized by a preference for uniformity and group authority.<sup>29</sup> As I described above, previous work has found that authoritarianism is associated with a tendency to possess strong group identities, and therefore, it would not be surprising to find a link between authoritarianism and a subscription to a dominant group identity, like white racial identity.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Stenner argues that authoritarians become more restrictive in their attitudes in response to threat, and so among authoritarian whites, a strong white identity may be one possible manifestation of racial outgroup threat.

The architects of social dominance theory argue that individuals vary in the extent to which they possess a social dominance orientation (SDO), and they argue that this trait is normally distributed across individuals (Pratto et al. 1994; Jim Sidanius and Pratto 2001). Individuals who score high on SDO desire that their ingroup dominate and be superior to outgroups. They also prefer that groups be arranged hierarchically and eschew equality. Because strong group identities and ingroup favoritism reinforce their group’s position in the social hierarchy, members of high-status dominant groups are thought to possess higher levels of ingroup identification. Existing empirical work supports this claim (Levin and Sidanius 1999).

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<sup>29</sup> Authoritarianism is measured in the ANES using four questions about child-rearing.

<sup>30</sup> Some work demonstrates a relationship between some of the Big Five dimensions and both authoritarianism and SDO (Akrami and Ekehammar 2006; Ekehammar et al. 2004), but generally, the Big Five, authoritarianism, and SDO are seen as separate personality traits (Pratto et al. 1994; Stenner 2005).

To see whether any of these relationships between personality and identity bear out, I regress racial identity, using the racial importance item, on each of the Big Five dimensions and authoritarianism using the 2012 ANES. Results among both the face-to-face sample and the Internet sample are presented in Table 3.4. The 2012 ANES did not include a measure of SDO, but I am able to examine the relationship between SDO, authoritarianism, and white racial identity using the SSI survey. These results are presented in the last two columns of Table 3.4.

Examining just the first two columns of Table 3.4, we can see first that, as predicted, extraversion is positively associated with stronger levels of white identification. Both agreeableness and conscientiousness are generally positively related to stronger white identities as well, but the coefficients are much smaller and consistently insignificant. The strongest relationship seems to emerge with respect to emotional stability. As expected, less emotionally stable (more neurotic) whites appear to possess stronger white identities, suggesting, perhaps, that the individuals most reactive or sensitive to threat are the ones that cling to a racial identity. Finally, and counter to my expectations, openness to experience is generally not associated with white racial identity, and coefficients run in separate directions when comparing the face-to-face and Internet samples.

The results in the third and fourth columns of Table 3.7 indicate that even after controlling for the Big Five dimensions, authoritarianism emerges as a significant factor. The bivariate regression model in the SSI sample, presented in the fifth column, confirms these results. Whites who score higher on authoritarianism report stronger white racial identities. This result is consistent with the work of Duckitt (1989), briefly mentioned

above, who posits that authoritarianism reflects intense group identification and a commitment to group cohesiveness.

The last column of Table 3.7 presents the results of a regression model among whites in the SSI sample, in which white identity is a function of both authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. We can see that while authoritarianism maintains some predictive power after controlling for SDO, this latter personality trait emerges as an incredibly powerful antecedent of white racial identity. Not only is the size of effect of SDO on white identity impressively large, but the R-squared leaps from .03 to .22 when SDO is included in the model, indicating that SDO explains a significant portion of the variance in white identity.

**Table 3.7 The Relationship between Personality Traits and White Identity**

	ANES Face-to- Face	ANES Internet	ANES Face-to- Face	ANES Internet	SSI	SSI
Extraversion	0.108 (0.085)	0.109*** (0.040)	0.106 (0.085)	0.091** (0.040)		
Agreeableness	0.057 (0.108)	0.012 (0.051)	0.054 (0.107)	0.001 (0.050)		
Conscientiousness	0.011 (0.103)	0.080 (0.050)	0.010 (0.102)	0.061 (0.050)		
Emotional Stability	-0.264*** (0.086)	-0.081* (0.044)	-0.268*** (0.086)	-0.064 (0.044)		
Openness to Experience	0.068 (0.105)	-0.092* (0.049)	0.072 (0.105)	-0.059 (0.050)		
Authoritarianism			0.057** (0.024)	0.124*** (0.026)	0.146*** (0.029)	0.053* (0.027)
Social Dominance						0.495*** (0.035)
Constant	0.461*** (0.104)	0.429*** (0.052)	0.435*** (0.104)	0.358*** (0.056)	0.495*** (0.018)	0.374*** (0.018)
Observations	597	2384	597	2384	797	797
R-squared	0.025	0.009	0.036	0.024	0.030	0.221

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.

Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

These results provide important evidence that subscribing to a white racial identity is in part a function of fundamental personality traits. In particular, less emotionally stable whites who prefer cohesiveness and uniformity, and who adhere to hierarchy, seem most likely to identify as white. These traits, however, clearly do not capture all the variance to be explained when it comes to identifying as white. Furthermore, life experiences and socialization processes can often overpower or alter the effects of personality. With this point in mind, I next consider the relationship between

white identity and several demographic factors, including age, education, gender, and income.

In the spirit of Campbell et al. (1960), who argue that ingroup identity strength is a function of the length of time one has been a group member, my expectations with respect to the relationship between identity and age are rather straightforward; older whites ought to possess stronger racial identities. Making predictions regarding the relationship between education and white identity is more complicated, however. Education is regarded as one of the most influential socializing factors in individuals' lives (Hyman and Wright 1979). When it comes to racial and other outgroup attitudes, higher levels of education are generally associated with reduced prejudice, lower levels of ethnocentrism, and greater levels of tolerance (Kinder and Kam 2010; Stouffer 1955). Furthermore, Stenner (2005) argues that "there is no more important determinant of authoritarianism than (lack of) education" (p.154).

Gabennesch (1972) argues that lower education levels give way to higher levels of authoritarianism and similar outcomes because a lack of education results in an insular worldview he calls "reification." This outlook is characterized by absolutism, adherence to conventionalism, and conformity to authority. As Feldman and Stenner (1997) explain, we can expect such individuals to "be threatened and disturbed by any events that challenge the self-evident truth of established beliefs and the integrity of the social order" (p. 767). These same sorts of individuals might be inclined to identify with a dominant group, particularly out of a desire to maintain the current racial and social hierarchy. Indeed, analysis by Croll (2008) is consistent with this expectation; he finds that more educated whites are less likely to report that their racial identity is important.

On the other hand, other work using the closeness item to measure white identity has suggested that education is positively correlated with identity, such that *more* educated individuals possess stronger levels of white racial identity (Wong and Cho 2005). This finding is consistent with an alternative hypothesis, advocated most eloquently by Jackman, regarding the relationship between education and attitudes toward social dominance. Jackman challenges the conventional proposition that higher education leads to an “enlightened” worldview and a greater commitment to tolerance. Throughout her work, she describes how dominant groups develop ideologies that legitimize the existing hierarchical status quo (Jackman 1994), and she suggests that “the well-educated members of these dominant groups are the most sophisticated practitioners of their group’s ideology” (Jackman and Muha 1984).<sup>31</sup> Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo (1996) make a similar prediction. They argue that the better-educated members of dominant groups, like whites, are more capable of understanding how social policy affects their group’s material and symbolic interests. These more educated group members are also more likely to comprehend how ideologies of ingroup superiority help maintain their group’s relative dominance. Thus, we might expect that the *most* educated individuals are also the most likely to subscribe to a white identity. With these competing expectations in mind, it is particularly important to consider the relationship between education and white racial identity, as well as to explore the effect that including education in a model of identity has on the association between identity and personality traits.

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<sup>31</sup> Jackman’s argument is similar to the system of “legitimizing myths” described by the authors of SDO (Jim Sidanius and Pratto 2001).

I also consider the relationship between gender and white racial identification. Social dominance theory would argue that men, who through socialization and genetics hold more hierarchy-enhancing attitudes, should be more likely to identify with a dominant group like whites in the U.S. (J. Sidanius, Pratto, and Rabinowitz 1994; Jim Sidanius, Pratto, and Mitchell 1994). Furthermore, the media have widely portrayed white *men* as a particularly victimized group and as the individuals most likely to be aggrieved by the gains in social, economic, and political equality achieved by women, racial and ethnic minorities, and immigrants over the past sixty years (Kimmel 2013). White men might, therefore, feel most threatened by the social changes that make white identity salient. In addition, women ought to be less likely to identify as white if the same system and set of values that help maintain whites' dominant status is also complicit in preventing women from achieving equality. While this expectation regarding gender and identity seems persuasive, it is important to note that Wong and Cho (2005) find that women are *more* likely to identify as white when identity is measured with the closeness item. We shall see, however, whether this relationship holds when identity is instead measured with the importance item.

The last demographic characteristic I consider is income. Previous work has suggested that "whiteness" is most developed among working-class whites (Roediger 1991). This group is also the most likely to be threatened economically by labor market competition with African Americans and immigrants. As a result, we might expect working class whites, with lower levels of income, to be most threatened, and therefore, to possess stronger levels of racial identity.

Table 3.8 presents the results, across datasets, of OLS models predicting levels of racial identity as a function of the personality and demographic characteristics described above. Measures of personality were not available in the 2010 KN data, but this survey allows us to view the relationship between identity and demographic characteristics when personality items are not included in the model. We can see that as expected and across each of the datasets, older individuals tend to possess stronger levels of racial identity. Education also has an especially powerful effect, although not in the way Jackman or the proponents of Social Dominance Theory would predict. More educated whites are *less* likely to report that being white is important to their identity, a finding consistent with the notion that higher levels of identity are associated with a more insular view of the world. Gender, on the other hand, does not appear to be an important predictor of identity. While women seem to have slightly higher levels of identity in the ANES face-to-face sample, the magnitude of the coefficient is not particularly large, and the effect is only marginally significant. Furthermore, the effect hovers fairly close to zero across the other datasets and is not statistically significant. This finding is also inconsistent with Social Dominance Theory, which would predict that men possess higher levels of racial identity.



**Table 3.8 The Relationship between Personality Traits, Demographic Characteristics, and White Identity**

	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN	SSI
Extraversion	0.072 (0.086)	0.082** (0.041)		
Agreeableness	-0.022 (0.111)	-0.006 (0.054)		
Conscientiousness	-0.015 (0.103)	0.074 (0.051)		
Emotional Stability	-0.244*** (0.087)	-0.061 (0.045)		
Openness to Experience	0.128 (0.104)	-0.040 (0.051)		
Authoritarianism	0.049** (0.022)	0.099*** (0.027)		0.038 (0.028)
Social Dominance				0.507*** (0.037)
Age	0.127* (0.069)	0.113*** (0.038)	0.097* (0.053)	0.073** (0.036)
Education	-0.125 (0.102)	-0.167*** (0.062)	-0.391*** (0.087)	-0.073 (0.070)
Female	0.060* (0.033)	-0.003 (0.018)	-0.014 (0.025)	0.022 (0.017)
Constant	0.474*** (0.119)	0.421*** (0.071)	0.860*** (0.072)	0.391*** (0.062)
Observations	577	2354	752	780
R-squared	0.052	0.038	0.047	0.223

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.

Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

Because so many survey respondents opt out of responding to income questions, I present results from the models including income separately in order to avoid missing data problems. Table 3.9 presents only the coefficients on income from the full model, but results for the remaining variables are available in Appendix D. What is readily

apparent from the table is that income has no significant effect on strength of identity. If working class individuals are in fact more likely to identify as white, the measure of income does not capture this dynamic.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 3.9 The Relationship between Income and White Identity**

	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN	SSI
Income	-0.088 (0.064)	0.030 (0.030)	0.030 (0.059)	0.014 (0.040)
Constant	0.441*** (0.121)	0.424*** (0.073)	0.853*** (0.073)	0.391*** (0.062)
Observations	502	2288	752	780
R-squared	0.087	0.039	0.048	0.223

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

It is worth noting that controlling for these demographic factors noticeably reduces the effect of authoritarianism on identity, although the relationships between identity and the other personality dimensions remain intact. In fact, controlling for education among the SSI sample *increases* the strength of the relationship between identity and SDO. While age and education do seem to play a role in the propensity to identify as white, it is clear that, above and beyond the effects of demographic characteristics, individuals with certain personalities are also quite compelled to adopt a dominant group identity.

Lastly, I turn to examining the relationship between white identity and contextual factors. By matching data from the 2010 Census with FIPS county codes available in

<sup>32</sup> Including income in the model using dummy variables to capture effects over smaller ranges of income does not produce different results. Thus, employing the continuous measure here does not seem to be obscuring a non-linear relationship between identity and income.

both the ANES and the 2010 KN data, I am able to examine whether respondents who live in counties with larger percentages of non-whites have, on average, higher or lower levels of white racial identity. Scholars have argued over whether counties are meaningful geographic units in which to observe the effect of racial composition on whites' attitudes. Some suggest that neighborhood diversity is more likely to affect attitudes (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000), but unfortunately I am unable to explore correlations between the size of the non-white population and white identity within smaller geographic units using available data. I therefore make do with county-level measures of racial diversity.

I also consider whether respondents residing in the southern U.S. have higher levels of white identity, with the expectation that the unique culture of the South and its history of racial conflict may lead to higher levels of white identity among its residents.<sup>33</sup> I present the results of OLS models including the percentage of non-whites in a respondents' county and an indicator variable for South in Table 3.10.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> I define "South" as the 11 former Confederate states.

<sup>34</sup> I do not include the ANES face-to-face respondents in this analysis because the cluster sampling procedure employed in the data collection process geographically biases the sample, making it difficult to determine whether effects are simply due to the geographic distribution of respondents.

**Table 3.10 The Relationship between Personality Traits, Demographics, Racial Context, and White Identity**

	ANES Internet	KN	SSI
Extraversion	0.082** (0.041)		
Agreeableness	-0.006 (0.054)		
Conscientiousness	0.075 (0.051)		
Emotional Stability	-0.062 (0.045)		
Openness to Experience	-0.041 (0.052)		
Authoritarianism	0.099*** (0.028)		0.035 (0.028)
Social Dominance			0.506*** (0.037)
Age	0.113*** (0.038)	0.111** (0.053)	0.069* (0.036)
Education	-0.171*** (0.063)	-0.403*** (0.084)	-0.065 (0.070)
Female	-0.004 (0.018)	-0.005 (0.025)	0.020 (0.017)
Percent non-white	0.019 (0.054)	0.115 (0.097)	
South	0.024 (0.021)	0.027 (0.026)	0.039** (0.018)
Constant	0.412*** (0.072)	0.819*** (0.076)	0.376*** (0.062)
Observations	2354	745	780
R-squared	0.039	0.053	0.227

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

The positive coefficients on both the percentage of non-whites in an individual's county and on the indicator variable for residing in a southern state, suggest that these factors may contribute to higher levels of white identity. The results are, however, statistically insignificant, with the exception of the variable for South in the SSI data. Thus, the extent to which the racial composition of one's locale effects identity is inconclusive. Perhaps, as other scholars have suggested, examining the relationship between racial context and attitudes at the county level is not the appropriate level of analysis. It is possible that if I were able to consider the composition within a smaller geographic unit, I might observe significant effects. Furthermore, the weak results with respect to the indicator variable for southern residence may obscure an actual relationship between the socialization effects of residing in or being raised in the South. The variable used here only captures current residence in the South, rather than the length of time one has lived in the South. Significant in-migration from non-southerners might be dampening effects.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter explored a number of important facets of white identity. First, I demonstrated that white identity can be measured with survey data using the racial importance item. When measured this way among a national sample, it is clear that a sizeable proportion of whites subscribe to a white identity—a very different conclusion from the one drawn by Sears and his colleagues in earlier work. Differences between his results and the ones presented here may very well be due to a combination of time and place. Unfortunately, I do not have nationally representative over-time data from which to examine the possibility that levels of identity have increased from the late 1990s to the

present. It seems quite possible, however, that factors in the political environment have not only made white identity more salient, but they have also led to increased adoption of this identity. Furthermore, a quick examination of racial identity in Los Angeles County with data from the 2012 ANES suggests that for whatever reason, levels of racial identity may be somewhat lower among whites in this region. I suggest that context may affect racial identity, whether that is due to levels of racial diversity in an area, or something unique about the socialization process one experiences in a particular locale. It is possible that something about living in Los Angeles depresses racial identity among whites, which raises a question about whether we might observe systematic geographic variation in levels of white identity across the country. The analysis presented here is not fruitful when it comes to examining county-level racial diversity or the effects of living in the South, but better tests with different data might be more illuminating. Unfortunately, such data are not presently available, but it is a point worth keeping in mind for future survey designs.

Sears and his co-authors are, of course, not the only individuals who have examined white identity. Wong and Cho (2005) also carefully compared racial identity among blacks and whites using the closeness measure in the ANES. There are a number of important differences between their analysis and mine worth highlighting here. Most importantly, they, like Sears, conclude that the predictive power of white identity is underwhelming, as they do not find a relationship between this identity and political preferences. My work here raises two possible explanations for these findings. First, the closeness item may not be adequately capturing the centrality or affective dimension of identity, and this dimension ought to have the most predictive power. In fact, differences

in the antecedents of white identity measured with the closeness item and with the racial importance item hint at the possibility that these items are measuring different things. In particular, Wong and Cho find that education is positively correlated with closeness, and women are more likely to report feeling close. I do not find a significant association between gender and identity, and I find that education has a negative relationship with identity.

Time might also play an important role in explaining differences. The closeness item in the ANES was not available on the survey after the year 2000. Factors in the political environment, however, which served to threaten the dominant status of whites, were not prevalent until after this time period. Thus, it is possible that over the period in time in which Wong and Cho were investigating, white identity was not sufficiently salient as to inform political attitudes.

As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, the racial importance item has impressive and consistent predictive power, but of course it is only one survey item measuring a single (but central) aspect of identity. While it performs quite well, future work should consider alternative measures, including a multi-item measure of identity. Lee (2009), for example, proposes a measurement approach in which respondents are given “identity points” to allocate across a number of social categories. This method allows respondents to weight the strength of identification across a range of groups. In addition, psychologists have recently moved toward a number of multi-item measurement approaches, including Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) collective self-esteem measure. Such a measure, adapted for white identity, may increase our understanding of this identity and its predictive power.

Another important feature of the racial importance item is its discriminant validity. It is clear from analysis presented here that identity is not a proxy for partisanship, ideology, support for limited government, or egalitarianism. Furthermore, it is not simply another measure of racial resentment. This latter point is particularly important, as the weak correlation between resentment and white identity demonstrates that favoring one's ingroup does not, in this case, lead to outgroup derogation. In other words, whites can identify with their ingroup without necessarily expressing prejudice or dislike for racial and ethnic minorities. This finding is consistent with work in social psychology, which finds that ingroup identification is often independent of negative attitudes toward outgroups, and that often times discrimination is motivated by preferential treatment of ingroup members, rather than hostility toward outgroup members (Brewer 1999). These results also illustrate an important distinction between the theory presented here and work under the umbrella of symbolic racism. The latter would argue that political preferences and policy preferences that hurt racial and ethnic minorities are driven by a socialized dislike for the outgroup. When racial identity is behind support or opposition to particular preferences, however, it suggests, in part, that the attitudes undergirding these preferences are primarily about protecting the privileges and power of the ingroup. This is a nuanced but important distinction, especially when politicians and academics are in the business of writing prescriptions aimed at reducing group conflict. Sometimes such conflict is rooted in prejudice, but other times, it is about ingroup favoritism.

The analysis examining the antecedents of white identity provides valuable insight into understanding who identifies—in a psychological sense—as white and what



might drive this identification. It seems clear that there are particular personality traits underlying the propensity to adopt a dominant group identity. Especially powerful are the effects of authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation. The framework of “reification,” offered by sociologist Gabennesch (1972) seems especially useful when it comes to interpreting these relationships. He argues that traits like authoritarianism are consistent with insular, limited perspectives, all of which are part of a particular worldview. Individuals who subscribe to this perspective regard institutions and culture as fixed and natural, not as human products, but instead of manifestations of “cosmic laws” or “divine will.” While this description might be seen a bit theatrical, it is in keeping with the constellation of findings reported here, wherein less educated individuals, with particular beliefs about obedience and order (authoritarianism), who are also inclined to endorse hierarchy (social dominance orientation) abstractly, are the individuals most likely to report a strong white racial identity.

It is worth noting that while Social Dominance Orientation does powerfully predict white identity, a number of the findings here are inconsistent with expectations from Social Dominance Theory. In particular, proponents of the theory have argued that men and more educated individuals should be more likely to possess high levels of SDO and to subscribe to a dominant group identity. That is not what I find here. In fact, the effect of education is not only negative, such that less educated individuals are more likely to identify as white, but it is one of the more powerful factors in the model of white identity.

Regardless, what is certainly clear is that a number of high white identifiers recognize their group’s advantaged status. Rather than expressing guilt or sympathy for

outgroup members, however, they are mostly satisfied with these privileges. This finding is especially interesting in light of recent media attention to the concept of white privilege. In particular, a backlash ensued after *Time Magazine* published an editorial from Princeton University freshman Tal Fortgang (2014), who complained about being told to “check his privilege.” Fortgang railed against the notion that being white offered him advantages, and that the “check your privilege” phrase undermined the personal challenges he, or his family, had overcome in order to succeed. In a sense, Fortgang was denying the notion that his race had offered him particular advantages—a sentiment consistent with some whites’ concern over “reverse discrimination” and other *disadvantages* they feel their racial group faces.

Interestingly, this denial of privilege was not especially prevalent in the open-ended responses I collected. Instead, high white identifiers primarily reported that their identity was important because it was “who they are,” how they are seen by others, reflective of the world in which they were raised, or because it offered them advantages. Furthermore, this recognition of privilege actually served to both strengthen and depress group identity, as a number of low identifiers similarly used the language of privilege to justify thinking about their racial group only infrequently. More common, among low identifiers, however, was the use of “colorblind” ideological terms to explain their lack of a racial identity. These individuals seemed to reject a white racial identity on the principle that “race doesn’t matter.”

This latter finding is especially interesting. “Colorblindness” is sometimes seen as an ideological tool coopted by conservatives in order to dismiss the existence of structural racism and racial inequality. It seems innocuous in that it proposes that

individuals “ignore” race when making evaluations. But opponents argue that colorblindness allows individuals to ignore the very real disadvantages faced by racial and ethnic minorities and to deny the privileges enjoyed by whites. Indeed, some scholars have proposed that colorblindness is another manifestation of contemporary racism (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Haney-Lopez 2014). This project is primarily focused on who identifies as white and what the political implications of this identity are, but these results suggest that there is much to be learned about racial conflict by examining the individuals at the low end of the identity scale as well. It seems that a significant proportion of them have adopted a particular racial ideology that may also inform political attitudes.

Finally, the results presented here hint at the possibility that there are subsets of both high and low identifiers, and the examination of specific heterogeneity among these groups is an important undertaking for future research. For example, individuals at the low end of the scale might be comprised of both racial liberals and racial conservatives. At the high-end of the scale, mixed in with the whites who are comfortable with their group’s privileged status, may be individuals who deny this privilege and worry about discrimination. Thus, future work should consider more carefully distinguishing between different types of high and low white identifiers.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Content of White Identity**

In the previous chapter, I explored a range of possible antecedents of white racial identity. In subsequent chapters, I turn to describing a number of political consequences of this identity. But there are a number of additional elements of this identity that are important to consider. In particular, a critical ingredient in determining whether group membership gives rise to political cohesion is the content or shared meaning of an identity. Do high white identifiers systematically possess certain beliefs? How do they, for example, orient themselves with respect to a national identity? To what extent do they perceive conflict with other racial groups? Has their attachment to their identity become more politicized? In this chapter, I take up these questions and more, as examining the collective attitudes and beliefs possessed by white identifiers can provide an important glimpse into the content of this identity. In short, such an effort helps us understand who white identifiers are and how they conceptualize their own sense of racial identification.

#### **White Identity & American Identity**

As the dominant group in American society, white identity is often viewed as devoid of content and whites are seen as “culturelessness” due to their appropriation of what is considered “mainstream.” It is therefore not surprising then that what may often be associated with “white” is synonymous with “American.” In fact, psychologists Devos

and Banaji (2005) demonstrate through a series of implicit association tests that Americans automatically and unconsciously associate “American” with “White,” as opposed to with other racial or ethnic groups. Furthermore, they find that the more whites displayed this “American = White” association, the stronger was their reported national identity.

Do white Americans also *explicitly* associate “America” with whiteness?<sup>35</sup> To better understand what comes to mind when individuals think of “white people,” I asked 55 white adult U.S. citizens on Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service to write, in their own words, what they associate with whiteness. Specifically, they were asked the following: “When you think about white people in the United States, what comes to mind in terms of the kinds of things you associate with whites in the United States? For example, are there any symbols, events, things of cultural significance, etc. that you think best represent most white Americans?” A noteworthy proportion (20 percent) of these whites did mention “America” in their response. More than one said the “American Flag” came to mind. Others wrote “Founding fathers” or “average Americans” and “America as a whole.

If whiteness and American identity are so strongly related, then we might expect higher levels of white identity to be associated with higher levels of national identity. Indeed, this is exactly what I find. I examined the relationship between white identity and American identity in the ANES, KN, and SSI studies. As the bivariate ordinary least

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<sup>35</sup> Devos and Banaji (2005) do find some explicit associations between American identity and whiteness, although their sample is composed entirely of college undergraduates, and they are not focused on exploring associations with particular kinds of American identity.

squares regression results in Table 4.1 illustrate, higher levels of white identity are indeed associated with stronger levels of American identity.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 4.1 The Relationship between White Identity and American Identity**

	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN	SSI
White Identity	0.165*** (0.025)	0.148*** (0.021)	0.219*** (0.034)	0.349*** (0.031)
Constant	0.800*** (0.017)	0.758*** (0.013)	0.716*** (0.027)	0.618*** (0.019)
Observations	857	2383	747	797
R-squared	0.077	0.039	0.080	0.140

Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES (face-to-face sample), 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Entries are percentages of respondents. KN & ANES data are weighted.

But what exactly is meant by “American identity” here? Previous research has demonstrated that there are multiple conceptualizations of American identity and what it means to feel attached to one’s nationality. In particular, scholars have differentiated between “inclusive” and “exclusive” national identities, with evidence that individuals maintain very different normative conceptions of who represents a “true” American. They have assessed these different types of identity by asking survey respondents to indicate the importance of a number of different traits in making someone a “true American” (Citrin and Sears 2009; Citrin, Wong, and Duff 2001b; Citrin et al. 2014; Wong 2010). The significant relationship I observe between white and American identity hint at the possibility that for high white identifiers, the content of their national

<sup>36</sup> American identity is measured, in each survey, with a question asking respondents how important being American is to their identity.

identity is a rather exclusive one. To find out I measure the nature of American identity using the 2013 SSI survey, on which I asked respondents the following:

Some people say the following things are important for being truly American. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is?

- 1) To have American citizenship
- 2) To be a Christian
- 3) To be able to speak English
- 4) To feel American
- 5) To have American ancestry
- 6) To have been born in America
- 7) To have lived in America for most of one's life
- 8) To respect America's political institutions and laws

I also added an additional item that some previous researchers have included with this battery of questions (Theiss-Morse 2009):

- 9) To be white

The available response options were on a five-point scale ranging from “not at all important” to “extremely important.” Figure 4.1 compares the distribution of responses to each of these questions among high and low white identifiers.<sup>37</sup> What is immediately clear is that a greater percentage of high white identifiers, compared to low identifiers, indicate that each trait is very or extremely important in making someone “truly American.” There is some agreement between high and low identifiers that having American citizenship, feeling American, and respecting America's political institutions and laws are important qualities. Large differences emerge, however, when it comes to the ability to speak English, having been born in the U.S. or possessing American

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<sup>37</sup> Identity is measured in the SSI data by scaling together two survey items: 1) “How important is being white to your identity” and 2) “How strongly do you identify with being white?” The white identity measure is then rescaled to range from zero to one. High identifiers here are defined as those individuals scoring above .5 on the zero to one scale; low identifiers are those with scores below .5.

ancestry, and even with regards to being white. In fact, approximately 23 percent of high identifiers (compared to 3 percent of low identifiers) claim that being white is important to being a “true American.” To be sure, a sizeable portion (43 percent) of high identifiers reject the notion that being white is at all important, but this figure still pales in comparison to the 85 percent of low identifiers who outright dismiss this trait.

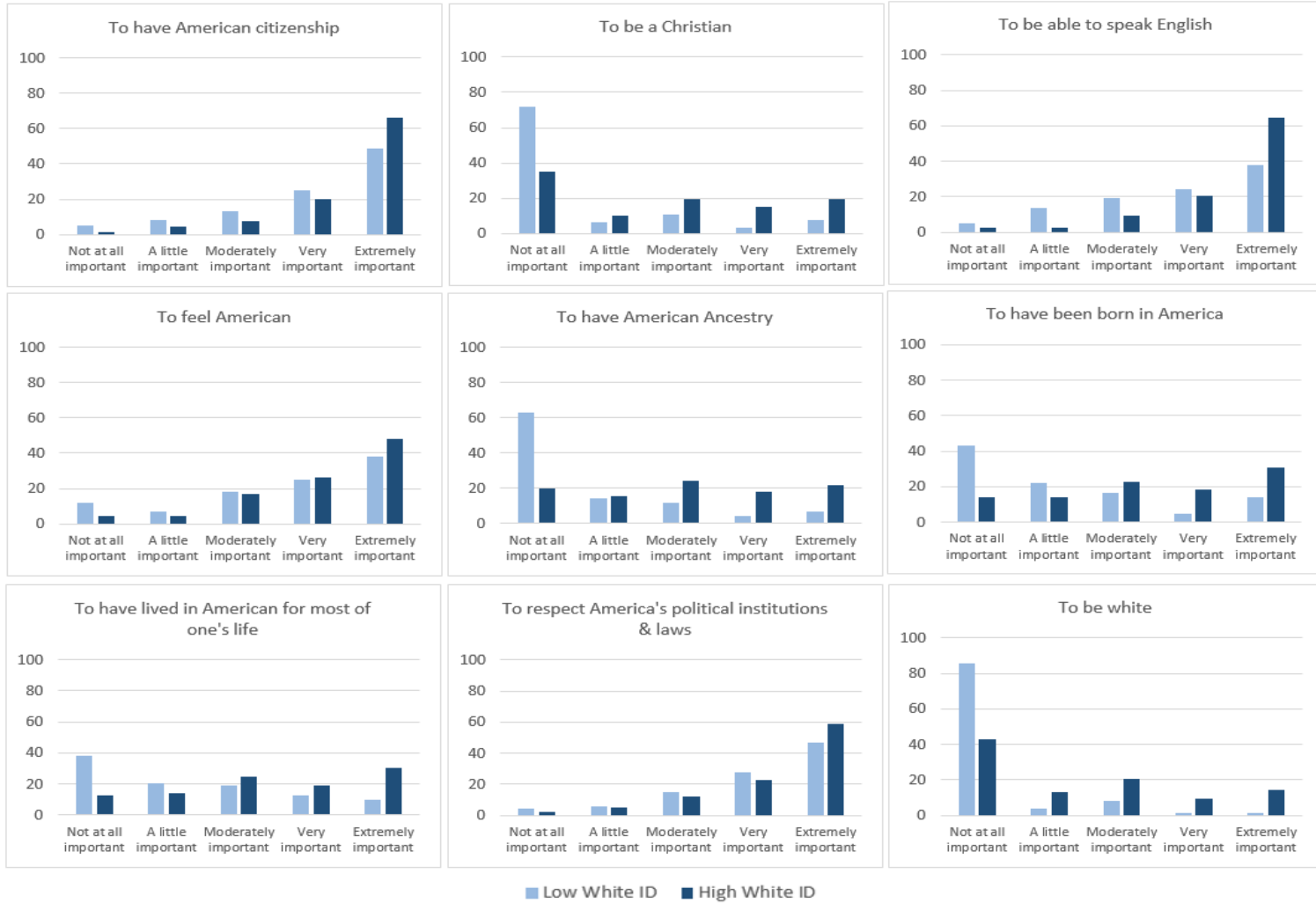
Differences in response options clearly demonstrate that high white identifiers tend to possess more exclusionary beliefs about American identity. In fact, these results, coupled with the strong relationship between white identity and opposition to immigration I discuss in the next chapter, suggest that white identifiers might be characterized as nativistic. But this is not nativism in a broad sense, in which all immigrants or foreigners are seen as threatening; it is a preference for an Anglo-centric America, one where the prototypical citizen is white.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> To be clear, a significant number of high white identifiers do not in fact require the prototypical American to be white. This preference, however, is much higher among high identifiers than low identifiers.



**Figure 4.1 The Nature of American Identity among White Identifiers**



Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Bars represent percentage of respondents in each category. N=782

There is one other important distinction to be made here. These results do not necessarily indicate that this narrow view of American identity is primarily driven by outgroup animus or negative evaluations of non-whites. To illustrate this latter point more clearly, I created an additive index of all nine of the above survey items to serve as a single measure of American exclusionism ( $\alpha=.85$ ).<sup>39</sup> I modeled this attitude as a function of white identity, age, education, gender, partisanship, political ideology, and egalitarianism. The results, presented in the first column of Table 4.2, show that white identity strongly and significantly predicts a more exclusionary view of American identity, as expected.<sup>40</sup> More importantly, the results of the OLS model in the second column reveal that when a control for attitudes toward outgroup members—measured here as the average feeling thermometer evaluations of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians—is included, the effect of white identity is only barely diminished.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, these outgroup attitudes are not significantly related to the dependent variable. In short, the relationships observed here are primarily driven by whites' preference for their ingroup, rather than dislike for racial and ethnic outgroups.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Scaling these items together is in keeping with Wong (2010), who using General Social Survey data, combines the same items into a single measure with the exception of the “to be white” question.

<sup>40</sup> These results are robust to controlling for income.

<sup>41</sup> I scaled the three items together because they are so significantly correlated with one another. Including each evaluation individually in three separate models does not substantively alter the results presented here.

<sup>42</sup> The relationships described here hold even after controlling for racial resentment.

**Table 4.2 Support for Exclusionary American Identity**

White Identity	0.370*** (0.027)	0.361*** (0.028)
Age	0.079*** (0.030)	0.082*** (0.030)
Education	-0.203*** (0.060)	-0.199*** (0.060)
Female	0.019 (0.014)	0.018 (0.014)
Partisanship (1=Republican)	-0.010 (0.027)	-0.007 (0.027)
Ideology (1=Conservative)	0.145*** (0.034)	0.148*** (0.034)
Egalitarianism	-0.068* (0.039)	-0.051 (0.040)
Attitudes toward racial outgroups		-0.031 (0.034)
Constant	0.426*** (0.063)	0.433*** (0.065)
Observations	686	685
R-squared	0.315	0.317

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

## Perceptions of Group Competition and Racial Alienation

There are a number of other attitudes we might expect high white identifiers to share beyond a more exclusionary American identity. In particular, one of the foundational elements of Blumer's Group Position Theory is that dominant group members believe they are entitled to certain rights and resources that outgroup members desire. If this theoretical framework helps explain perceived conflict between whites, the dominant group, and racial and ethnic minorities, then we would of course expect that whites believe their group faces competition over certain resources from outgroup members. This prediction is rather straightforward; if white identity becomes salient in response to group threat, high white identifiers should be most attuned to outgroup members challenging whites' status. In other words, they should be more likely to report perceptions of zero-sum competition with racial and ethnic minorities.

We might also expect that the insecurity these whites feel to be expressed in ways other than perceptions of competition. For instance, in their work extending Blumer's Group Position Theory to racial and ethnic minorities, Bobo and Hutchings focus on the notion of *racial alienation*. They argue that this concept ranges along a continuum, capturing feelings of entitlement and enfranchisement among dominant group members, and disenfranchisement among racial and ethnic minorities. They also describe alienation as part of collective memory; it develops through shared historical experiences of group members as part of their typical social, political, and economic positions.

According to their theoretical account, feelings of alienation should be lowest among dominant group members, as they are the most secure and least likely to feel threatened. The conditions which make white identity salient, however, should turn this expectation on its head. That is, if white identity either develops or becomes salient when whites feel that their groups' dominant status is no longer secure, then we would expect that high white identifiers also report feelings of racial alienation. And we should especially anticipate finding a relationship between white identity and perceptions of racial alienation if threat has made identity *chronically* salient, since longer exposure to such conditions ought to increase the collective sense that one's racial group is being unreasonably challenged.

Thus, I explore whether higher levels of identity are indeed associated with any of these perceptions. I first examine whether high white identifiers perceive zero sum competition over jobs and political influence with outgroups—in this case blacks and Hispanics. In both the 2010 KN and 2013 SSI studies, respondents were asked the extent to which they believe 1) that more good jobs for (blacks/Hispanics) means fewer good jobs for members of other groups and 2) The more influence (blacks/Hispanics) have in politics the less influence members of other groups have in politics.

Table 4.3 presents the results of an OLS model in which white identity predicts perceptions of zero-sum competition over jobs with both blacks and Hispanics.<sup>43</sup> In each dataset, and for both groups, white identity is strongly and significantly related, such that

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<sup>43</sup> Because perceptions of zero-sum competition were measured in this survey after some respondents received an experimental treatment, this analysis here only uses respondents in the control condition of the study.

higher levels of identity are indeed associated with stronger agreement that more good jobs for blacks and Hispanics means fewer good jobs for other groups.

**Table 4.3 The Relationship between White Identity Zero-Sum Competition with Outgroups over Jobs**

	More jobs for blacks means fewer for others		More jobs for Hispanics means fewer for others	
	KN	SSI	KN	SSI
White Identity	0.371*** (0.081)	0.328*** (0.099)	0.239*** (0.086)	0.419*** (0.103)
Constant	0.184*** (0.047)	0.291*** (0.062)	0.276*** (0.049)	0.319*** (0.064)
Observations	120	119	120	120
R-squared	0.186	0.086	0.074	0.123

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

The results are not quite as consistent with respect to perceptions of zero-sum competition over political influence. As Table 4.4 shows, among SSI respondents, white identity powerfully predicts the belief that more political influence for both blacks and Hispanics means less for other groups. Among KN respondents the relationship is statistically insignificant.<sup>44</sup> The coefficients are positive, however, and generally these results are consistent with the prediction that white identifiers do in fact perceive greater competition from outgroups.

<sup>44</sup> These tepid results seem to be mostly due to a lack of statistical power. Because these perceptions of competition questions were asked in a post-test following several experimental conditions, I only analyze results among the control group. This approach leaves me with a limited number of cases. In analysis not presented here, however, I find that white identity significantly predicts perceptions of political competition among higher white identifiers when all respondents are included in a model with dummy variables controlling for each experimental condition.

**Table 4.4 The Relationship between White Identity & Zero-Sum Competition with Outgroups over Political Influence**

	More influence for blacks means less for others		More influence for Hispanics means less for others	
	KN	SSI	KN	SSI
White Identity	0.074 (0.081)	0.359*** (0.095)	0.080 (0.103)	0.452*** (0.096)
Constant	0.367*** (0.056)	0.282*** (0.059)	0.379*** (0.061)	0.262*** (0.060)
Observations	119	121	118	121
R-squared	0.009	0.108	0.008	0.157

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

As an additional test of perceptions of group competition, I also examined the extent to which levels of identity are related to the perception that blacks, Hispanics, and whites have too much or too little influence in politics. Specifically, whites were asked whether they think whites/Blacks/Hispanics have too much influence in American politics, just about the right amount of influence in American politics, or too little influence in America politics. Table 4.5 presents the results of this analysis using data from both the 2012 ANES and the 2010 KN study. It is clear that white identity strongly and significantly predicts perceptions that blacks have too much political influence in both the ANES and KN data. Higher levels of white identity are also related to the perception that Hispanics have too much influence, although the results are not quite as consistent. It is also possible that with the election of high-profile black politicians, like Barack Obama, white identifiers are simply more likely to perceive this group as having too much influence compared to Hispanics.

**Table 4.5 The Belief that Groups have too much Political Influence**

	Blacks			Hispanics			Whites		
	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN
White Identity	0.124*** (0.037)	0.146*** (0.025)	0.268** (0.110)	0.034 (0.040)	0.099*** (0.027)	0.379*** (0.124)	-0.105*** (0.028)	-0.102*** (0.023)	-0.208* (0.123)
Constant	0.405*** (0.020)	0.414*** (0.014)	0.331*** (0.080)	0.419*** (0.021)	0.406*** (0.014)	0.224*** (0.078)	0.595*** (0.017)	0.569*** (0.013)	0.576*** (0.083)
Observations	856	2373	120	857	2373	120	857	2373	120
R-squared	0.020	0.023	0.053	0.001	0.009	0.099	0.023	0.014	0.038

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted.

All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.

Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 American National Election Study.



A clear and consistent pattern does emerge when we examine the last three columns of Table 4.5, which show the effects when the belief that whites have too much influence is regressed on white identity. The coefficients are significant and negative. Not only do high white identifiers believe that racial outgroups have too much political influence, they also report that their own group has too little influence. These results provide compelling evidence that high white identifiers perceive racial and ethnic outgroups as competitive threats, and they are dissatisfied with their own group's position.

Next, I examine whether higher levels of identity are associated with perceptions of racial alienation. In the KN study, alienation was measured using three survey questions. The first asked respondents the extent to which they agree or disagree that American society owes white people a better chance in life than they currently have. The second was their level of agreement or disagreement that American society has provided white people a fair opportunity to get ahead in life. The third measured their agreement with the sentiment that American society has not dealt fairly with white people ( $\alpha=.73$ ). Only the first two items were employed on the SSI survey. In both datasets, these items were scaled together to create a single measure of alienation, which was recoded to range from zero to one.

Table 4.6 presents the results of a bivariate regression model in which white identity predicts levels of white racial alienation. The coefficients are large, statistically significant, and *positive*. Higher levels of white identity are in fact strongly linked to a greater sense of racial alienation. Taken together, the results in Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 paint a clearer portrait of white identifiers. Not only do they seem more sensitive to

competition from racial outgroups, but they believe to a greater degree that their group has too little political influence and that whites are not receiving the opportunities owed to them.<sup>45</sup>

**Table 4.6 The Relationship between White Identity and Feelings of Alienation**

	KN	SSI
White Identity	0.356*** (0.062)	0.212*** (0.027)
Constant	0.095** (0.042)	0.254*** (0.017)
Observations	121	796
R-squared	0.201	0.072

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

## Group Consciousness

If white identity is chronically salient, and if white identifiers feel a greater sense of competition and racial alienation, then one manifestation of these attitudes may be the development of *group consciousness*. Unlike group identity, which involves a psychological attachment to a group, sometimes coupled with perceptions of that group's position in a social stratum, group consciousness "involves identification with a group *and* a political awareness or ideology regarding the group's relative position in society along with a commitment to collective action aimed at realizing the group's interests" (Miller et al. 1981, p.495). Theoretical accounts of group consciousness describe its

<sup>45</sup> To be clear, average levels of alienation among even the highest white identifiers are not on par with average levels among blacks. Specifically, in the KN sample, the average level of alienation among whites is .4 on the zero to one scale. Among blacks, it is .6. This relationship is, of course, consistent with Bobo & Hutchings (1996) theoretical account of alienation, which argues that dominant group members should possess lower levels of alienation due to their groups' historically advantaged status in the racial hierarchy.

manifestation as a process of politicization derived through the common historical experiences of group members; group identity gives way to consciousness when group conflict leads to perceptions that one's group is relatively deprived and collective action is an agreed upon means by which to challenge the social order in an effort to improve the position of the group. In other words, if whites possess a sense of group consciousness, we would expect them not only to identify with their group and feel aggrieved, but also believe that whites should work together as a group to resolve these grievances.

The extent to which consciousness is developed among group members has important political implications; while identity may embody an attachment to a group and a vague desire to protect group interests in the political arena, consciousness suggests that group members have internalized a shared ideology regarding the group's position in society and have committed to collective action aimed at addressing the group's interests. Scholars have found that group consciousness generally is more closely linked with organized political participation on behalf of a group, be it in the form of lobbying, demonstrations, or other efforts to change the social order (Gurin 1985).

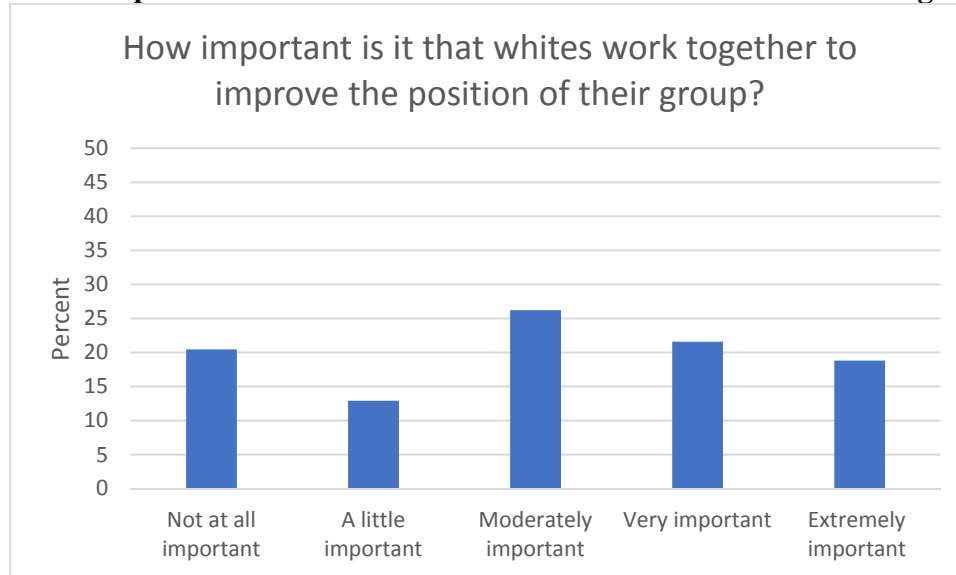
As is the case with racial identity, previous work, conducted primarily in the 1980s, suggested that whites do not possess a sense of racial consciousness (Miller et al. 1981). These results, however, may be because the political environment was not previously conducive to producing a sense of consciousness among whites. Furthermore, most of the survey questions intended to tap consciousness were designed to measure it among subordinate groups, and the language of these items may not translate well to dominant groups. Thus, using the original questions as a guide (Gurin 1985), I generated new items

designed to capture a sense of consciousness among whites. I employed these measures, which I describe in detail below, in the 2013 SSI study.

Beyond mere identification, group consciousness entails a sense of collective orientation – an indication that the group desires a change in its rank or power because its dominance has been challenged. Survey items designed to capture this dimension ask respondents whether they think members of their group should work together to change laws unfair to their group. I asked white respondents two questions designed to capture this dimension of consciousness. The first reads as follows: “How important is it that whites work together to improve the position of their group?” The second asks, “how important is it that whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?” Both questions have five response options ranging from “extremely important” to “not at all important.”

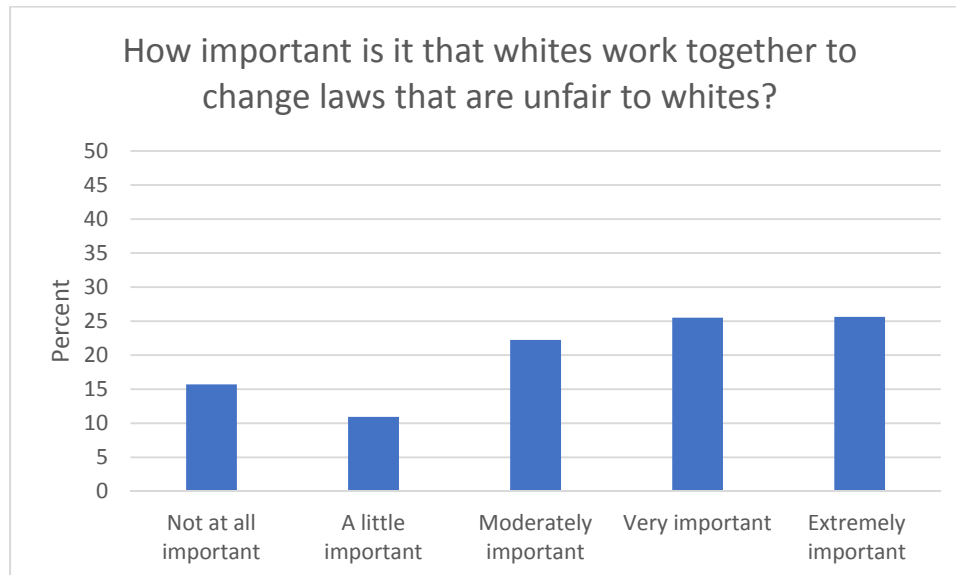
Figures 4.2 and 4.3 present the distribution of responses to these two items among whites in the SSI sample. The responses to the first item are fairly evenly distributed, with a sizeable portion of whites (approximately 40 percent) indicating that it is at least very, if not extremely important, for whites to work together to change the position of their group. An even greater percentage of individuals (51 percent) believe it is at least very important for whites to work together to change laws that are unfair to whites.

**Figure 4.2 Group Consciousness: The Belief that Whites Should Work Together**



Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Bars represent percentage of respondents. N=798

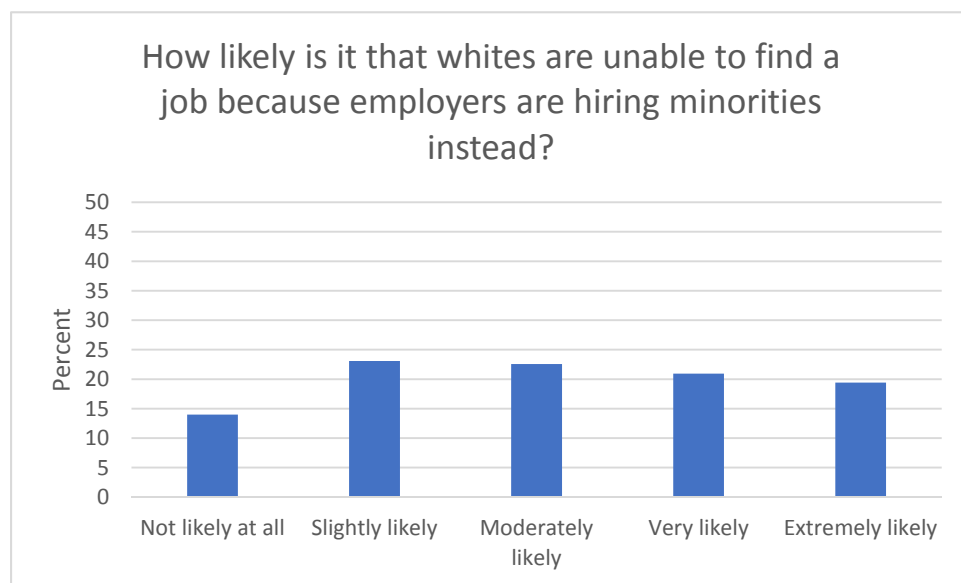
**Figure 4.3 Group Consciousness: The Belief that Whites Should Work to Change Unfair Laws**



Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Bars represent percentage of respondents. N=798

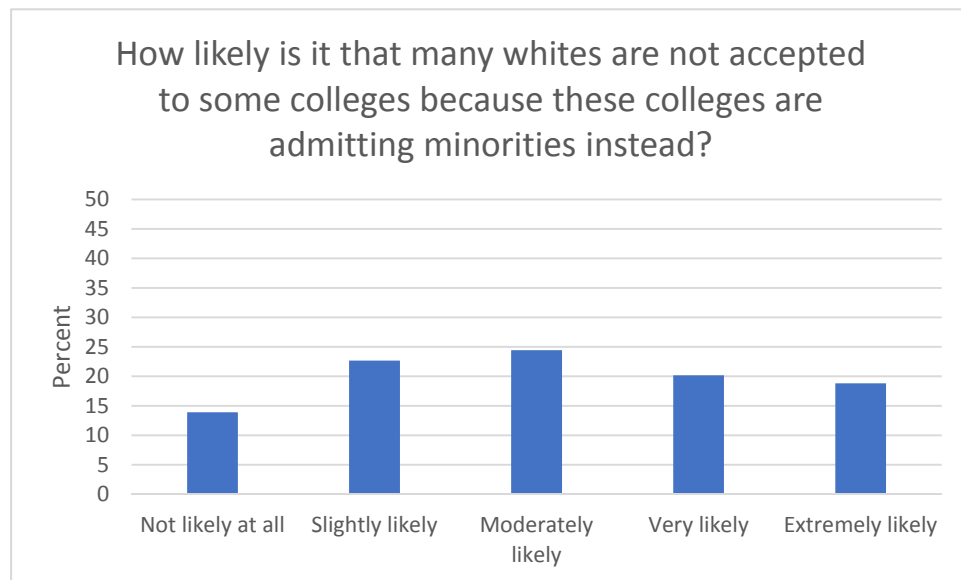
Group consciousness also requires that group members believe the disparities their group suffers are the result of some illegitimate, structural barriers, rather than the result of inadequacies of individual group members. In the past, survey items have measured beliefs about the legitimacy of group disparities or circumstances by asking respondents whether they think group members are unable to get jobs due to a lack of qualifications or due to discriminatory practices. To measure this dimension among whites, respondents were asked the following questions: “How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?” and “how likely is it that many whites are not accepted to some colleges because these colleges are admitting minorities instead?” The response options for both items ranged from “extremely likely” to “not at all likely.” Figures 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate the distribution of these two items. For both questions, close to 40 percent of respondents indicate that minorities are being hired or admitted to college over whites.

**Figure 4.4 Group Consciousness: Belief that Employers are Hiring Minorities Over whites**



Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Bars represent percentage of respondents. N=798

**Figure 4.5 Group Consciousness: Belief that Colleges are Admitting Minorities Instead of Whites**



Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Bars represent percentage of respondents. N=798

The distribution of these four items indicates that a sizeable portion of whites believe that their group faces some degree of discrimination, and that whites should work together to improve the position of their group. In short, it appears as if whites do possess some degree of group consciousness, and these questions seem to capture this construct fairly well. Furthermore, these items scale together reliably ( $\alpha=.86$ ). But, is it *white identifiers* that primarily adopt a sense of group consciousness? To find out, I regress each of the four measures of group consciousness on white identity.

**Table 4.7 The Relationship between White Identity and Group Consciousness**

	Whites work together to improve group position	Whites work together to change unfair laws	Whites unable to find job b/c employers hiring minorities	Whites not accepted to colleges b/c they are admitting minorities
White Identity	0.827*** (0.036)	0.714*** (0.039)	0.566*** (0.040)	0.511*** (0.040)
Constant	0.041* (0.023)	0.178*** (0.024)	0.198*** (0.025)	0.225*** (0.025)
Observations	796	795	792	797
R-squared	0.397	0.298	0.201	0.168

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.  
Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

As Table 4.7 shows, white identity is strongly and significantly related to each dimension of group consciousness. In every case, the magnitude of the coefficients is above .5, meaning that a one unit change in white identity equates to movement at least halfway up the scales of each of the consciousness items. These results indicate that high identifiers seem powerfully disposed toward collective action on behalf of their group. They want to improve the position of their group, agree that whites should work together to change laws unfair to whites, and believe that minorities are affecting their group's chances at jobs and college admissions.

That fact that for many whites racial identity seems to have developed into group consciousness is especially noteworthy, given that previous work dismissed the existence or salience of group identity alone. These results lend further support for the notion that



whites are increasingly concerned about and interested on behalf of their racial group. What are the political implications of this group consciousness? I do not take up answering that question in this dissertation, but previous work suggests that at least among racial and ethnic minorities, consciousness is significantly related to political engagement and participation. Now that it seems we can measure this sense of collective orientation among whites, future work should assess the extent to which consciousness is related to behavior.

### Interdependence

Beyond identity and consciousness, another concept important to theories of group solidarity is interdependence, or *linked fate*. This concept captures the belief that one's individual fate or outcome is inextricably tied to the fate of the group to which one belongs. Much of the theoretical development regarding linked fate has been with respect to African Americans. Specifically, political scientists Michael Dawson (1995) and Katherine Tate (1993) argue that day-to-day encounters with discrimination and racial oppression make blacks aware that they are treated as members of a group, rather than as individuals. As a result, black Americans recognize their own fate as tied to that of their racial group. This theoretical account is similar to both that of racial alienation and group consciousness, both of which develop through shared historical experiences in which groups interact within a racial hierarchy.

Have threats to whites' dominance lead to a sense of interdependence? Do whites possess a sense of linked fate with their racial group? Measures of linked fate were available on both the 2012 ANES and 2013 SSI surveys. In both cases, respondents were asked the following: "Do you think that what happens generally to white people in this

country will have something to do with what happens in your life?” If they answered affirmatively, they were then asked, will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much?” Thus, the subsequent scaled measure of linked fate therefore had response options ranging from “not at all” to “a lot.” Table 4.8 presents the distribution of this measure for the ANES and SSI samples. Across the studies, the distribution of responses are quite similar. Only a small percentage (between 14 and 18 percent) of whites subscribe to linked fate at the highest level. A sizeable minority (between 32 and 37 percent) report some degree of interdependence, but an even greater number indicate that their individual fate is not very or not at all linked to that of other whites.

**Table 4.8 The Distribution of White Linked Fate**

	ANES Face-to-Face (2012)	ANES Internet (2012)	SSI (2013)
Not at all	41%	36%	43%
Not very much	9	9	5
Some	32	40	37
A lot	18	14	15
Observations	738	2838	797

Source: 2012 ANES (face-to-face sample), 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Entries are percentages of respondents. ANES data are weighted.

To what extent is linked fate related to white identity? Table 4.9 demonstrates that white identity is significantly and positively related to linked fate. Whites who score higher on the measure of racial identity are also more likely to report a sense of interdependence with their group. The distribution of linked fate, however, clearly does not mimic that of racial identity measured with the importance item. While a significant

number of whites report that their identity is important, similar numbers do *not* buy into a sense of linked fate. Furthermore, in analysis not presented here, I find that the linked-fate measure lacks predictive power across the range of dependent variables I examine in this dissertation. It is inconsistently related to political preferences, and when it does emerge as a significant factor in opinion, the results appear mostly idiosyncratic.

**Table 4.9 The Relationship between White Identity and Linked Fate**

	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	SSI
White Identity	0.145*** (0.050)	0.162*** (0.030)	0.504*** (0.049)
Constant	0.369*** (0.028)	0.381*** (0.016)	0.128*** (0.031)
Observations	736	2377	796
R-squared	0.016	0.021	0.118

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2012 American National Election Study, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

It is not entirely clear why sizeable portions of whites report a sense of racial identity while much smaller numbers subscribe to linked fate. Perhaps this is one distinct measure of solidarity that truly separates dominant groups from subordinate ones. White identity, I argue, develops as a result of group threat, but that threat is, after all, directed at a privileged status. The challenges experienced by whites as the dominant group are therefore qualitatively different than the long-standing experience of discrimination and oppression that scholars argue leads to the development of linked-fate—and these differences remain even when whites coopt the language of discrimination and minority status to describe the current and future conditions of their racial group.

There is other evidence that white identity and white linked fate are independent constructs, and ones that may be capturing very different sentiments. In fact, available evidence suggests that whatever white linked fate is measuring, it is an attitude very different from what we might expect if linked fate were a response to feelings of disenfranchisement or discrimination experienced by whites. Dawson (2009) examined white linked fate among respondents in KN's panel in 2004. The distribution of white linked fate in the 2004 KN is essentially identical to that of the 2012 ANES face-to-face sample; approximately 17 percent of whites (compared to 45% of blacks) reported that what happens to other whites will affect them "a lot." More interestingly, Dawson examined the antecedents of white linked fate. He found that education is *positively* and significantly related to higher levels of white linked fate. My replication of his analysis using 2012 ANES data (not shown here) confirms this result.

This relationship is quite different than what I find with respect to white identity. As I discussed in the previous chapter, across every dataset, education is significantly and *negatively* associated with higher levels of racial identity. Furthermore, Dawson also offered no coherent interpretation of the predictive power of white linked fate. He even goes on to write that "these results are *so* counterintuitive that we went back to the raw data to make sure there were no coding mistakes" (p. 193). Generally, he finds that higher levels of white linked fate are associated with racially liberal positions on racialized policies like offering apologies and reparations for slavery. In short, Dawson's earlier work and my own findings suggest a need to examine white linked fate more carefully in future work.

## White Privilege and the Valence of White Identity

I have described how personality, demographic characteristics, and context are related to levels of white racial identity. In addition to these factors, the *valence* of a particular identity can affect identity development. In other words, is the group regarded positively or negatively? Existing work has suggested that stronger identities are formed among members of objectively established higher-status groups because such groups might be seen as superior. For example, Swan and Wyer (1997) find that men—members of a higher status group—are more likely to identify with their gender when in the minority than are women. This expectation is consistent with the motivational hypothesis underpinning Social Identity Theory (SIT), which argues that identity is more likely to form among high-status groups because membership positively differentiates ingroup members from outgroup members. It is also in keeping with Social Identity Theory's self-esteem hypothesis, which posits that group-oriented behaviors are part of an ongoing process to maintain and protect a positive self-concept (Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Of course the valence of a white identity might instead be fraught with negative associations like white supremacist hate groups, racism, and other taboo connotations—a concern I address more completely in Chapter 6. Or perhaps white identity is viewed by many Americans in the same way it is described by scholars under the umbrella of critical whiteness studies, who focus critically on white privilege and a subscription to a sense of collective guilt (Delgado and Stefancic 1997). These “whiteness” studies view white identity as a socially constructed concept developed in order to establish and maintain a hierarchical system of power and oppression. Such scholars actively call for whites to recognize unearned privileges they possess as a result of their race, and to defy

such privileges in order to achieve racial equality (Allen 1997; Ignatiev 1996; Roediger 1994; Saxton 1975).

While this work is motivated by an important social justice agenda, it seems unlikely that the views advanced by academics who study whiteness in this way are shared by the majority of white Americans. It is, after all, hard to imagine most whites wanting to “abolish” the white race any more than a majority supporting the KKK. Some work does suggest, however, that reminding whites of their groups’ privileged status can in fact reduce modern racism in some cases and exacerbate it in others (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer 2007). Thus, perhaps some whites do in fact reluctantly acknowledge their own privileged status and express a degree of guilt in response to such recognition.

It is difficult to ascertain what valence most white Americans project on white racial identity using close-ended survey items. To acquire a better sense of what this identity means and whether whites view this identity positively, I conducted a survey in November of 2013 in which 373 white U.S. citizens over the age of 18 were asked to describe, in their own words, why they responded in the way they did to the close-ended racial importance question. I used Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) service to recruit my respondents, and while the sample has some shortcomings (see Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2010), it is nationally diverse. There are, however, a few other caveats to keep in mind before I describe the analysis. First, whites in this sample tend to possess slightly lower levels of white identity when compared to the other Internet samples described above.<sup>46</sup> The difference in the distribution of identity is likely a result of another

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<sup>46</sup> In response to the question, “How important to you is your identity as a white person?” approximately 11 percent of whites report that their identity is extremely important, 10 percent report that it is very important,

important characteristic of the MTurk sample: participants tend to be more educated than the average U.S. population (Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis 2010). Thus, one should keep in mind that these results potentially represent a more restrained view of white identity than we might expect to find in the actual U.S. population.

Clear patterns emerge when examining the rationale 79 respondents provided for indicating that their identity is either extremely or very important to them. First, 10 percent positively described their identity as something of which they are proud.<sup>47</sup> Some stated this simply: “I am white and proud of it” or “I am very proud of who I am, and my people’s history as inventors, explorers, and creators.” For others, however, this pride does in fact accompany a recognition of group privilege. One respondent, who reported that his or her identity is “extremely” important, said as such: “Because I identify and am proud to be white. I see all the struggles that minorities go through and I think god everyday that I do not have to face those types of situations.” This particular response is unique, however, in that it almost goes so far as to express sympathy for non-white groups. As I illustrate below, most of the respondents who described a feeling of privilege did not discuss feelings of sympathy or guilt:

Being white automatically gives me the right to be the leader in America.

It is extremely important to me that I am white because I feel no matter how politically correct people get in this society a white person has a one up on any other race. I am grateful I am white.

I feel white people are given more privileges in the US. They make up the majority and have always been strong leaders and in the wealthier class, which is where I’d like to be, so that’s why I like to identify as white.

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28 percent indicate it is moderately important, 23 percent say it is a little important, and 28 percent report it is not at all important.

<sup>47</sup> N=8

I can't imagine being another race. I feel like if I was [*sic*] born black or Middle Eastern I would badly wish I was [*sic*] white. I am most comfortable around other white people. All my friends are white, and I have only dated white girls. Most of my hobbies and interests are those probably most popular among white males. If I was [*sic*] a different race, I would be a completely different person.

I don't like to think of race as very important but the fact is that the successful in the world are primarily white males. Going off that I would say I am lucky.

Our society treats people other than a white identity different [*sic*]. I believe it is very important to me to fit in with the rest of my community. African and Hispanic Americans are treated differently in terms of jobs, education, and general social situations.

My identity is tied to my family, my profession, my accomplishments. If I will be demonized for my skin color by the media proclaiming it somehow a privilege [*sic*] I abuse, though it denied me scholarships and promotions, I'll take pride in the accomplishments of my ancestors. Going to the moon, the industrial revolution, antibiotics and other hallmarks of civilization don't belong to anyone else.

These individuals clearly recognize that being white affords them advantages, even in the face of potential challenges to their group in the form of “political correctness” and media proclamations of “abused privilege”. In fact, all told, 34 percent of high white identifiers mention that their group is somehow privileged, and another 28 percent of the moderate identifiers describe their group in this way. What is so revealing about such responses is that these individuals both recognize the hardships faced by racial and ethnic minorities and sometimes straightforwardly denounce racism, while still simultaneously embracing their group’s privilege. Furthermore, and as SIT would predict, many of these whites recognize the benefits this privileged status has for their positive self-regard. One respondent put this quite plainly: “I feel that, as a white person, my standing in society is a little higher, due to perceptions of race. Therefore, I feel a little better about myself and my overall identity.”



A noteworthy number of whites (approximately 37 percent) also use privilege as an explanation for their *lack* of identity:

I'm privileged enough to be in the majority so I don't have to define myself by that parameter.

As a member of the majority (well, according to most people, anyway), I have the privilege of not having my skin color define me.

White people in this country have the luxury of not thinking about race, because we are the majority and are identified with having power. I know there are privileges [*sic*] I enjoy because of my race, but on a daily basis I rarely have to think about them. I can choose to ignore my race in most situations.

This rationale is in keeping with Sears' and others' explanation for a lack of white identity. Most low identifiers, however, do not so explicitly explain that their group's advantages contribute to the irrelevance of this identity; they simply report that their identity "doesn't matter" or that they "don't think about it."

Approximately one quarter of the low-identifiers seem to have adopted a "color-blind" philosophy. They describe race as not being a feature or characteristic on which a person should be judged:

Because I don't judge people by what color they are. There are plenty of white people I don't like after all. It's all about what's in a person's head and heart. And I dislike generalizations such as all {fill in the ethnic or racial characteristic} [*sic*]. White people aren't all alike, black people aren't all alike, Asian people are not all alike, and so on....

I want to be identified by who I am not what I am.

So my body produces less melanin than some other guy. What's the big deal? Martin Luther King was exactly right: It's character that counts, not the color of one's skin.

I think all men and women are creative equal and it doesn't matter about what race they are. To me it is what is on the inside that counts.

It doesn't matter what I look like. People will ultimately judge me by my actions.

What defines someone is their personality, intelligence, how they treat others, accomplishments, goals, etc. I don't see how being white has anything to do with my identity except my physical traits. It's of little importance.

What is clear from these responses is that any discussion of collective guilt is absent. Only *one* respondent seemed to adopt such a position: “Because of the atrocities our race has committed throughout time, we really shouldn't be allowed to call ourselves ‘really important’.” Furthermore, only a single respondent suggested that adopting a white identity is taboo: “Maybe my identity as a member of specific European ethnicities is significant to me, but not the color of my skin. That's just asinine. The only people who are ever 'proud' of being white are neo nazis, KKK members, or various unaffiliated hicks.”

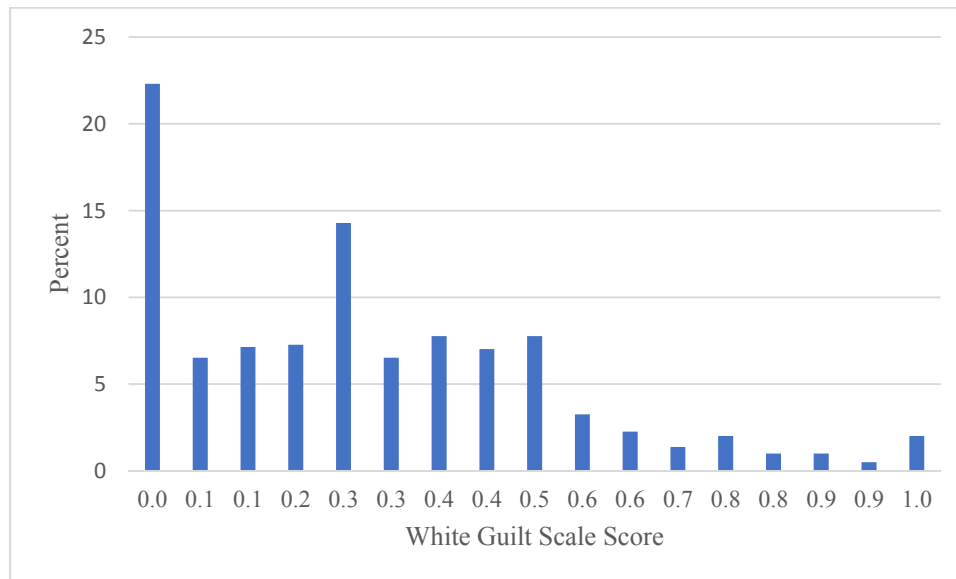
The fact that most whites do not seem to describe their identity with the language of guilt distinguishes the way I describe identity here from other conceptualizations of white racial identity, like Helms' six-stage model (Helms 1995). Helms argues that whites feel discomfort at the recognition of past and present maintenance of a racist society. Others have also suggested that awareness of privilege and collective guilt is a part of white identity formation (Tatum 1992). Yet these results suggest that for high white identifiers, the recognition of group privilege is a facet of which they are proud and not self-conscious or embarrassed, as the critical whiteness scholars would predict.

To see more clearly the extent to which feelings of guilt and privilege might be present in the white American population, and whether these attitudes are systematically related to white racial identity, I included survey measures of both constructs in the 2013

SSI study. These measures were adopted from Swim and Miller (1999), who examined racial privilege and guilt among white undergraduate students.

One important distinction from their work is that I measure white guilt and white privilege among a nationally diverse adult sample of white Americans. I also measure guilt with four of their items scaled together (as opposed to eleven). These questions ask about how often individuals feel guilty about being white given the treatment of non-whites in the country, how often they feel guilt about the inequalities experienced by black Americans, and how often they feel guilty about privileges they receive as a white person (alpha=.92).<sup>48</sup> Figure 4.6 presents the distribution of the White Guilt Scale (coded to range from zero to one) among the SSI respondents.

**Figure 4.6 The Distribution of White Guilt**



Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Bars represent percentage of white respondents. N=798

<sup>48</sup> Complete question wording available in Appendix A.

As Figure 4.6 illustrates, I find, just as Swim and Miller (1999), that most whites do *not* report feeling a sense of collective racial guilt.<sup>49</sup> The graph is skewed right, with a sizeable proportion of the respondents (22 percent) scoring at zero on the scale. Furthermore, Swim and Miller do not find a significant correlation between white guilt and evaluations of whites on the feeling thermometer. Similarly, as Table 4.10 reveals, I find no significant relationship between white identity (measured with the racial importance item) and white guilt in a bivariate regression where identity is regressed on the guilt scale.

Again, following Swim and Miller (1999), I adapted their measure of white privilege, creating a five-item scale ( $\alpha=.94$ ). Respondents were asked the extent to which they feel that white Americans have certain advantages over minorities, the extent to which being white grants them unearned privileges, whether having white skin opens certain doors for them, whether they have privileges due to their race, and whether being white is an asset in their everyday lives.

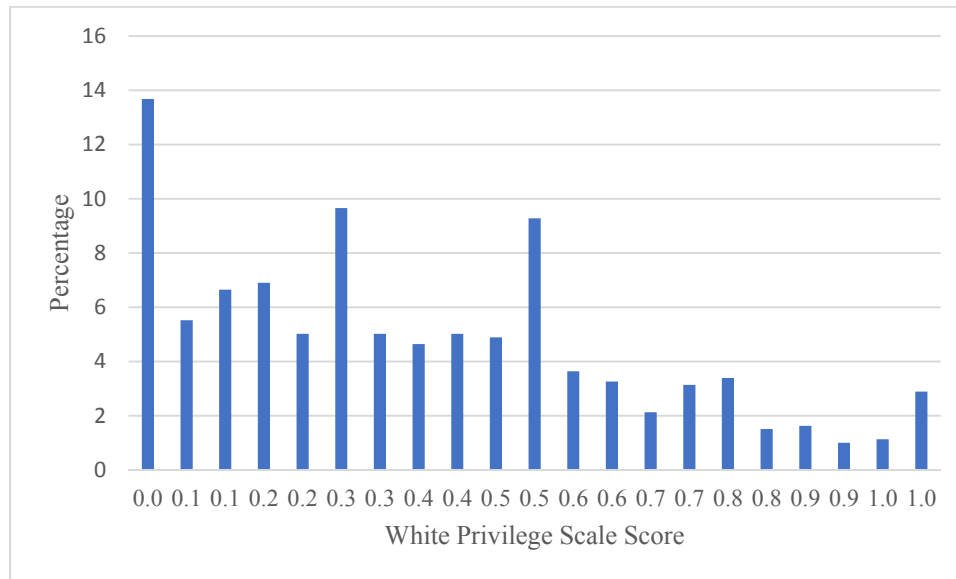
Figure 4.7 presents the distribution of scores on the White Privilege scale. It is clear that compared to the Guilt Scale, a greater number of whites do report feeling some sense of privilege due to their race.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, just as Swim and Miller (1999), I find that white privilege is positively and significantly related to white identity. As Table 4.10 reveals, whites who score higher on the white privilege scale also score significantly higher on the white identity scale.

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<sup>49</sup> The mean White Guilt Scale score is .28 (standard deviation=.009) on the scale recoded to range from zero to one.

<sup>50</sup> The mean White Privilege Scale score is .35 (standard deviation=.273) on the scale recoded to range from zero to one.

**Figure 4.7 The Distribution of White Privilege**



Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study. Bars represent percentage of white respondents. N=798

**Table 4.10 The Relationship between White Identity, White Guilt, and White Privilege**

White Guilt	-0.051 (0.038)	
White Privilege		0.104*** (0.034)
Constant	0.586*** (0.014)	0.535*** (0.015)
Observations	797	796
R-squared	0.002	0.012

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.  
Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

The empirical analyses examining the relationship between privilege and white racial identity comport with what we can glean from the open-ended responses. Many white identifiers recognize that their group has particular advantages, and they describe feeling grateful for them. For the most part, these feelings of privilege are not described in tandem with resentment or animus toward outgroups. Indeed, and most interestingly,

racial resentment is significantly and *negatively* correlated with the white privilege scale in the SSI data.<sup>51</sup> What the open-ended explanations also demonstrate, however, is that these feelings of privilege are not associated with guilt or with a strong desire for more equality across racial groups.<sup>52</sup> The whites who recognize their privilege, are, for the most part, glad for it and not especially interested in relinquishing it.

Regardless, what is certainly clear is that a number of high white identifiers recognize their group's advantaged status. Rather than expressing guilt or sympathy for outgroup members, however, they are mostly satisfied with these privileges. This finding is especially interesting, in light of recent media attention to the concept of white privilege. In particular, a backlash ensued after Time Magazine published an editorial from Princeton University freshman Tal Fortgang (2014), who complained about being told to "check his privilege." Fortgang railed against the notion that being white offered him advantages, and that the "check your privilege" phrase undermined the personal challenges he had overcome in order to succeed. In a sense, Fortgang was denying the notion that his race had offered him particular advantages—a sentiment consistent with some whites' concern over "reverse discrimination" and other *disadvantages* they feel their racial group faces.

Interestingly, this denial of privilege was not especially prevalent in the open-ended responses I collected. Instead, high white identifiers primarily reported that their identity was important because it was "who they are," how they are seen by others, reflective of the world in which they were raised, or because it offered them advantages.

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<sup>51</sup> Pearson's  $r = -.52$ ,  $p = .00$

<sup>52</sup> There is a small but significant positive correlation between the white privilege scale and egalitarianism (Pearson's  $r = .21$ ,  $p = .00$ ).

Furthermore, this recognition of privilege actually served to both strengthen and depress group identity, as a number of low identifiers similarly used the language of privilege to justify thinking about their racial group only infrequently. More common, among low identifiers, however, was the use of “colorblind” ideological terms to explain their lack of a racial identity. These individuals seemed to reject a white racial identity on the principle that “race doesn’t matter.”

This latter finding is especially interesting. “Colorblindness” is sometimes seen as an ideological tool coopted by conservatives in order to dismiss the existence of structural racism and racial inequality. It seems innocuous in that it proposes that individuals “ignore” race when making evaluations. But opponents argue that colorblindness allows individuals to ignore the very real disadvantages faced by racial and ethnic minorities and to deny the privileges enjoyed by whites. Indeed, some scholars have proposed that colorblindness is another manifestation of contemporary racism (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Haney-Lopez 2014). This project is primarily focused on who identifies as white and what the political implications of this identity are, but these results suggest that there is much to be learned about racial conflict by examining the individuals at the low end of the identity scale as well. It seems that a significant proportion of them have adopted a particular racial ideology that may also inform political attitudes.

Finally, the results presented here hint at the possibility that there are subsets of both high and low identifiers, and examining specific heterogeneity among these groups is an important undertaking for future research. For example, individuals at the low end of the scale might be comprised of both racial liberals and racial conservatives. At the high-end of the scale, mixed in with the whites who are comfortable with their group’s

privileged status, may be individuals who deny this privilege and worry about discrimination. Thus, future work should consider more carefully distinguishing between different types of high and low white identifiers.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results in this chapter provide more insight with respect content of white identity. As expected, as a dominant group identity, white identity is significantly associated with national identity. But this relationship is with respect to a particular kind of national identity—an exclusionary one that envisions Americans primarily as white, English-speaking Christians.

White identity is also associated with attitudes that previous work suggests should be found primarily among racial and ethnic minorities. In particular, high white identifiers report greater perceptions of zero-sum competition over political and economic resources, and they possess a greater sense of racial alienation than do low identifiers. Furthermore, the social and political conditions, which likely lead to the increased salience of white identity, boosted racial consciousness among whites. These results are in keeping with the claim that white identity is in part a product of threats to whites' status. When whites feel like their group is threatened, they react much in the same way that members of threatened racial and ethnic minority groups do. Future work needs to explore the consequences of these attitudes, especially the extent to which group consciousness predicts political participation and behavior.

In his examination of the determinants of white racial identity, Croll (2008) argues that high identifiers possess both “progressive” and “defensive” racial characteristics. He suggests that more progressive identifiers see white identity as part of



their struggle against racism and they adopt more tolerant and racially liberal attitudes. Defensive identifiers, on the other hand, are more racially conservative and are potentially most concerned about their own group. Perhaps the results here are picking up on this duality. In particular, white identity is associated with a stronger sense of linked fate, even though education is significantly related to both these attitudes, but in opposite directions. Furthermore, linked fate has been associated with racially liberal policy positions, whereas white identity seems either unrelated or to have the opposite effect with respect to many of these attitudes.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Power of White Identity

On April 9, 1924, Senator Ellison DuRant “Cotton Ed” Smith (D-South Carolina) stood before members of the U.S. Congress and ardently argued in favor of what would become the Immigration Act of 1924. The law, which was an effort to further restrict immigration to the U.S. from Southern and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and India, largely solidified American immigration policy until the 1950s (Zolberg 2008). In its defense, DuRant proclaimed that it was time for America to “shut the door” to any further influx of foreigners, and for the nation to instead focus on increasing its population of “pure, unadulterated American” citizenry (“Speech by Ellison DuRant Smith” 1924). DuRant’s speech made clear the significance of race in defining such citizenship:

Thank God we have in America perhaps the largest percentage of any country in the world of the pure, unadulterated Anglo-Saxon stock; certainly the greatest of any nation in the Nordic breed. It is for the preservation of that splendid stock that has characterized us that I would make this not an asylum for the oppressed of all countries, but a country to assimilate and perfect that splendid type of manhood that has made America the foremost Nation in her progress and in her power.

The legislation was passed into law with strong support; only six senators dissented. The majority’s view reflected the broader national discourse on citizenship and national identity of the time—a conversation that largely centered on the belief that

Anglo-Saxon heritage should be the prevailing criteria for entry into the U.S. and whiteness the defining characteristic of American identity (Jacobson 1999).<sup>53</sup>

Explicit discussion of whiteness, immigration, and citizenship, like the debate surrounding the Immigration Act of 1924, is not a relic of a distant era in which racial prejudice was more widely accepted, nor is similar language in the contemporary period relegated to marginalized political extremists. Such debates, it seems, have been rehashed in the political arena each time the U.S. has experienced mass immigration, and the period following large-scale immigration from Latin American in the 1980s and 1990s is no exception. Political scientist Samuel Huntington (2004), for example, warned that the influx of Latinos to the U.S. presents “the single most immediate and most serious challenge to America’s traditional identity” (p.2). He made clear the exact nature of this identity when he asked, “[w]ill the U.S. remain a country with a single national language and a core Anglo-Protestant culture” (p. 2)?

A number of other scholars and political pundits, including Victor Davis Hanson (2003), Francis Fukuyama (1993), Peter Brimelow (1996), and Patrick Buchanan (2011) have joined Huntington in lamenting what they argue are the dangers of multiculturalism, the rise of group identity politics, and the failure of new immigrant groups to assimilate to the dominant American culture.<sup>54</sup> They contend that bilingualism, the election of non-white politicians, population displacement, and even challenges to “racial purity” are all threats to white Americans posed by “the browning of America.”

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<sup>53</sup> The link between race and naturalization was not newly introduced in 1924. In fact, the import of race in defining immigration policy appeared much earlier in American history: The U.S. Naturalization Law of March 26, 1790 limited naturalization to immigrants who were “free white persons” (Daniels 2002).

<sup>54</sup> To be clear, concern expressed by these individuals regarding identity politics is not with respect to white identity politics, but instead to the increased salience of group identities among racial and ethnic minorities.

These arguments clearly demonstrate the extent to which whiteness has and continues to dominate notions of American national identity, as well as the degree to which immigration is seen as threatening such dominance. Consistent with the Dominant Group Identity Theory laid out in Chapter 1, several scholars, including Huntington, have predicted a backlash among white Americans in response to Latino immigration. Huntington claims that initiatives against illegal immigrants, affirmative action, and bilingual education are just a few examples of whites' negative responses. He also foreshadows what he sees as inevitable collective action on the part of whites: "If blacks and Hispanics organize and lobby for special privileges, why not whites? If the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Council of La Raza are legitimate organizations, why not a national organization promoting white interests" (Huntington 2004b, p. 3)? Similarly, Swain argues that a rise in white nationalism and white racial consciousness is a clear symptom of whites' concern over Latino immigration. She proposes that such a reaction is "the next logical stage for identity politics in America" (Swain 2002, p.423).

In many ways, compared to other potential threats, immigration to the U.S. is exceptional in the degree to which it challenges whites' dominant status. For one, large influxes of foreigners with unfamiliar cultures and language may in fact pose a realistic threat to the nation's status quo. But immigration is also a unique threat specifically because race has been so significantly implicated in citizenship policies over the course of the nation's history. Efforts to accommodate immigrants who are not part of the country's Anglo-centric culture may be viewed as directly threatening white Americans' cultural hegemony. Indeed, Higham (1955) describes how in the past, nativistic responses

among white Americans toward European immigrants were more likely when immigrants threatened the order and dominance of Anglo-Saxon Americans.

Furthermore, whiteness has been so central to American citizenship that previous immigrant groups, especially those from Southern and Eastern Europe, deliberately came to identify as “white” in order to distance themselves from Chinese immigrants and African Americans (Saxton 1975). And the notion that immigrants have adopted a white identity in order to gain political and social acceptance in America has been broadly documented by historians (Brodkin 1998; Ignatiev 1996; King 2002; Roediger 2006). While today’s Latino immigrants may eventually follow the path laid out by 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century European immigrants, eventually becoming subsumed under a white identity, this transformation has not yet occurred.<sup>55</sup> Thus, in the contemporary period, immigration is likely viewed by many whites as a threat to their group’s dominant status.

In Chapter 1, I argued that threats to dominant status make racial identity salient and subsequently forge or strengthen the relationship between this identification and political policies or attitudes aimed at eliminating the threat. Accordingly, when immigration in the U.S. grows over time, we would expect the relationship between white racial identity and immigration opinions increase in strength. In particular, white identity should be increasingly associated with opposition to immigration to the U.S. To be clear, this expectation does not suppose that most Americans are explicitly aware of the specific change in the percentage of immigrants entering the country in a given year.<sup>56</sup> Instead,

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<sup>55</sup> A number of scholars have suggested that Hispanics will eventually be viewed as white (e.g., Sears and Savalei 2006; Warren and Twine 1997).

<sup>56</sup> As previous work has demonstrated, most Americans are not widely knowledgeable about specific politically relevant facts, and so it would be unreasonable to assume that information about changes in immigration levels was widely known by the American population (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996).

immigration becomes a salient topic through the growing elite discourse that accompanies these trends. In other work, my co-authors and I find that news coverage of immigration increases in response to growing levels of immigration, and that media attention to Latino immigration in particular parallels actual rates of immigration from Latin America (Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013).

In this chapter, I examine directly whether white identity is indeed significantly related to changes in immigration, including whether there is any evidence that increasing levels of immigration have boosted the impact of white identity on a host of political preferences over time. This chapter also considers the specific domains in which white identity is influential. White identity should not, for instance, be a predictor of all race-related evaluations; rather, it should most powerfully predict policies and preferences that most clearly benefit or challenge whites' dominant status.

## White Identity and Immigration

In order to determine whether changes in immigration levels have in fact moderated the impact of whites' racial ingroup identification on political preferences, I turn first to the American National Election Studies (ANES) time series data. For the majority of ANES studies, respondents have been asked to rate a variety of groups, including whites, on a scale from zero, indicating negative or cold feelings, to one hundred, which indicates positive or warm feelings. While the feeling thermometer falls short of measuring ingroup identity explicitly, it does capture a sense of ingroup favoritism.

Beginning in 1992, the ANES asked survey respondents to indicate whether they think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the U.S. to live should be increased, decreased, or left the same.<sup>57</sup> Using this item as a dependent variable to determine whether white identity – measured with the feeling thermometer – is related to attitudes toward immigration levels, I construct an ordinary least squares model with a specification informed by a number of studies on whites' immigration attitudes.<sup>58</sup> To date, most of this work contrasts the role of economic interests with outgroup attitudes in driving immigration opinion (Citrin, Green, and Muste 1997; Clark and Legge 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007). Thus, the model includes evaluations of personal and national financial circumstances and income. I also control for education, age, partisanship, and gender. Furthermore, in keeping with work showing that affect toward Hispanics is strongly related to immigration attitudes, I

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<sup>57</sup> Question wording for variables employed in the analyses presented in this paper are provided in Appendix A.

<sup>58</sup> An ordered logit estimation produces substantively identical results. OLS is employed here for ease of interpretation.

include in the model evaluations of Hispanics on the feeling thermometer (Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013).<sup>5960</sup>

Before viewing the results of the model, let us first consider trends in immigration levels over this same time period. As Figure 5.1 shows, the most recent and significant changes in immigration levels occurred in the mid to late 1990s, with levels of both legal and illegal immigration peaking between 1999 and 2000 (Passel and Suro 2005). Thus, we would expect that the greatest impact of white identity on immigration opinion should come slightly after the peak in immigration levels, when national attention to immigration was likely to be at its highest and when perceptions of threat were therefore likely to be most prevalent.

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<sup>59</sup> This model also includes controls for attitudes toward blacks and Asians for the purpose of comparison, as well as political party identification, political ideology, respondents' age, education level, income, and gender. All variables in the model are coded to range from zero to one.

<sup>60</sup> These results are robust to controlling for another measure of outgroup animus – racial resentment. However, because racial resentment is designed to measure attitudes toward blacks specifically, and immigration is primarily associated with immigration, it is not especially appropriate to include resentment in a model of immigration opinion.



**Figure 5.1 Levels of Immigration to the U.S.**



Annual Immigration to the U.S. based on Census 2000, ACS and CPS Data: 1991 – 2004 (Passel and Suro 2005)

The results of the immigration opinion model over time, presented in Table 5.1, reveal that, with one exception, the white feeling thermometer is indeed a significant predictor of immigration opinion such that respondents who rate whites more support a decrease in the number of immigrants.<sup>61</sup> In fact, the effect of ingroup identity is frequently larger than that of the Hispanic feeling thermometer and more often significant, suggesting that ingroup concerns are more central to immigration opinion than are negative outgroup attitudes. Furthermore, over time, the magnitude of the coefficient on the white feeling thermometer item has generally increased. As predicted, there is a notable increase in the size of the coefficient in 2000, corresponding to the end of a large peak in immigration.

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<sup>61</sup> Results for the full model are available in Appendix D.

**Table 5.1 The Relationship between White Identity and Support for Increasing Levels of Immigration to the U.S.**

	1992	1994	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
White feeling thermometer	-0.240*** (0.054)	-0.080 (0.056)	-0.172** (0.075)	-0.436*** (0.112)	-0.375*** (0.084)	-0.567*** (0.078)	-0.342*** (0.083)
Hispanic feeling thermometer	0.142** (0.070)	0.175*** (0.062)	0.213** (0.096)	0.090 (0.134)	0.106 (0.103)	0.233** (0.097)	0.192* (0.102)
Constant	0.037 (0.059)	-0.040 (0.071)	0.106 (0.084)	0.184 (0.128)	0.143 (0.099)	0.174* (0.101)	0.394*** (0.102)
Observations	1126	944	829	342	521	745	554
R-squared	0.109	0.083	0.061	0.206	0.160	0.201	0.185

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.

Model also includes the black feeling thermometer, Asian feeling thermometer, positive national and personal economic evaluations, education, age, income, party identification, ideology, and gender.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File. Analysis in 2000 used on the face-to-face respondents.

Furthermore, the largest observed effect of identity on immigration attitudes occurs in 2008, coinciding with arguably another threat to whites' dominant status: the election of President Barack Obama—an important potential threat, which I will focus on in more detail later. While it is not possible with this particular analysis to determine whether Obama's election was the impetus for the spike in the impact of white racial identity on immigration preferences, the results are provocative.

If over time, the threat of immigration has solidified the link between ingroup identity and immigration opinion, then we should expect that identity strongly and consistently predicts a wide range of immigration attitudes and policy preferences in the present day. Specifically, higher levels of white identity should be significantly associated with more restrictive positions on immigration, like support for decreasing levels of immigration, efforts to tighten border security, and negative attitudes toward immigrants generally. To test this proposition, I focus next on estimating the present-day

impact of white identity on a number of different immigration attitudes across three independent public opinion surveys.

The 2010 KN study, the 2012 ANES, and the 2013 SSI survey all included a host of questions about immigration attitudes and policies.<sup>62</sup> They also have the virtue of including the preferred measure of white identity—the racial importance item. Across each of the surveys, I examine the relationship between white identity and a host of immigration opinions. First, for the sake of robustness, I again examine responses to the immigration-levels item employed in the overtime analysis. Similar results in the KN and SSI surveys confirm that the relationship borne out in the ANES is not unique to that survey, and suggest that the SSI data do in fact perform similarly to nationally representative samples. Each survey asked respondents the extent to which they think immigration to the U.S. should be increased, decreased, or left the same. The KN study also asked respondents to indicate how important this issue was to them personally on a five-point scale ranging from “not at all important” to “extremely important.”

In addition to asking respondents their preferences regarding the level of immigration to the U.S., the surveys asked two other questions about individuals’ preferred policy response to immigration. In both the KN and SSI studies, respondents were asked whether federal spending on tightening border security should be increased, decreased, or kept the same. The 2012 ANES also included an item intended to gauge support for state laws that require police to check the immigration status of suspected immigrants. Furthermore, respondents were asked their beliefs about the effects of immigration. All three studies asked whether respondents believe immigrants will take

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<sup>62</sup> The sampling frames and distribution of white identity for each of these surveys is described in detail in Chapter 2.

jobs away from American citizens, and both the KN and SSI studies inquired about the effect of immigration on American culture. KN respondents were also asked the extent to which they agree that immigrants make America more open to new ideas and cultures, while the SSI survey included an item about the likelihood that immigrants will change American traditions. Finally, the ANES had respondents indicate how they feel toward immigrants themselves; the survey included a feeling thermometer measure for illegal immigrants.

To determine whether white racial identity is significantly related to whites' orientation toward a range of immigration-related policies and attitudes, I employ a model whose specification is similar to that of the overtime immigration analyses described above.<sup>63</sup> Table 5.2 presents the results of an ordinary least squares regression model estimating the impact of white identity on immigration-related policies and attitudes among non-Hispanic whites within each of the three datasets. Each column presents the estimated effect of white identity.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> In both SSI and KN, the model includes evaluations of personal and national financial circumstances, evaluations of Hispanics on the feeling thermometer, party identification, political ideology, support for limited government, age, education level, income, and gender. The specification of the model employing the KN data is nearly the same, except that measures of limited government and national economic evaluations were not available. Across each dataset, all variables are recoded to range from zero to one.

<sup>64</sup> Tables presenting the results of the entire models are available in Appendix D.

**Table 5.2. White Identity and Attitudes toward Immigration**

Dependent variable	Coefficient associated with white identity		
	KN	ANES	SSI
Decrease number of immigrants	0.147*** (0.050)	0.120*** (0.038)	0.153** (0.060)
Importance of immigration level issue	0.152*** (0.039)		
Decrease federal spending on tightening border security	0.107*** (0.029)		0.178*** (0.048)
Immigrants make America more open to new ideas & culture (strongly disagree)	0.192*** (0.036)		
Immigrants change American culture and values (extremely likely)			0.284*** (0.073)
Immigrants take jobs away from American citizens (strongly agree)	0.255*** (0.041)	0.093*** (0.045)	0.353*** (0.071)
Support law checking immigration status		0.071 (0.052)	
Illegal immigrant feeling thermometer		-0.033 (0.032)	
Concern about changing ethnic makeup of U.S.	0.340*** (0.051)		0.422*** (0.068)

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. KN & ANES data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. All models include controls for the Hispanic feeling thermometer, age, education, party identification, ideology, gender, income, and, positive personal economic outlook. SSI and ANES also both control for positive national economic outlook and limited government. The SSI and KN models include dummy variables to control for the effects of experimental conditions. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

For most of the immigration-related dependent variables, white identity is significantly related to more restrictive immigration policies and more negative attitudes toward immigrants above and beyond personal or sociotropic economic concerns, political orientations, and outgroup attitudes. What is more, these results are robust across multiple surveys. Whites who report that their racial identity is important to them favor reducing the level of immigrants in the U.S., and the results from the KN data reveal that they are also more apt to indicate that this issue is extremely important to them. High

white identifiers also favor increasing federal spending on tightening border security, and do not endorse the notion that immigrants make America open to new cultures and ideas. They do believe that immigrants change American culture and values, and while these two sentiments might seem at odds with one another, it is likely because making America open to new ideas is framed as a benefit of immigration, which white identifiers reject. White individuals whose racial identity is important to them also believe it is likely that immigrants take jobs away from people in the U.S., support police checks on the immigration status of suspected undocumented immigrants, and more negatively evaluate illegal immigrants on the feeling thermometer.<sup>65</sup> Finally, high white identifiers are also significantly more worried about ethnic change in the U.S. than other whites, even after controlling for other predispositions, outgroup attitudes, and demographic characteristics. In short and as expected, possessing a strong racial group identity is significantly and consistently associated with opposition to immigration among whites.

Not only do these results demonstrate that white racial identity is broadly linked to immigration attitudes, but they also reveal some important trends. First, just as was generally the case with the overtime analysis gauging attitudes toward levels of immigration, the measure of ingroup identity is more substantively influential—and at times more significant—than attitudes toward outgroups (Hispanics, in this case). It is also worth noting that across immigration items, the coefficient on white identity is smallest in the models predicting attitudes toward immigrants themselves. These results lend support to the notion that a desire to protect the ingroup, rather than dislike for the

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<sup>65</sup> These latter two results are not statistically significant, although the relationships are in the expected direction.

outgroup, primarily drives immigration opinion.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, the coefficients on identity tend to be largest for items that tap beliefs about the *effects* of immigration, suggesting that identity is especially linked to perceptions of threat posed by immigration, and is not just another measure of outgroup animus.

## White Identity and the 2012 Election

As the demographic composition of the country has changed due to immigration, the aging of the population, and differential birth rates across racial and ethnic groups, the country has witnessed some important racial milestones. In 2012, America's first African American president was reelected with 93% of the black vote and 71% of the Hispanic vote, but only 39% of the white vote. Other presidential candidates (although none who were victorious) have received lower levels of support from the white electorate, but the fact that Obama fared so poorly drew significant attention to the racial divisions that characterized the election. Empirical evidence from survey analysis conducted around the 2008 election makes it clear that white racial animus plays an important role in the lack of support for Obama (Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Tesler and Sears 2010). Yet Obama's election is also especially symbolic of shifts in the racial hierarchy in which white Americans no longer maintain a monopoly at the highest levels of political office.

During the 2008 and 2012 campaigns, a number of conservative political pundits did not shy away from blatantly claiming Obama's election posed a threat to white Americans. Several, like Rush Limbaugh, capitalized on the idea that whites were now an oppressed group:

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<sup>66</sup> There may be some question that it is ingroup favoritism coupled with outgroup animus, or ethnocentrism, that is driving these results. Valentino, Brader, and Jardina (2013) demonstrate that ethnocentrism no longer primarily explains immigration opinion among U.S. whites.

How do you get promoted in a Barack Obama administration, by hating white people, or even saying you do, or that they're not good, or whatever. Make white people the new oppressed minority and they are going along with it, because their shutting up. They're removing to the back of the bus. They're saying I can't use that drinking fountain, ok. I can't use that restroom, ok. That's the modern day Republican Party, the equivalent of the Old South, the new oppressed minority (Limbaugh 2009).

On the evening of the 2012 election, as the vote counts rolling in signaled an Obama victory, Fox News host Bill O'Reilly offered an explanation for the outcome: "It's not traditional America anymore... The white establishment is now the minority" (LoGiurato 2012).

If white Americans do indeed perceive Obama's election as threatening to their group's relative status, then white identity should be implicated in electoral support for Barack Obama. That is, higher levels of white identity should be associated with less support for Obama and more support for Mitt Romney. Thus, I test whether whites bring their racial identity to bear on their attitudes toward Obama in the 2012 election using the 2012 ANES.

I turn first to determining whether white identity played a significant role in vote choice. I estimate voting for Obama (coded as zero if the respondent reported voting for Mitt Romney and one for Obama), as a function of white identity, racial resentment, demographic characteristics, and other potentially related predispositions.<sup>67</sup> Results of the logit estimation indicate that white identity was in fact significantly associated with not voting for Obama in 2012, even after controlling for racial resentment, partisanship, political ideology, and other relevant factors.<sup>68</sup> For ease of interpreting the results of the

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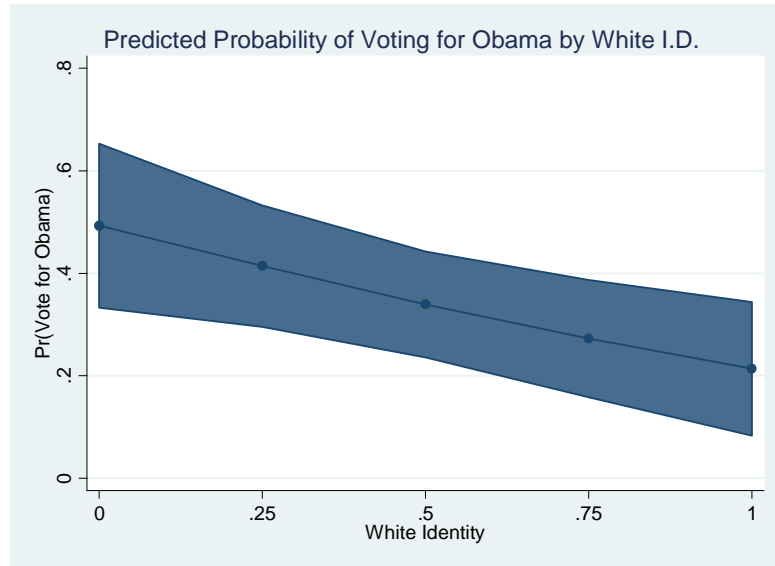
<sup>67</sup> The model also includes controls for age, education, party identification, political ideology, egalitarianism, gender, income, support for limited government, personal and national economic evaluations, South (lives in one of eleven former Confederate states), household union membership, and marital status.

<sup>68</sup> Full results of the logit estimation are available in Appendix D.



logit model, Figure 5.2 plots the predicted probability of voting for Obama at each level of white identity while holding all other variables in the model at their mean values. Movement from the lowest value to the highest value of white identity results in a 27 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of voting for Barack Obama.

**Figure 5.2 Predicted Probability of Voting for Obama**

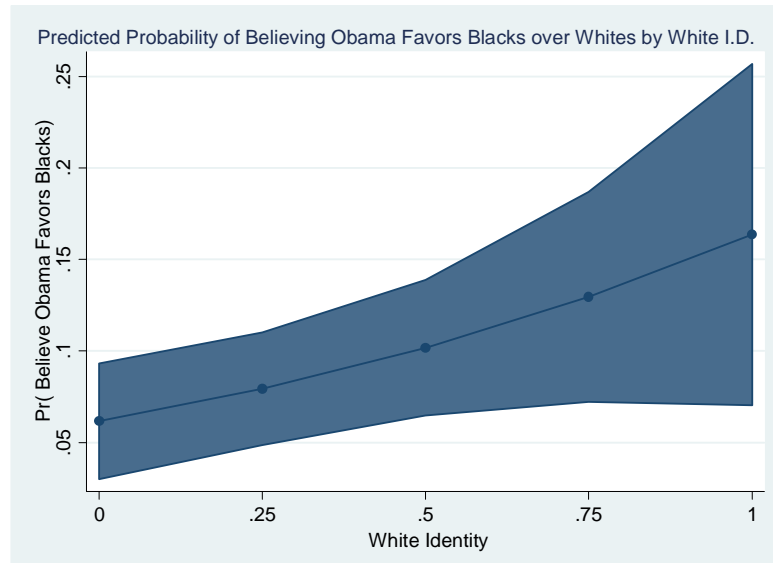


Source: 2012 ANES. N=451. Shaded area represents 95% confidence interval. Vote choice is coded 1 if respondent reported voting for Obama and 0 for Romney. All variables coded from zero to one. See Table A2 for full presentation of logit estimation and list of controls.

One facet of the threat Obama embodies may be the belief that he disproportionately favors outgroup members over whites. The 2012 ANES also includes a measure making it possible to capture whites' belief that Obama does not represent all racial groups equally. Respondents were asked to indicate whether Obama favors blacks over whites or whites over blacks. To determine whether white identity is indeed associated with the belief that Obama favors his own ingroup members, I estimate the same logit model as specified above for vote choice, but this time the dependent variable is coded at zero if respondents indicated that Obama favors whites over blacks and one for the belief that he favors blacks over whites. In this case, white identity is positively

associated with the belief that Obama favors blacks.<sup>69</sup> Figure 5.3 plots the predicted probability of believing that Obama favors blacks over whites at each level of white identity. Moving from the lowest to the highest level of racial identity results in a nine percentage point increase in the belief that Obama favors blacks over whites.

**Figure 5.3 Predicted Probability of Believing that Obama Favors Blacks Over Whites**



Source: 2012 ANES. N=574. Shaded area represents 95% confidence interval. Values of the dependent variable are coded such that 1 indicates the belief that Obama favors blacks over whites and zero for whites over blacks. All variables coded from zero to one. See Table A2 for full presentation of logit estimation and list of controls.

Taken together, these results suggest that white identity is in fact powerfully related to attitudes toward Obama. The effect with respect to vote choice is particularly noteworthy, especially in light of the substantial evidence that racial outgroup animus so strongly influenced opposition to Obama in 2008 (Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Piston 2010; Tesler and Sears 2010). It is worth noting that the results of the vote choice model described above indicate that when white identity is accounted for in a model that predicts voting for Obama over Romney, racial resentment is not statistically

<sup>69</sup> Results are marginally significant at  $p=.069$ .

significant.<sup>70</sup> These results strongly imply that ingroup attitudes—at least in the present—indeed play a significant role in electoral politics. And not only do these attitudes play a role above and beyond racial animus, but they are a crucial predictor of one of the disciplines’ most important outcomes: presidential vote choice.

## White Identity and Social Welfare Policy

Thus far, I have described how white identity is strongly related to two perceived threats’ to whites’ dominant status: immigration and the election of Barack Obama. I also argued in Chapter 1, however, that white identity ought to be related to support for policies and programs perceived as protecting or disproportionately benefitting whites as a group. Conversely, white identity should be either unrelated or negatively associated with policies thought to benefit outgroup members.

Several scholars, including Winter (2006, 2008), argue that Social Security is especially perceived as benefitting whites as a result of the way in which it has largely been framed in political discourse over the past fifty years. The policy, he explains, has been consistently and deliberately linked by political elites with values generally associated with whiteness, like hard work and legitimately earned rewards. Kinder and Kam (2010) argue that Medicare has been similarly framed, and that like Social Security, support for these social insurance programs is in part a manifestation of ingroup favoritism.<sup>71</sup> Both show that whites’ ingroup attitudes consistently and strongly predict support for these social welfare programs. Winter (2008) and others, like Gilens (1999),

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<sup>70</sup> Multicollinearity is likely not a problem here. The correlation between white identity and racial resentment is not especially strong (.13).

<sup>71</sup> Kinder and Kam’s goal is to demonstrate the role of ethnocentrism, which embodies *both* ingroup favoritism and outgroup animosity, but they suggest that for some policies, ingroup attitudes are more central.

posit that other government social spending programs, like welfare, have been also been racialized, except these programs have been symbolically associated with benefitting racial and ethnic minorities. They have shown that among whites, outgroup attitudes are strongly related to opposition to these types of policies (Gilens 1999; Kinder and Sanders 1996; N. J. G. Winter 2008). Winter finds that ingroup attitudes are only occasionally associated with such policies.

If the political impact of white identity has increased over time, then we might expect to see this relationship appear with respect to attitudes toward Social Security when white identity is measured using the white feeling thermometer. But we should also expect to see that in the present day, white identity—measured with the importance item—predicts positive attitudes toward both Social Security and Medicare. I turn first to exploring the relationship between ingroup attitudes, measured with the feeling thermometer, and support for Social Security using ANES time series data from 1984 (when attitudes toward Social Security were first measured) to 2012. The models, run separately for each year, control for attitudes toward blacks, Hispanics, and Asians (also measured with the feeling thermometers), personal and sociotropic financial evaluations, demographic characteristics, party identification, political ideology, and support for limited government. The results, presented in Table 5.3, first make clear that ingroup favoritism among whites has significantly and fairly consistently predicted support for Social Security. Furthermore, while trends in the magnitude of the coefficient on the white feeling thermometer show some idiosyncrasies, generally, the relationship has grown stronger over time.<sup>72</sup> In the 1980s, the coefficient was .074, but by 2012, it had

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<sup>72</sup> It is not surprising that the results from 2004 are especially unusual. Public opinion was still very much affected by the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, and other work has found that in 2004, attitudes toward

increased to .271. Unfortunately, public opinion data with all necessary measures is not available prior to what Winter (2006) describes as the racialization of Social Security in the 1970s. If we were able to measure attitudes toward Social Security in earlier years, we would expect that whites' ingroup attitudes played even less of a role in support for this program.

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Muslims were most salient in predicting a range of political preferences (Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013).

**Table 5.3 Support for Social Security**

	<b>1984</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>
White	0.074**	0.068**	0.071**	0.124***	0.160***	0.152***	0.196***	0.064	0.088*	0.271***
Feeling Thermometer	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.037)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.038)	(0.060)	(0.048)	(0.091)
Constant	0.925***	0.839***	0.893***	0.889***	0.845***	0.885***	0.931***	1.041***	0.931***	0.814***
	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.036)	(0.045)	(0.069)	(0.067)	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.089)
Observations	958	841	1159	945	835	346	787	520	742	558
R-squared	0.124	0.087	0.116	0.135	0.116	0.188	0.074	0.180	0.101	0.135

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted.

All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ , two tailed.

All models include controls for age, education, party identification, ideology, gender, income, and, positive personal economic outlook. SSI and ANES also both control for positive national economic outlook and limited government.

Next, I turn to examining the relationship between both Social Security and Medicare and ingroup identity. Here, I employ the preferred measure of white identity, the racial importance item. Using multiple datasets when all appropriate variables are available, I regressed attitudes toward these “white” social spending policies on white identity, racial resentment, national and personal economic attitudes, education, age, income, party identification, political ideology, gender, and support for limited government.<sup>73</sup> The results in Table 5.4 confirm that whites who identify with their racial group are in fact more supportive of Social Security and Medicare, even after controlling for these other factors—a finding that is both consistent with the previous work done by Winter and others, but one that also confirms the import of white identity with respect to particular political preferences.

**Table 5.4 Attitudes toward “White” Social Welfare Policy**

	Increase Social Security spending		Support for Medicare
	SSI	ANES Face-to-Face	SSI
White identity	0.098* (0.054)	0.094** (0.039)	0.152*** (0.053)
Racial resentment	-0.056 (0.069)	0.141** (0.068)	-0.098 (0.067)
Constant	0.796*** (0.117)	0.822*** (0.101)	0.968*** (0.113)
Observations	299	572	300
R-squared	0.175	0.140	0.146

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. KN & ANES data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. All models include controls for age, education, party identification, ideology, gender, income, and, positive personal economic outlook. SSI and ANES also both control for positive national economic outlook and limited government. The SSI models include dummy variables to control for the effects of experimental conditions. Source: 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study

<sup>73</sup> A question assessing support for Medicare was available only in SSI.

What about attitudes toward programs that have been traditionally associated as benefitting racial and ethnic minorities? Does white identity predict opposition to these programs? To find out, I regressed attitudes toward welfare spending and support for federal spending on aid to blacks on the same public opinion model employed to estimate attitudes toward Social Security and Medicare, again employing multiple datasets. The results, presented in Table 5.5, reveal that white identity is not significantly related to these attitudes. Across all three surveys, the coefficient on white identity is statistically insignificant and close to zero. Instead, and as previous work has consistently demonstrated, racial resentment is the driving force behind opposition to these programs, which elites have generally associated with blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities (Gilens 1999).

**Table 5.5 Attitudes toward “Non-White” Social Welfare Policy**

	Increase welfare spending			Aid to blacks
	KN	SSI	ANES Face-to-Face	SSI
White identity	0.008 (0.041)	0.049 (0.065)	-0.027 (0.041)	-0.023 (0.030)
Racial resentment	-0.365*** (0.066)	-0.363*** (0.083)	-0.229*** (0.067)	-0.493*** (0.044)
Constant	0.025 (0.083)	1.182*** (0.139)	0.717*** (0.095)	0.654*** (0.075)
Observations	736	298	585	522
R-squared	0.255	0.321	0.287	0.438

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. KN & ANES data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. All models include controls for age, education, party identification, ideology, gender, income, and positive personal economic outlook. SSI and ANES also both control for positive national economic outlook and limited government. The SSI and KN models include dummy variables to control for the effects of experimental conditions. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.



It is interesting to note that, at least with respect to the particular social insurance programs examined here, that there is no persistent overlap in terms of the predictive power of ingroup and outgroup attitudes. When it comes to support for Medicare, racial resentment is wholly unrelated, and while it does predict support for Social Security in the ANES dataset, it does not in data from SSI. Furthermore, there is no indication that ingroup attitudes predict preferences for welfare or federal spending on aid to blacks. In fact, examining the relationship between white identity and other racialized policies normally associated with racial and ethnic minorities yields similar results. Table 5.6 presents estimates of the effect of white identity on affirmative action at universities and in the work place, government efforts to ensure fair treatment for blacks in the work place, and support for neighborhood segregation.

**Table 5.6 Support for Race Policies**

	Affirmative action – universities			Affirmative action - work place		Fair treatment in jobs	Support for neighborhood segregation
	KN	ANES Face-to-Face	SSI	ANES Face-to-Face	KN	ANES Face-to-Face	SSI
White identity	-0.022 (0.037)	-0.008 (0.034)	-0.103 (0.096)	0.046 (0.033)	-0.003 (0.038)	0.064 (0.057)	0.263*** (0.063)
Racial resentment	0.491*** (0.060)	0.406*** (0.058)	0.601*** (0.121)	0.342*** (0.060)	0.467*** (0.057)	-0.891*** (0.079)	0.064 (0.080)
Constant	-0.034 (0.071)	0.389*** (0.085)	0.043 (0.207)	0.553*** (0.087)	-0.044 (0.065)	1.181*** (0.147)	0.037 (0.136)
Observations	722	577	301	581	724	571	301
R-squared	0.260	0.234	0.320	0.219	0.234	0.327	0.116

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. KN & ANES data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. All models include controls for age, education, party identification, ideology, gender, income, and, positive personal economic outlook. SSI and ANES also both control for positive national economic outlook and limited government. The SSI and KN models include dummy variables to control for the effects of experimental conditions. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.

For the most part, white identity is not significantly associated with these policies. Across all three data sets, high white identifiers are not more or less opposed to affirmative action at universities or in the workplace, nor are they more or less supportive of the government ensuring fair treatment in jobs for blacks. Attitudes toward these policies are overwhelmingly associated with racial outgroup sentiments with one exception: high white identifiers significantly favor neighborhood segregation. Even when controlling for racial resentment, white identity is strongly associated with the belief that whites have a right to keep blacks out of their communities (versus allowing blacks to live wherever they can afford).<sup>74</sup> This result is perhaps surprising, as we might expect the public's attention to residential segregation to have waned in the post-Civil Rights era. Yet these results suggest that a concern over the composition of one's neighborhood is in fact important to many white Americans. Perhaps, then, these results are not as unexpected as we might suggest at first blush; restricting who lives within one's immediate community arguably has as much to do with protecting one's ingroup as it does with dislike for an outgroup. Taken as a whole then, these results provide even more evidence that ingroup favoritism and outgroup animus are not regularly symbiotic; racial animus and racial favoritism are not simultaneously driving support for or opposition to these programs and policies.

## Discussion and Conclusion

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<sup>74</sup> The proportion of whites who endorse neighborhood segregation in this sample is relatively small, but not inconsequential (approximately 10 percent). But those who do endorse neighborhood segregation score quite high on white identity (mean=.79 on a zero to one scale).

The analyses presented in this chapter testify that the political impact of white identity has in fact grown over time, most clearly with respect to immigration attitudes, and that white identity today powerfully predicts a range of political preferences. Consistent with my expectation that identity is strongly associated with policies and attitudes that are directly related to threat, in the present day, identity is a driving force behind whites' opposition to immigration, which they perceive as changing American culture, and not for the better. Of equal importance, and consistent with theoretical expectations, the influence of white identity arises for issues and evaluations that implicate threats to white dominance and the preservation of white interests. In contrast, the impact of this identity disappears, for the most part, when whites evaluate policies linked to other groups; in those cases, outgroup attitudes, not white identity, shape preferences.

In 2012, identity was a strong and substantially important factor in white American's vote choice; high white identifiers were significantly less likely to vote for Barack Obama and much more likely to believe that Obama favors whites over blacks, two outcomes that lend support for the hypothesis that Obama's election was threatening to whites. Finally, identity predicted support for neighborhood segregation, a finding which suggests that high white identifiers are also supportive of protecting their physical space from perceived threats posed by non-whites. These results also show that white identity is not exclusively related to policies associated with threats to group status. It is also an important predictor of policies arguably framed as disproportionately benefitting whites and serving to maintain their dominant status, Social Security and Medicare. Furthermore, just as with immigration, as the status of whites has become more

precarious over time, so has the extent to which identity is brought to bear on attitudes, at least with respect to Social Security. In an effort to maintain their status, however, white identifiers are not necessarily interested in eliminating programs or policies that benefit racial and ethnic minorities, as white identity is not significantly associated with opposition to social welfare programs like welfare or with policies like Affirmative Action.

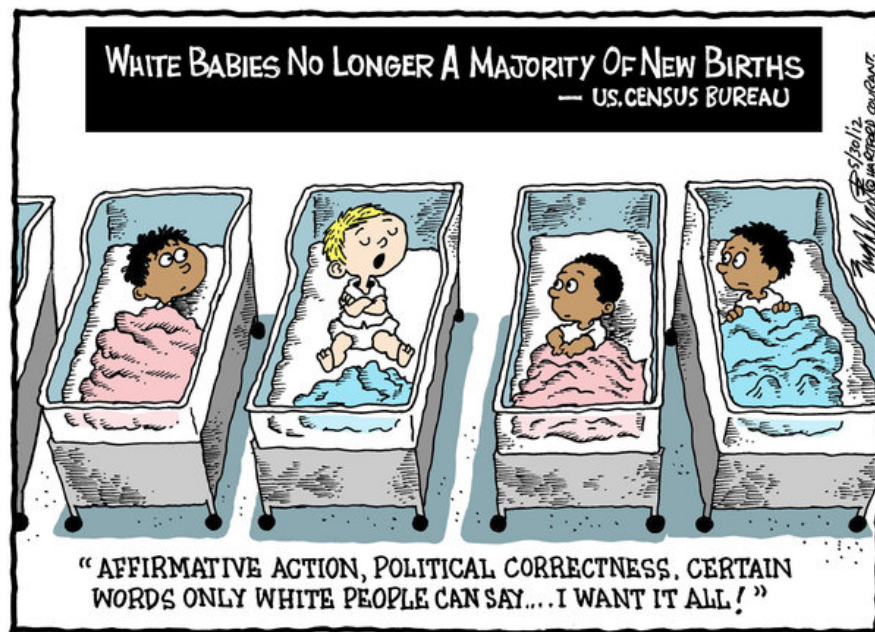
This analysis also helps to delineate the boundaries for where white identity matters and where it does not. Whites bring their racial identity to bear on political preferences clearly related to threats to their status, or to policies that help whites preserve their privileges. Furthermore, these results provide important evidence of discriminant validity: White identity is not simply a proxy for outgroup animus. When it comes to racialized policies that have been framed as benefitting racial and ethnic minorities, white identity is largely unrelated to attitudes. That is, high white identifiers are not significantly more opposed to such policies, and as previous work has routinely demonstrated, it is in fact racial resentment which best explains whites' attitudes in this domain. These results are consistent with work by Marilynn Brewer (1999), who argues that ingroup identification is independent of negative attitudes toward outgroups. White identification, it seems, is not another manifestation of racial prejudice.

## CHAPTER 6

### The Threat of Population Displacement

*Whether you describe it as the dawning of a post-racial age or just the end of white America, we're approaching a profound demographic tipping point. According to an August 2008 report by the U.S. Census Bureau, those groups currently categorized as racial minorities—blacks and Hispanics, East Asians and South Asians—will account for a majority of the U.S. population by the year 2042. Among Americans under the age of 18, this shift is projected to take place in 2023, which means that every child born in the U.S. from here on out will belong to the first post-white generations.*

Hua Hsu, *The End of White America?* (2009)



In the preceding chapter, I argue that threats to whites' dominant status are the driving force linking whites' racial identity to their political attitudes. Yet, it is difficult to determine causality from cross-sectional data. In other words, the changing coefficients on white identity over time and the relationship between white identity and political

preferences in the present day only hint at the possibility that perceptions of threat moderate the relationship between ingroup identity and attitudes or political preferences. One way to better understand whether individuals who identify with their fellow whites do indeed react to challenges to the status of their racial group is by exposing them to such a threat in an experimental design and then observing their response.

I suggested in Chapter 2 that there are several potential threats to whites' dominant status, but that the threat of population displacement is potentially one of the most tangible and formidable. According to demographers, whites will no longer comprise a majority of the U.S. population in the next few decades. These demographic shifts are in part due to higher birth rates among native racial and ethnic minorities, but they are also the result of widespread immigration to the U.S., which may leave many whites concerned about threats potentially posed by an influx of individuals with foreign cultures and traditions. It seems likely that many Americans are also aware of this information, as the news about impending population displacement has been widely publicized. Every major media outlet in the country has covered the Census projections describing these changes, featuring headlines like "Census: White majority in U.S. gone by 2043" (Kayne 2013) and "Census: Minority babies are now majority in U.S." (Morello 2012). Such articles have identified how waves of immigrants from Latin America, lower birth rates among whites, and the aging of the white American population have contributed to these demographic outcomes. Despite the widespread coverage of these projections, however, we know very little about how white Americans are responding to this news. Are whites reacting negatively to these population changes and

are their reactions influencing their political opinions? Are they responding, as some pundits have suggested, like an embattled minority group (Blake 2011)?

## White Anxiety

Some hints regarding whites' response to these demographic changes do come from cross-sectional data. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, white Americans are anxious about the growing multiculturalism of the U.S. As Table 6.1 shows, approximately 22 percent of white Americans reported feeling very worried about the changing ethnic makeup of the U.S., and an additional 42% are somewhat worried. Furthermore, the results from the regression analysis in the previous chapter demonstrate that even after controlling for a number of demographic and political variables, high white identifiers are more likely to express this concern than are those who score low on the white identity measure.

**Table 6.1 Whites Attitudes toward Changing Ethnic Makeup of U.S.**

Very worried	21.8%
Somewhat worried	42.1%
Not at all worried	36.1%
<hr/>	
N	120

Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks Study. Data are weighted.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, an Esquire-NBC News survey of registered voters in 2013 found that one third of the “American Center”—a category they define as consisting of four distinct subpopulations of Americans, most of whom are white (78 percent), but all of whom are ideological centrists—is worried about how “increasing diversity” will affect the country’s future. Moreover, 65 percent report that diversity does not leave them hopeful

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<sup>75</sup> Results are from respondents in the study’s control condition.

for the future (NBC News 2013). The results from this study are especially worth mentioning, as the survey was conducted by leading Republican and Democratic pollsters, one of whom described the results as nothing short of “a bible” when it comes to future successful political messages.<sup>76</sup> In other words, powerful political strategists and politicians are paying attention to this apparent growing anxiety among white Americans.

But what are the political implications of this anxiety? These limited survey questions do not provide tremendous insight regarding the extent to which perceptions of threat are connected to whites’ political attitudes. Furthermore, if whites do indeed feel threatened, it is important to consider *which* whites are responding to such threats. That is, does the threat of population displacement differentially affect low and high white identifiers?

One observable implication of experiencing threat to one’s group comes from Intergroup Emotions Theory, which argues that individuals will experience emotions on behalf of their collective group based on their appraisal of the group’s security (E. R. Smith, Seger, and Mackie 2007). Thus, events that are assessed as threatening to one’s ingroup should produce a negative emotional response. In particular, individuals should report feeling angry when they believe that their group is losing valuable resources or that their goals are being obstructed. They should feel fear when they perceive uncertainty about their group’s well-being (Cottrell and Neuberg 2005). Accordingly, the impending

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<sup>76</sup> The bipartisan study of 2,410 registered voters was conducted from August 5-11, 2013 by Benenson Strategy Group (the lead pollster for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012), and by Neil Newhouse of Public Opinion Strategies (the lead pollster for Mitt Romney in 2012). An interactive guide to the complete results and detailed descriptions of the subgroups that comprise the “American Center” is available at <http://www.nbenews.com/id/53277240#intro>.



relative loss of status due to demographic shifts should produce negative emotional reactions among white identifiers.<sup>77</sup>

A second outcome one might observe among white identifiers is that group threat serves as a prime, making particular ideas or identities—in this case white identity—cognitively accessible, and increasing the likelihood that such considerations are automatically employed in subsequent evaluations (Iyengar and Kinder 1987a; S. E. Taylor 1978). In other words, threat may establish or strengthen the relationship between identity and political attitudes. The optimal way to observe such an effect directly and empirically is by first measuring the predisposition purported to be primed (racial identity). Then several weeks later, subjects receive an experimental intervention, usually in the form of a political advertisement or news article, designed to prime the previously-measured predisposition. Upon exposing subjects to the treatment, the researcher subsequently measures whether an interactive effect is present between the previously measured predisposition and the treatment, such that individuals who received the intervention are more or less likely to bring that predisposition to bear on their political attitudes compared to individuals in the control condition (Iyengar and Kinder 1987b; Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2004). Thus, if threat primes identity, I should find that identity is significantly related to political preferences among whites who are exposed to threatening information about their group, compared to those whites who are not exposed to such a threat.

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<sup>77</sup> Outten et al. (2012) have demonstrated that when exposed to information about demographic changes, White Americans do report feeling more negative emotions. This work does not, however, consider differences in responses by levels of ingroup identity, nor does it explore the political implications of these effects. Furthermore, this work focuses on negative reactions to outgroups, rather than negative reactions more broadly.

## Experimental Design

Do high and low white identifiers experience different emotions in response to threatening information, and in particular, to the displacement of their group as the numerically dominant population in the U.S.? Furthermore, does this threat moderate the relationship between identity and political attitudes? To obtain some purchase on these questions, I turn to an experiment to test these relationships more systematically.

The most effective way to test whether the effect of threat does in fact motivate the relationship between white identity and political preferences is with an experimental design in which whites are exposed to information about population changes. The virtue of an experimental method is that it allows the researcher to manipulate the information frame subjects receive while holding all other aspects of a message constant across conditions. Coupled with random assignment, the experimental design allows us to determine that the exposure to a given treatment is the causal force affecting the relationship between particular variables (Kinder and Palfrey 1993).

The study presented here was conducted among a nationally diverse sample of 455 white adult U.S. citizens recruited by the survey firm Survey Sampling International (SSI) in June of 2013. Each subject completed a pre-test survey questionnaire designed to measure their levels of racial identification and other demographic characteristics. A week after completing the pre-test, subjects were re-invited to complete a post-test survey, which included an experimental manipulation. Each subject was randomly assigned to either the control condition or one of two treatment conditions.<sup>78</sup> Those in the

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<sup>78</sup> The study actually included three treatments groups, but given the aims of this chapter, I only focus on respondents in the first two treatments. The respondents in the third treatment viewed a version of the story which argued that while whites would lose their majority status, in the future many of today's racial and ethnic minority group members would be subsumed under a white identity, as happened with the Irish and

control condition read an article about trends in age with respect to cell-phone carrier subscriptions, and the article (like all the other articles in the experiment) was formatted to look as if it had appeared on the ABC News website. What is important about this control article is that it was wholly unrelated to race or to demographic changes.<sup>79</sup> The purpose of this article was simply to give individuals in the control condition the same experience of reading a news article as those in the treatment conditions.

In the first treatment condition, which I will refer to as the “population displacement condition,” subjects read a fabricated newspaper article claiming that by the end of the present decade, white Americans will no longer comprise a majority of the population. This article was modeled after several stories that actually appeared in sources like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. The headline of the article boldly stated, “Minority population in U.S. Overtakes Whites,” and an accompanying graph showed that the non-white population of the U.S. was projected to be much greater than that of the white population. The text of the article explained that Hispanics, blacks, and Asians will outnumber whites as a result of higher birthrates and increased immigration. The purpose of this treatment was to clearly and directly present subjects with the threat of population displacement.

In the second treatment condition, called the “population maintenance condition,” subjects were exposed to an article with information completely counter to what respondents in the first treatment read.<sup>80</sup> This article claimed that white Americans would

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Italians during the initial decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With this treatment, I hypothesized that racially prejudiced white identifiers would feel more threatened than would high white identifying racial liberals, but these predictions were not born out in the data.

<sup>79</sup> The full-text of the experimental treatments are provided in Appendix B

<sup>80</sup> It is important to note that while the nature of the message changes across treatments, a great deal of effort was put into trying to achieve parity in language and presentation across the two articles. In most

continue to comprise a majority of the U.S. population at the end of the current decade, and that they would maintain their majority status through at least midcentury. The headline of this article read “Minority Population in U.S. Shrinking Relative to Whites,” and subjects were told that these trends were the result of lower birthrates and declining levels of immigration. The purpose of this article was to reduce perceptions of threat and to suggest that whites should feel confident that their group will maintain its majority status.

### Results: Emotional Reactions

Are whites threatened by demographic change? Subjects’ reported emotional reactions to the stories they read may provide some evidence. Immediately after viewing the fabricated news stories, subjects were given a list of different emotions and were asked to indicate if the story made them experience any of these emotions. Consistent with other work on emotions (Banks and Valentino 2012; Valentino et al. 2008, 2011), I combined the available measures into three dimensions: fear (uneasy and afraid), anger (angry, disgusted), and enthusiasm (hopeful, proud, happy). All measures were rescaled to range from zero to one. Do high and low white identifiers respond differently to stories describing demographic changes? Differences in emotional responses by treatment and levels of identity—measured here with the identity item that combines the strength and importance questions—are presented in Table 6.2.

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cases, each sentence of the treatments is similar, except where the information presented needed to be reworded to express the opposite sentiment.

**Table 6.2 Emotional Response to Articles about Demographic Change**

	Anger	Fear	Enthusiasm
White identity	0.029 (0.072)	0.034 (0.106)	0.252** (0.115)
Treatment 1 (Displacement)	0.003 (0.064)	0.072 (0.094)	0.169 (0.103)
Treatment 2 (Maintenance)	-0.023 (0.066)	-0.055 (0.097)	-0.060 (0.105)
Treatment 1 x White identity	0.233** (0.102)	0.374** (0.150)	-0.362** (0.164)
Treatment 2 x White identity	0.094 (0.102)	0.216 (0.150)	0.278* (0.164)
Constant	0.012 (0.045)	0.032 (0.066)	0.031 (0.072)
Observations	340	340	340
R-squared	0.113	0.181	0.104

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data are weighted.

All variables are coded 0 to 1.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.

Source: 2013 Survey Sampling International study

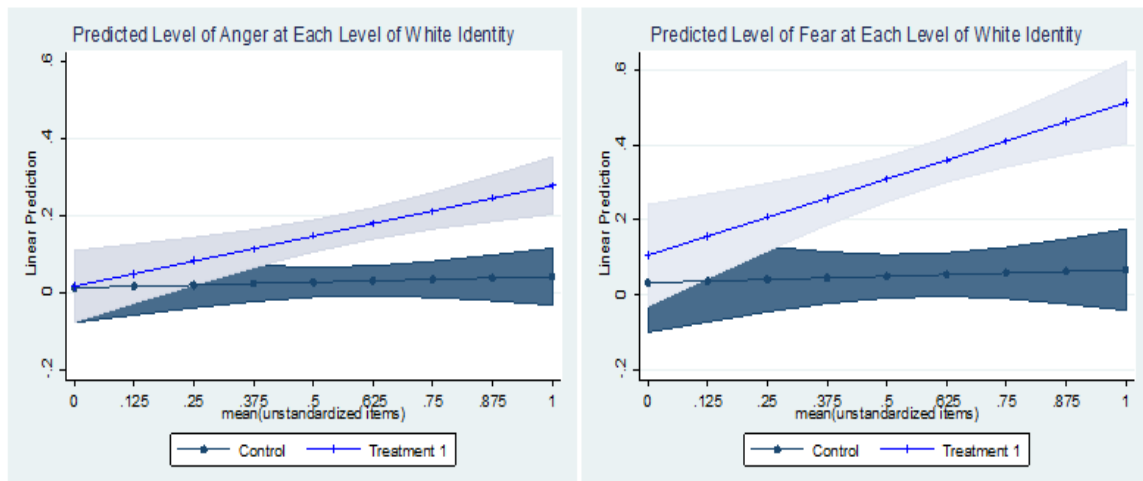
The results indicate that compared to the control condition, high white identifiers who read the story about white population displacement (Treatment 1 x White identity) reported significantly higher levels of both anger and fear. They were also significantly less enthusiastic. Conversely, high identifiers who read the story indicating that their group would not be displaced did not report feeling more angry or afraid. In fact, they were marginally more likely to feel some level of enthusiasm.

Figure 6.1 presents the predicted levels of anger and fear at each level of white identity in the control group and in the threatening displacement treatment.<sup>81</sup> In both the control and treatment groups, we can see that low identifiers do not report feeling angry.

<sup>81</sup> High identifiers are those respondents who received a score of one on the zero to one scale. Low identifiers are those individuals coded at zero on the scale.

They do report feeling marginally more fearful in the threatening condition. But the important differences to observe are with regards to the high identifiers. In the control conditions, there is no significant difference between the high and low identifiers with regards to their reported levels of anger or fear—the predicted effect is essentially zero. In the threatening displacement condition, however, high identifiers report significantly higher levels of anger than do low identifiers (an average level of .28 on the zero to one scale). It is fear, however, that appears to be the most salient emotional reaction among high identifiers exposed to the threatening demographic information. The predicted level of fear among high identifiers is .51 – just over halfway up the zero to one scale, and a much higher reported level compared to anger.

**Figure 6.1 Predicted Level of Emotional Response after Exposure to Population Displacement Treatment**



Source: 2013 SSI survey (N=334). Predicted values of OLS estimation. All variables coded from 0 to 1. Shaded regions represent 95% confidence intervals. X-axis values represent each level of white identity.

Appraisal theories of emotions offer further insight when it comes to interpreting these results (C. A. Smith and Ellsworth 1985). According to appraisal theory, the particular emotional reactions individuals experience in a given situation depend on how individuals interpret or assess threats or opportunities in their environment (Lazarus 1991a). Individuals respond to threats with fear when such threats are either difficult to control or it is unclear how to address them. They respond with anger when there is certainty about the source of a threat, when where blame should be directed is clear, and where control over the situation seems attainable (Huddy et al. 2005; Lazarus 1991b; C. A. Smith and Ellsworth 1985). With regards to racial attitudes, existing work suggests that anger is primarily linked to symbolic racism because according to this theory, whites believe blacks choose not to work hard, and therefore blame blacks for their own disadvantages. On the other hand, group-oriented theories like Group Position Theory (Blumer 1958; Bobo and Hutchings 1996) and the Power-Threat Hypothesis (Key 1949) suggest that fear underlies the threat of resource redistribution and changes in social hierarchies.

When it comes to the threat of population displacement, it is perhaps unsurprising that high white identifiers respond with both feelings of anger and fear. Because the source of the threat is somewhat identifiable (e.g., Latino immigrants moving to the U.S., sometimes illegally), it is consistent with appraisal theory that individuals would respond with some degree of anger. Yet many aspects of this threat are difficult to address (e.g., differences in birth rates, the aging of the population) and solutions, like revised immigration policies, are complicated. Furthermore, and consistent with group-oriented theories like Group Position Theory, population displacement is a very real manifestation

of changes in a racial hierarchy, one that involves, for many whites, a sense of uncertainty regarding the future of the group and its access to power and resources. Accordingly, and quite in keeping with appraisal theory, it makes sense that the primary response would be one of fear. Thus, not only do these results demonstrate that high white identifiers respond to group-threat much differently than do low identifiers, but they also lend credence to the argument that white identity is indeed a group-based disposition that is conceptually distinct from outgroup attitudes like symbolic racism or racial resentment.

### Results: The Moderating Effect of Threat

Taken as a whole, the results indicate that high white identifiers do in fact react negatively to threats directed at their group—in this case, the notion that their group will be demographically displaced in the U.S. In response to this information, white identifiers respond with both anger and fear. When assured that their group will maintain its relative status, however, white identifiers react with enthusiasm. To what extent, however, does exposure to this threatening information moderate the degree to which identity is brought to bear on political evaluations? That is, does threat more strongly link white racial identity to whites' political evaluations? Recall in Chapter 2, I argued that identity, when salient, should be positively related to policies that benefit whites, negatively related to policies that threaten whites' dominant status, or negatively related to political figures associated with such threats. Thus, the expectation is that reminding whites of a threat to their group should make identity a strong predictor of these types of political evaluations.



To test this possibility, I again estimate the impact of white racial identity across the conditions of the design, but this time focus on attitudes toward immigration policy. I turn first to examining the relationship between immigration policy opinions and identity in each of the two treatment conditions. In Chapter 5, I showed that white identity is significantly linked to immigration attitudes. Does the threat of population displacement further strengthen this relationship? Table 6.3 provides an answer. Each column in the table presents the results of a separate OLS regression model estimating the effect of white identity in the two treatment conditions (compared to the subjects in the control condition who read the cell-phone article) on a particular immigration related opinion. In the first column, the dependent variable is support for decreasing levels of immigration. In the second and third columns, I examine the joint effect of the experimental treatments and white identity on endorsement of the belief that immigrants take jobs and support for the notion that immigrants change American traditions in values, respectively.<sup>82</sup> In each model, all variables are recoded to range from zero to one, and higher values of the dependent variable coincide with anti-immigration attitudes.

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<sup>82</sup> Full question-wording for these immigration dependent variables is provided in Appendix A.

**Table 6.3 The Effect of White Identity on Immigration Attitudes by Experimental Condition**

	Immigration level	Immigration takes jobs	Immigration changes values
White identity	0.243** (0.095)	0.436*** (0.111)	0.267** (0.111)
Treatment 1 (Displacement)	0.047 (0.084)	-0.105 (0.099)	-0.103 (0.098)
Treatment 2 (Maintenance)	0.034 (0.087)	0.044 (0.102)	-0.001 (0.101)
Treatment 1 x White identity	-0.037 (0.134)	0.137 (0.158)	0.177 (0.157)
Treatment 2 x White identity	-0.064 (0.135)	-0.125 (0.158)	0.073 (0.157)
Constant	0.457*** (0.059)	0.325*** (0.069)	0.276*** (0.069)
Observations	338	336	336
R-squared	0.044	0.131	0.091

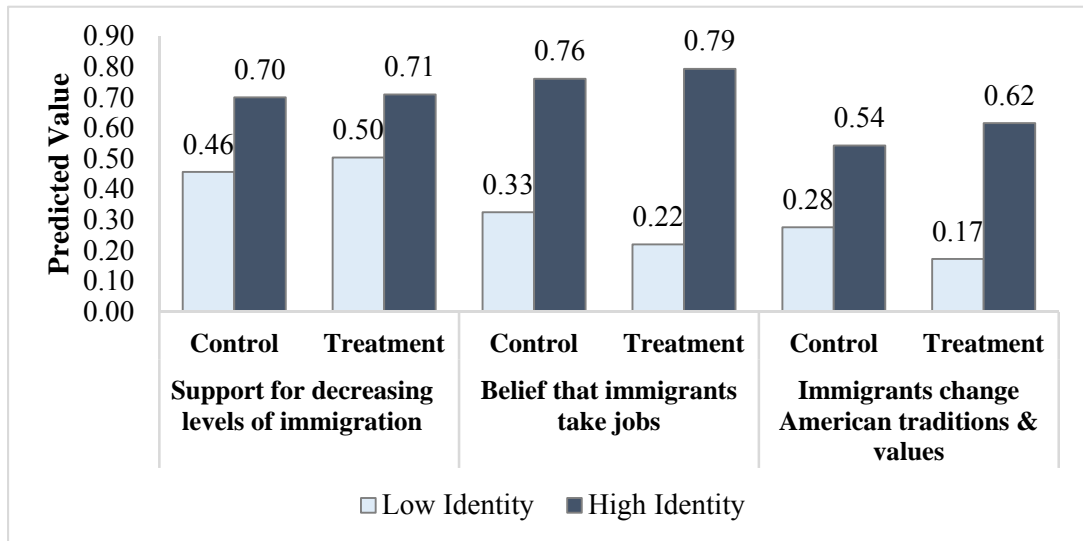
Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Higher values indicate higher levels of reported emotion. Source: 2013 SSI Study

The first result to observe is that the interaction of white identity and either treatment condition yields no significant results. Higher levels of white identity are not associated with greater opposition to (or support for) immigration nor with more negative (or positive) views of immigrants in either the displacement condition or the maintenance condition. Thus, it appears that in this case, exposure to news about the threat of population displacement does not moderate the relationship between identity and immigration attitudes. It is also important to notice, however, that the coefficient on white identity alone is positive and significant in each of the three columns. These values represent the effect of white identity on each immigration attitude among subjects in the control condition. The significant coefficients indicate that absent any intervention, white identity is *already* strongly associated with immigration opinion.

Figure 6.2 illustrates these relationships even more clearly. The bars represent the predicted value of each of the three immigration dependent variables among high (darker bars) and low (lighter bars) white identifiers in the displacement treatment and control conditions.

**Figure 6.2 Immigration Attitudes in Response to Population Displacement Treatment**



Source: 2013 SSI survey (N=334). Predicted values of OLS estimation. All variables coded from 0 to 1.

There are two noteworthy relationships to observe from this chart. The first is that for each of the dependent variables, low identifiers, on average, express less opposition to immigration and more positive views of immigrants than do high identifiers. The second is that across the control and treatment conditions, the predicted response among high identifiers is not significantly different. High white identifiers are, on average, quite opposed to immigration and endorse negative views of immigrants. In fact, predicted values among high identifiers, when it comes to support for decreasing levels of immigration and the belief that immigrants take jobs, are over .7 on the zero to one scale. With predicted opposition already so high, it is perhaps unsurprising that the

displacement treatment had no effect; there is little room for these whites to express even greater opposition to immigration or more disapproval of immigrants.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the experiment described here was twofold: first, to demonstrate that group-threat is strongly linked to group identity, and that high white identifiers respond differently to threats to their group than do low identifiers. Second, the study was designed to test the hypothesis that threat directly moderates the relationship between identity and political evaluations. The former goal was clearly achieved. The results here demonstrate that whites most attached to their racial group appear to be most affected by the possibility of losing their numerical majority in the U.S., and consistent with appraisal theory, they respond somewhat with anger, but mostly with fear.

Banks and Valentino (2012) have demonstrated that individual emotional responses are significantly intertwined with racial attitudes. Specifically, they find that contemporary racial animus—namely in the form of symbolic racism—is rooted in blame appraisals and consequently, in anger. Their studies reveal that when individuals high on symbolic racism experience anger, they are more opposed to affirmative action and other racial policies. Triggering fear, however, does not have the same effect. One conclusion to draw from their findings is that expressions of racial outgroup animus are not uniformly grounded in a host of negative emotions, but instead almost exclusively in anger. This distinction is worth highlighting, because it provides some direction for future work. Are the emotional substrates of white identity similar to those of racial resentment? There are some hints that it is primarily fear or anxiety that undergirds white identity. For instance, in Chapter 2, I show that individuals with less emotionally stable personalities

seem more likely to adopt a white identity. And here, fear is primarily triggered in response to threatening information. Perhaps it is fear that underlies this identity.

The second objective of the experiment was less clearly accomplished. At least with regards to the threat of population displacement, exposure to such information did not uniformly increase the extent to which racial identity was brought to bear on whites' political attitudes. Whites who identify with their racial group and who were exposed to this threatening information, were no more or less opposed, for example, to increasing levels of immigration to the U.S., nor were they more or less favorable toward immigrants generally. In part, the lack of a priming effect observed here may be because the link between identity and these evaluations existed absent any experimental intervention. White identity was already strongly associated with these political attitudes. These latter findings lend more support for the notion that white identity is now chronically salient. Priming white racial identity is difficult because this identity is already activated, especially as a result of threatening information about population changes.

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from these results. First, white identity is indeed significantly linked to anxiety about the group's status in the racial hierarchy. Consistent with Group Position Theory and other group-oriented theories of racial conflict, whites respond negatively to the possibility that their group will be displaced numerically in the population. In fact, information about population changes, or lack thereof, creates a general sense of emotional arousal among white identifiers. They respond with negative emotions when their group is threatened, and positive emotions when assured their group will maintain its dominance. Low identifiers, on the other hand,

have no emotional response to either type of information. These results further validate the notion that white identity is meaningful for many individuals. The fact that threats to the group have the capacity to arouse emotions in individuals is consistent with the expectations laid out in social identity theory and intergroup emotions theory.

Unfortunately, the conclusions we can draw about whether threat primes white identity's impact on political evaluations are somewhat murky. For one, it was difficult to boost or establish a moderating effect between identity and political attitudes with the employed treatment, in part because identity was already strongly linked to a number of evaluations. This result was somewhat unexpected given that in a study conducted in 2010, my co-authors and I find that when whites receive information highlighting their group's economic vulnerability relative to the success of blacks, white racial identity is powerfully linked to a variety of political attitudes (Hutchings et al. 2010).

There are a number of reasons why the results generated by my own study conducted in 2013 were inconsistent with the 2010 results. Methodological factors like the nature of the samples and survey firm house effects may partly explain such differences. It is also possible that the nature of the threatening treatment was not effective at boosting the association between identity and the particular range of political evaluations I examined. Other work, for instance, *has* found evidence of shifts in political evaluations when whites are exposed to information about population changes. In their experiment involving whites who identify as political independents, Craig and Richeson (2014) find that exposure to information about white Americans' impending "majority-minority" status leads whites to endorse more conservative policy positions. Perhaps,

however, the threat of population displacement has already left white identifiers strongly entrenched in such political views.

It is also likely that in the three years between the KN and SSI studies, factors in the political and social environment made identity more chronically salient, wholly eliminating the possibility of priming this identity. This outcome would of course not preclude the possibility that threat is the most important catalyst in linking identity to political evaluations. It simply means that instigating and observing these relationships in an experimental setting is more challenging, since the political world has already forged these relationships.

## CHAPTER 7

### When White Racial Identity is Taboo

*Whiteness describes, from Little Big Horn to Simi Valley, not a culture but precisely the absence of culture. It is the empty and therefore terrifying attempt to build an identity based on what one isn't and on whom one can hold back.*

David Roediger, *Toward the Abolition of Whiteness* (1994)

*The common understanding at present is that open expressions of race consciousness are taboo for white-Anglo Americans, but just fine for everyone else. A leading black presidential candidate subtitles his best-selling biography "A Story of Race and Inheritance"; the main lobbying organization for Hispanics carries the proud title "National Council of the Race"; and so on. This word is, however, not available to white-Anglo Americans in reference to themselves, and white-Anglo Americans are indoctrinated from childhood to believe, or to pretend to believe, that race is an empty category.*

John Derbyshire, "Towards a White Minority" (2007)

As I argued in Chapter 1, social scientists have frequently dismissed the significance of white racial identity, particularly because as a dominant group identity, it is sometimes latent and difficult to detect. There are a number of potential reasons for the general "invisibility" of this identity; perhaps first and foremost, white identity lies dormant because dominant group members, compared to members of subordinate groups, are reminded less frequently of social and cultural differences between their group and others. Generally, dominant groups appropriate the social, cultural, and political customs collectively considered "mainstream" in society. This "normalization of dominant group culture" means that group members largely seem unaware of the cultural and social practices that define their group (Doane 1997, p. 378). Rather than fostering group



identity, this widespread sense of “sameness” promotes a culturelessness among dominant group members (Perry 2001) and leads to attachment to a national identity, rather than to a racial or ethnic group (Frankenberg 1993; Higham 1955). Furthermore, dominant group members are far less likely to experience discrimination as a result of their objective group membership (Williams et al. 1997) and are therefore rarely made conscious of their identity through such experiences. As a result of these factors, I have argued that a dominant group identity, like white racial identity, may at times appear insignificant, until activated when group members perceive a threat to the status of and privileges possessed by their group.

There is, however, another potential and somewhat overlooked reason why social scientists may have had difficulty observing white racial identity and its political consequences: the adoption and expression of this identity may be socially stigmatized. As legal scholar Cheryl Harris notes, whiteness was “built both on exclusion and racial subjugation” (Harris 1992, p.1737). In the past, strong white identities have been associated with marginalized extremist groups like the Klu Klux Klan, Neo-Nazi’s, and other white supremacist organizations (Adams and Roscigno 2005; Harris 1992). Thus, out of concern for violating social norms, many whites may reject this identity, or at least may be reluctant to report such an identification on an opinion survey. Indeed, because attachments to dominant groups are sometimes associated with aggressive and explicit subordination of outgroup members, the tendency for individuals to recoil from adopting these identities is not unprecedented. Previous work found, for example, that German students were reluctant to display strong ingroup favoritism, particularly in a context

where Israeli students were referenced as an outgroup (Schwartz, Struch, and Bilsky 1990).

If social desirability concerns ever dissuaded whites from claiming that their racial identity is important to them, it appears few whites have reservations in the present day. As I discussed in Chapter 3, a sizeable portion of the white American population is willing to indicate that their identity as a white person is very, if not extremely, important to them. In fact, because the percentage of white Americans who express this sentiment is so high, it seems quite unlikely that reporting a strong white identification feels widely inappropriate or in violation of a norm in recent years.<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately, a paucity of public opinion surveys with optimal measures of white identity over time makes it difficult to determine whether whites were once more widely hesitant to proclaim this sort of attachment to their racial group. If such tentativeness existed, however, it is likely that the same confluence of events, which today is making white identity salient, has also made this identity more socially acceptable.

In the present day, greater attention to white identity in the media and in pop culture provides anecdotal evidence that it is no longer seen as socially offensive to discuss whiteness or to identify as white. Generally, these discussions have taken two forms, each of which is entrenched in both class and partisan identities. The first of these conversations tends to be characterized by a rather tongue-in-cheek, anti-elitist, and somewhat demeaning position taken up by whites who recognize that they themselves are among the white elite. Popular blogs like the satirical and self-deprecating “Stuff White People Like” seem hyper-aware of white privilege, and mock the mores of left-wing,

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<sup>83</sup> As I discussed in Chapter 4, somewhere between 27 percent and 41 percent of white Adult U.S. citizens report that their racial identity is very, if not extremely, important.

upper-middle-class whites (Mieszkowski 2008). Similarly, online sites, such as the entertainment curator, BuzzFeed, have published comedic lists like “The 25 Whitest Things That Have Ever Happened” (Stopera 2013) and popularized the Twitter hashtag, “#WhitePeople.” Salon.com has an entire category of articles on “white people” and the publication’s editor-at-large, Joan Walsh, declared 2013 “the year in whiteness” (Walsh 2013a).<sup>84</sup> Generally, these sources take a more critical view of whiteness, adopting an almost ironic attachment to an identity they see as inane at best or deeply problematic at worst.

The second prevalent discourse regarding whiteness has been captured by conservative political elites like Pat Buchanan, Glenn Beck, and Rush Limbaugh. Buchanan, for example, has explicitly advocated for the rise of white racial consciousness in response to white Americans’ demographic displacement (Buchanan 2011). Glenn Beck has argued that Barack Obama has a “deep seated hatred of white people or the white culture” (Associated Press 2009). This side of the whiteness conversation is rooted in populist appeals to white Americans who seem to reject notions that they are among the elite or in any way privileged. Accordingly, these particular political pundits seem to have struck a resonant chord among the white working-class Americans most concerned with demographic shifts, multiculturalism, and globalization. For these whites, such concerns have engendered “a solidarity defined by a yearning for American ‘authenticity,’ a folksy realness that rejects the global, the urban, and the effete in favor of nostalgia for ‘the way things used to be’” (Hsu 2009). These are the anxieties that primarily undergird the nature of the white identity I have described in this dissertation.

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<sup>84</sup> See [http://www.salon.com/topic/white\\_people/](http://www.salon.com/topic/white_people/) for Salon.com’s articles tagged under the category of “white people”.

What is important to recognize with respect to these two dialogues is that while the first does adopt a more critical view of “white privilege,” neither perspective generally associates whiteness with extremism. Furthermore, regardless of the divergent nature of these discourses, they both provide important evidence that in the contemporary period, whiteness is increasingly discussed openly. This candor, coupled with the survey evidence indicating that many whites feel comfortable reporting a racial identity, suggests that identifying as white is not widely and generally taboo in the present day.

### Social Desirability Biases and Whiteness

In spite of the openness with which white identity seems to be discussed today, it is possible that the historical association of this identity with supremacy and hate groups continues to prompt some social desirability bias among whites, and therefore some high white identifiers may be reticent to report this identity on public opinion surveys. In other words, survey measures of white identity might be under-measuring levels of white racial identity in the U.S. population. Fortunately, the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES) provides a means by which to investigate this possibility. In addition to the traditional face-to-face survey mode, the principal investigators of the ANES also fielded a companion survey conducted entirely over the Internet among a nationally representative sample of adult U.S. citizens.<sup>85</sup>

If some whites find it objectionable to report their racial identity during a face-to-face interview, then they may likely feel more comfortable doing so in the private and relatively anonymous survey environment offered by the Internet mode.<sup>86</sup> In this case, we

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<sup>85</sup> The Internet sample was drawn from panel members of GfK Knowledge Networks.

<sup>86</sup> Previous work has shown that Internet survey modes reduce social desirability biases that accompany sensitive questions (Chang and Krosnick 2009).

should expect to see an even greater percentage of whites indicating that their racial identity is either somewhat, very, or extremely important to them.<sup>87</sup> Table 7.1 compares the distribution of the white identity, measured with the racial importance item, across the two survey modes:

**Table 7.1 The Distribution of White Racial Identity Across Survey Modes**

	Face-to-face	Internet
Not at all important	23.1%	21.8%
A little important	18.4%	20.0%
Moderately important	24.8%	27.6%
Very important	19.9%	19.4%
Extremely important	13.9%	11.2%
Observations	860	2836

Data are weighted. Source: 2012 American National Election Study

Comparing the two columns in Table 7.1 reveals that the distribution of this measure in the face-to-face mode is not significantly different from the Internet mode. If anything, respondents taking the survey via the Internet are more likely to temper their responses to the identity question; a slightly smaller percentage were willing to indicate that their identity is extremely important to them. At the same time, however, slightly *fewer* of the whites in the Internet sample were clustered in the lowest end of the identity measure, reporting that their identity is “not at all important”. Across both modes, a majority of the respondents indicated that their racial identity is “moderately important”. In short, the similarity in responses across the two survey modes suggests that social

<sup>87</sup> During the 2012 face-to-face interview, the white identity measure was asked using a Computer-Aided Self-Interview (CASI) format, whereby the interviewer handed a tablet computer to the respondent, and the respondent answered the questions privately. This method was implemented to reduce social desirability bias, but one could argue that the setting, where the interviewer remained in the room, would not necessarily reduce bias in the same way that taking the entire survey anonymously on the Internet might.

desirability bias is not dramatically affecting individuals' willingness to claim a racial identity.

### Race of Interviewer Effects

Even if many whites possess a racial identity and usually feel comfortable revealing their identification on anonymous opinion surveys, it is still possible that in specific circumstances, white identifiers might feel reluctant to express their identity. For instance, it is possible that *to whom* they are reporting this identity matters. Some whites may feel comfortable revealing their white identity to fellow whites, but are potentially uncomfortable doing so in the presence of non-white individuals. One way to uncover this potential bias is by comparing whites' responses to the racial identity question on the ANES in the face-to-face interview when their interviewer was white, to responses given when the interviewer was black or of some other race or ethnicity.

Table 7.2 presents the mean level of white identity (measured with the importance item and rescaled to range from zero to one) among white respondents in the face-to-face survey when the interviewer was white, black, or "other".<sup>88</sup> The results reveal some important differences in respondents' willingness to express an identity. When white respondents are interviewed by a white individual, their average reported level of white identity is .45, which is equivalent to a response of "moderately important". Whites interviewed by an interviewer who self-identifies as "other" report nearly the same level of white identity (.46). But whites interviewed by a black individual report significantly

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<sup>88</sup> On the 2012 ANES, interviewers self-report their race, and the options available are limited to white, black, or other. The analysis here uses the race of the interviewer from the post-test survey, since the white identity question was asked on the post-test survey.

lower levels of white identity, on average.<sup>89</sup> The mean level of racial identity among whites interviewed by blacks is .35, which falls between “only a little” and “moderately” important.

**Table 7.2 Mean Levels of White Identity by Race of Interviewer**

	White interviewer	Black interviewer	Other interviewer
Mean	0.451 (0.017)	0.355 (0.038)	0.461 (0.047)
N	787	105	122

Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted. Source: 2012 American National Election Study

Of course race-of-interviewer effects are not a new phenomenon. A robust line of research has documented the fact that the race of the interviewer can significantly affect survey-takers’ responses to questions, particularly on face-to-face surveys (Guterbock and Borg 1991; Hyman 1954; Krysan 1998). Some work demonstrates that in the presence of interviewers of the same race, respondents are more likely to be open or honest. Other times, however, respondents attempt to save face with interviewers of their own race by giving what they believe is the “correct” or most socially desirable response (Anderson, Silver, and Abramson 1988). Comparing the average level of white identity among whites who had a white interviewer to those white respondents who took the survey over the Internet sans interviewer, there appears to be no difference in levels. Thus, it seems that white respondents were not over-reporting their racial identification.

<sup>89</sup> Mean difference (.095) in white identity when the interviewer is black compared to white is significant at  $p = .022$ , two-tailed.

A number of studies have also demonstrated that whites tend to give more racially liberal responses to race-related questions when their interviewer is of a different race or ethnicity – or in the case of telephone surveys, perceived to be non-white (Hatchett and Schuman 1975; Hyman 1954; Krysan 1998). Similarly, the fact that whites tend to report lower levels of racial identity in the presence of blacks suggests that some degree of self-monitoring is occurring, and that a meaningful percentage of white respondents feel uncomfortable declaring that their racial identity is important to a black interviewer. Furthermore, while the interviewer remained present when respondents answered the racial identity questions, these items were self-administered, meaning that the presence of the black interviewer alone affected results, even when respondents could feel somewhat confident that their responses were anonymous. Thus, it appears that the expression of white identity may be conditioned on circumstances, and that under certain conditions, some whites feel that it is inappropriate to proclaim an identification with their race.

### White Identity and Extremism – An Experiment

The race of interviewer effects provide some evidence that whites express lower levels of racial identity in certain contexts where it seems socially undesirable to do so. Are there other circumstances in which whites are either reluctant to express their identity, or in which the relationship between this identification and political preferences is altered? One possibility is that while many whites do not ordinarily associate racial identification with white supremacy, they do actively reject their racial identity when it is associated with extremist hate groups, like white supremacists. Furthermore, such associations may alter the relationship between identity and political preferences, such that identity is no longer associated with particular attitudes and policy positions.



To explore whether whites who identify with their racial group react to associations between their group and the label “white supremacist,” I designed an experiment in which white respondents were exposed to news information about the formation of a white interest group at a small mid-Atlantic college. While the actual language of the news articles was fabricated, the events referenced in the article were mostly real. In the fall of 2012, a student at Towson University received national media attention when he sought to start a student group specifically for whites. The student, Matthew Heimbach, argued that the group’s intentions were similar to the advocacy work done by campus organizations that serve the interests of racial and ethnic minorities. He explained his position to the student newspaper: “You have a Black student Union who promotes black heroes, we want to do the same thing” (Munshaw and Bauer-Wolf 2012).

Heimbach’s proposed White Student Union was certainly controversial; some Towson students denounced the group as racist, and the Southern Poverty Law Center pointed out Heimbach’s association with the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Kingcade 2012; Lenz 2013). Furthermore, Heimbach was not alone in his efforts; reports surfaced that similar groups had formed at Georgia State University and Indiana University (Wildeman 2013; Witteman 2013). A cursory glance at the online comments in response to reports of these student unions suggested that whites’ reactions were mixed. Some expressed outrage at what they argued was a “double standard,” whereby racial and ethnic minorities were able to form student organizations without a widespread backlash. Yet other commenters seemed to side with the notion that Heimbach and his compatriots should be considered leaders of hate groups. Of course, individuals who respond to such

articles are not likely to be representative of the larger white adult population (Kingkade 2012). So how might white Americans more broadly react to the formation of organizations designed to promote white interests, and further, how might they respond when such efforts are linked to white supremacist groups? More importantly, how are any potential reactions conditioned by individuals' levels of racial identification?

As I argued in Chapter 1, white racial identification is not synonymous with the radical endorsement of white supremacy. It is likely that a select few who possess high level of white identity are in fact bona fide white supremacists, but by and large, most white identifiers do not endorse these extremist views. Therefore, while many high identifiers may not be troubled by the notion that individuals are forming groups designed to promote white identity or white interests, they ought to reject this identity when it is associated with extremism. Furthermore, when exposed to information associating their group with extremism, white identity should no longer be linked as strongly to policies that benefit whites, since identifiers should subsequently reject efforts to maintain their privilege and status.

## Experimental Design

The news articles in my experiment used language similar to that found in actual local and national news coverage of Heimbach's efforts to start a "White Student Union." Both articles were designed to look as if they had appeared on the ABC News website, were of similar length, identically formatted with a photograph on the right-hand side, and featured nearly identical text. The two articles viewed by the experimental groups differed from each other in a few important ways, however.<sup>90</sup> In the control condition,

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<sup>90</sup> The full text of the fabricated newspaper articles is available in Appendix C.

subjects read an article with the headline “Student Starts Campus Group for Whites” that straightforwardly described the formation of a white student union. In the article, Heimbach explains that the group seeks to advocate for white students in the same way that other race-related groups on campus, like the Black Student Union, do for students. It goes on to describe some of the group’s aims, like starting a scholarship fund for white students and declaring December as “White History Month.” Accompanying the article was a photo designed to look like a screenshot taken from television news coverage of the story. It included a photo of one of the organization’s campus fliers, which read as follows: “Love your race. Support a White Student Union.” Across the bottom of the screen, a banner stated, “Controversy heats up over White Student Union.” Importantly, this article was devoid of any editorializing about the group. There was no mention that such efforts might be seen as racially prejudiced, nor any suggestion that group members had ties to white supremacist groups. Further, while the banner across the bottom of the photograph used the word “controversy,” the text included no explanation for why the group was seen as provocative. Thus, this article straightforwardly describes whites organizing a racial group to promote group members’ collective interests.

In the treatment condition, subjects read a nearly identical article, save for a few important changes. First, the headline for this article read “Student Starts Campus Group for Whites; Denounced as White-Supremacist.” The accompanying photograph was also the same, except the banner across the bottom of the screen had an additional row of text which stated, “Group called white supremacists.” Compared to the control condition, this version of the article also had three additional sentences, which described the activities of the White Student Union as a “thinly veiled appeal to white supremacy” and pointed out

that, as is often the case, supporters of these groups are associated with white nationalist groups like the KKK and the neo-Nazis. These remarks were attributed to a fictitious organization – the National Human Rights Center. This treatment was designed to clearly and overtly associate the formation of a white interest group with extremism.

The study was conducted over the Internet in July of 2013 among a nationally diverse sample of 460 white adult U.S. citizens who were recruited by the firm Survey Sampling International (SSI). SSI recruits participants to their online panel via opt-in methods, and provides a census-balanced sample. All subjects completed an online pre-test survey, which included measures of their racial identity, other measures of racial attitudes, and a variety of demographic questions. A week later, participants viewed one of the two fabricated newspaper articles, depending on the condition to which they were randomly assigned, and then completed a post-test survey. The lag-time between the pre-test and the experimental intervention was intentional; such a design helps mitigate the possibility that questions on the pre-test are themselves serving as a sort of prime or treatment that may be altering responses to the post-test survey independent of (or in interaction with) the experimental conditions. Thus, the lag helps ensure that any significant differences observed across the experimental conditions are a result of the treatments themselves.

## Experimental Results

In order to gauge their reactions to the White Student Union articles, subjects were asked whether they experienced any one of several emotions immediately following exposure to the treatment. Because we would expect different reactions to the two White Student Union stories, the emotions items also serve as a manipulation check. Just as with

the population displacement experiment analysis in Chapter 5, I scaled together the emotions measures into three dimensions: fear (uneasy and afraid), anger (angry, disgusted), and enthusiasm (hopeful, proud, happy). These scales are coded so that the values range from zero to one, with higher values indicating the presence of an emotional response. Table 7.3 provides the results of three separate ordinary least squares regression models predicting emotional reactions when respondents read the white supremacist version of the story compared to the neutral version of the story. The model includes respondents' level of white identity as measured in the pre-test, as well as an indicator variable for the white supremacist treatment.

**Table 7.3 Effect of White Identity, by Experimental Condition, on Emotional Reactions to White Student Union Stories**

	Anger	Fear	Enthusiasm
White identity	-0.117 (0.107)	-0.187 (0.123)	0.528*** (0.131)
White supremacist treatment	-0.003 (0.094)	-0.101 (0.108)	-0.106 (0.115)
White identity * White supremacist treatment	0.251* (0.152)	0.285 (0.174)	-0.163 (0.186)
Constant	0.201*** (0.067)	0.342*** (0.077)	0.121 (0.082)
Observations	224	224	224
R-squared	0.060	0.020	0.153

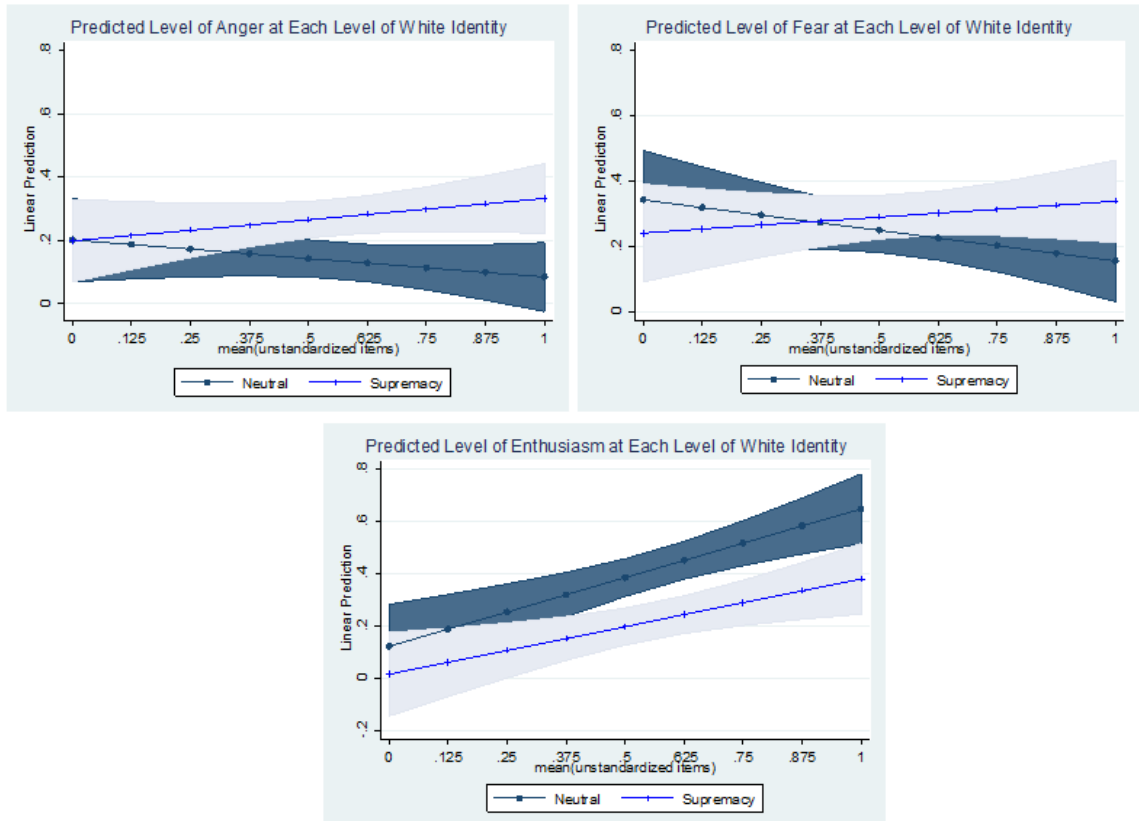
Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1  
Higher values indicate higher levels of reported emotion. Source: 2013 SSI White Supremacy Study

If we consider first the coefficient for the white identity measure, which is the effect of white identity on each emotional response among respondents in the neutral condition, we can see that these individuals did not, on average, report different levels of anger or fear compared to those who read the white supremacist article. In fact, while not statistically significant, the coefficients on both the measures of fear and anger were

negative, suggesting that high white identifiers felt comparatively lower levels of these emotions in response to the neutral versions of the story. They did, however, respond more enthusiastically. That is, high white identifiers reacted significantly more positively compared to low identifiers in response to the article that described the formation of the white student union without reference to white supremacists.

Examining the interaction between the white supremacy treatment and white identity, however, we can see that high white identifiers, compared to those in the neutral treatment, reported feeling more angry in response to the race-neutral story. Furthermore, while the relationship is not statistically significant, the coefficient on the measure of fear is also fairly large and positive, suggesting that high white identifiers were inclined to report feeling more anxious or afraid in response to the supremacy story. Figure 7.1 illustrates the relationship between high and low identifiers in the control and treatment conditions more clearly. The bars represent the predicted level of each emotional response among high and low identifiers, in the two experimental conditions.

**Figure 7.1 Predicted Level of Emotional Response after Exposure to White Student Union Stories**



Source: 2013 SSI survey (N=334). Predicted values of OLS estimation. All variables coded from 0 to 1. Shaded regions represent 95% confidence intervals. X-axis values represent each level of white identity.

We can see that in the neutral condition, high white identifiers have slightly, but insignificantly, lower predicted levels of anger and fear, and a much higher level of enthusiasm compared to low identifiers. In other words, the high identifiers respond more positively to the neutral white student union story. These relationships, however, are significantly altered in the supremacy condition. High identifiers who viewed the story in which the organization of the Student Union is associated with white supremacy reported higher levels of anger and fear, and lower levels of enthusiasm. In short, these emotional reactions suggest that high white identifiers somewhat endorse the formation of a white student union, unless such an organization is associated with extremism.

In addition to gauging their emotional reaction to the stories, the post-test survey also included the same measure of white identity as was on the pre-test. Measuring white identity again allows me to determine whether the white supremacy condition had any effect on individual's reported levels of identification. Table 7.4 presents the mean values of white identity as measured in the post-test, across the two experimental conditions.

**Table 7.4 Mean Levels of Identity by Experimental Condition**

	Neutral	White supremacy
Mean	0.513 (0.027)	0.525 (0.027)
N	111	105

Standard errors in parentheses.  
Source: 2013 SSI White Supremacy Study.

The difference between the two means is negligible (.012) and statistically insignificant ( $p=.752$ ). In sum, whites who received the white supremacist version of the story did not report significantly different levels of white identity, on average, compared to those who read the neutral version of the student union story. These results indicate that whites do not reject – nor adopt, for that matter – a strong white identity when group members' efforts to organize around racial interests are associated with extremism.

In addition to items ascertaining their emotional reactions and levels of identity, subjects also answered a variety of questions regarding their policy preferences. Several of these items ascertained the extent to which respondents believed that the federal government should do more to help whites and how much they support increasing federal spending on aid to members of different racial groups.<sup>91</sup> Table 7.5 presents the results of

<sup>91</sup> The first question asked whites, “how much do you think the federal government should be doing to help white Americans?” and response options ranged from “nothing at all” to “a great deal.” The federal



ordinary least squares regression models, where both attitudes toward the federal government helping whites and toward support for increasing federal spending (recoded to range from zero to one, with higher values indicating greater support) are regressed on the measure of white identity, the indicator variable for the white supremacy condition, and the interaction between the two.

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spending items were arranged on a grid, and asked respondents “should federal spending on aid to the following groups be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?” Whites’ responses were independently recorded for whites Americans, black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans.

**Table 7.5 The Effect of White Identity, by Experimental Condition, on Federal Assistance Programs**

	Fed govt. help whites	Spending on whites	Spending on blacks	Spending on Hispanics	Spending on Asians
White identity	0.427*** (0.105)	0.273*** (0.088)	-0.057 (0.092)	0.018 (0.092)	-0.014 (0.088)
White supremacist treatment	-0.061 (0.092)	-0.053 (0.077)	-0.151* (0.081)	-0.110 (0.081)	-0.132* (0.077)
White identity * White supremacist treatment	0.061 (0.148)	0.070 (0.124)	0.244* (0.130)	0.107 (0.131)	0.246** (0.124)
Constant	0.254*** (0.066)	0.357*** (0.055)	0.508*** (0.058)	0.480*** (0.058)	0.479*** (0.055)
Observations	218	221	221	220	221
R-squared	0.154	0.104	0.021	0.018	0.032

Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1  
Higher values indicate support for policy. Source: 2013 SSI White Supremacy Study.

As the results in Table 7.5 indicate, high white identifiers in the neutral condition significantly support both greater federal government assistance for whites and increasing federal spending on aid for fellow whites. These individuals do not, however, significantly support more, nor less, federal aid for blacks, Hispanics, or Asians.<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, high identifiers in the supremacy condition significantly endorsed *increasing* federal spending on aid for blacks and Asians.<sup>93</sup> Apparently, when it comes to outgroups, the white supremacy condition fostered much more generous and liberal positions among white identifiers.

This pattern of results is borne out much more starkly with respect to attitudes toward racialized social welfare programs like Medicaid, welfare, and federal spending on efforts to eliminate unemployment. As I argued in Chapter 4, whites' attitudes toward these programs, which through historical elite framing efforts are generally seen by whites as benefitting racial or ethnic minorities, are generally unrelated to white racial identity. Yet the experimental results here demonstrate that these relationships can be fundamentally altered. Table 7.6 provides results from an ordinary least squares regression model, which estimates support for these programs among high and low white identifiers in the neutral and supremacy conditions. As expected, in the neutral condition, white identity is not significantly related to attitudes toward these policies. Somewhat surprisingly, however, high identifiers in the white supremacy condition are significantly *more* supportive of these policies.

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<sup>92</sup> This finding arguably lends further support to the notion that white identity is ingroup focused.

<sup>93</sup> The coefficient on support for increasing federal spending for Hispanics among high white identifiers in the white supremacy condition is also positive, but the effect is not statistically significant.

**Table 7.6 The Effect of White Identity, by Experimental Condition, on Support for Social Welfare Programs**

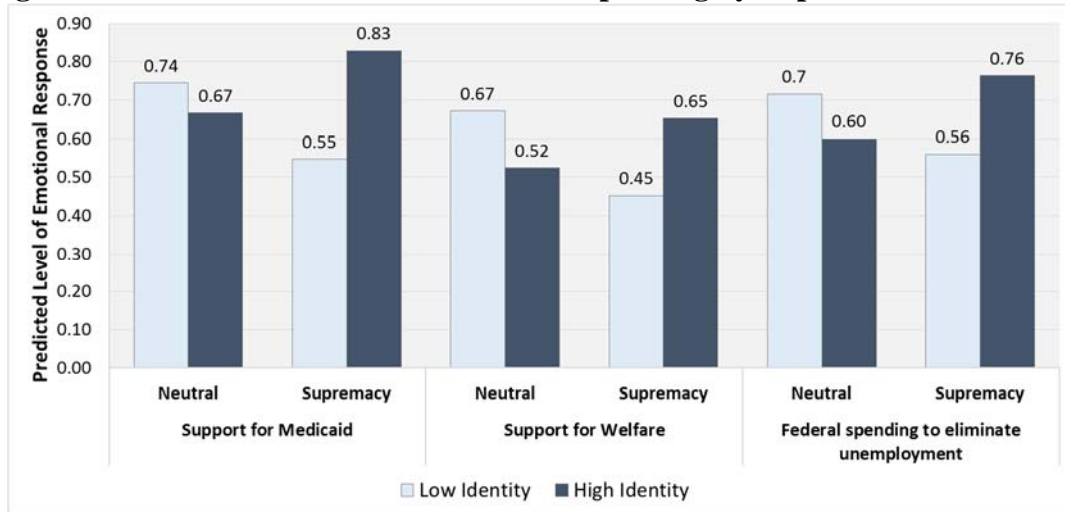
	Support for Medicaid	Support for Welfare	Support for eliminating unemployment
White identity	-0.078 (0.094)	-0.147 (0.111)	-0.116 (0.094)
White supremacist treatment	-0.198** (0.082)	-0.220** (0.097)	-0.156* (0.083)
White identity * White supremacist treatment	0.360*** (0.131)	0.348** (0.155)	0.319** (0.133)
Constant	0.744*** (0.059)	0.672*** (0.070)	0.716*** (0.059)
Observations	217	218	218
R-squared	0.045	0.025	0.030

Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1  
Higher values indicate support for policy. Source: 2013 SSI White Supremacy Study.

Figure 7.2 illustrates these differences more clearly. The bars represent the predicted levels of support for each of the social welfare policies among high and low identifiers in both the neutral and supremacy conditions. Across each of the three policies in the neutral condition, high white identifiers possess lower levels of support than low identifiers. This pattern is reversed, however, among subjects who read the supremacy article. In this condition, not only do high identifiers become more supportive of these policies, but low identifiers actually become less supportive than they were in the neutral condition. Thus, the results are being driven both by low identifiers becoming more conservative in their positions after viewing the supremacy article, and by high identifiers becoming significantly more liberal.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Graphs plotting the marginal effect of white identity in both the neutral and supremacy conditions on each policy preference are presented in Appendix D. For Medicaid, the significant effects are being driven by both the low and high identifiers (the marginal effect among low and high identifiers is  $p=.017$  in both cases). For support for welfare, differences are primarily driven by low identifiers ( $p=.024$  among low identifiers and  $p=.109$  among high identifiers). Finally, with respect to support for federal spending on

**Figure 7.2 Attitudes toward Social Welfare Spending by Experimental Condition**



Source: 2013 SSI survey (N=334). Predicted values of OLS estimation. All variables coded from 0 to 1.

It is not entirely clear why the supremacy condition drives low identifiers to adopt more conservative policy positions. What is clear is that when their group’s collective efforts are associated with extremism, high identifiers seem to over-compensate with regards to their policy positions by supporting policies that provide assistance to groups that would likely be the target of racial hate-groups.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis presented here provides compelling evidence that, generally, whites who identify with their racial group do not have major reservation about expressing their identification unless they are asked to do so in the presence of blacks. This particular reservation suggests, however, that some white identifiers do worry that the expression of their identity may be misinterpreted, or seen as racially insensitive. Despite this reticence, white identifiers do not reject their identity when it is associated with white supremacy.

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ending unemployment, differences are reflected among both low identifiers ( $p=.06$ ) and high identifiers ( $p=.018$ ).

Reported levels of white identity were not significantly lower among whites who viewed the article associating a white interest group with the KKK and Neo-Nazis. Instead, white identifiers seem to, in a sense, qualify their identity when it is associated with these marginalized groups. Specifically, white identifiers in the supremacy treatment group appeared much more racially liberal in their policy preferences, mainly by becoming more generous with regards to policies that benefit racial and ethnic minorities. They were not significantly less supportive of policies that benefitted their own group, like federal spending on whites, but they had much more favorable reactions to federal assistant programs like spending on aid to blacks, welfare, and Medicaid.

In addition to exploring how whites react to associations between white identity and supremacy, the experiment here also gauged how whites react to the basic idea of white individuals forming groups around shared racial interest. The results make it clear that high white identifiers generally viewed such efforts favorably; they responded with more enthusiasm than low identifiers to the possibility of the white student union. Such results suggest that while efforts like those undertaken by Heimbach may indeed arise from an underlying belief in white supremacy, many white American's do not readily associate such activities with supremacy, nor do they see white-only interest groups as fundamentally problematic. If anything, many likely endorse the sentiment frequently expressed by online commentators in response to the real White Student Union stories – the notion that groups specifically for whites are simply equitable and fair in a world where racial and ethnic minorities frequently form such organizations.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusion**

Through the work presented here, I join the company of a handful of social scientists who have turned their attention to the meaning and significance of identity among members of dominant groups in recent years (Doane 1997; Knowles and Peng 2005; McDermott and Samson 2005). Despite decades of arguments and evidence suggesting that white identity is a meaningless construct, I provide preliminary evidence that when their group's status is challenged, members of dominant groups—in this case white Americans—do in fact embrace their ingroup identity in large numbers and bring it to bear on their political preferences. Furthermore, I show that the extent of self-conscious identification may be captured with explicit survey questions, and that items gauging the importance and strength of identity are particularly suitable and effective for this purpose.

More importantly for political science, in this paper, I provide a preponderance of evidence that white identity is a meaningful antecedent of political attitudes. The results of the over-time ANES analysis suggest that as levels of immigration to the U.S. sharply increased, so did the extent to which whites brought their identity to bear on their attitudes toward immigration. Furthermore, I show that there is strong evidence linking identity to a variety of political evaluations in the present-day.

White identity is significantly related to political evaluations in domains where whites' status is threatened—like immigration policy—as well as to policies associated with benefitting whites as a group—like Social Security and Medicare. In fact, white identity appears to be sufficiently powerful that it was a significant predictor of vote choice in the 2012 election. High white identifiers were more likely to report voting for Mitt Romney and more likely to believe that Barack Obama favors blacks over whites.

The results of an experiment in which whites were exposed to information about shifts in the racial make-up of the country suggest that white identifiers are responding especially negatively to the notion that they will be displaced as a group. High white identifiers reported feeling angry and especially afraid after reminders of their impending displacement as the majority, indicating that individuals do identify with their racial group and feel measurable concern over their group's status.

I also find evidence that, while a sizeable portion of whites feel comfortable identifying with their racial group, some do express reservations. The race-of-interviewer effects I present in Chapter 6 suggest that the presence of blacks may suppress whites' proclivity to identify explicitly as white. That said, most white Americans do not readily recoil at the notion of their group members organizing collectively to promote their racial interests. They did not, for example, reject plans for the formation of a white student organization on a college campus. Associating such efforts with the extremism of white supremacist hate groups, however, profoundly affects attitudes. Suggesting that white-only organizations are a manifestation of white supremacy does not cause whites to reject their racial identity, but it does dramatically push high identifiers to adopt more liberal policy positions. These results suggest that not only can different frames affect the



attitudes of white identifiers, but also that most white identifiers do not condone white supremacy or see a connection between their racial identity and these hate-groups.

In demonstrating that white racial identity exists and is politically consequential, I offer a revised account of our understanding of racial dynamics in the contemporary U.S.. The results here make a strong case for the claim that racial attitudes are multi-dimensional. When it comes to a number of evaluations and attitudes, predispositions like racial resentment, symbolic racism, and ethnocentrism account for our understanding of whites' orientations and behavior. For other attitudes, and under certain conditions, a desire to protect group interests seems to explain more accurately whites' preferences. Knowing the difference is crucial for our understanding of political attitudes and racial conflict, especially as the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. continues to change dramatically over the next several decades.

### For Further Consideration

The research here raises a number of questions important for future consideration. For instance, in Chapter 5, I failed to find priming effects when exposing whites to threatening information about impending demographic changes. High white identifiers responded with more emotional arousal to this information, but exposure did not result in a greater propensity to bring racial identity to bear on political evaluations and attitudes.<sup>95</sup> One reasonable explanation for these results is that white identity is chronically salient at present, and thus, it is not possible to prime something that is already activated. There is certainly evidence for this account; absent the threatening information, white identity

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<sup>95</sup> Another possibility for the lack of priming results could be that the way population displacement was raised in the experiment failed to register effectively among whites. This explanation, however, seems less likely given the powerful emotional responses that the experiment generated.

predicts a wide range of preferences. Yet I also want to raise the possibility that the threat employed in the experiment is too proximate to the identity and outcomes I seek to predict. In other words, the associations that demographic changes have made for whites between ingroup identity and the range of dependent variables I included on my survey may be already fixed across the white population. But perhaps different threats and different information frames may make white identity a relevant predictor of attitudes and behavior I have yet to consider. For example, the threat of political displacement, and the increased success of non-white candidates across elective office might strengthen the link between identity and candidate or party evaluations. Exposure to economic threats from racial and ethnic minorities might forge a relationship between white identity and attitudes toward taxes or wealth redistribution. Additional experiments could readily test these possibilities.

Another important relationship not considered here is that some racial groups may be more threatening to whites than others. Elsewhere, my colleagues and I find that white identity is activated when whites believe that their economic success is waning relative to blacks, but this relationship does not hold when the threat is framed as originating with Hispanics (Hutchings et al. 2010). These results suggest, as others have, that the relationship between blacks and whites is unique (Sears and Savalei 2006). Indeed, scholars have argued that when groups are ordered hierarchically, blacks are situated at the bottom (Kim 2000). Perhaps the historical experiences of conflict between blacks and whites, coupled with blacks' place on the hierarchy, makes the perception of legitimate challenges from this group seem most threatening to whites in certain domains. Additional studies examining whether the same threats originating from different racial

groups have equivalent effects may be a worthwhile focus of future work.

In addition to expanding the range of threats and testing whether different outgroups generate different reactions, future studies should also examine a wider range of attitudes and evaluations. Does white identity, for example, strongly predict attitudes toward other policies that predominately benefit whites, like abolishing inheritance taxes, other efforts to limit wealth redistribution, or eliminating affirmative action programs in college admissions? Furthermore, I find in analysis not presented in this dissertation, that white identity strongly and consistently predicts support for the death penalty, as well as an endorsement of an isolationist foreign policy, a desire to restrict outsourcing of jobs, and support for limiting foreign imports. Some of these latter preferences may be tapping into ethnocentrism, or they may reflect white Americans anxiety about their loss of power globally. Explaining the relationship between this identity and support for the death penalty seems more challenging, but important to pursue.

New efforts to examine the import of white identity also need to consider developing multi-item measures of the construct. The racial importance item clearly has powerful predictive capacity, but a multi-item measure may prove to be more reliable, and it may be necessary in order to capture multiple dimensions of white identity, should they exist. One possible approach may be adapting Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) collective self-esteem measure, which breaks identity down into four subscales and has been used most widely (Crocker et al. 1999; Huddy 2003).

Results presented throughout this dissertation also hint at the possibility that there may be important subsets of high and low identifiers. Croll (2008) argues that white identity is comprised of both progressive and defensive identifiers, with the former

adopting more racially liberal and tolerant attitudes. Developing a measurement strategy to untangle these groups is important. Furthermore, the results in this dissertation tell us something important about the low identifiers. While I do provide evidence that low white identifiers often seem to adopt racially progressive attitudes, the responses to open-ended questions—designed to understand more completely why some whites adopt or reject a racial identity—suggest that many of these low identifiers are espousing colorblind racism.<sup>96</sup> In short, these results suggest that understanding the attitudes of low identifiers may be just as important as work on high identifiers.

Finally, the demographic changes threatening whites' dominance are not limited to the U.S. Western Europe is experiencing a similar decline in white birth rates and many of these countries have also been subject to decades of increased immigration. Is racial identity now salient among white Europeans? Does it similarly predict political evaluations? One important difference between the U.S. and Europe is that across the pond, viable right-wing political parties can run on explicitly anti-immigration, nationalistic political platforms. In Britain, the anti-immigrant UK Independence Party recently made significant gains in local elections. The Front National Party topped the polls in France. The Danish People's party won a sizeable victory in Denmark's parliamentary elections (Traynor 2014). As these populist, far-right parties dominate

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<sup>96</sup> Scholars of race are increasingly turning their attention to whites' subscription to "colorblindness", and these attitudes were brought into sharp relief with the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to uphold Michigan's controversial ban on affirmative action in public college admissions. In her dissenting opinion, Justice Sonia Sotomayor rejected the argument put forth by proponents of colorblindness – that race does not matter and that raising the issue of race is in itself detrimental. She wrote, "As members of the judiciary tasked with intervening to carry out the guarantee of equal protection, we ought not sit back and wish away, rather than confront, the racial inequality that exists in our society. It is this view that works harm, by perpetuating the facile notion that what makes race matter is acknowledging the simple truth that race does matter" (Demby 2014) But Sotomayor's opinion is likely an unpopular one, and individual support for policies on the grounds that they are "race-neutral" are increasingly fueled by political efforts to promote "colorblindness" (Bonilla-Silva 2014).

European elections, it seems especially worthwhile to consider how racial identity might affect public opinion across the European Union.

## The Future of White Identity

As the population of the U.S. change, and as non-whites continue to achieve greater political representation, the importance of white racial identity to politics may only grow. This mounting significance has important implications. For one, it may give way to greater political polarization and more racialized partisan attachments in the U.S. in the coming years. If whites continue to feel threatened, they may move further away from the Democratic Party. As Democrats continue to court successfully racial and ethnic minorities, however, political observers suggest that the Republican Party must develop a new strategy that lures these voters without alienating their already disaffected base of white voters (Teixeira and Abramowitz 2013; Walsh 2013b). Of course, Republicans may instead continue to focus on primarily wooing whites, leading to greater racial polarization in the American party system (Trende 2013). Such efforts will likely call greater public attention to the notion that whites are a more cohesive group with shared political interests.

Presently, there is also at least some anecdotal evidence that at the elite level, explicit attention to white racial identity is intensifying. Swain and Nieli (2003), for example, document the rise of a white nationalist movement, beginning in the 1990s, whose proponents are making strides to distance themselves from the image of 1950s and 1960s-era Ku Klux Klan members. Leaders of this movement include the Yale-educated

Jared Taylor, who argues in his most recent book that white Americans have racial interests they should seek to protect (2011). Others, like conservative political pundit Patrick Buchanan explicitly advocate for the rise of “white racial consciousness” as part of a collective effort on the part of whites to protect the nation from the effects of changing demographics (Buchanan 2011). Talk-show host Rush Limbaugh has suggested that President Obama’s administration hates “white people” and that whites are being sent to “the back of the bus” (Limbaugh 2009).

Currently, these elite-driven efforts to appeal directly and explicitly to white identity are at the margins of political discourse, but if white identity grows at the mass level, this kind of rhetoric may become more mainstream. The combination of these factors suggests that over the coming years, race-relations in the U.S. may be increasingly defined by whites’ efforts to assert pro-white policies and practices. The research here suggests, in part, that these efforts are not necessarily motivated by outgroup animus. Rather, conflict may be more about the maintenance of power and privilege. Nevertheless, in their efforts to preserve ingroup privileges, white identifiers may, under some circumstances, come to embrace policies that discriminate against minorities in practice.

Furthermore, demographic changes in which whites’ relative share of the population continues to decrease may lead whites to believe that their relative power as a group has waned considerably. They may subsequently come to believe more fully that racial equality has been achieved—a point that rings especially true when one considers the popular promulgation that a post-racial America had been realized after the election of Obama—and may therefore become increasingly opposed to policies aimed at

reducing structural inequalities between minorities and whites. Whites also may come to believe that their group is actually racially disadvantaged, furthering their support for policies that disproportionately benefit their group (Morrison, Plaut, and Ybarra 2010). Troublingly, the work here implies that elites have the power to amplify these attitudes among whites by reminding them of impending demographic changes, and the efforts of political elites like Buchanan and Limbaugh suggest that these strategies are already being employed.

The results also suggest, however, that not all whites will respond negatively to population changes, nor do all whites identify strongly with their racial group. In fact, it appears that low white identifiers are actually quite *supportive* of population changes, and additional work needs to be done in order to understand more fully the political preferences and behavior of *both* low and high white identifiers. Furthermore, other research has shown that when members of dominant groups recognize that their group is somehow illegitimately privileged, they are more likely to support practices that reduce their relative power (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer 2007). Thus, many whites may not respond with anger and fear to threats to whites' status.

Another implication of this project is that elites have the power to quell conflict by reframing policies as non-threatening to group status. Furthermore, work by scholars like Gaertner and colleagues (1997), under the umbrella of aversive racism, proposes that intergroup bias can be reduced by efforts to re-categorize groups under single, superordinate identities (see also Sherif (1958) and Transue (2007)). Some work, for instance, has shown that when whites prioritize an American identity over a more inclusive "Caucasian" identity, they tend to be more amenable to policies designed to

benefit blacks (H. Smith and Tyler 1996). Thus, redirecting ingroup favoritism may prove to be a powerful strategy for addressing racial biases resulting from whites' ingroup identities.

I have provided evidence that white identity is now chronically salient, and thus, white identity is likely to play an important role in U.S. politics for the foreseeable future. But is a desire to protect group interests likely to define whites' race-related political attitudes in the very long-term? Probably not. As Sears and Savalei suggest, "the new immigrant groups may well enter the United States as somewhat alien and therefore stigmatized minority groups, but in the long run are not likely to face the same impermeable color line as blacks" (2006, p. 917) Many of these groups, just as the Irish and Italians immigrants of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, will likely be subsumed under the umbrella of whiteness. When this process is complete, other forms of racial attitudes may more strongly govern opinion. The process of assimilation is an inter-generational one, however, and it still may forever change the now predominantly Anglo-Protestant nature of American culture. Therefore, instead of seeing this identity as only temporary, we should expect its salience to wax and wane over time as whites' dominance fluctuates. Thus, the import of white identity in the coming decades cannot be ignored.



## **Appendix A: Full Wording of Survey Questions**

### **Survey Sampling International (SSI) Study**

#### **Closeness**

People have a lot of different feelings toward a variety of groups in society. We would like to get a sense of how you feel toward different groups. Now, you'll see a list of groups in American society. Indicate how close you feel to whites in your ideas, interests, and feelings about things.

1. Not at all close
2. A little close
3. Moderately close
4. Very close
5. Extremely close

#### **White Identity**

As you know, people have different identities. They think of themselves as black, white, etc. We would like to ask you how you think about yourself. How important to you is your identity as a white person? Would you say that it is extremely important, very important, moderately important, a little important, or not at all important?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Moderately important
4. A little important
5. Not at all important

How strongly do you identify with other white people? Do you identify: extremely strongly, very strongly, moderately strongly, not very strongly, or not at all strongly?

1. Extremely strongly
2. Very strongly
3. Moderately strongly
4. Not very strongly
5. Not at all strongly

#### **Linked fate**

Do you think that what happens generally to white people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?

1. Yes
2. No

Will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much?

1. A lot
2. Some
3. Not very much

### **American Identity**

How important to you is your identity as an American? Would you say that it is extremely important, very important, moderately important, a little important, or not at all important?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Moderately important
4. A little important
5. Not at all important

### **Group Consciousness**

How important is it that whites work together to improve the position of their group?

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Moderately important
4. A little important
5. Not important at all

How important is it that whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?

1. Extremely important
2. Very Important
3. Moderately important
4. A little important
5. Not at all important

How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?

1. Extremely likely
2. Very likely
3. Moderately likely
4. Slightly likely
5. Not likely at all

How likely is it that many whites are not accepted to some colleges because these colleges are admitting minorities instead?

1. Extremely likely
2. Very likely
3. Moderately likely
4. Slightly likely
5. Not likely at all

### **Social Dominance Orientation**

The next statements are about the way different people view basic values in American society. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

We should try to get ahead by any means necessary.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

Sometimes war is necessary to put other nations in their place.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

Winning is more important than how the game is played.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

Inferior groups should stay in their place.

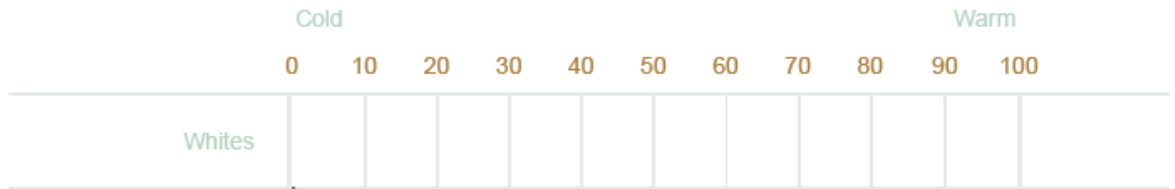
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

### **Feeling Thermometer Evaluation**

We would like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. When you see the name of a person or group, please rate it with what we call a feeling thermometer by moving the mouse pointer and clicking on the thermometer on a number from 0 to

100. Ratings between 0 and 49 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably toward the person or group and that you don't care too much for that person or group; ratings between 51 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward the person or group. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward a person or group you would rate them at 50 degrees.

Using the feeling thermometer below, how do you feel toward whites?



### White Guilt

Please tell us how often you think or feel the following:

How often do you feel guilty about the benefits and privileges that you receive as a white American?

1. Extremely often
2. Very often
3. Somewhat often
4. Not very often
5. Never

How often do you feel guilty about the past and present social inequality of black Americans (i.e., slavery, poverty)?

1. Extremely often
2. Very often
3. Somewhat often
4. Not very often
5. Never

How often do you feel guilty about social inequality between white and black Americans?

1. Extremely often
2. Very often
3. Somewhat often
4. Not very often
5. Never

When you think about the history of this country and the treatment of different non-white groups, how often do you feel guilty because you are white?

1. Extremely often
2. Very often

3. Somewhat often
4. Not very often
5. Never

### **White Privilege**

Please indicate the extent to which you think or feel the following:

To what extent does your status as a white person grant you unearned privileges in today's society?

1. A great deal
2. A lot
3. A moderate amount
4. A little
5. None at all

To what extent do you feel that white people have benefits or privileges due to their race?

1. A great deal
2. A lot
3. A moderate amount
4. A little
5. None at all

To what extent does having white skin in the United States open doors for whites during their everyday lives?

1. A great deal
2. A lot
3. A moderate amount
4. A little
5. None at all

To what extent do you feel that having white skin is an asset to you in your everyday life?

1. A great deal
2. A lot
3. A moderate amount
4. A little
5. None at all

To what extent do white Americans have certain advantages that minorities do not have in this society?

1. A great deal
2. A lot
3. A moderate amount
4. A little
5. None at all

### **Authoritarianism**

Although there are a number of qualities that people feel that children should have, every person thinks that some are more important than others. We are going to show you pairs of desirable qualities. Please say which items are more important for children to have:

Obedience or self-reliance

1. Obedience
2. Self-reliance

Independence or respect for elders

1. Independence
2. Respect for elders

Curiosity or good manners

1. Curiosity
2. Good manners

Considerate or well behaved

1. Considerate
2. Well behaved

### **Limited Government**

Next, we are going to ask you to choose which of two statements you see comes closer to your own opinion. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your own views.

1. The main reason government has become bigger over the years is because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves;
  2. Government has become bigger because the problems we face have become bigger.
- 
1. Government is bigger because it's involved in things people should handle themselves
  2. Government is bigger because the problems we face have become bigger
- 
1. The less government, the better
  2. There are more things that government should be doing

### **Racial Resentment**

Please tell us whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

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

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

It is 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.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

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

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

### **Alienation**

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with following statements.

American society owes white people a better chance in life than they currently have.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

American society has provided white people a fair opportunity to get ahead in life.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree

4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

### **Egalitarianism**

Please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat disagree
6. Disagree
7. Strongly disagree

### **Party ID**

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a DEMOCRAT, a REPUBLICAN, an INDEPENDENT, or what?

1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent



4. No preference
5. Other party: specify

[If select Democrat] Would you call yourself a STRONG Democrat or a NOT VERY STRONG Democrat?

1. Strong
2. Not very strong

[If select Republican] Would you call yourself a STRONG Republican or a NOT VERY STRONG Republican?

1. Strong
2. Not very strong

[If select Independent] Do you think of yourself as CLOSER to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?

1. Closer to the Republican
2. Closer to the Democratic
3. Neither

### **Ideology**

In general, do you think of yourself as...

1. Extremely liberal
2. Liberal
3. Slightly liberal
4. Moderate, middle of the road
5. Slightly Conservative
6. Conservative
7. Extremely Conservative
8. I haven't thought much about this

### **Political Interest and Engagement**

How interested are you in information about what's going on in government and politics?

1. Extremely interested
2. Very interested
3. Moderately interested
4. Slightly interested
5. Not at all interested

### **Political Knowledge**

Next are some questions to help us see how much information about politics gets out to the public. Many people don't know the answers to these questions, but we would be grateful if you would please answer every question even if you are not sure what the right answer is.

What job or political office is held by John Boehner?

1. U.S. Secretary of Defense
2. Vice President of the United States
3. Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
4. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
5. None of these

Which party currently has the majority of the seats in the U.S. Senate?

1. Republicans
2. Democrats
3. Neither

What is the job or political office held by John Roberts?

1. U.S. Secretary of Defense
2. Vice President of the United States
3. Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
4. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
5. None of these

### **Personal Economic Evaluations**

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family living with you are better off, neither better off nor worse off, or worse off financially than you were a year ago?

1. Better off
2. Neither better off nor worse off
3. Worse off

### **National Economic Evaluations**

Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?

1. Better off
2. Neither better off nor worse off
3. Worse off

### **Gender**

Please indicate your gender.

1. Male
2. Female

### **Education**

Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.

1. No formal education

2. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade
3. 5th or 6th grade
4. 7th or 8th grade
5. 9th grade
6. 10th grade
7. 11th grade
8. 12th grade NO DIPLOMA
9. High School Graduate - High school diploma
10. Some college, no degree
11. Associate Degree
12. Bachelors Degree
13. Masters Degree
14. Professional or Doctorate Degree

**Income**

Please indicate your yearly household income.

1. Less than \$5,000
2. \$5,000 to \$7,000
3. \$7,500 to \$9,999
4. \$10,000 to \$12,499
5. \$12,500 to \$14,999
6. \$15,000 to \$19,999
7. \$20,000 to \$24,999
8. \$25,000 to \$29,999
9. \$30,000 to \$34,999
10. \$35,000 to \$39,999
11. \$40,000 to \$49,999
12. \$50,000 to \$59,999
13. \$60,000 to \$74,999
14. \$75,000 to \$84,999
15. \$85,000 to \$99,999
16. \$100,000 to \$124,999
17. \$125,000 to \$149,999
18. \$150,000 to \$174,999
19. \$175,000 or more

**Employment Status**

We would like to know if you are working now, temporarily laid off, Unemployed, retired, permanently disabled, a homemaker, student, or something else?

1. Working now
2. Temporarily laid off
3. Unemployed
4. Retired
5. Permanently disabled
6. Homemaker
7. Student
8. Something else (Please specify)

**Emotions**

Please let us know if the news story you read made you feel any of the following emotions. Did the story make you feel...

- Anxious?
- Proud?
- Angry?
- Hopeful?
- Afraid?
- Excited?
- Happy?
- Depressed?
- Sad?
- Uneasy?
- Disgusted?

1. Yes
2. No

**Presidential Approval**

Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

1. Approve extremely strongly
2. Approve moderately strongly
3. Approve slightly strongly
4. Neither approve nor disapprove
5. Disapprove slightly strongly
6. Disapprove moderately strongly
7. Disapprove extremely strongly

### **Group Obama Favors**

In general, do you think the policies of the Obama administration favor whites over blacks, favor blacks over whites, or do they treat both groups the same?

1. Favors whites over blacks
2. Favors blacks over whites
3. Both groups treated the same

### **Neighborhood Segregation**

Which of these statements would you agree with:

1. White people have a right to keep black people out of their neighborhoods if they want to.
2. Black people have a right to live wherever they can afford to, just like anybody else.

### **Affirmative Action**

Some people say that because of past discrimination it is sometimes necessary for colleges and universities to reserve openings for black students. Others oppose quotas because they say it discriminates against whites. What about your opinion—do you support or oppose quotas to admit black students?

1. Support a great deal
2. Support a moderate amount
3. Support a little
4. Neither support nor oppose
5. Oppose a little
6. Oppose a moderate amount
7. Oppose a great deal

Some people say that because of past discrimination it is sometimes necessary for colleges and universities to reserve openings for black students. Others oppose quotas because they say quotas give blacks advantages they haven't earned. What about your opinion--do you support or oppose quotas to admit black students?

1. Support a great deal
2. Support a moderate amount
3. Support a little
4. Neither support nor oppose
5. Oppose a little
6. Oppose a moderate amount
7. Oppose a great deal

Should federal spending on aid to whites be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

1. Increased a great deal
2. Increased a moderate amount
3. Increased a little
4. Kept about the same
5. Decreased a little
6. Decreased a moderate amount
7. Decreased a great deal
8. Cut out entirely

Some people say the following things are important for being truly American. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is?

- To have been born in America
- To have lived in America for most of one's life
- To be a Christian
- To be able to speak English
- To have American citizenship
- To feel American
- To respect America's political institutions and laws
- To have American ancestry
- To be white

1. Not at all important
2. A little important
3. Moderately important
4. Very important
5. Extremely important

### **Support for Medicare**

Do you support or oppose expanding the Medicare program to pay for nursing home care and long hospital stays for the elderly?

1. Support a great deal
2. Support a moderate amount
3. Support a little
4. Neither support nor oppose
5. Oppose a little
6. Oppose a moderate amount
7. Oppose a great deal

### **Support for Welfare**

Do you support or oppose welfare programs?

1. Support a great deal
2. Support a moderate amount
3. Support a little
4. Neither support nor oppose
5. Oppose a little
6. Oppose a moderate amount
7. Oppose a great deal

### **Support for Social Security**

Should federal spending on Social Security be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

1. Increased a great deal
2. Increased a moderate amount
3. Increased a little
4. Kept about the same
5. Decreased a little
6. Decreased a moderate amount
7. Decreased a great deal
8. Cut out entirely

### **Immigration Attitudes**

Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be increased, decreased, or left the same as it is now?

1. Increased a great deal
2. Increased a moderate amount
3. Increased a little
4. Left the same as it is now
5. Decreased a little
6. Decreased a moderate amount
7. Decreased a great deal

Please tell us how likely you think each of the following are when it comes to new immigrants to America. How likely is it that new immigrants to America will...

Take jobs away from American citizens?

1. Extremely likely
2. Very likely
3. Moderately likely
4. Slightly likely
5. Not likely at all

Change American traditions and values?

1. Extremely likely
2. Very likely
3. Moderately likely
4. Slightly likely
5. Not likely at all

Quickly blend into American society?

1. Extremely likely
2. Very likely
3. Moderately likely
4. Slightly likely
5. Not likely at all

### **Group Conflict**

For the next few questions please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

More good jobs for Hispanics mean fewer good jobs for members of other groups.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

The more influence Hispanics have in politics, the less influence members of other groups will have in politics.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

More good jobs for blacks mean fewer good jobs for members of other groups.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

The more influence blacks have in politics, the less influence members of other groups will have in politics.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree



**Concern over Ethnic Composition of U.S.**

How worried are you that the changing ethnic makeup of the United States will make it hard to maintain the American way of life? Would you say that you are very worried, somewhat worried, or not at all worried about this?

1. Extremely worried
2. Very Worried
3. Moderately worried
4. A little worried
5. Not at all worried

## **Knowledge Networks Study**

### **Linked Fate**

Do you think what happens to whites will affect your life?

1. Yes
2. No

Will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much at all?

1. A lot
2. Some
3. Not very much at all

### **White Identity**

How important to you is your identity as a white person? Would you say that it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not very important
4. Not at all important

### **Closeness**

Now we have some more questions about different groups in society. How close do you feel to [whites] in your ideas, interests, and feelings about things?

1. Very close
2. Fairly close
3. Not too close
4. Not at all close

### **American Identity**

Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement.

Being an American is a very important part of how I see myself.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

### **Personal Economic Evaluations**

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family living with you are better off, neither better off nor worse off, or worse off financially than you were a year ago?

1. Better off
2. Neither better off nor worse off
3. Worse off

### **Racial Resentment**

Below are several additional statements. Please tell us whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

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

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

It is 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.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

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

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

### **Group Conflict**

For the next few questions please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

More good jobs for blacks/Hispanics mean fewer good jobs for members of other groups.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

The more influence blacks/Hispanics have in politics, the less influence members of other groups will have in politics.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

As more good housing and neighborhoods go to blacks/Hispanics, there will be fewer good houses and neighborhoods for members of other groups.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Many blacks/Hispanics have been trying to get ahead economically at the expense of other groups.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

### **Group Influence**

Next, we would like you to answer some questions about groups in America. Some people think that certain groups have too much influence in American life and politics, while others feel that they don't have enough influence. You will be presented with a list of groups and for each one please tell us whether that group has too much influence, just about the right amount of influence, or too little influence.

Blacks / Hispanics

1. Too much influence
2. Just about the right amount of influence
3. Too little influence

**Affirmative Action**

Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose affirmative action policies for Blacks in the workplace?

1. Favor
2. Neither favor nor oppose
3. Oppose

Do you strongly [FAVOR/OPPOSE] or not strongly [FAVOR/OPPOSE] affirmative action policies for Blacks in the workplace?

1. Strongly
2. Not strongly

Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose affirmative action policies for Blacks in colleges and universities?

1. Favor
2. Neither favor nor oppose
3. Oppose

Do you strongly [FAVOR/OPPOSE] or not strongly [FAVOR/OPPOSE] affirmative action policies for Blacks in colleges and universities?

1. Strongly
2. Not strongly

**Immigration Attitudes**

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements?

Immigrants make America more open to new ideas and cultures.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Immigrants take jobs away from American citizens.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

**Support for Welfare**

Do you think federal spending on welfare programs should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

1. Increased
2. Kept about the same
3. Decreased

Do you think federal spending on welfare programs should be [INCREASED/DECREASED] a great deal, a moderate amount, or a little?

1. A great deal
2. A moderate amount
3. A little

### **Support for Social Security**

Do you think federal spending on Social Security should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

1. Increased
2. Kept about the same
3. Decreased

Do you think federal spending on Social Security should be [INCREASED/DECREASED] a great deal, a moderate amount, or a little?

1. A great deal
2. A moderate amount
3. A little

### **Concern about Ethnic Composition of U.S.**

How worried are you that the changing ethnic makeup of the United States will make it hard to maintain the American way of life? Would you say that you are very worried, somewhat worried, or not at all worried about this?

1. Very worried
2. Somewhat worried
3. Not at all worried

### **Presidential Approval**

Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

1. Approve
2. Neither approve nor disapprove
3. Disapprove

### **Obama Favors Groups**

In general, do you think the policies of the Obama administration favor Whites over Blacks, favor Blacks over Whites, or do they treat both groups the same?

1. Favors Whites over Blacks
2. Both groups treated the same
3. Favors Blacks over Whites

**Alienation**

Please tell us whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements.

American society owes white people a better chance in life than we currently have.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

American society has provided white people a fair opportunity to get ahead in life.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

American society just hasn't dealt fairly white people.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

## Appendix B: Population Displacement Experiment Conditions

### Control



## Mobile Carrier Demographics; Younger Americans more likely to be customer of AT&T

By David Miller,  
Associated Press

June 22, 2013

Americans between the ages of 18 and 30 comprise a majority of AT&T's mobile service customer base. ComScore, an information service and research firm, and the authority on the consumption of mobile content and applications, has found that the top traditional cellular carriers in the U.S. have distinct trends in the demographic characteristics of their customers.

"Our data show that each carrier attracts its own demographic, which correlates with the consumption of mobile content," observed Sean McAteer, senior analyst and chief product architect for ComScore. Different cellular service carriers appear to appeal to attract different demographic groups based on age.



ComScore found that carriers like AT&T and T-Mobile have a high percentage of younger subscribers, particularly those between the ages of 18-34 – the most likely to consume mobile content.

"Younger users spend more time on their phones with services like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media applications on their phones. These users are more interested in the phones and services offered by companies like AT&T and T-Mobile, which cater more toward the use of these services. Members of these younger demographic groups are also more likely to be early adopters of technology, and joined AT&T when Apple's new iPhone was exclusive to the company," explained McAteer.

On the other hand, the other major mobile providers in the U.S., Sprint and Verizon, tend to appeal to older individuals. Sprint subscribers are 47.4 percent more likely to be between the ages of 35 and 44, compared to those who subscribe to other networks. Verizon subscribers are 25.2 percent more likely to be over 45.

According to McAteer, older individuals are more likely to use their phones exclusively for phone calls to co-workers, clients, friends, and family members. For these individuals, cellular plans with smaller data plans but more minutes and group plans are most appealing. Sprint and Verizon offer a wider range of these options than other cellular carriers.



## Treatment 1: Population Displacement Condition



### Minority Population in U.S. Overtakes Whites

By David Miller,  
Associated Press

June 22, 2013

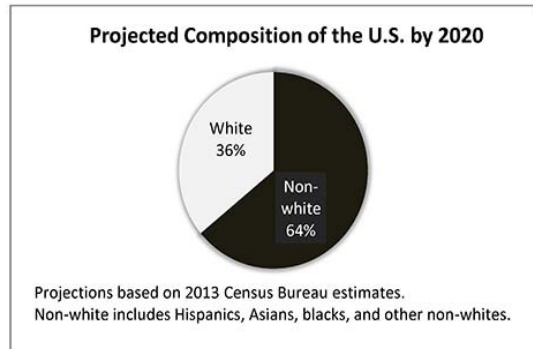
#### Story Highlights

- By 2021 Hispanics, blacks, & Asians will outnumber white Americans.
- Increased immigration and higher birthrates are driving changes.

At the end of this decade, white Americans will no longer comprise a majority of the U.S. population, according to new Census Bureau projections.

By 2020, Hispanics, blacks, and Asians will together outnumber whites, a transformation that is occurring faster than anticipated just a few years ago. In several states, including California and Texas, non-whites are already in the majority.

The main reason for the change in the projections is significantly higher birthrates among immigrants and other minority group members, which the Census Projections did not fully account for. Another factor is the arrival of more foreigners, rising from about 1.3 million annually today to more than 2 million a year by the next decade, according to analysis based on current immigration policies.



**“This country is experiencing rapid racial and ethnic change,” said Max Mathews, a demographer with the Population Reference Bureau, a research organization in Washington.**

With the Census Bureau forecasting even more immigrants, demographers estimate that the proportion of foreign-born Americans, now about 12 percent, could surpass the 1910 historic high of nearly 15 percent by about 2015 and may approach 20 percent in 2020.

According to the new forecast, by 2020, the number of Hispanic people will nearly triple, to 133 million from 47 million, to account for 30 percent of Americans, compared with 15 percent today.

Asians, with their ranks soaring to 41 million from 16 million, will make up more than 9 percent of the population, up from 5 percent.

The black population is projected to rise to 66 million from 41 million, increasing its overall share by two percentage points, to 15 percent.

Mathews noted that while the composition of the country is shifting, the economic costs of these changes will be negligible. Taxes paid by these groups and their contribution to economic growth will compensate for any financial burden they might place on society.

## Treatment 2: Population Maintenance Condition



### Minority Population in U.S. Shrinking Relative to Whites

By David Miller,  
Associated Press

June 22, 2013

#### Story Highlights

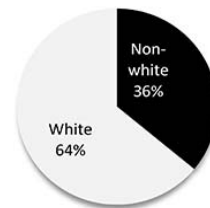
- Whites will continue to make up a strong majority of the U.S. population.
- Reductions in immigration and lower minority birthrates are driving changes.

At the end of this decade, white Americans will continue to comprise a majority of the U.S. population, according to new Census Bureau projections.

By 2020, Hispanics, blacks, and Asians will remain a minority of the nation's population as their numbers decline, a transformation that is occurring faster than anticipated just a few years ago. These new projections mean through at least midcentury, whites will continue to constitute a majority of the U.S. population.

The main reason for the change in the projections is significantly lower birthrates among immigrants and other minority group members, which the Census Projections did not fully account for. Another factor is the arrival of fewer foreigners, declining from about 2 million annually today to less than 1.3 million a year by the next decade, as well as the return of many immigrants to their home countries, according to analysis based on current immigration policies.

Projected Composition of the U.S. by 2020



Projections based on 2013 Census Bureau estimates.  
Non-white includes Hispanics, Asians, blacks, and other non-whites.

**“This country has actually experienced a decline in racial and ethnic change,” said Max Mathews, a demographer with the Population Reference Bureau, a research organization in Washington.**

With the Census Bureau forecasting fewer immigrants, demographers estimate that the proportion of foreign-born Americans, now about 12 percent, could decline well below this number by about 2015 and may approach 6 percent in 2020.

According to the new forecast, by 2020, the number of Hispanic people will decrease significantly, to account for 9 percent of Americans, compared with 15 percent today.

Asians will make up no more than 5 percent of the population, down from 9 percent.

The black population is projected to decline as well, decreasing its overall share by two percentage points, to 11 percent.

Mathews noted that while the composition of the country is shifting, the economic costs of these changes will be negligible.

## Appendix C: White Identity and Extremism Experiment Conditions

### Control



## Student Starts Campus Group for Whites

By David Miller,  
Associated Press

June 22, 2013

Towson University senior Matthew Heimbach recently ignited controversy at the public university located just outside of Baltimore Maryland when he started a group specifically for white students.

“Every ethnic group has its own advocacy group but white students don’t. We essentially want to replicate what every student union does on campus,” Heimbach told the student newspaper. “You have a Black Student Union who promotes black heroes; we want to do the same thing and celebrate white heritage.”

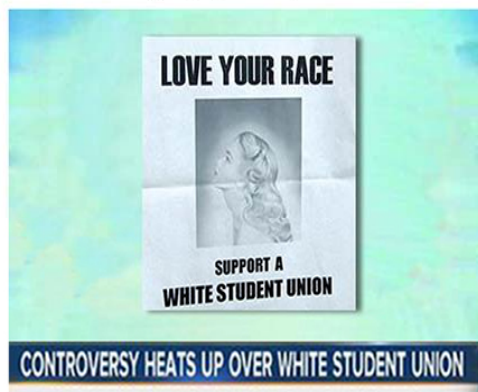
The organization’s website states that the group’s mission is to “advocate white campus community at Towson University through political activism, education, and promoting European cultural values.”

The group’s actions sparked comments from national organizations like the National Group Rights Center, who called the group the latest in a series of grassroots organizations designed to promote white interests.

As part of their efforts, the White Student Union circulated a flier around the university’s residence halls, which declared November and December as “White History Month.” They are also seeking donations to start a scholarship fund exclusively for white students.

“Towson has scholarships for black and Hispanic students, and we think that whites should get their own scholarship fund, too,” said Heimbach.

Heimbach said he has more than 50 students who are members of his group.



## Treatment: White-Supremacist Condition



### Student Starts Campus Group for Whites; Denounced As White-Supremacist Hate Group

By David Miller,  
Associated Press

June 22, 2013

Towson University senior Matthew Heimbach recently ignited controversy at the public university located just outside of Baltimore Maryland when he started a group specifically for white students.

“Every ethnic group has its own advocacy group but white students don’t. We essentially want to replicate what every student union does on campus,” Heimbach, a senior at Towson, told the student newspaper. “You have a Black Student Union who promotes black heroes; but the simple truth is that throughout history members of the white race have made far greater contributions.”



The group’s actions sparked intense criticism among the Towson student population, like the Black Student Union, and received national attention from organizations like the National Human Rights Center, who called the group a “white supremacist hate group”.

“When white people, who hold positions of privilege in our society, start a group promoting their race, it is almost always a thinly veiled appeal to white supremacy. As is usually the case, Heimbach and his supporters are supported by white nationalist groups as well as to the KKK and neo-Nazi organizations,” said National Human Rights Center representative Sara Ryan.

The organization’s website states that the group’s mission is to “advocate white campus community at Towson University through political activism, education, and promoting Western European cultural values.”

As part of their efforts, the White Student Union circulated a flier around the university’s residence halls, which declared November and December as “White History Month.” They are also seeking donations to start a scholarship fund exclusively for white students.

“Towson has scholarships for black and Hispanic students, and we think that whites should get their own scholarship fund, too,” said Heimbach.

Heimbach said he has more than 50 students who are members of his group.

## Appendix D: Complete Version of In-text Tables

**Table D1 The Relationship between Personality Traits, Demographics, and White Identity**

	ANES Face-to-Face	ANES Internet	KN	SSI
Extraversion	0.206** (0.083)	0.076* (0.042)		
Agreeableness	0.020 (0.114)	-0.000 (0.054)		
Conscientiousness	-0.005 (0.105)	0.073 (0.053)		
Emotional Stability	-0.350*** (0.092)	-0.064 (0.046)		
Openness to Experience	0.126 (0.111)	-0.043 (0.053)		
Authoritarianism	0.036** (0.017)	0.100*** (0.029)		0.038 (0.028)
Social Dominance				0.507*** (0.037)
Age	0.164** (0.072)	0.110*** (0.039)	0.098* (0.052)	0.072** (0.036)
Education	-0.096 (0.114)	-0.187*** (0.067)	-0.407*** (0.093)	-0.084 (0.076)
Female	0.054 (0.034)	-0.002 (0.018)	-0.013 (0.025)	0.022 (0.017)
Income	-0.088 (0.064)	0.030 (0.030)	0.030 (0.059)	0.014 (0.040)
Constant	0.441*** (0.121)	0.424*** (0.073)	0.853*** (0.073)	0.391*** (0.062)
Observations	502	2288	752	780
R-squared	0.087	0.039	0.048	0.223

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. All data, except SSI, are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: 2010 Knowledge Networks study, 2012 ANES, 2013 Survey Sampling International study.



**Table D2.1 Support for Increasing Levels of Immigration to the United States**

	1992	1994	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
White Feeling Thermometer	-0.240*** (0.054)	-0.080 (0.056)	-0.172** (0.075)	-0.436*** (0.112)	-0.375*** (0.084)	-0.567*** (0.078)	-0.342*** (0.083)
Hispanic Feeling Thermometer	0.142** (0.070)	0.175*** (0.062)	0.213** (0.096)	0.090 (0.134)	0.106 (0.103)	0.233** (0.097)	0.192* (0.102)
Black Feeling Thermometer	0.215*** (0.064)	0.070 (0.066)	0.068 (0.093)	0.279* (0.145)	0.300*** (0.098)	0.054 (0.100)	-0.048 (0.127)
Asian Feeling Thermometer	0.207*** (0.070)			0.083 (0.160)	0.126 (0.110)	0.517*** (0.104)	0.262** (0.103)
Positive National Economic Evaluations	0.035 (0.031)	0.073*** (0.026)	0.058 (0.036)	0.011 (0.047)	0.001 (0.038)	0.101 (0.069)	-0.098* (0.058)
Positive Personal Financial Evaluations	0.006 (0.023)	-0.018 (0.025)	0.047 (0.030)	-0.045 (0.045)	-0.028 (0.036)	0.082*** (0.031)	-0.014 (0.043)
Education	0.110*** (0.036)	0.176*** (0.042)	0.145*** (0.044)	0.170* (0.088)	0.312*** (0.058)	0.224*** (0.059)	0.136*** (0.044)
Age	0.115** (0.045)	0.156*** (0.051)	0.058 (0.052)	0.169** (0.083)	-0.001 (0.076)	0.000 (0.069)	0.037 (0.043)
Income	0.020 (0.037)	-0.015 (0.040)	-0.023 (0.045)	0.245*** (0.068)	0.000 (0.051)	-0.057 (0.059)	0.097** (0.043)
Party ID (1=Republican)	0.063** (0.029)	0.011 (0.036)	-0.065 (0.042)	0.046 (0.059)	0.009 (0.053)	0.038 (0.055)	-0.024 (0.059)
Ideology (1=conservative)	-0.134*** (0.046)	-0.060 (0.057)	-0.106 (0.066)	-0.259*** (0.088)	-0.130* (0.078)	-0.130* (0.075)	-0.074 (0.079)
Female	0.000 (0.018)	-0.000 (0.020)	0.007 (0.022)	0.029 (0.034)	-0.063** (0.028)	-0.030 (0.027)	-0.060** (0.024)
Constant	0.037 (0.059)	-0.040 (0.071)	0.106 (0.084)	0.184 (0.128)	0.143 (0.099)	0.174* (0.101)	0.394*** (0.102)
Observations	1126	944	829	342	521	745	554
R-squared	0.109	0.083	0.061	0.206	0.160	0.201	0.185

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 2000 sample includes only face-to-face respondents. Data are weighted. Source: ANES Cumulative File.

**Table D2.2a Knowledge Networks Opposition to Immigration**

	Decrease number of immigrants	Importance of immigration level issue	Increase federal spending on border security
White identity	0.147*** (0.050)	0.152*** (0.039)	-0.107*** (0.029)
Hispanic Feeling Thermometer	-0.365*** (0.057)	-0.132** (0.054)	0.191*** (0.036)
Age	0.219*** (0.061)	0.065 (0.049)	-0.130*** (0.040)
Education	-0.293*** (0.088)	-0.014 (0.092)	0.175*** (0.064)
Party ID (1=Republican)	0.113** (0.053)	0.008 (0.041)	-0.047 (0.037)
Ideology (1=conservative)	0.036 (0.077)	0.085 (0.059)	-0.232*** (0.057)
Female	-0.020 (0.028)	-0.022 (0.022)	0.043** (0.018)
Income	-0.072 (0.064)	-0.059 (0.044)	0.018 (0.042)
Positive personal financial outlook	0.074 (0.062)	-0.057 (0.054)	0.030 (0.040)
Treatment 2	-0.037 (0.050)	-0.009 (0.041)	0.016 (0.036)
Treatment 3	-0.000 (0.046)	-0.017 (0.036)	-0.027 (0.031)
Treatment 4	0.047 (0.050)	0.007 (0.038)	-0.038 (0.032)
Treatment 5	0.041 (0.046)	-0.008 (0.036)	-0.032 (0.030)
Treatment 12	0.076 (0.059)	-0.069 (0.059)	0.022 (0.051)
Treatment 13	0.018 (0.080)	0.035 (0.043)	-0.048 (0.047)
Treatment 14	0.008 (0.084)	0.027 (0.072)	-0.005 (0.052)
Treatment 15	-0.031 (0.065)	0.111** (0.053)	0.003 (0.042)
Treatment 16	0.041 (0.065)	-0.016 (0.049)	-0.096** (0.049)
Constant	0.806*** (0.092)	0.491*** (0.095)	0.235*** (0.058)
Observations	723	728	729
R-squared	0.207	0.098	0.252

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: Knowledge Networks 2010 Survey.

**Table D2.2b Knowledge Network Opposition to Immigration**

	Immigrants make America more open to new ideas & culture (strongly disagree)	Immigrants take jobs away from American citizens (strongly agree)	Worried about ethnic change
White identity	0.192*** (0.036)	0.255*** (0.041)	0.340*** (0.051)
Hispanic Feeling Thermometer	-0.392*** (0.049)	-0.358*** (0.051)	-0.218*** (0.067)
Age	0.067 (0.050)	-0.037 (0.042)	0.024 (0.059)
Education	-0.202*** (0.072)	-0.275*** (0.070)	-0.458*** (0.098)
Party ID (1=Republican)	0.010 (0.039)	0.021 (0.041)	0.039 (0.055)
Ideology (1=conservative)	0.086 (0.058)	0.117* (0.060)	0.249*** (0.073)
Female	0.007 (0.022)	0.015 (0.021)	0.031 (0.027)
Income	-0.020 (0.047)	-0.093* (0.049)	0.084 (0.057)
Positive personal financial outlook	-0.056 (0.050)	0.007 (0.055)	-0.120* (0.065)
Treatment 2	-0.014 (0.039)	0.010 (0.038)	-0.007 (0.047)
Treatment 3	-0.055 (0.041)	0.016 (0.040)	0.030 (0.049)
Treatment 4	-0.000 (0.037)	0.036 (0.036)	0.077* (0.045)
Treatment 5	-0.017 (0.037)	0.012 (0.036)	-0.002 (0.048)
Treatment 12	0.009 (0.038)	0.087* (0.045)	0.035 (0.074)
Treatment 13	0.041 (0.066)	0.030 (0.050)	0.075 (0.059)
Treatment 14	-0.070 (0.062)	0.009 (0.057)	-0.115 (0.079)
Treatment 15	-0.047 (0.049)	0.099** (0.040)	0.045 (0.062)
Treatment 16	-0.067 (0.054)	0.022 (0.072)	-0.055 (0.068)
Constant	0.595*** (0.075)	0.761*** (0.071)	0.443*** (0.099)
Observations	718	722	728
R-squared	0.266	0.303	0.271

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted.

All variables are coded 0 to 1.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: Knowledge Networks 2010 Survey



**Table D2.3 ANES Opposition to Immigration**

	Decrease number of immigrants	Immigrants take jobs away from American citizens (strongly agree)	Support law checking immigration status	Illegal immigrant feeling thermometer
White identity	0.071 (0.052)	0.120*** (0.038)	-0.033 (0.032)	0.093** (0.045)
Hispanic Feeling Thermometer	-0.250*** (0.086)	-0.172*** (0.058)	0.381*** (0.057)	-0.347*** (0.063)
Age	-0.020 (0.072)	-0.040 (0.045)	0.058 (0.041)	-0.162*** (0.054)
Education	-0.175** (0.072)	-0.143*** (0.045)	0.037 (0.040)	-0.127** (0.053)
Party ID (1=Republican)	0.141* (0.077)	-0.026 (0.058)	-0.069 (0.044)	-0.013 (0.063)
Ideology (1=conservative)	0.401*** (0.117)	0.105 (0.084)	-0.132* (0.070)	0.232*** (0.086)
Female	0.037 (0.036)	0.062** (0.024)	0.035* (0.021)	0.023 (0.030)
Income	-0.084 (0.079)	-0.096** (0.043)	0.026 (0.039)	-0.007 (0.056)
Limited government	0.146** (0.060)	-0.046 (0.038)	-0.030 (0.032)	-0.040 (0.045)
Positive personal financial outlook	-0.098 (0.065)	0.023 (0.044)	0.041 (0.037)	-0.039 (0.055)
Positive national financial outlook	-0.046 (0.081)	-0.140** (0.058)	-0.033 (0.050)	-0.105 (0.069)
Constant	0.625*** (0.128)	0.802*** (0.070)	0.162*** (0.058)	0.737*** (0.089)
Observations	566	555	576	571
R-squared	0.287	0.167	0.220	0.159

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted.

All variables are coded 0 to 1.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File

**Table D2.4. SSI Opposition to Immigration**

	Decrease number of immigrants	Increase federal spending on border security	Immigrants change American culture and values (extremely likely)	Immigrants take jobs away from American citizens (strongly agree)
White identity	0.153** (0.060)	0.178*** (0.048)	0.284*** (0.073)	0.353*** (0.071)
Hispanic Feeling Thermometer	-0.134** (0.061)	0.006 (0.049)	-0.063 (0.074)	-0.171** (0.072)
Age	0.238*** (0.068)	0.186*** (0.055)	0.033 (0.083)	0.022 (0.080)
Education	-0.140 (0.136)	-0.061 (0.110)	0.120 (0.165)	-0.238 (0.161)
Party ID (1=Republican)	-0.054 (0.060)	0.033 (0.048)	0.155** (0.072)	-0.047 (0.070)
Ideology (1=conservative)	0.124* (0.070)	0.105* (0.056)	-0.097 (0.085)	0.108 (0.083)
Female	0.060** (0.030)	-0.012 (0.025)	-0.060 (0.037)	0.005 (0.036)
Income	-0.032 (0.073)	0.004 (0.059)	-0.074 (0.088)	-0.043 (0.086)
Limited government	-0.025 (0.039)	-0.041 (0.032)	-0.021 (0.048)	-0.099** (0.047)
Positive personal financial outlook	0.000 (0.048)	-0.017 (0.039)	-0.062 (0.059)	0.070 (0.057)
Positive national financial outlook	0.115** (0.050)	0.125*** (0.041)	0.104* (0.061)	0.091 (0.059)
Treatment 1	0.049 (0.036)	0.019 (0.029)	0.034 (0.044)	0.009 (0.043)
Treatment 2	-0.006 (0.037)	-0.017 (0.030)	0.073 (0.045)	0.000 (0.043)
Constant	0.474*** (0.133)	0.522*** (0.107)	0.212 (0.161)	0.552*** (0.156)
Observations	301	300	299	299
R-squared	0.178	0.231	0.135	0.232

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses.  
 All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.  
 Source: Survey Sampling International 2013 survey.

**Table D3 Logit Estimations of Vote Choice and Belief that Obama Favors Blacks over Whites**

	Voted For Obama	Obama Favors Blacks Over Whites
White identity	-1.272** (0.552)	1.091** (0.477)
Racial resentment	-0.867 (1.355)	1.429* (0.810)
Age	0.086 (0.795)	0.235 (0.672)
Education	0.790 (0.869)	-0.616 (0.619)
Party ID (1=Republican)	-4.707*** (0.956)	0.212 (0.754)
Ideology (1=Conservative)	-3.600** (1.461)	0.779 (0.980)
Egalitarianism	-3.427** (1.721)	3.890*** (0.913)
Female	-0.219 (0.479)	-0.056 (0.320)
Income	-0.713 (0.995)	0.739 (0.661)
Limited government	-0.291 (0.748)	0.386 (0.588)
Positive personal financial outlook	0.175 (0.886)	-0.142 (0.616)
Positive national financial outlook	4.555*** (0.948)	-2.415*** (0.853)
South	0.101 (0.481)	-0.298 (0.341)
Union membership	0.140 (0.604)	-0.057 (0.452)
Married	-0.465 (0.431)	0.051 (0.329)
Constant	3.547** (1.505)	-3.636*** (0.939)
Observations	451	574

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two-tailed.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File

Table D4 Support for Social Security over Time

	1984	1988	1992	1994	1996	2000	2002	2004	2008	2012
White Feeling	0.074**	0.068**	0.071**	0.124***	0.160***	0.152***	0.196***	0.064	0.088*	0.271***
Thermometer	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.037)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.038)	(0.060)	(0.048)	(0.091)
Hispanic Feeling	-0.118***	0.055	-0.034	-0.041	-0.140**	0.134	-0.067	0.086	0.002	-0.151
Thermometer	(0.040)	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.066)	(0.098)	(0.049)	(0.060)	(0.047)	(0.111)
Black Feeling	0.083*	-0.032	-0.016	0.018	-0.018	-0.140	-0.148***	-0.030	0.099	0.010
Thermometer	(0.043)	(0.036)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.069)	(0.088)	(0.050)	(0.073)	(0.061)	(0.105)
Asian Feeling			0.014			-0.041	0.005	-0.058	-0.149**	-0.057
Thermometer			(0.046)			(0.062)	(0.047)	(0.068)	(0.058)	(0.110)
Positive National	-0.032**	-0.023	-0.030	-0.034**	-0.018	-0.035	-0.031	-0.031	-0.015	0.076
Economic	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.017)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.041)	(0.064)
Positive Personal	-0.007	0.033**	-0.002	-0.000	-0.001	-0.005	0.026	-0.037*	-0.011	-0.113**
Financial Evaluations	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.052)
Education	-0.099***	-0.045**	-0.096***	-0.155***	-0.112***	-0.090**	-0.083***	-0.168***	-0.046	-0.139**
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.032)	(0.038)	(0.022)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.055)
Age	-0.055**	-0.017	-0.038	-0.030	-0.003	-0.067	0.015	-0.041	0.053	0.001
	(0.025)	(0.030)	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.055)
Income	-0.067***	-0.024	-0.074***	-0.022	-0.046	0.032		-0.048	-0.038	-0.070
	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.034)		(0.034)	(0.027)	(0.059)
Party ID	0.063***	0.036*	0.019	0.036*	0.100***	0.049*	0.037*	0.009	0.000	0.041
(1=Republican)	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.031)	(0.029)	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.064)
Ideology	-0.054**	-0.087***	-0.006	-0.071**	-0.041	-0.001	-0.038	-0.012	-0.091**	-0.116
(1=conservative)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.034)	(0.042)	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.041)	(0.037)	(0.085)
Female	0.029***	0.050***	0.054***	0.049***	0.039**	0.048***	0.009	0.036**	0.034**	0.094***
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.030)
Limited Government			-0.048***			-0.102***		-0.095***	-0.066***	-0.062
			(0.015)			(0.028)		(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.044)
Constant	0.925***	0.839***	0.893***	0.889***	0.845***	0.885***	0.931***	1.041***	0.931***	0.814***
	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.036)	(0.045)	(0.069)	(0.067)	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.089)
Observations	958	841	1159	945	835	346	787	520	742	558
R-squared	0.124	0.087	0.116	0.135	0.116	0.188	0.074	0.180	0.101	0.135

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File. Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

**Table D5.1. SSI Social Welfare and Race Policy Data**

	Increase social security spending	Increase Medicare spending	Increase welfare spending	Affirmative action – universities	Support for neighborho od segregation
White identity	0.098* (0.054)	0.152*** (0.053)	0.049 (0.065)	-0.103 (0.096)	0.263*** (0.063)
Racial resentment	-0.056 (0.069)	-0.098 (0.067)	-0.363*** (0.083)	0.601*** (0.121)	0.064 (0.080)
Age	0.212*** (0.063)	0.093 (0.061)	-0.102 (0.075)	0.057 (0.103)	-0.082 (0.073)
Education	-0.213* (0.125)	-0.256** (0.121)	-0.321** (0.149)	0.175 (0.213)	-0.032 (0.146)
Party ID (1=Republican)	0.014 (0.055)	-0.000 (0.054)	-0.011 (0.067)	0.060 (0.092)	0.062 (0.065)
Ideology (1=conservative)	-0.211*** (0.065)	-0.160** (0.063)	-0.178** (0.078)	0.046 (0.110)	-0.031 (0.076)
Female	0.029 (0.028)	0.031 (0.027)	-0.044 (0.034)	0.006 (0.048)	0.018 (0.033)
Income	-0.131* (0.067)	-0.057 (0.065)	-0.154* (0.080)	0.122 (0.119)	-0.148* (0.078)
Limited government	0.083** (0.037)	0.079** (0.035)	0.153*** (0.044)	-0.047 (0.061)	-0.038 (0.042)
Positive personal financial outlook	0.007 (0.044)	-0.020 (0.043)	0.023 (0.053)	0.001 (0.074)	-0.030 (0.051)
Positive national financial outlook	0.010 (0.047)	0.022 (0.046)	-0.074 (0.056)	0.028 (0.079)	-0.017 (0.055)
Treatment 1	0.053 (0.033)	0.010 (0.032)	0.016 (0.040)	-0.009 (0.058)	0.033 (0.039)
Treatment 2	-0.004 (0.034)	-0.014 (0.033)	0.080** (0.040)	0.019 (0.056)	0.033 (0.039)
Constant	0.796*** (0.117)	0.968*** (0.113)	1.182*** (0.139)	0.043 (0.207)	0.037 (0.136)
Observations	299	300	298	301	301
R-squared	0.174	0.146	0.321	0.320	0.116

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses.

All variables are coded 0 to 1.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: Survey Sampling International 2013 survey.

**Table D5.2 Knowledge Networks Social Welfare and Race Policy Data**

	Increase welfare spending	Affirmative action - universities	Affirmative action - workplace
White identity	-0.041 (0.039)	-0.032 (0.040)	0.074* (0.039)
Racial resentment	-0.400*** (0.061)	-0.351*** (0.068)	0.382*** (0.062)
Age	0.008 (0.048)	0.008 (0.059)	0.116** (0.048)
Education	0.201** (0.087)	0.197** (0.088)	-0.140* (0.080)
Party ID (1=Republican)	-0.379*** (0.046)	-0.315*** (0.049)	0.427*** (0.050)
Ideology (1=conservative)	-0.293*** (0.062)	-0.276*** (0.068)	0.330*** (0.069)
Female	-0.014 (0.022)	0.004 (0.024)	0.006 (0.023)
Income	-0.118** (0.050)	-0.062 (0.049)	0.088 (0.055)
Positive personal financial outlook	0.060 (0.062)	0.015 (0.067)	-0.126** (0.063)
Treatment 2	0.078** (0.039)	0.023 (0.041)	-0.023 (0.043)
Treatment 3	0.040 (0.046)	0.038 (0.047)	0.019 (0.045)
Treatment 4	0.003 (0.039)	-0.021 (0.040)	0.032 (0.046)
Treatment 5	0.031 (0.040)	-0.006 (0.037)	-0.031 (0.041)
Treatment 12	0.118** (0.059)	0.092 (0.061)	-0.046 (0.047)
Treatment 13	-0.071 (0.048)	-0.048 (0.066)	0.037 (0.053)
Treatment 14	-0.012 (0.057)	-0.053 (0.054)	0.037 (0.054)
Treatment 15	-0.069 (0.046)	-0.092 (0.064)	-0.004 (0.053)
Treatment 16	0.067 (0.065)	0.133** (0.060)	0.048 (0.082)
Constant	0.952*** (0.093)	0.925*** (0.098)	-0.010 (0.086)
Observations	657	659	727
R-squared	0.482	0.373	0.504

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: Knowledge Networks 2010 Survey.

**Table 5.3a ANES Social Welfare and Race Policy Data**

	Social security	Welfare spending	Aid to blacks
White identity	0.094** (0.039)	-0.027 (0.041)	-0.023 (0.030)
Racial resentment	0.142** (0.068)	-0.229*** (0.067)	-0.493*** (0.044)
Age	-0.029 (0.055)	0.174*** (0.050)	0.046 (0.039)
Education	-0.140** (0.058)	0.019 (0.052)	-0.044 (0.038)
Party ID (1=Republican)	0.058 (0.065)	-0.016 (0.060)	0.074 (0.049)
Ideology (1=conservative)	-0.152* (0.081)	-0.304*** (0.083)	-0.090 (0.067)
Female	0.095*** (0.029)	0.046* (0.027)	-0.020 (0.020)
Income	-0.061 (0.056)	-0.181*** (0.053)	-0.054 (0.041)
Limited government	-0.062 (0.046)	-0.186*** (0.044)	-0.032 (0.034)
Positive personal financial outlook	-0.122** (0.053)	-0.014 (0.057)	0.042 (0.041)
Positive national financial outlook	-0.080 (0.063)	0.031 (0.068)	0.070 (0.046)
Constant	0.822*** (0.101)	0.717*** (0.095)	0.654*** (0.075)
Observations	572	585	522
R-squared	0.140	0.287	0.438

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed. Source: ANES 2012

**Table D5.3b ANES Social Welfare and Race Policy Data**

	Affirmative action - universities	Affirmative action - workplace	Fair treatment in jobs
White identity	-0.008 (0.034)	0.046 (0.033)	0.064 (0.057)
Racial resentment	0.406*** (0.058)	0.342*** (0.060)	-0.891*** (0.079)
Age	-0.024 (0.041)	-0.031 (0.042)	-0.038 (0.068)
Education	0.041 (0.045)	-0.003 (0.048)	-0.023 (0.073)
Party ID (1=Republican)	-0.032 (0.058)	-0.081 (0.059)	0.001 (0.095)
Ideology (1=conservative)	0.082 (0.076)	-0.025 (0.080)	0.019 (0.126)
Female	0.010 (0.025)	0.008 (0.025)	-0.045 (0.039)
Income	0.101** (0.048)	0.060 (0.047)	0.011 (0.071)
Limited government	0.065* (0.035)	0.097** (0.038)	-0.263*** (0.064)
Positive personal financial outlook	-0.073 (0.045)	-0.125*** (0.046)	-0.023 (0.073)
Positive national financial outlook	-0.006 (0.049)	0.031 (0.050)	0.032 (0.090)
Constant	0.389*** (0.085)	0.553*** (0.087)	1.181*** (0.147)
Observations	577	581	571
R-squared	0.234	0.219	0.327

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted. All variables are coded 0 to 1. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, two tailed.  
Source: ANES 2012



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