

Racial Sympathy in American Politics

by

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To my parents,
For their sacrifice and bravery

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At some point during graduate school, I learned that I could postpone seminar reading by perusing a book's acknowledgements section. Here you could gain a sense of the author's academic tribe. This is also the section where you could find the author's wit and warmth on full display. For years, reading the acknowledgments section provided me with amusement. Lately, as I realized that I too would write an acknowledgements section to be read by procrastinating students, they have filled me with dread. How could I write acknowledgments that would adequately convey my appreciation for everyone who has helped me during graduate school? Could I do it with the right amount of humor and sentimentality? Would I end the first paragraph of the acknowledgements with a final rhetorical question?

My journey as a graduate student began before I even submitted my application. In the fall of 2009, someone told me that in order to apply to grad school I had to "know someone" and that the best way to do so was to write to academics about their work. Shirking from my responsibilities as a low-level bureaucrat, I emailed political scientists across the country to see if they would like to know me. Few responded. When two political scientists in Ann Arbor – Hanes Walton Jr. and Vince Hutchings – replied to my emails, I put Michigan on my list of schools. Months later, when I met with Vince during recruitment weekend, he was somehow already advising me, even though I had yet to enroll in the program. I see now that this early interaction was typical of Vince – he is unusually supportive of and committed to graduate student education. It is no surprise Vince attracts so many students to Michigan and advisees to his side; he provides graduate students with a magical mix of constructive criticism and compassion.

Since our first meeting, I have spent countless hours talking with Vince, both in his office and over the phone, learning from him about research, race, and the profession. Vince has made time to chat with me whatever the topic or day. He listens to my incoherent ramblings and then distills them down to the most essential components, often prefaced with: "I think what you're trying to say, Jenn, is ...". There are, in fact, many Vince-isms, and I list a few of them now, confident that they will age well: "The devil is in the details," "You are starting to convince me,"

and “I don’t have a crystal ball.” Through encouragement and exceptional example, Vince shows his students how to be bold and careful. He modeled how to take risks with your work and pose provocative questions, but then, also, how to stock an army of back-up slides. I feel so fortunate to have been his advisee and I look forward joining the Vince Advisee Alumni Association (V-triple A), whose members support each other and admire Vince for the rest of their careers.

During my recruitment weekend, I met Don Kinder. From the first time we met, I knew Don was a big deal because he sat behind an imposing desk, illuminated only by the glaring light blasting through the window behind him. I am confident that I did not know what I was talking about during that meeting, so it came as a surprise that Don took an interest in me early on, leaving his office on that cold March day to walk me to the Ford School for my next appointment. Since then, I have remained in awe of Don. If, undeterred by these acknowledgements, you slog on through the rest of the dissertation, you will see that I cite Don more than anyone else, likely a common trait of race and politics dissertations. *Divided by Color* is my most consulted book, sitting on top of my desk with its spine worn from many years of use. This is because whenever I approach a new academic task, I wonder, “What would Don do?” and look for the answer within the impressive Kinder oeuvre. Don’s influence is also apparent beneath the surface – like so many others, I like how Don writes. This dissertation may not show it, but writing became a pleasurable task under Don’s supervision.

Beyond his groundbreaking scholarship, Don contributed to this project in even more important ways. First, Don’s high standards improved every section of this dissertation: every theory I considered, every vignette I composed, every empirical analysis I conducted, every experiment I designed, and every chapter I wrote benefitted from Don’s insightful, but occasionally illegible, advice. Don’s generosity, in the form of his guidance and his financial support, elevated this project immeasurably. And I learned so much from him about the art of research: the framing of the question, the addressing of the alternative hypotheses, and the introduction of the results – these are all skills I picked up from Don. Working with Don was such a privilege and pleasure. I particularly enjoyed our meetings together as they were always rich with ideas, suggestions, stories, and jokes. I feel fortunate to have started my academic journey with Don by my side. He is an ideal guide and a very dear friend.

Returning to that recruitment weekend back in 2010, meeting with Vince and Don had endeared me to Michigan, but listening to Rob Mickey recite lines from *30 Rock* sealed the deal. Since then, I could always count on Rob for rigorous insight, astute advice, and the best jokes in Haven Hall. Through Rob, I came to think about racial sympathy's place in American history as well as its application outside of the sterile experimental context. The depth of Rob's questions often exceeded my ability to answer them. Nonetheless, Rob helped this project grow from a study of public opinion to a study of American politics. The next step, to follow his extraordinary example, is to expand the enterprise to a study of politics. Beyond his substantive contributions to this project, Rob was a phenomenally supportive mentor throughout graduate school. He fielded inquiries, soothed neuroses, reviewed materials, and offered unparalleled support at all hours of the day, all days of the week. It was not his first time at the rodeo, as he would sometimes tell me, and his sharp insight and Texas charm helped me navigate tricky waters on many occasions.

Meeting Phoebe Ellsworth made me reconsider whether I had in fact attended the correct recruitment weekend or if, instead, I should have become a psychologist. As I sat in her experimental methods class, I observed an imaginative scholar introduce, with great wit, her craft. I was so impressed by how methodically and carefully Phoebe could think about a question. She could take many things into consideration simultaneously and hone in on an elegant and brilliant answer. Phoebe brought this same rigor and inventiveness to this project. She helped me clarify my objectives on more than one occasion and also showed me how to think through results, good and bad. She also offered encouragement and wry commentary, both very much welcomed, throughout the job market. With no offense to the others, Phoebe's class was my favorite in graduate school and I would scurry back to Haven Hall after our class meetings and spread the gospel of psychology, trying to get other political scientists to convert and become a social psychologist like Phoebe. While I ultimately remain a political scientist, I hope I can channel Phoebe's focus, diligence, creativity, humor, and rigor in my own research and teaching.

There are three other scholars that I would like to recognize. It was in Ted Brader's classroom that I was introduced to public opinion and political psychology. His excellent and thorough tour of the canon was punctured only by my occasional song, which he took in good spirits. He also provided valuable, detailed feedback on my practice job talk and separately, hours of great conversation over wine and Marcona almonds. I developed the racial sympathy vignettes

during Pauline Jones' qualitative methods class. Pauline guided me through the "listening" part of the vignette design and, later, provided valuable support as I embarked on the job market. I am so thankful to have met her. Finally, Spencer Piston. If, at any point, my committee read something and thought: "wow, Jenn knows what she is doing," (probably not a common thought, sorry Spencer) it is because I ran the idea, email, or draft by Spencer first. Spencer has been an exceptional mentor to me. He has advised me on almost every facet of grad school life since my first year. In this respect, he very much reflects the traits of our shared advisor, Vince. Spencer, thank you so much for all of your time and guidance.

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I spent two years on the job market and for each one, gained a terrific “market buddy.” Logan Casey, you are brilliant and bold. It has been such a pleasure having you by my (Gchat) side over the last two years. Thank you for your consistent encouragement and for providing me with so many opportunities to talk through the feels. Diana Greenwald, I’ve appreciated your agile intellect and humor since I first met you. Thank you for indulging my whims and keeping me sane during the most stressful period of graduate school.

Elizabeth Mann bears second mention because she, through example, showed me how to tcb (take care of business) in grad school and in life. Elizabeth’s commitment to her studies and her friends are unparalleled. She hosted me in Ann Arbor more times than I can count and each time I arrived to stay with her, I felt like I was home.

Perhaps it is a good thing that I wrote my dissertation remotely, because had I sat next to Hakeem Jefferson every day at ISR, I never would have accomplished anything. He is the best company – considerate, thoughtful, and funny – elevating every meeting and workshop he attends. Hakeem cares about me so much that he once ate some oatmeal I cooked that (unintentionally) featured screaming worms as an ingredient – just ask him.

I wrote most of this dissertation from New York City and therefore need to thank some New York people, places, and things as well. First, the people. Thank you to Steve Bow, Neel Chugh, Rebecca Elman, Jon Gagen, Ali Hassan, Gabe Heywood, Anna Hidalgo, Paolo Ikezoe, Kristin Jordan, Daniel Scher, Chris Sommerfeld and Sarah Tucker for providing plenty of support for and distraction from my studies over the last few years. Many of you also endured practice job talks– I don’t know why you chose to spend your weekend nights that way, but thank you. Two friends in particular – Drew Patterson and Nicole Thie were unwavering in their encouragement from the beginning. Drew and Nicole are my favorite people. They humor my absurdist tendencies, praise my success, and lambaste anyone who gets in my way. Idealistic and laid back, Rukesh Samarasekera is definitely not a New Yorker, but he has been with me every step of the way. Rukesh’s sunny disposition provided a much-needed antidote to the toil of dissertating.

Three cafes: Joyce Bakeshop on Vanderbilt Avenue, Hungry Ghost on Flatbush Avenue, and City Bakery on 18th Street, hosted me for hours of dissertation writing after my black coffee had gone lukewarm. The New York subway, sidewalks, and shopkeepers forced me out of my computer into the world daily – in doing so, they all provided hearty doses of perspective, keeping me very much afloat. I was also carried through sleepy mornings and fading afternoons aided by numerous Broadway cast recordings, the ones by Steven Sondheim helping me the most.

I am now preparing to depart from New York and, in doing so, will leave behind my sister Stephanie. Stephanie is a punk-goth fashion designer who wears all black every day and lives in a “rotting pile of yarn” as she once called her apartment. She keeps a cat with a moustache and dresses him like a sailor. Steph, will you ever read this? I don’t know if you will. But if you do, please know that our relationship is so precious to me and becoming closer to you over the last few years has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

My father once told me that my parents’ best gift to me was my sister, and while that is true, my parents have given me other important gifts that I would be remiss not to mention. My father’s levity and my mother’s intensity provided me with a balanced approach to life that sustained me from Grade 1 to Grade 22. My father encouraged my early enthusiasm in my social studies, no doubt an outgrowth of his own interest in history. And my mother brought me up in an environment where, from as early as I can remember, I was exposed to people and lifestyles from around the world, classical music performed by the finest ensembles, *New Yorker* cartoons, art, and books piled high in every direction. I know now that this kind of background was rare and that it equipped me to succeed in many other settings once I left my small town.

Last in my acknowledgments, first in my heart, I thank Nitin Walia. On multiple occasions, frustrated by the results, the writing, and the job market, I demanded that Nitin acknowledge the impossibility of it all. Nitin is guided by logic in most domains and I would insist that he use this logic to admit the undeniable – that the results were bad, the writing subpar, and the job market abysmal. Much to my dismay, he would refuse to do so. Nitin was always confident in my success, but was especially positive when I was not. His compassion, mental agility, patience, and kindness are simply unmatched. I do not quite understand his conviction in me, engaged in a pursuit that took me so far away physically and, on occasion, mentally, but this dissertation would not have been possible without his steadfast support, respect, and love.

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ABSTRACT

RACIAL SYMPATHY IN AMERICAN POLITICS

This project examines the understudied, but prevalent, phenomenon of white racial sympathy for blacks in American politics. Reversing course from a long tradition of studying racial antipathy, I argue that racial sympathy, which I define as white distress over black misfortune, shapes public opinion among a subset of white Americans. In Chapter 1, I introduce the project and provide an overview of the dissertation's organization. Chapter 2 begins with a summary of the relevant racial attitudes literature, laying the foundation for the theory of racial sympathy. In Chapter 3, I describe the qualitative exploratory research I conducted to form an original measure of racial sympathy, *the racial sympathy index*. I examine the properties of the index, including its convergent validity. In Chapter 4, I explore the relationship between racial sympathy and public opinion using four national samples. These analyses reveal that racial sympathy is consistently and significantly associated with support for public policies perceived to benefit African Americans, while accounting for measures of principles and prejudice. Additionally, racial sympathy is distinct from a general social sympathy, as it does not influence policy opinion related to other groups, such as women. The concept is tightly associated with race; as evidence of this, I find that racial sympathy is activated when the suffering of African Americans is made salient, a phenomena I explore through a series of experiments in the dissertation's fifth chapter. In Chapter 6, I argue that racial sympathy enhances our understanding of the complexity of intergroup relations. Here I suggest that sympathy has the potential to motivate a variety of political opinions and behavior. I also discuss the limits to its reach. Overall, the project is a companion to the rich literature in political science on racial prejudice. The dissertation demonstrates the multifaceted role of race in American politics and public opinion.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

“I can say that I haven’t any prejudices...Negroes should be given social equality, any job they are qualified for, should be able to live in any neighborhood, and so on. ...We aren’t unified and we don’t know what we’re fighting for and the discrimination is at the root of it....The discrimination toward Negroes is because they aren’t understood and because they are physically different.”

-Larry, The Authoritarian Personality, 1950

In 1950, social psychologists at Berkeley introduced scholars to two college students: Mack, “a man high on ethnocentrism,” and Larry, “a man low on ethnocentrism.” In their seminal study of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno and his colleagues examined how Mack’s negative views of the out-group lead to a “prejudiced outlook of the world” (1950, 224). Since the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, decades of social science research has studied individuals like Mack, that is, those who hold negative views of social out-groups. In political science, scholars have found that racial prejudice towards blacks is an important determinant of white opinion on public policy (Kinder & Sanders 1996; Hurwitz & Peffley 2005) and in, some cases, may also influence vote choice in elections with black candidates (Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011; Piston 2010; Terkildsen 1993; Tesler & Sears 2010).

But what about Larry? Though an extensive literature explores the antecedents and consequences of out-group antipathy on political behavior (see Huddy & Feldman 2009 and Hutchings & Valentino 2004 for reviews), scholars have rarely considered the other side of the coin: that is, the possibility that non-trivial proportions of whites carry sympathy towards blacks

and that these sympathetic attitudes have political consequences. The central questions of this dissertation project are: (1) What is racial sympathy? (2) What are the consequences of racial sympathy for public opinion? And (3) Under what conditions does racial sympathy matter? Reversing course from a long tradition in social science research, this project attempts to add conceptual richness to a behavior often defined in terms of its opposite.

The research that emerged from *The Authoritarian Personality* investigated the attitudes of prejudiced individuals like Mack and, eventually, the impact of these types of attitudes on policy opinion (Sears & Kinder 1971). Years later, when scholars study white “racial attitudes” in political science, it is assumed they are studying prejudice.¹ Given the breadth of the literature on racial animus, this assumption is reasonable. Still, by devoting so much attention to prejudice, scholars have failed to develop theories or measures that would allow them to assess the role of other white racial attitudes in politics.

That said, recent work in the American politics subfield has begun to consider the possibility that some whites might carry racially sympathetic attitudes (Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011; Tesler & Sears 2010; Tesler 2012). Although this work has provided suggestive evidence that the racially sympathetic exist and may be politically influential, most of it has been tied to assessments of a single black candidate: Barack Obama. It is therefore unclear whether these findings extend to black candidates generally and if these attitudes spill over into other political domains.

This dissertation develops a theory and measure of racial sympathy, and in doing so, contributes to our understanding of the diversity of racial attitudes in American politics.

¹ For example, when writing about the relationship between racial animus and policy opinion, Hutchings and

Additionally, I examine the role of racial sympathy as it relates to support for public policies, broadening the scope of inquiry from understanding the emergence of a single black candidate to the multiple policies that influence black Americans' everyday lives. In the next chapter, I provide an overview of the racial attitudes literature and highlight the few occasions in which this scholarship has acknowledged the possibility of racial sympathy. I then define racial sympathy and provide an overview of its potential origins. This theorizing leads to a number of expectations for the dissertation's three empirical chapters, which I attend to in the final part of Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 takes up the measurement of racial sympathy. I begin by discussing previous efforts to measure the concept and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. In particular, I consider the possibility that racial sympathy may be substantively and functionally equivalent to low-prejudice. Next, I discuss the formation of the *racial sympathy index*, an original measure developed through qualitative research methods, including a series of passive participant observation sessions. Examining the various properties of the racial sympathy index, I find that a nontrivial percentage of white Americans, distributed across different demographic groups, are racially sympathetic. Additionally, the racial sympathy index is internally consistent and associated with, though ultimately distinct from, related concepts like low-prejudice and egalitarianism.

Chapter 4 considers the influence of racial sympathy on public opinion. Using the 2013 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), which includes the racial sympathy index, I find that racial sympathy is consistently and significantly associated with support for policies that explicitly or implicitly reference blacks as beneficiaries. The second part of the chapter replicates the CCES results using a related measure of racial sympathy that appears in the 2008 and 2012

American National Election Study and the 1994 General Social Survey. Across these independent, nationally representative datasets, a consistent pattern emerges: racial sympathy influences racialized public policies across time and sample. That it does so even while considering the influence of other related theoretical concepts, like prejudice, egalitarianism, rejection of negative stereotypes and implicit attitudes, suggests that racial sympathy is a distinct and powerful dimension of opinion in American politics.

I close Chapter 4 by examining the precision of racial sympathy. To do so, I conduct analyses that explore the relationship between racial sympathy and support for policies that affect other marginalized groups as well as policies that are unrelated to race. In both cases, I find that racial sympathy is not associated with support for non-racial policies, such as offshore drilling or gay marriage. Nor is it associated with immigration policies or policies that benefit women, suggesting that the concept cannot be reduced to liberalism or mistook for a broad social sympathy. Instead, the discriminant validity analyses suggest that racial sympathy uniquely captures distress over *black* suffering.

The final empirical chapter, Chapter 5, investigates the activation of racial sympathy. I begin the chapter by providing an overview of the racial priming literature. Here I argue that the activation of racial sympathy is not equivalent to the suppression of prejudice. Then, using three national experiments set in diverse policy settings, I explore sympathy's activation, first, by demonstrating that racial cues prime sympathy, and then by probing the substantive nature of its activation. In particular, I examine two components of sympathy's activation: the severity of black suffering and attributions for this suffering. The chapter's final experiment considers how racial sympathy fares when other racial attitudes, specifically racial resentment, are also primed.

In all, the empirical chapters are intended to scrutinize the origins, associations, and effects of racial sympathy in American politics. I employ a variety of different methods including participant observation, survey design and analysis, and experiments. Additionally, I analyze six independent national data sets and where possible, consider alternative hypotheses through a series of robustness checks. The breadth of the enterprise is to ensure that the relationship between sympathy and American politics is captured and durable across data sets and specifications.

I conclude the dissertation by discussing the contribution of the project to the study of public opinion more generally. By focusing on animus, scholars have explored only one, albeit powerful, way in which racial attitudes affect political outcomes. My project demonstrates that the influence of race is manifold and nuanced; white attitudes about blacks are more diverse than previously acknowledged. By considering racial sympathy, scholars are better positioned to understand the complexity of intergroup attitudes as well as the occasions in which whites support political measures that advance black interests. My work does not dismiss the effect or prevalence of racial animus, but rather it draws our attention to the multiple ways that attitudes about race can powerfully shape American politics.

CHAPTER II

Racial Sympathy

In some respects, previous studies of racial attitudes in political science have been exhaustive. Scholars have considered the influence of prejudice in American politics across numerous dimensions, including how best to measure it (Kinder & Sanders 1996, see also Huddy & Feldman 2009, Tesler & Sears 2016), how it relates to support for public policies (Kinder & Sanders 1996), and black politicians like Obama (Tesler & Sears 2012) and Colin Powell (Kinder & McConaughy 2006). Scholars have considered the effect of prejudice on opinion of controversial objects like the Confederate flag (Hutchings et al. 2010) or seemingly uncontroversial objects, like a Portuguese water dog named Bo (Tesler 2016). Scholars have sharpened their understanding of the role of prejudice in political life by looking at the cues that activate it (Mendelberg 2001, Stephens 2014) the emotions that are associated with it (Banks 2014) and the gendered dimensions of it (Hutchings et al. 2004, McConaughy & White 2011). In short, the attention to the “Negro problem,” as Myrdal called it (1944), is not new. In his groundbreaking treatise on race in America, Myrdal observed “wandering around the stacks of a good American

library, one is amazed at the huge amount of printed material on the Negro problem. A really complete bibliography would run up to several hundred thousand titles” (27).

And yet, a survey of American history suggests that white Americans have long engaged in efforts to both obstruct *and* promote the political advancement of African Americans. For example, some whites participated in the Abolitionist Movement, walked alongside blacks during the March on Washington and, more recently, celebrated Obama’s election and protested following Michael Brown’s shooting. These events have often left enduring marks on American politics, yet political scientists cannot use existing theories of racial attitudes to explain what these attitudes are and why some whites support political efforts that might further African American interests.

I suggest that this omission has resulted in an incomplete picture of the role of racial attitudes in American politics. Otherwise put, though our bibliography may be lengthy, it is deeper than it is broad. The discipline’s emphasis on prejudice is understandable given the attitude’s prevalence and power (Kinder & Sanders 1996). Yet, if other racial attitudes exist and have consequences for American politics, then they too deserve to be examined. This project draws attention to one attitude in particular, racial sympathy, and demonstrates that this overlooked attitude can be reliably measured, is consistently and robustly associated with opinion on a host of policies, and can be activated under certain circumstances.

This chapter has two aims. The first is to situate the project in the broader racial attitudes literature. The second aim is to introduce a theory of racial sympathy. As the first paragraph of this chapter suggests, the majority of the work in this field has focused on racial prejudice, but on occasion, has acknowledged sympathy. I summarize and analyze this previous research in the first part of the chapter. In the second part of the chapter, I introduce a theory of racial sympathy

informed by work in social psychology and political theory. I discuss sympathy's origins and its role in public life. Based on this theory of racial sympathy, the final section of the chapter presents a series of expectations that shape the analysis of the dissertation's three empirical chapters.

As the foregoing suggests, few scholarly accounts of white racial attitudes in the United States ignore prejudice.² And one of the main contributions of this project will be to demonstrate, with each chapter, that racial sympathy is distinct from prejudice. Since I engage in this exercise throughout the dissertation, I will also devote some time in this chapter to discussing the similarities and differences between racial animus and racial sympathy. This background will provide helpful context for the analyses that follow.

Literature Review – An Opening for Racial Sympathy

In the first section of the chapter, I examine the existing research in political science on racial sympathy. I begin by revisiting the foundational work in the field, which first established the role of group-based attitudes in politics. I suggest that much of this work allows for the possibility of racial sympathy and even, in some cases, explicitly acknowledges it. I will then summarize a series of recent studies, most of which are related to understanding white public opinion in the 2008 presidential election. By considering the role of white “racial liberals” in Obama’s electoral coalition, these studies drew attention to the possibility of a positive racial attitude. And yet, as I will discuss in this section, as much as these efforts should be encouraged, they also should be critically examined. If Obama’s support from “racial liberals” is one of the “keys to understanding how Obama won the White House” as Tesler and Sears (2010, 37) have claimed, then it is important to assess the extent to which concepts such as racial liberalism are defined. This review

² That said, scholars certainly debate its measurement, prevalence, and influence. See Hutchings & Valentino 2004, Kinder & Sears 1981, Sniderman & Tetlock 1986.

will lay the foundation for the theory of racial sympathy, which is developed in the second part of the chapter.³

In his seminal work on public opinion, Philip Converse wrote that the coherence of attitudes, or “constraints,” was a central component of American political behavior. Converse argued that the mass public often conceived of politics not in ideological terms, indeed they could be characterized by their lack of ideological constraint, but rather in terms of salient social groups (Converse 1964). His 1964 essay spawned a rich line of inquiry on the “group-centric” foundations of public opinion (e.g., Nelson & Kinder 1996).

Of the research in this tradition, social scientists have mostly focused on examining out-group attitudes, with the preponderance of work focusing on negative attitudes. As the first paragraph of this chapter makes clear, this work has followed prejudice to the many corners of its reach. However, the theory of group-centrism in public opinion is broader and allows for the presence of a variety of group-based attitudes. For example, Nelson and Kinder (1996) acknowledge that “support for affirmative action among whites reflects sympathy for the plight of blacks...opposition to welfare programs derives from hostility to the poor; and political tolerance, the willingness to extend constitutional protection to disagreeable speech and assembly, hinges on the reputation of the groups intent on carrying out these activities” (1056).

Otherwise stated, Converse’s theory does not identify a specific type of sentiment; rather, what is more important is that *a* sentiment or attitude about a group shapes citizens’ views of public policies. Indeed, the diversity of such sentiments may have been anticipated by Converse, when he proposed a hypothetical survey question to reveal both the negative and the positive

³ In the empirical chapters that follow, I will occasionally provide supplemental literature reviews related to the specific empirical analyses at hand.

elements of white attitudes toward African-Americans: “Are you sympathetic to Negroes as a group, are you indifferent to them, or do you dislike them?” (Converse 1964, 235)

In addition to group-centric attitudes, some scholars have suggested that citizens carry general orientations that make them more inclined to support policies that benefit disadvantaged social groups. For example, research has found that humanitarianism, defined as “a sense of responsibility for one’s fellow human beings” (Feldman et al. 2001, 660), is associated with support for many social welfare policies. According to Feldman and Steenbergen, humanitarians’ commitment to assisting the disadvantaged leads them to: “want (the) government to intervene and provide for those people” (661).

Similarly, scholars have suggested that citizens’ egalitarianism, defined as a “general commitment to equality” (Feldman 1988, 424), makes them more likely to embrace political outcomes that elevate marginalized social groups. However, as I will discuss later in this chapter, it is unclear what role race-specific attitudes play in broad pro-social orientations like egalitarianism and humanitarianism. In theory, egalitarianism and humanitarianism do not vary with respect to different marginalized groups. That said, it is important to assess if white attitudes about African Americans, which has led, some argue, to “a divide without peer” (Kinder and Sanders 1996) are somehow unique. Nonetheless, both the research on pro-social orientations and the group-centric literature allow for the possibility that some white citizens may endorse political efforts precisely because they are also perceived as advancing black interests.

Since political scientists have devoted most of their attention to understanding racial animus, previous scholarship has yet to offer a compelling account of what exactly sympathetic attitudes are, why we should expect some whites to hold such attitudes, and why these attitudes

might lead whites to support certain policies or favor black candidates. Importantly, the existing research does not contend with the question as to whether such “pro-Black” (Creamer 2008) outcomes are the product of broad value systems, like egalitarianism, or instead, if they are primarily rooted in specific attitudes about African Americans.

In 2007, an African American senator from Illinois announced his candidacy for president. With his political ascendancy came renewed speculation about the role of white Americans’ racial attitudes in public opinion. In the next section, I provide an overview of the scholarship that explored Obama’s race and the 2008 election. Beyond exploring the impact of prejudice, some of this work also considered the possibility that racial sympathy may have contributed to the election of the country’s first black President.

Obama and Race

What forces propelled Barack Obama to victory in 2008? And, in particular, what role did race play in his astonishing election? When asked to reflect on how race influenced his candidacy, Obama himself observed:

“There’s no doubt that there’s some folks who just really dislike me because they don’t like the idea of a black President. Now, the flip side of it is there are some black folks and maybe some white folks who really like me and give me the benefit of the doubt precisely because I’m a black President.”⁴

Previous research in political science has come to similarly ambiguous conclusions about the role of a candidate’s race in elections (see Citrin et al. 1990, Highton 2004, Sass & Pittman 2000). Most studies about Obama’s candidacy, however, seem to be in agreement that a nontrivial population of whites did not “like the idea of a black President,” as Obama puts it (Hutchings

⁴ David Remnick. “Going the Distance: On and off the road with Barack Obama” *The New Yorker*. January 27, 2014. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/27/going-the-distance-david-remnick>

2009, Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2011, Piston 2010, Tesler & Sears 2010).

Far less research has sought to understand whites that “really liked” Obama because of his race. That said, a few political scientists have argued that Obama received support from a subgroup of white citizens who were especially enthused to elect Obama *because* rather than in spite of his race. As the preceding section suggests, a “pro-Black” outcome, such as endorsing the country’s first black president, could emerge for a few reasons. It is plausible that broad values systems, such as egalitarianism, could have influenced white vote choice in 2008. It is also possible that group-specific attitudes of African Americans could have lead some whites to “really like” Obama and support him in the general election.

With respect to value systems like egalitarianism, it is conceivable that some whites elected Obama because doing so allowed them to promote a more equal society, in which any racial group could ascend to the nation’s highest political post. Obama also pledged to expand social programs during his campaign, making him a more egalitarian choice than his opponent John McCain. A few studies have examined the role of egalitarianism in the 2008 election. Much of this research has found that in the presence of other factors, values, such as egalitarianism, did not significantly predict vote choice for Obama (Kam & Kinder 2012, Piston 2010, Valentino & Brader 2011). Additionally, and perhaps surprisingly, some scholars have found that *anti*-egalitarian whites, that is, those individuals who support “hierarchy-enhancing” outcomes were especially inclined to support Obama (Knowles et al. 2009). These authors argue that anti-egalitarians supported Obama as a way of dismissing the notion that race still played an important role in American political life (and in doing so, implicitly supporting the country’s racial hierarchy). In either case, it does not

seem that whites' egalitarianism was an especially potent force in the 2008 election (although see Hutchings 2009).

Other work has considered the role of group-specific attitudes in the 2008 election. For example, in a 2009 article, Sniderman and Stiglitz uncovered an association between responses to whites' positive stereotypes about blacks (which they call "esteem for blacks") and vote choice for Obama. They argue that this relationship is different than the relationship between negative stereotypes and vote choice.

Furthermore, two books by symbolic racism scholars, written independently (Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011, Tesler & Sears 2010), also argue that pro-black attitudes led some whites to vote for Obama. These scholars find that in both the 2008 Democratic presidential primary and in the 2008 general election, those on the low end of the racial resentment scale were especially likely to support Barack Obama. Moreover, the association between scoring on the low end of the scale and support for the Democratic candidate in the general election was higher in 2008 than in previous recent presidential elections. Primarily on the basis of these findings, both books conclude that some whites favored Obama due to his race.

Beyond the case of Obama specifically, some experimental work has unearthed evidence of white support of "pro-Black" outcomes in politics. For example, in a 1990 study, Colleau and colleagues uncovered a net preference for a black candidate, relative to a white candidate, among white experimental subjects randomly selected from two technical colleges in Wisconsin. Five years later, Sigelman and colleagues conducted an experiment with a local sample in Tucson, Arizona to examine whether whites were willing to vote for non-white candidates. Their findings led them to suggest that "positive prejudice" (or "reverse discrimination") might cause some whites to

“consistently bend over backwards to support minority candidates” over white candidates (1995, 250). Finally, using an Internet-based sample (Knowledge Networks), Weaver (2012) found that white women and liberals were *more* likely to vote for a dark-skinned black candidate than a white candidate. Despite these findings, the authors have not engaged in attempts to define or measure “positive prejudice,” where it comes from, or why it may have influenced the behavior of the subjects in their survey.

Research on these “pro-Black” attitudes is still in its infancy. Therefore, despite the valuable contributions of this scholarship substantial questions remain. Beginning with Sniderman and Stiglitz (2009), the authors define “esteem” as white Americans’ “wish [for] life to go well” for blacks (1). It is not clear, however, if this attitude represents “a wish for life to go well” for blacks *in particular* or if it reflects a more general positive orientation toward all racial groups.

Sniderman and Stiglitz also write that whites that possess “esteem” for blacks will favor a black candidate over a white one. However, the theoretical basis for this expectation is somewhat puzzling. Indeed, the argument that esteem for an out-group leads to favoritism for a member of that out-group seems inconsistent with predominant theories of intergroup attitudes in social psychological research, which emphasize in-group favoritism: the widespread, pervasive tendency for people to privilege groups to which they belong over groups to which they do not belong (Hogg & Abrams 1988, Kinder & Kam 2009, Tajfel et al. 1971, Turner et al. 1979). This line of scholarship has also demonstrated that it is not necessary for one to derogate an out-group in order to favor one’s in-group; indeed, liking an out-group often coexists with in-group favoritism (Brewer 1999). That is, it is one thing to “wish life to go well” for members of an out-group, like blacks; however, it is quite another to elevate a member of that group at the expense of a member of one’s

in-group. In sum, Sniderman and Stiglitz' research does not make clear why or under what conditions "esteem for blacks" should lead whites to favor black candidates.

Turning now to the research of the symbolic racism scholars, one difficulty presented by their conceptualization of symbolic racism is that the concept itself has typically been defined as an anti-black attitude. For example, Kinder and Sears describe symbolic racism⁵ as: "a blend of anti-black affect and the kind of traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant Ethic" (1981, 416; see also Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011, 52; Tesler & Sears 2010, 18). Since symbolic racism was initially "born out of a need to explain widespread white opposition to black candidates and race-targeted policies in the post-civil rights era" (Tesler & Sears 2010; 62, see also Kinder & Sanders 1996, pgs. 92-3), this conceptualization is reasonable. However, this definition seems to leave little room for symbolic racism to be characterized as a pro-black attitude.

That said, the symbolic racism scholars occasionally consider those whites that score low on the symbolic racism index to be "generally sympathetic toward blacks" (Kinder & Sanders 1996, 106; Tesler & Sears 2010, 19). At first glance, the claim that the racial resentment scale captures positive attitudes toward blacks seems to contradict these authors' previous arguments. Yet a close reading provides some grounds for an alternative interpretation. Consider the following excerpt from Kinder and Sanders' (1996) discussion of the 1960s:

"White Americans appeared to come to a new conclusion: that segregation and discrimination were wrong, that black Americans should enjoy the same formal rights and opportunities as whites... One legacy of the civil rights movement, we believe, was this bundling together, in public debate and private attitude, of egalitarian ideas and racial sympathy." (102)

If the movement towards sympathy involved a complex rearranging or "bundling" of values such that "new conclusions" were generated, it suggests that positive racial attitudes may be worth

⁵ In this dissertation, I use the terms "racial resentment" and "symbolic racism" interchangeably.

studying in their own right. However, with only limited attention has been devoted to clarifying what the “sympathetic” or “racially liberal” part of the scale is intended to capture, the substantive interpretation of low resentment is ambiguous.

Since the overwhelming focus of the symbolic racism scholars has been on those whites on the high or “resentful” end of the scale, less attention has been paid to clarifying what the “sympathetic” or “racially liberal” part of the scale is intended to capture or understanding the types of behavior that may emanate from racial sympathy. For example, on page 114 of *Divided by Color*, Kinder and Sanders find: “white Americans who express racial sympathy on the racial resentment scale (a perfect score of 0) show up almost precisely at the color-blind 0.5 neutral point on all three stereotype measures: they say whites and blacks are indistinguishable.” But if those scoring low on the symbolic racism index view whites and blacks as indistinguishable, it is not clear why they might engage in pro-black political behavior, such as favoring a black candidate because of his race.

Using the racial resentment scale to approximate sympathy draws our attention to a broader question – what is the relationship between prejudice and sympathy? Based on preceding studies, it is not evident whether sympathy is theoretically or empirically equivalent to low prejudice. In the next section, I discuss the concepts’ shared roots and respective differences.

Racial Sympathy and Racial Prejudice

In principle, existing measures of racial attitudes could already explain why some whites support political measures perceived to benefit blacks. For example, stereotype measures allow for blacks to be rated positively, as do feeling thermometer scores, as do the racial resentment items.

However, since these measures were originally adopted to capture racial prejudice, it should come as no surprise that few white respondents rate blacks more favorably on these measures than they rate their own group (Kinder & Kam 2009, Piston 2010).

We know a great deal about what it means to score high on these measures of prejudice, which following Allport (1954), could be defined as a pre-existing negative attitude toward a group that is resistant to positive information and can result in discriminatory behavior. But we know very little what it means to score low in prejudice. A white person who devotes his or her life to advancing black interests may register a low score on a measure of prejudice. So too could a white person who does not have much, if any, reaction when he or she thinks about race. Forman and Lewis (2006), for example, have discussed the role of white racial apathy in response to Hurricane Katrina. The authors argue that *racial apathy*, which is defined as: “indifference toward societal racial and ethnic inequality and lack of engagement with race-related social issues” (Forman 2004 44), is an “increasingly central dimension in Whites’ racial attitudes (Forman & Lewis 2006 177) Insofar as emotions play an important role in our conceptualization of prejudice, it is possible that those individuals who score “low” on indices such as racial resentment or stereotype ratings may be more accurately described by their “utter indifference” (Kinder 2013; Pettigrew 1982) rather than sympathy. Otherwise stated, it is not clear whether the concept of racial sympathy is best represented on a bipolar dimension with racial animus as its opposite anchor

Using measures of prejudice to approximate a racial sympathy presents other complications. Of course, many of those individuals who demonstrate hostility toward blacks are less likely to feel sorry for that group; psychological research shows that disliking a person or group is negatively correlated with the likelihood of feeling sympathy for them (Hareli & Weiner 2002).

However, it is also possible that some whites might carry racial animus and racial sympathy simultaneously. Indeed, movies such as *Precious* and *The Blind Side* have been criticized for perpetuating negative stereotypes even as they attempt to evoke sympathy for racial disadvantage (Calavita 2010; Chaw 2009).

Since racial sympathy has often been equated with low prejudice, scholars have not been able to detect whether the two attitudes might be simultaneously present. In the book *Reaching Beyond Race*, for example, Sniderman and Carmines argue that “declining to characterize black Americans in positive terms is one thing; publicly characterizing them in negative ones is quite another” (1999, 63). Here the authors are acknowledging that even if white individuals do not attribute positive traits to blacks, they do not necessarily assign negative ones. In subsequent analyses, however, Sniderman and Carmines label those who score below .5 on their racial stereotypes index to be “tolerant” (79). But if withholding positive characterizations is not equivalent to assigning negative characterizations, as the authors argue, why then is withholding negative characterizations equivalent to assigning positive characterizations? That is, if a white American declines to characterize blacks as lazy, should we assume that he necessarily carries “sympathy and a positive regard to blacks” (77)?

Beyond these self-report measures of prejudice, it is important to note that implicit measures, such as the Implicit Attitudes Test (IAT) and the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP), could be suited to capture pro-Black attitudes. Measures like the IAT and AMP were designed to measure not only the extent to which respondents associate African Americans with negative stimuli, but also the extent to which respondents associate African Americans with positive or “pleasant” stimuli (see Olson & Fazio 2004 for a discussion).

Despite the promise and impressive methodological innovation of measures like the IAT and AMP, a consensus is emerging that implicit measures like these fail to predict political outcomes (Ditonto, Lau and Sears 2013, Huddy & Feldman 2009, Kalmoe & Piston 2013, Kinder & Ryan 2015).⁶ Therefore although implicit measures may be theoretically suited to represent sympathy for blacks, empirically these measures do not seem to map onto political preference.⁷

More generally, since the majority of previous research has focused on animus, further conceptual development is needed to understand the role of other racial attitudes in politics. It is particularly worthwhile to consider whether the tools we have developed to measure racial prejudice can be imported for use in the measurement of sympathy as well. Based on the preceding literature review, I argue that current theories and measures of racial attitudes provide scant guidance on the forces that might compel whites to support politicians or policies that are perceived to benefit black interests. In order to fully engage with the sources and consequences of this attitude, we must devote theoretical and empirical attention to the study of a new concept: racial sympathy.

A Theory of Racial Sympathy

To motivate a definition of racial sympathy, we might consider why a white person would experience sympathy towards a black individual or blacks as a group. After all, much of the research on intergroup relations has confirmed the widespread presence of ethnocentrism, a “predisposition to divide human society into in-groups and out-groups” (Kinder & Kam 2009, 31) that entails “favoritism toward in-groups and animosity toward out-groups” (85).

⁶ This analysis has found that the influence of implicit measures on political outcomes is significantly reduced or eliminated altogether after controlling for explicit measures of prejudice.

⁷ In Chapter 4, I consider this possibility explicitly by examining the relationship between sympathy and opinion while controlling for implicit attitudes (as measured by the AMP).

Diverging from this pattern, however, animosity toward the out-group (or lack thereof) is not the primary attribute of racial sympathy. Rather, racially sympathetic individuals can be characterized by the distress they experience in response to black Americans' misfortune. Racial sympathy is both cognitive and emotional – it is cognitive insofar as it relies on the recognition of either past or present suffering and emotional in that it conjures an affective reaction to these circumstances. It is an enduring predisposition on a spectrum: those high in racial sympathy express great distress over racial inequities and bias, which they perceive to be prevalent, while those low in racial sympathy exhibit a muted response to these problems, which they perceive to be negligible. Between these two extremes lie most white Americans. Note that this definition of racial sympathy does not refer to the presence or absence of prejudice. Instead, racial sympathy captures its own unique dimension of intergroup attitudes.

Most white Americans do not interact with black Americans on a day-to-day basis, and when they do, these interactions are often brief and superficial (Sigelman et al. 1996). Politics is one of the few venues in which white Americans can exercise their sympathy. In this respect, the political effects of whites' sympathy are rooted not in white citizens' self-interest, but instead in more symbolic concerns. Although a white person with racial sympathy may not experience the tangible consequences of her actions, since “one's relevant personal ‘stake’ in the issue is an emotional, symbolic one” (Sears et al. 1979), racial sympathy can still shape opinion on a range of policies and with respect to various political figures.

I consider the term “racial sympathy,” which is sometimes shortened to “sympathy” throughout the dissertation, to be a racial *attitude*. It may not at first be obvious why I consider sympathy to be an attitude and not an emotion. After all, in social and developmental psychology,

sympathy is often classified as an emotion, which is defined as “responses to the significance that circumstances hold for an individual” (Damasio 2000). According to this definition, emotions are fleeting since they are “responses” and are likely to vary with circumstances.

Yet there is a precedent in the study of political decision-making to acknowledge that emotion and cognition often merge to form the durable “psychological tendency” that Eagly and Chaiken classify as “attitudes.” This account is consistent with a variety of research traditions in political science finding that attitudes toward social groups have strong emotional components. For example, Sears’ (2001) theory of symbolic politics holds that “political symbols,” such as “blacks,” “rivet our attention and evoke emotion,” and that these emotions may “take a wide variety of more specific forms.”⁸ Conover (1988) has argued that people employ a “cognitive-affective model” when they think about groups in which “a group label evokes both a group schema and a stored affective reaction.” Banks and Valentino (2012) have suggested that racial prejudice contains the “emotional substrates” of anger and disgust. My argument is that for some whites, racial sympathy is a durable attitude with affective and cognitive components. When some whites think of blacks, sympathy surfaces in an enduring and meaningful way; in turn, this attitude shapes public opinion on policies perceived to benefit blacks.

The degree of racial sympathy depends on multiple individual and environmental factors. Among the environmental factors, white individuals’ perceptions of the size and nature of the racial disadvantage have the potential to influence their corresponding emotional reaction. For example, major historical events that provoked national dialogues on the prevalence of

⁸ Sears lists hatred, anger, fear and disgust as examples of such forms, while arguing that social scientists’ “language for positive emotions may be more impoverished” (15).

discrimination and inequality might encourage the widespread emergence of racial sympathy as a political force. Indeed, according to Kinder and Sanders, nontrivial proportions of whites came to internalize a public discourse of racial equality as they watched sit-ins, boycotts, and marches during the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁹ At other times when racial issues receive less national attention, racial sympathy might be less politically salient.

In Chapter 5, I conduct a series of experiments to examine the conditions that activate racial sympathy in politics. In the next section of this chapter, I consider some of the individual level factors that might shape a white person's level of racial sympathy. Although I do not present any empirical evidence here, the research I reference provides some clues of sympathy's origins.

The Potential Origins of Racial Sympathy

Racial sympathy may be a newcomer in political science, but it is a manifestation of broader concepts that have been studied in psychology for decades. As the introduction suggests, much of this literature has examined prejudiced or ethnocentric individuals. However, this literature has also often sought to distinguish *why* and *how* individuals come to carry out-group attitudes in the first place. In this respect, the existing literature is helpful in providing us with insight to the origins of racial attitudes generally.

Social and personality psychologists have typically pursued two different approaches when examining the antecedents of out-group attitudes (see Reynolds et al., 2001). Personality psychologists attempt to uncover stable factors within the individual that could influence out-group attitudes, like personality characteristics (Adorno et al., 1950, Altemeyer, 1998, Sidanius &

⁹ Indeed, Kinder and Sanders write about an explicit backlash in racial attitudes following a period of urban unrest in the mid-1960s.

Pratto 1999). In contrast, social psychologists consider the ways in which the outside world shapes individuals' out-group attitudes. This research has examined factors like social identity, or social self-categorization (Tajfel & Turner 1986, Turner & Reynolds 2003). Though the first systematic explorations of out-group attitudes used personality-based accounts to explain the roots of prejudice – indeed the title of Adorno and colleagues' study was *The Authoritarian Personality* (emphasis added) –scholars later came to emphasize the role of social and intergroup influences on attitude formation (e.g., Pettigrew 1959). For the most part, this social psychological approach has prevailed, particularly within political science, over the last decades, and the dissertation's final empirical chapter takes up this approach by examining racial sympathy's activation.

Starting in the 1980s, psychologists resumed interest in studying personality as a precursor to out-group attitudes. Notably, scholars developed the five-factor model of personality (“The Big Five”) to help systematize and clarify personality measurement (Goldberg 1999, John & Srivastava 1999, Sibley & Duckitt 2008). The Big Five factors are relatively independent, broad-bandwidth dimensions of personality, organized by five domains: Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness (C). Scholars have examined the relationship between these personality traits and out-group attitudes and, of particular relevance to the present study, have identified the traits of openness and agreeableness as especially relevant to racial animus and sympathy, respectively.¹⁰

Studies have found that both genetic and environmental factors determine variance in agreeableness and openness. Research has also demonstrated that the individual traits are heritable at different levels. For example, in 1993, Bergeman examined the genetic and environmental

¹⁰ Note that these studies often used a mediating concept – either Social Dominance Orientation or Right Wing Authoritarianism – to link personality to out-group attitude (see Ekehammar et al. 2004; Pratto et al. 1994; Whitley et al. 1999).

effects of openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness using a Swedish Twin registry of monozygotic (identical) and dizygotic (fraternal) twins reared together and apart. The study found that genetic influences account for 40%, 12% and 29% of the variance in Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, respectively (1993, 149). Conversely, estimates of shared rearing environment were modest for Openness to Experience (6%) and Conscientiousness (11%). These findings comport with the foundational research in personality and genetics, which suggests that Openness to Experience is highly heritable. Furthermore, unlike Agreeableness, Openness is also understood to be more durable, which means that it is unlikely to fluctuate with age (McCrae and Costa 2003).¹¹

Genetics, therefore, might contribute to individual differences in racial sympathy. This does not mean that individuals high on the traits of openness and agreeableness will always be racially sympathetic, nor does it mean that individuals low on openness and agreeableness will never carry racially sympathetic attitudes. Rather, it suggests that some individuals may be genetically predisposed to embrace racial sympathy from the outset.

In addition to the potential biological contribution, parenting or exposure to certain environments could encourage the development of racial sympathy in white Americans. Developmental psychologists have long argued that children learn racist attitudes from a number of sources, including their parents, caregivers, teachers, community members and peers (see Allport 1954, Clark & Clark 1939, Hraba & Grant 1970, Bigler 1999). In recent years, a burgeoning field of research has suggested that certain developmental techniques might not only

¹¹ I am not suggesting that sympathy is interchangeable with agreeableness or openness to new experience. Indeed, in the next chapter, I take up this point empirically by conducting an analysis that considers the relative influence of personality traits and racial sympathy on opinion and find that sympathy is independently associated with policy opinion. That said, it is possible these personality traits are one of the many sources that might contribute to a white person's level of racial sympathy.

reduce the impact of racism but also encourage the development of sympathy for marginalized groups (see Eisenberg 1983, 2000, Hamm 2001, Quintana et al. 2006).

For example, in a 2001 study of racial socialization, Hamm interviewed a number of white parents and found that many of these parents lamented the limited contact their white children had with peers from different ethnic groups (81). Indeed, research has found that interracial interaction among children leads white children to improved acceptance of black children (Goldstein et al. 1979). Hamm noted that these parents were cognizant of the barriers facing interracial contact, such as social segregation, but yet, “rarely assumed responsibility for broadening contact, preferring to defer socialization to other agents such as school” (2001, 83). It is possible, therefore, that a parenting style which deliberately encourages interracial interaction at a young age may contribute to a white child’s development into a racially sympathetic adult.

Recognizing that many white parents do not engage in efforts to discuss race,¹² some educators have attempted to practice a pedagogy that works to “confront White racism in all its distinct manifestations...(by) promoting educational change to transform or oppose existing arrangements that are harming people of color” (Young & Laible 2000 25). Schools have pursued a variety of techniques in an effort to reduce prejudice. One of the most common practices is for teachers to introduce white students to “the cultural ways of minority groups” (Aboud & Amato 2001 79). Studies have found that this technique has no consistent effect on the reduction of prejudice. Instead, by emphasizing difference, this approach reinforces an oversimplification of cultural patterns and the development of stereotypes (Pate 1988; Furuto & Furoto 1983).

¹² A study by Kofkin, Katz and Downey (1995) reported that approximately 25% of white parents have ever commented on race in any capacity. When probed as to why they had not discussed the topic, white parents tended to remark that all people were the same or their children had not asked.

In contrast, research has found that when white students perceive less homogeneity within out-groups, they are more inclined to develop positive feelings towards out-group members. For example, Aboud and Fenwick (1999) evaluated an 11-week curriculum program in which fifth-grade students used a textbook that featured profiles of 30 children from different racial and ethnic groups. In the textbook, each profile included a child's name, photograph, likes and dislikes, personality traits, and preferences. The curriculum was centered on activities in which students were asked to both cross-categorize and also remember the unique qualities of each of the children depicted in the profiles. At the conclusion of the class, white students who had taken part in this intervention curriculum assigned more positive attributes to non-whites than those white students who were in a control curriculum. This research suggests, therefore, that white children who are integrated into diverse environments and/or participate in educational activities that reduce perceptions of out-group homogeneity may be especially inclined to become racially sympathetic adults.

Thus a white person's parents, schooling, personality, and genetics may all predispose him or her to embrace racial sympathy. It should be reiterated that these factors do not guarantee racial sympathy, nor do the absence of these factors prevent the possibility of racial sympathy. These sources of sympathy may vary in the extent to which they influence a white person and, further, as I will discuss in the chapters that follow, there are a number of situational factors that too could shape the influence of racial sympathy in American politics. That said, this discussion provides some initial insight into the sources of racial sympathy.

In sum, I define racial sympathy as white individuals' sympathetic reactions to perceptions of racial problems generally, and within the context of American politics, misfortune experienced

by blacks specifically. Racial sympathy is not merely the absence or opposite of prejudice, but instead, is uniquely representative of the distress some whites experience when they think about racial inequality.

In principle, racial sympathy can make its mark in many areas of life – it can impact how the sympathetic choose a person to befriend, a movie to watch, or a charity to sponsor. In American politics, I argue that racial sympathy can influence white support for public policies perceived to benefit blacks.¹³ Although there are many reasons why a white person might endorse a racialized policy – some of which I will explore empirically in later chapters – I suggest that, for some white Americans, carrying sympathy for African Americans provides an additional influence on top of the many forces we already know to shape public opinion. In the final section of this chapter, I lay out my expectations for a study of racial sympathy in American politics.

Expectations

The conceptualization of racial sympathy provided in this chapter leads to a number of expectations, which guide the dissertation’s empirical chapters. The first expectation is that racial sympathy can be reliably measured. Since I have argued that the concept is not interchangeable with low prejudice, we require a devoted measure of racial sympathy. When psychologists introduce new concepts or measures, they typically embark on a series of validation exercises, which attempt to gauge the extent to which the measure adequately captures the concept it purports to. In Chapter 3, I introduce a new measure of racial attitudes, the *racial sympathy index*, and, through a series of validation exercises, examine whether this index represents the definition

¹³ Racial sympathy may also influence support for black politicians, though I do not examine this possibility in this project.

of racial sympathy put forward in this dissertation. I pay specific attention to the ways in which the racial sympathy index differs from other racial attitudes, notably prejudice.

Racial sympathy has the potential to shape public opinion because it is an attitude about a group and previous research has demonstrated that groups matter in politics (Nelson & Kinder 1996). As outlined in this chapter, since racial sympathy reflects distress over black misfortune, a group attitude that is not merely the inversion of prejudice, I expect to observe an independent relationship between racial sympathy and opinion on racialized public policies while accounting for measures of prejudice. In Chapter 4, I examine the relationship between sympathy and opinion using four national surveys. Here I expect to find that racial sympathy is meaningfully and consistently present, is not interchangeable with other related concepts, and imparts a unique and substantively significant contribution to whites' opinions on policies.

If racial sympathy exists and matters in politics, as I have argued, then I should be able to activate it with consequences for public opinion. To examine this expectation, the final empirical chapter of the dissertation uses a series of experiments to explore the circumstances that increase the salience of racial sympathy on political outcomes. My theory of racial sympathy suggests that the attitude is based on perceptions of black suffering. Accordingly, I expect that racial sympathy will be activated when a policy's black beneficiaries are emphasized.

Just as the foundational work in prejudice and politics introduced the discipline to the pronounced and perhaps surprising connection between animus and opinion, stimulating subsequent research on its reach, this project's primary contribution is to draw our attention to a previously understudied, but powerful, racial attitude. In a field crowded with research on prejudice, the principle aim of this dissertation is to reinvigorate the racial attitudes literature by

spurring new work on the complex and multiple roles that race can play in American politics. In doing so, the project complicates, but ultimately enriches, our longstanding interpretation of the nature of white racial attitudes in American politics.

CHAPTER III

The Measurement of Racial Sympathy

“There is no simple way to describe white attitudes toward black people. There has probably never been a time when white people in this country were of a common mind regarding the black population and it seems likely that as time has gone by, what consensus there may have been in the early days of the Republic has gradually dissipated” (Campbell, 1971, 1).

*“Are you sympathetic to Negroes as a group, are you indifferent to them, or do you dislike them?”
(Converse 1964, 235).*

Measuring racial attitudes has never been a straightforward task. Early studies in psychology and sociology debated the foundation and structure of intergroup attitudes (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950, Allport 1954, Blumer 1958), sparking a vibrant research tradition that continues to grapple with questions like: Where do intergroup attitudes come from? What are their consequences? And how do we measure them?

In the 1970s, scholars began to study the relationship between racial attitudes and policy opinion (Sears & Kinder 1971), marking the arrival of these provocative questions into political science. The last question in particular – how to measure racial attitudes – has invited “impassioned research criticism” (Huddy & Feldman 2009) among political scientists. Indeed, identifying the boundaries and measurement of white racial prejudice has produced a debate that is “among the most contentious in all of public opinion research” (Hutchings & Valentino 2004 390).

Yet, as the preceding chapter has argued, although political scientists diverge on how best to measure animus, they converge in focus on this single attitude. In part, this emphasis is understandable, given that the majority of whites might be characterized as “resentful” (e.g., Kinder and Sanders 1996). However, as Converse’s question, quoted above, suggests, white attitudes toward African Americans can take many forms: whites could sympathize, be indifferent, or dislike African Americans. Despite Converse’s recognition of these distinct possibilities, in practice, the majority of social science research has examined those whites who dislike African Americans. Work exploring other types of racial attitudes is comparably scarce.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the measurement of a different racial attitude, racial sympathy. Building on the theoretical background of the preceding chapter, this chapter lays out the justification for dedicated instrumentation of racial sympathy and describes the development of an original measure to complete this task: the *racial sympathy index*. I start by providing an overview of previous scholarship in the field, both from psychology and political science. In reviewing this research, I argue that although existing measures have attractive features, they are poorly equipped to capture distress over black misfortune. Accordingly, I next discuss the efforts I undertook to form an original measure of racial sympathy. I then provide an overview of the exploratory research that shaped the measure as well as a summary of the index’ quantitative properties.

In their seminal work on construct validation, Campbell and Fiske instruct scholars “before one can test the relationships between a specific trait and other traits, one must have some confidence in one’s measure of that trait. Such confidence can be supported by evidence of convergent and discriminant validation” (1959, 100). Accordingly, I enlist a series of validation

exercises to improve our confidence in the measure of racial sympathy. In this chapter, I explore the characteristics of the racial sympathy measure by examining the index's convergent validity, that is, the extent to which the index is related to theoretically similar concepts. In the next chapter, I will address the index's discriminant validity, or the extent to which the measure does *not* correlate with unrelated concepts and measures. This chapter provides us with a sense of the origins and contents of the racial sympathy index, a particularly important enterprise given the long-standing debates about the measurements of racial attitudes in political science. Additionally, these validation analyses create the empirical foundation for the analyses in the subsequent empirical chapters.

Previous Efforts to Measure Racial Sympathy

I will begin by providing an overview of the previous efforts to measure racial sympathy and closely related concepts. I consider these efforts in two parts: first, I look at work in psychology that has examined sympathy, broadly defined. Second, I examine the limited work in political science that has attempted to understand “pro-Black” (Craemer 2008) political behavior, such as the motivations that led some whites to cast their votes for Obama (see Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011; Tesler & Sears 2010).

In psychology, much of the research on sympathy defines it as a transitory emotion felt in response to a variety of difficult scenarios including events such as death, unemployment, natural disaster, and unjust treatment (Clark 1997). To examine the “state” of sympathy, researchers will typically induce sympathy and subsequently gather respondents' self-assessments. Psychologists have also occasionally classified facial expressions or issued physiological indices to gauge the effect of sympathy (see Eisenberg et al. 1990 for a review).

Other work in psychology has considered sympathy toward blacks as an enduring attitude. For example, in a survey conducted by Iyer and colleagues (2003), the authors asked respondents to complete the sentence: “when I think about racial discrimination by white people toward blacks I feel....” Subjects were presented with a list of adjectives as suggested answers, including the words sympathetic, compassionate, and/or empathetic. If subjects selected any of these adjectives, their responses were grouped into a single index to measure “sympathy.” Iyer and colleagues then used this sympathy index to predict pro-social behavior. The formatting of this measure suggests that whites draw on a disposition when they reflect on race, corresponding with Banks and Valentino’s conceptualization of prejudice (2012).

Psychologists have also considered other measures that acknowledge the possibility of a positive racial attitude. For example, Katz and Haas (1988) argue that racial attitudes in the United States have two distinct dimensions: Humanitarianism-Egalitarianism and the Protestant Work Ethic. They argue that the simultaneous presence of both of these orientations contribute to white racial ambivalence and the “American Value Conflict.” Relatedly, Dovidio and Gaertner’s aversive racism recognizes “the conflict between whites’ denial of personal prejudice and the underlying unconscious negative feelings toward and beliefs about blacks” (2004, 4). Finally, Devine and colleagues (2002) examine the internal and external motivations that lead whites to respond without prejudice. They argue that whites must develop “effective regulatory strategies” so as to “overcome years of exposure to biased and stereotypical information” (835).

In political science, the most developed research on racial sympathy can be found in research on “symbolic racism” (Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011, Tesler 2012, Tesler & Sears 2010). Scholars of symbolic racism have argued that a single measure, in this case, the racial resentment

scale, contains multiple affective tags. More specifically, these scholars contend that the racial resentment scale captures not only negative components of white racial attitudes but positive ones as well.¹⁴

Despite the valuable contributions of existing scholarship, the current efforts to measure sympathy demonstrate some important shortcomings with respect to measurement. Starting with the research in psychology, since I do not conceptualize racial sympathy as a transitory emotion, it would be inappropriate to induce, and then measure, the emotion of sympathy.¹⁵ For this reason, many of the creative measurement approaches pursued by psychologists are not suited for the current enterprise. Furthermore, the limited research that has considered sympathy toward African Americans to be more stable (Iyer et al. 2003) uses a question formatting that requires subjects to identify and distinguish between three, potentially separate, emotions: sympathy, empathy and compassion (Wispe 1986). Collapsing potentially distinct concepts into a single term of “sympathy” may muddle important differences between empathy and sympathy, for example. Indeed, despite using this method himself, Batson has observed “it seems likely that some subjects, even if they are experiencing some distinct emotion such as empathy rather than distress, do not have the language skills to interpret this experience accurately – at least not in the terms provided on our rating scales” (Batson 1987, 357).

Moving to the scholarship on ambivalent racism, this research suggests that non-prejudicial attitudes can be an important dimension of racial attitudes. It also underscores an important theme of this project: white racial attitudes are multifaceted and studies that only examine white

¹⁴ For critiques of the scale, see: Feldman and Huddy 2005; Huddy and Feldman 2009; Sniderman, Carmines, and Easter 2011. For rebuttals, see: Sears and Henry 2003.

¹⁵ That said, in the dissertation’s fifth chapter, I examine whether the *effects* of sympathy can be activated or heightened.

prejudice obscure the complexity of white public opinion. That said, because concepts like Katz and Haas' Humanitarian-Egalitarian orientation are broad by design, they potentially encompass multiple emotions (such as empathy rather than sympathy) and are directed toward multiple groups. As such, they are not able to isolate white distress over black misfortune specifically. In theorizing racial sympathy in this way, it is important to use a measure that calibrates attitudes about African Americans specifically.¹⁶

The work by Dovidio and Gaertner, as well as Devine and colleagues, suggests that some whites may try to suppress their prejudice. Similarly, when scholars use the low end of the racial resentment scale, they are suggesting that low-prejudice may be a politically potent force. However, and as the previous chapter has made clear, we should not assume that low prejudice is necessarily equivalent to racial sympathy.

In sum, despite the valuable contributions of existing measures, important questions remain: first, assuming there are some whites who have sympathy for blacks, it is unclear whether they are able to identify or articulate it using currently available measures. Additionally, if some white Americans are distressed over black suffering, this racial sympathy should have consequences for policies that influence black Americans but not other marginalized groups. In the analysis that follows, I take up each of these questions using a new measure of racial attitudes: the racial sympathy index.

Creating the Racial Sympathy Index

Based on the limitations of the existing measures, I created an original measure of racial sympathy, the racial sympathy index, which is uniquely designed to calibrate white distress over

¹⁶ As the subsequent analyses will reveal, sympathy for African Americans is distinct from broader value orientations like humanitarianism and egalitarianism.

black misfortune. It was formed through a series of participant observation sessions and qualitative interviews. In this section, I detail the exploratory research I undertook to create this novel measure.

As I set out to design a new measure, my only prerequisite was that it ought to lend itself to questionnaire format, in part, to allow for comparison with other racial attitudes research in the subfield, much of which is conducted through survey research. Aside from this initial qualification, I began the process of creating a new measure with few expectations about its form or content.

Instead, I embarked on this process by simply listening to how white Americans thought and talked about race. During this period of exploratory research, the College of Literature, Sciences and the Arts (LS&A) at the University of Michigan had fortuitously planned a theme semester entitled “Understanding Race.” Since 1980, the College has planned a “theme semester,” which consists of a variety of events on a broad, interdisciplinary subject,¹⁷ intended to provide the community with “intellectual and cultural immersion in a particular topic...true to U-M’s public mission, theme semester events are generally open to the public and are done frequently in collaboration with community organizations.” In the winter of 2013, the College scheduled an assortment of events related to “understanding” race, ranging from semi-structured discussions following a racially themed museum exhibit to casual dialogues after a play that explored interracial tension. These events typically drew white individuals who wanted to think, and often talk, about race and so I attended to listen to how they expressed themselves. I paid close attention to the words they used and the salient images that they referenced. To complement this research, I

¹⁷ Past theme semesters include: Translation (Fall 2012), Water (Winter 2011), 100 Years Beyond Einstein (Fall 2005), and Sport in the University (Fall 2014). More information about the LS&A Theme Semesters can be found at: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/themesemester/>

also conducted in-depth interviews with white student leaders from the U-M Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR) throughout the spring and summer of 2013.¹⁸ I supplemented these in-person interviews with a series of qualitative surveys about race on Amazon's *Mechanical Turk* platform.

In total, I spent approximately 30 hours listening to this subpopulation of white Americans talk about race. Throughout this exploratory research, a couple of themes consistently emerged. First, I found that these whites regularly expressed distress and regret about the disadvantage experienced by blacks. Rarely did they indicate that they were able to relate to the experience of blacks; which is to say, they did not articulate their attitudes in empathetic terms. Rather, their tone was often one of remorse for the situations of blacks and regret about how these situations were typically ignored or misunderstood by other whites. For example, during one semi-structured discussion, the moderator asked the group why racial prejudice persisted. A white woman observed:

“If you look at Detroit, and you know, you’re saying the schools are bad and everyone there is a certain race, then you’re putting a bunch of people who, you know, have been socially misplaced or downgraded, and giving them the worst of things, and then blaming it on the color of their skin...people don’t understand that blacks’ skin color doesn’t cause the bad schools. It’s really distressing.”

Here the participant notes that African Americans in Detroit have experienced misfortune as “misplaced or downgraded” individuals, and that “people” (presumably white people) have improperly interpreted the consequences of this treatment. She concludes by observing that this is “distressing” to her. Throughout this particular discussion, which was guided by trained facilitators, white respondents voiced similar comments in which they expressed distress over the unequal

¹⁸ The Program on Intergroup Relations is an on-campus social justice education program that “prepares students to live and work in a diverse world and educates them in making choices that advance equity, justice, and peace.”

conditions experienced by blacks and also regret that many of their fellow in-group members were not sensitive to the causes or prevalence of these conditions.

Similarly, another participant commented:

“I have friends who are African American and I have talked to them about what it’s like to be black. They told me about times they’ve been treated differently – followed around stores, or people assumed they weren’t smart – and I feel really sad for them – it’s also terrible knowing that some people can be so horrible.”

This excerpt was taken from a community dialogue session and, like many others, it revealed that white sympathy for blacks is often rooted in specific episodes – in the first case, the situation of schools in Detroit and in the second, a conversation with black friends. More generally, these two observations seemed to be part of a broader trend: participants did not articulate their distress in terms of ideology or values, but instead referenced specific imagery of African Americans facing hardships. This observation was confirmed during my interviews with the white leaders of the U-M Program on Intergroup Relations. When I asked them what compelled them to take on leadership roles in the group, they often referenced a salient incident as motivating their participation, or at the very least, awakening them to the hardships faced by African Americans. One white female leader of IGR told me that she joined the group after she heard white dorm mates saying negative things about the only African American student in her residence hall. Another student said he joined because he had recently visited a predominantly black neighborhood in Detroit and was distressed by its poverty.

Reflecting on this exploratory research, I drew two conclusions. First, when sympathetic whites thought about African Americans, they tended to reference salient and actual instances of discrimination – schools in Detroit or a dorm mate who is treated differently due to her race. Otherwise put, many of these whites root their sympathy in episodic rather than thematic

observations.¹⁹ Participants did not bemoan the institutional and historical forces that created Detroit's deteriorating schools as much they found the current states of the schools as objectionable. For the most part, these whites' observations focused mostly on individual level racism rather than institutional racism, a finding that comports with Ture and Hamilton (1967).

Second, recent work in psychology and political science has argued that *empathy* drives individuals to pursue pro-social behavior, such as helping members of other ethnic groups (see Batson 1997, 2001, Feldman et al. 2015). However, during my exploratory research, I found that it was rare for whites indicate that they were able to *relate* to the circumstances of blacks. In fact, in many cases, some subjects went out of the way to emphasize that they indeed *could not* imagine what it was like to be black, drawing attention to the ways in which African Americans' race lead to a unique and severe disadvantage. Based on these observations, and while acknowledging that racial sympathy might have multiple emotional components, sympathy seems to be the most central and often-expressed emotion.

The Racial Sympathy Index

Using the language and themes I observed from my preliminary research, I formed a measure of racial sympathy by adapting an approach pursued by Schuman and Harding in the 1964 article "*Sympathetic Identification with the Underdog*." In this article, the authors compose a series of fictional vignettes meant to elicit sympathy, each featuring a member of an ethnic out-group. After reading each paragraph, the authors ask subjects whether they experienced "sympathetic identification" with the out-group member depicted in the vignette. The benefit of these types of vignettes is that they enabled subjects to react directly to specific stimuli rather than

¹⁹ But see Iyengar 1990 for a discussion of the episodic/thematic distinction.

to abstract notions of discrimination and inequality, terms that citizens, especially white citizens are unlikely to employ when they think about race.²⁰ Instead, the vignettes allow subjects to “easily identify the broader set of issues to which this particular one apparently belongs... they can use their general attitude toward the broader set of issues to determine their attitude toward this particular one” (Schwarz 1994 135).²¹

I update Schuman and Harding’s measures by composing a series of new vignettes that, like the originals, depicted instances of prejudice or discrimination. Unlike the original measures, my vignettes featured only black targets and provided response reactions designed to measure sympathy, not sympathetic identification. After reading each vignette, subjects are asked to report how much sympathy they felt for the black character(s) with answer choices ranging from “I do not feel any sympathy” to “A great deal.”²² I combine individual responses to all four questions to form the *racial sympathy* index. Overall, the index is intended to capture the extent to which whites feel sorry about black suffering across a range of contemporary contexts and are presented below.

²⁰ See Walsh’s (2007) discussion of “practical politics” (p. 7-8).

²¹ Though many current measures of racial attitudes do not use vignettes, there is reason to believe that this approach is well suited for measuring racial attitudes generally but also racial sympathy specifically. A recent National Research Council panel on measuring racial discrimination suggested, for example, that vignettes offered one way to overcome subjects error related to limited memory, interpretation and telescoping, writing: “one fruitful avenue for (measure) improvement might be greater use of the factorial vignette method, in which stories are presented to respondents” (Blank et al. 2004; 171). Furthermore, research on empathy in developmental psychology has often employed a similar approach, using “picture-story” indices, in which subjects are presented with a “series of story narratives in which the characters are described and portrayed (by drawings, photos, slides, or more recently, by videotapes) in contexts likely to evoke sadness, fear, or other emotions” (Strayer 1987; 351).

²² I refer to this question as “Question 1”. In an effort to reduce question error and increase response variation, I included an additional question, “Question 2”. The content of Question 2 differed slightly among the four scenarios: for example, respondents were asked if they liked, or would be friends with, the target of discrimination, or occasionally, with the white perpetrator of discrimination (in this case, reverse coded). As a practical matter, I found that this eight-item index performed very similarly to a shortened, four-item index that only used the responses from Question 1 (correlation 0.95 among whites). All of the analyses present here, therefore, use this four-item index (that is, an index that combines four responses to Question 1), though the results are robust across specifications that use the eight-item racial sympathy index.

The Racial Sympathy Index

Mrs. Lewis, a white woman with young children, posts advertisements for a nanny on community bulletin boards. She receives many inquiries and decides to interview all applicants over the phone. Mrs. Lewis is most impressed with a woman named Laurette, who has relevant experience, is an excellent cook, and comes enthusiastically recommended. Mrs. Lewis invites Laurette over for what she expects will be the final step of the hiring process. When Laurette arrives, Mrs. Lewis is surprised to see that Laurette is black. After Laurette's visit, which goes very well, Mrs. Lewis thanks her for her time but says that she will not be offered the job. When Laurette asks why, Mrs. Lewis says that she doesn't think that her children would feel comfortable around her. Laurette is upset about Mrs. Lewis' actions.

Tim is a white man who owns a hair salon. His business is growing rapidly and so he decides to place an advertisement to hire new stylists. In the advertisement, he writes that interested applicants should come for an interview first thing next Monday. When he arrives at the salon on Monday, he sees a line of seven or eight people waiting outside the door, all of whom appear to be black. He approaches the line and tells the applicants that he's sorry, but the positions have been filled. The applicants are upset; they feel they have been turned away because of their race.

Milford is a mid-sized city in the Northeast. The main bus depot for the city is located in the Whittier section of Milford, a primarily black neighborhood. Whittier community leaders argue that the concentration of buses produces serious health risks for residents; they point to the high asthma rates in Whittier as evidence of the bus depot's harmful effects. The Milford Department of Transportation officials, who are mostly white, state that Whittier is the best location for the depot because it is centrally located and many Whittier residents take the bus. Furthermore, it would be expensive to relocate the bus depot to a new location. Whittier community leaders are very upset by the Department's inaction.

Michael is a young black man who lives in a midwestern city. One day Michael is crossing the street and jaywalks in front of cars. Some local police officers see Michael jaywalk and stop and question him. Michael argues that he was just jaywalking and is otherwise a law-abiding citizen. The police officers feel that Michael is being uncooperative and so they give him a pat down to see if he is carrying any concealed weapons. Michael is very upset by this treatment.

In Schuman and Harding's article, the authors find that sympathetic identification with socially marginalized groups is associated with support for those African Americans who challenged Jim Crow segregation, such as the black students who participated in the Woolworth's Lunch Counter sit-in. Both the racial sympathy index and Schuman and Harding's measure

provide concrete examples of discriminatory acts, intentional or unintentional, encountered by a member of an out-group.²³

At the conclusion of their article, Schuman and Harding argue that their measures convey a substantively unique racial attitude, writing:

“These results suggest that sympathetic identification cannot be thought of as simply equivalent to what is usually measured under the term “prejudice.” The two types of measures are clearly related, but not so much so as to consider one a close substitute for the other. Identification with the underdog appears to be a distinctive dimension, worth studying, if at all, in its own right” (238).

The authors claim that sympathetic identification is a “central motivating force in humanitarian movements” (241) suggesting that the concept has broad application beyond the context of segregation. Indeed, while many years have passed since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 overturned Jim Crow segregation laws, I expect that white sympathy for African Americans maintains its influence in present day American politics. In the next section, I provide an overview of the index and demonstrate its suitability for capturing white distress over black misfortune.

Data and Measurement

I use data from the 2013 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) to examine the quantitative properties of the racial sympathy index. The CCES is national stratified sample administered annually on the Internet by YouGov/Polimetrix. The 2013 CCES was fielded in November 2013; half of the questionnaire consisted of “Common Content,” 60 questions covering a wide range of political attitudes and politician evaluations, and the other half comprised

²³ Schuman and Harding’s vignettes presented acts of discrimination or prejudice that were common in 1964. For example, in one vignette, the authors write: “A colored man born in New England goes South for the first time and sees in a Mississippi bus station two waiting rooms, one for colored and one for whites. How do you think he would be likely to react to this?” (231). Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, discrimination in public accommodations, like the bus station described in this vignette, was outlawed. I updated the vignettes to appear relevant to contemporary readers.

of “Team Content,” in which individual researchers submitted their own questions to be asked on a subset of 1,000 individuals. The racial sympathy vignettes were submitted through “Team Content” and as such, were distributed to approximately 1,000 respondents, 751 of whom identified as white. In addition, our “Team Content” module included multiple questions related to policy and politician evaluations, building on the many relevant questions in these domains already contained in the Common Content.

To approximate national representativeness, the CCES uses a two-stage selection and weighting scheme, based off of Census estimates and propensity-score weighting. Studies have found that the CCES sample performs similarly to the ANES sample on important variables, like vote choice (Ansolabehere & Rivers 2013, Vavrek & Rivers 2008). In one article, Ansolabehere and Rivers (2013) compare the demographic composition of Obama and McCain supporters across the 2008 ANES, the 2008 CCES, and exit polls. They find the distribution of the vote to be “remarkably similar to the exit polls for both the ANES and the CCES” (320). In this spirit, Table 3.1, provided in the Appendix, displays some key demographic attributes of the CCES white respondents, with appropriate weights applied, as compared to other nationally representative surveys.

Table 3.1 about here

As Table 3.1 illustrates, the 2013 CCES sample resembles recent samples collected by the ANES and the GSS with regards to gender, education and age. The 2013 CCES sample does report a higher percentage of partisan independents than the other surveys (approximately 20%).²⁴

²⁴ Though this is interesting from a survey design perspective, I do not think that the high percentage of independents presents a problem for my argument. First, my theorizing about racial sympathy does not assume that the concept maps neatly onto partisanship. Furthermore, as later parts of this document will demonstrate, I replicate my results using three nationally representative samples, which feature a more accurate representation of the partisan landscape.

Organizers of the CCES have acknowledged that they cannot strictly classify the sample as nationally representative (Ansolabehere & Rivers 2013), and others have criticized opt-in surveys more generally, arguing that the survey mode may produce distinct results because respondents who self-select into the sample are unique (see Erikson & Tedin 2007, Malhotra & Krosnick 2007). Nonetheless, the distributions listed above suggest that the white sample in the 2013 CCES shares important characteristics of the white samples collected in other reputable academic surveys and is adequate for the present purpose.

The distribution of the racial sympathy index, presented in Figure 3.1, suggests that substantial proportions of white respondents reported feeling sympathetic for the black individual(s) described in the vignettes. Indeed, among whites in the CCES sample (n=751), the average level of racial sympathy was .63.

Figure 3.1 about here

For those accustomed to scales of resentment or prejudice, the distribution of racial sympathy presented in Figure 3.1 may come as a surprise.²⁵ Indeed, the distribution suggests that the majority of white Americans are racially sympathetic, a finding that seems to run counter to previous research in racial attitudes. Kinder and Sanders (1996) find, for example, that “substantial majorities” (108) of white Americans exhibit racial resentment. Does Figure 3.1 contradict this finding?

To address this question, it is important to first reiterate that racial animus and sympathy are independent concepts. It is therefore appropriate that they yield distinct distributions. As I have theorized it, perhaps sympathy’s focus on black suffering makes it a more palatable racial

²⁵ The distribution of the individual vignettes appears in the chapter’s Appendix as Table 3.1.

attitude than we might have previously expected, and thus more attainable for most whites.²⁶

Furthermore, with respect to racial resentment specifically, it is conceivable that a white person could simultaneously believe that blacks do not adhere to the Protestant work ethic and that, on other occasions, they are discriminated against, and that this discrimination is distressing. Figure 3.1 provides empirical support for the possibility that white Americans could both be high in sympathy for and resentment of African Americans.²⁷

Indeed, as Figure 3.2 reveals, a non-trivial percentage of whites that score high on the racial resentment measure also score high on the racial sympathy index. In this Figure, respondents' level of racial sympathy is displayed on the *y*-axis and their level of racial resentment is displayed on the *x*-axis. If racial sympathy was merely the opposite of racial resentment, then we might expect for all of those whites who score high in sympathy to be concentrated in the top left corner of the chart, where resentment is at its lowest. Instead, the dispersion of whites' sympathy and resentment scores suggest that many whites hold *both* sympathetic and resentful attitudes about African Americans.

Figure 3.2 about here

This point is reinforced through the modest correlation of racial resentment and the racial sympathy index (the raw correlation is -0.45).²⁸ The magnitude of this correlation suggests that the

²⁶ Furthermore, in later chapters, I employ a different measure of racial sympathy that yields a more conservative average; however, even with this measure, I am able to replicate the results generated from racial sympathy index. I will provide more information about the advantages and disadvantages of different racial sympathy measures in Chapter 4.

²⁷ That said, surveys routinely reveal that a non-trivial percentage of whites acknowledge that blacks face discrimination. For example, the 2012 ANES reports that most whites think that black Americans encounter at least some discrimination in society. Additionally, this survey also reports that most whites (slightly more than half) think that blacks encounter more discrimination than whites. Given that many whites acknowledge discrimination, perhaps it is not surprising that many whites also express some form of sympathy for African Americans.

²⁸ The correlation between resentment and sympathy varies somewhat between samples. Among whites in Mechanical Turk convenience samples, the correlation has been as low as -0.19 and as high as -0.4. The correlation between the

concepts are negatively related but not interchangeable. In addition to considering the relationship between sympathy and resentment, I examined the relationship between racial sympathy and a number of other related variables that appear in the 2012 ANES.²⁹ These analyses also revealed that racial sympathy is correlated with but yet, not identical, to existing concepts. For example, the raw correlation of racial sympathy and egalitarianism is 0.3. The correlation of sympathy and the belief that blacks face discrimination in the United States is 0.28. Similarly, the correlation between sympathy and warmth toward blacks is 0.28 and the correlation between sympathy and admiration of blacks is 0.49. The magnitude of these correlations suggests that racial sympathy bears resemblance to other related concepts while also reflecting a unique dimension of racial attitude.

The racial sympathy index ranges from 0 to 1 with a score of 0 indicating that, spanning diverse scenarios, the subject feels no distress over black suffering. A score of 1 indicates that the subject consistently feels “a great deal of sympathy” for the black subject across four vignettes. Each of the four vignettes is intended to represent a unique instance of discrimination. The targets of discrimination in the index were men and women, individual and groups, personable and abstract, young and middle-aged, and yet, across these diverse scenarios, I observe that white respondents expressed relatively consistent levels of sympathy across the vignettes. This is reflected in a relatively high intra-item correlation and Cronbach’s alpha (.74 for the 4-item index).

Furthermore, examining the items’ item-rest correlations, that is, the correlation between an item and the scale that is formed by all other items, suggests that the responses are highly correlated

ANES sympathy measure and racial resentment is -0.28 (for those respondents interviewed in face-to-face mode) and -0.46 (among those respondents who completed the web version of the survey) among whites in the 2012 Time Series.

²⁹ See page 75.

with each other (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994). Factor analysis confirms this point. Responses to the four vignettes load heavily and roughly equally on a single factor. See Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 about here

In addition to the factor analysis among the racial sympathy items, I conducted a factor analysis in which I combined the racial sympathy index questions with the questions from the racial resentment scale. Since scholars have argued that racial resentment scale can capture sympathy, and indeed two of the scale's questions draw attention to African American suffering,³⁰ this analysis allows me to examine whether the two concepts lie on a single dimension or, instead, are independent. The results of this analysis, which are, like Table 3.2, principal factor analyses with promax oblique rotation, are presented in Table 3.3. The factor analysis in Table 3.3 retains two factors (those with eigenvalues greater than 1); cumulatively, these factors explain a large proportion of the variance in responses.

As Table 3.3 displays, the racial sympathy index loads well onto one dimension and the racial resentment index loads well onto another. Notably, the "sympathetic" items of the racial resentment scale do not appear to load heavily onto Factor 2, suggesting that if these components do indeed capture a form of racial sympathy, it is substantively distinct from the type of sympathy represented in the racial sympathy index. As confirmation of this point, when I combine the two "sympathetic" items of the racial resentment scale into an abridged 2-item index and calculate the correlation of this 2-item index with the racial sympathy index, I find that these two indices are moderately correlated (raw correlation is 0.44).

³⁰ These questions ask respondents to agree/disagree with the following statements: 1) "Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve" and 2) Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class. The full text of the racial resentment items appears in the Appendix.

Table 3.3 about here

In the next analysis, I conduct a series of regressions to examine the demographic and attitudinal antecedents of racial sympathy and resentment. I expect sympathy to be associated with factors such as party identification, education and limited government, as previous research has found that these factors are related to other racial attitudes, such as racial resentment (Sears et al. 1997) and white racial identity (Hutchings et al. 2011). However, since the racial sympathy index collects responses to scenarios that are set in everyday life and are therefore, somewhat removed from the sphere of political institutions, I do not expect the measure to be especially politicized. Instead, I expect party identification, education and limited government to exhibit only a modest relationship with the racial sympathy index.

Table 3.4 about here

Table 3.4 demonstrates that racial sympathy is positively associated with party identification, education and limited government. However, with the exception of party identification, none of the antecedents is significantly ($p < 0.05$) correlated with racial sympathy. On the other hand, age, education, and preferences for limited government are all significantly correlated with scores on the racial resentment scale. Despite these differences, in most cases, the coefficients are in the consistent direction,³¹ and not surprisingly perhaps, party identification is the strongest predictor for both sympathy and resentment. The results in Table 3.4 display the concepts' shared roots. They also suggest that the ingredients of racial sympathy may not be identical to those of racial resentment.

More generally, the preceding analyses suggest that racial sympathy passes multiple tests of

³¹ Note that racial resentment is coded with a score of 1=resentful and racial sympathy is coded with a score of 1=sympathetic. Therefore opposite signs on the coefficients in Table 2 are indicative of a consistent influence of the correlate on the two attitudes.

convergent validity. In the next chapter, I examine the discriminant validity of the racial sympathy index, or the extent to which the measure does *not* correlate with unrelated concepts and measures. For now, the analyses of this chapter suggest that the racial sympathy index is internally consistent. Based on these results, it seems that the measure is indeed tapping into a unique, coherent, dimension of white racial attitude.

Discussion & Conclusion

This analysis builds on previous research on the measurement of racial attitudes by examining the contents and boundaries of an important determinant of white public opinion. And while the discussion of how to measure racial attitudes may be familiar to social scientists, the attention to a non-prejudicial attitude, sympathy, is new. The results presented in this chapter suggest that racial sympathy is a coherent and unique attitude, distinct in composition from prejudice.

This chapter begins an exercise in concept validation. The analyses suggest that racial sympathy is internally consistent and associated with relevant concepts, passing tests of convergent validity. In Chapter 4, I find that the racial sympathy index is unassociated with non-racial policies, clearing concerns related to discriminant validity. Based on the strength of these results, I employ the racial sympathy index throughout the dissertation.

The quote that began the chapter, from Angus Campbell's 1971 book *White Attitudes Toward Black People*, warns scholars that there is no simple way to describe white attitudes toward black people. By reducing the study of racial attitudes to the study of prejudice, political scientists have overlooked the complexity of white Americans' views on race. This chapter attempts to expose the diversity of opinion and the range of intergroup attitudes among whites.

That said, the analyses of this chapter do not establish if racial sympathy has political consequences. Indeed, while some white Americans carry sympathy toward African Americans, an attitude that can be reliably measured with the racial sympathy index, it is not yet clear whether this sympathy is overridden by the influence of other considerations, such as values of egalitarianism, limited government, or partisanship.

Furthermore, this chapter provided compelling initial evidence that racial sympathy is distinct from low-end resentment. But when it comes to understanding *how* whites support certain policies, does racial sympathy provide unique explanatory power that resentment cannot? In the next chapter, I take up these questions by examining the influence of racial sympathy on public opinion.

Table 3.1. Comparison of Whites in the 2013 CCES, the 2008 & 2012 ANES, and the 2012 GSS

	2013 CCES	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	2012 GSS
% Male	49.26	48.46	44.82	46.53
% BA+	29.17	32.94	29.83	31.74
% Democrat ³²	37.76	37.74	43.61	41.02
% Republican	42.18	48.68	44.67	40.84
Mean Age	49	45-54	48	48

³² Includes all three categories of Democrats: lean Democrat, Democrat, and Strong Democrat. This coding is replicated with the relevant categories for the percentage of Republicans.

Table 3.2: Principal Factor Analyses of Whites' Responses to Racial Sympathy Index

Variable	Factor 1
PFA Results	2.3
Eigenvalues (% of variance explained)	(58)
Vignette 1: Laurette - hiring	0.81
Vignette 2: Hair salon applicants	0.82
Vignette 3: Bus depot	0.67
Vignette 4: Michael - police	0.72

Source: 2013 CCES

Table 3.3: Principal Factor Analyses of Whites' Responses to Racial Sympathy Index and Racial Resentment Index

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2
PFA Results	3.43	2.80
Eigenvalues (% of variance explained)	(43)	(35)
Vignette 1: Laurette - hiring	0.1	0.88
Vignette 2: Hair salon applicants	0.05	0.86
Vignette 3: Bus depot	-0.06	0.63
Vignette 4: Michael - police	-0.23	0.58
Racial Resentment – Irish	0.93	0.11
Racial Resentment – Generations	0.88	0.01
Racial Resentment – Try harder	0.79	-0.07
Racial Resentment - Deserve	0.84	-0.02

Source: 2013 CCES

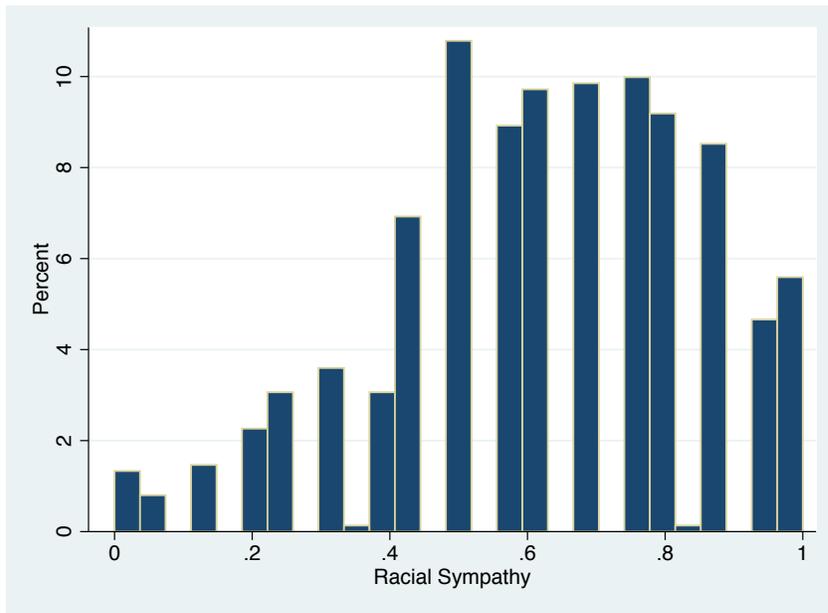
Table 3.4: Antecedents of Racial Sympathy and Racial Resentment

	Racial Sympathy	Racial Resentment
Party (1=Republican)	-0.16*** (0.037)	0.27*** (0.039)
Income	-0.03 (0.055)	0.01 (0.054)
Age	-0.04 (0.044)	0.13** (0.056)
Education	0.07* (0.039)	-0.11** (0.043)
Gender (1=Female)	0.02 (0.022)	0.04* (0.023)
Church Attendance	-0.01 (0.031)	0.00 (0.033)
Region (1=South)	-0.01 (0.023)	-0.03 (0.026)
Limited Government	-0.07* (0.034)	0.17*** (0.033)
Constant	0.73*** (0.050)	0.61*** (0.059)
Observations	751	751

Source: 2013 CCES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings indicate the dependent variables, the racial sympathy and racial resentment indices.

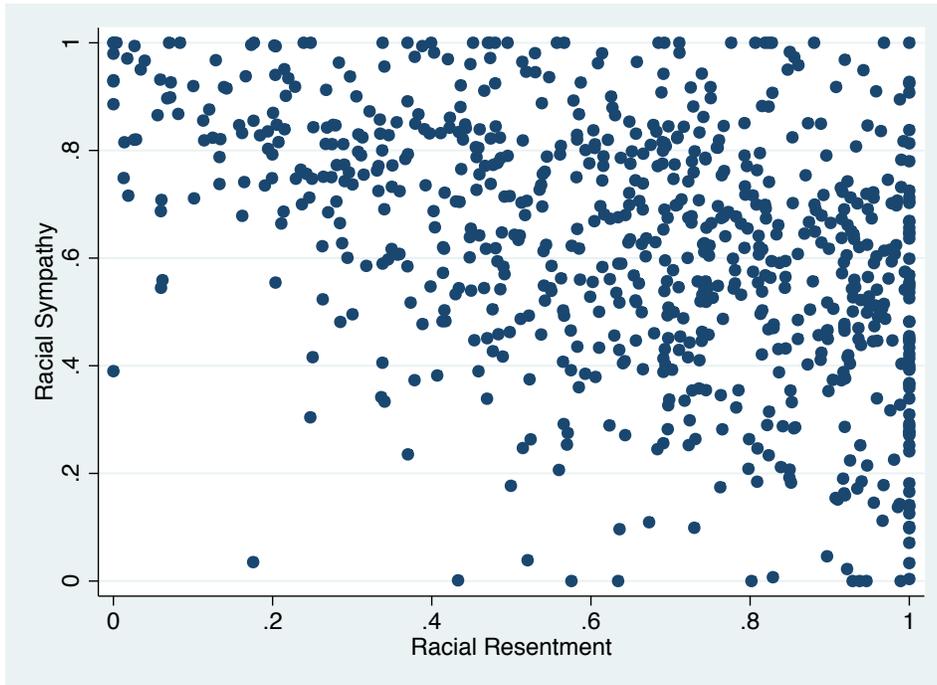
Figure 3.1: The Distribution of Racial Sympathy



Source: 2013 CCES

White respondents only (n=751), analyses are unweighted.

Figure 3.2: The Distribution of Racial Sympathy and Racial Resentment



Source: 2013 CCES

White respondents only (n=751), analyses are unweighted.

Appendix: Chapter 3 - Tables

Table A3.1: Distribution of Racial Sympathy Items

	Response Categories				
	"A great deal of sympathy"	"A lot of sympathy"	"Some sympathy"	"A little sympathy"	"I do not feel any sympathy"
Items					
Black woman, "Laurette", turned away for nanny job after interview	43.37	29.26	16.65	4.53	5.79
Group of Blacks turned away for salon jobs	36.96	27.25	22.45	8.34	5.01
Black neighborhood ignored by local government	11.02	18.82	37.16	18.20	14.33
Black man, "Michael", pat down by police after jaywalking	19.82	19.97	24.46	15.04	20.64

Source: 2013 CCES

Appendix: Chapter 3 – Survey Items

1. 2013 CCES

2013 Independent Variable: Racial Sympathy Index

The following directions were provided at the beginning of the racial sympathy questions.

We are interested in your reactions to some things that happen in every day life. We will first describe the situation to you and then ask you a few questions.

.....

Racial Sympathy 1A

Variable Label

Mrs. Lewis, a white woman with young children, posts advertisements for a nanny on community bulletin boards. She receives many inquiries and decides to interview all applicants over the phone. Mrs. Lewis is most impressed with a woman named Laurette, who has relevant experience, is an excellent cook, and comes enthusiastically recommended. Mrs. Lewis invites Laurette over for what she expects will be the final step of the hiring process. When Laurette arrives, Mrs. Lewis is surprised to see that Laurette is black. After Laurette's visit, which goes very well, Mrs. Lewis thanks her for her time but says that she will not be offered the job. When Laurette asks why, Mrs. Lewis says that she doesn't think that her children would feel comfortable around her. Laurette is upset about Mrs. Lewis' actions.

How much sympathy do you feel for Laurette?

Question Text

- 1 A great deal of sympathy
- 2 A lot of sympathy

- 3 Some sympathy
- 4 A little sympathy
- 5 I do not feel any sympathy for her

Racial Sympathy 2A

Variable Label

Tim is a white man who owns a hair salon. His business is growing rapidly and so he decides to place an advertisement to hire new stylists. In the advertisement, he writes that interested applicants should come for an interview first thing next Monday. When he arrives at the salon on Monday, he sees a line of seven or eight people waiting outside the door, all of whom appear to be black. He approaches the line and tells the applicants that he's sorry, but the positions have been filled. The applicants are upset; they feel they have been turned away because of their race.

Please indicate which statement best describes you.

How much sympathy do you feel for the applicants?

Question Text

- 1 A great deal of sympathy
- 2 A lot of sympathy
- 3 Some sympathy
- 4 A little sympathy
- 5 I do not feel any sympathy for them

Racial Sympathy 3A

Variable Label

Milford is a mid-sized city in the Northeast. The main bus depot for the city is located in the Whittier section of Milford, a primarily black neighborhood. Whittier community leaders argue that the concentration of buses produces serious health risks for residents; they point to the high asthma rates in Whittier as evidence of the bus depot's harmful effects. The Milford Department of Transportation officials, who are mostly white, state that Whittier is the best location for the

depot because it is centrally located and many Whittier residents take the bus. Furthermore, it would be expensive to relocate the bus depot to a new location. Whittier community leaders are very upset by the Department's inaction.

How much sympathy do you feel for the residents of Whittier?

Question Text

- 1 A great deal of sympathy
- 2 A lot of sympathy
- 3 Some sympathy
- 4 A little sympathy
- 5 I do not feel any sympathy for them

Racial Sympathy 4A

Variable Label

Michael is a young black man who lives in a midwestern city. One day Michael is crossing the street and jaywalks in front of cars. Some local police officers see Michael jaywalk and stop and question him. Michael argues that he was just jaywalking and is otherwise a law-abiding citizen. The police officers feel that Michael is being uncooperative and so they give him a pat down to see if he is carrying any concealed weapons. Michael is very upset by this treatment.

Please indicate which statement best describes you.

How much sympathy do you feel for Michael?

Question Text

- 1 A great deal of sympathy
- 2 A lot of sympathy
- 3 Some sympathy

- 4 A little sympathy
- 5 I do not feel any sympathy for him

Racial Resentment: Racial resentment is a four-item scale, which researchers have found to be a strong predictor of race-relevant policy preferences (Hutchings and Valentino 2004; Kinder and Sanders 1996). The scale focuses on levels of support for statements featuring negative traits and stereotypes about African Americans, such as the view that blacks do not try hard enough to get ahead. After each statement below, subjects are asked to report the extent to which they agree with the following answer choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. I use these labels in the following analysis:

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV

The Influence of Racial Sympathy in American Politics

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the influence of racial sympathy on American public opinion, specifically as it relates to racialized public policies. The preceding chapter provides the tools to measure racial sympathy; this chapter employs these tools to evaluate how racial sympathy shapes white public opinion. I do this by conducting a series of analyses exploring the association between racial sympathy and support for racialized policies, that is, those policies that implicitly or explicitly reference race, using the 2013 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). I then replicate these results with three nationally representative surveys, all of which include a related measure of racial sympathy. Across these diverse, independent samples and measures a consistent pattern becomes clear: racial sympathy influences racialized public policies across time and survey. That it does so while considering the effects of other related theoretical concepts, like prejudice, egalitarianism, implicit attitudes, and rejection of negative stereotypes suggests that racial sympathy is a unique and powerful dimension of opinion in American politics.

I begin the chapter by developing theoretical expectations about the relationship between racial sympathy and opinion. Here I explain why I expect racial sympathy to influence a wide range of white political preferences. Additionally, I attempt to differentiate racial sympathy from

prejudice by arguing that racial sympathy's focus on black suffering makes it substantively separate from prejudice, a theme explored throughout the dissertation. This theorizing leads to several expectations for the analysis, which I attend to next.

This background information lays the foundation for the heart of the chapter, which employs national survey data to examine the relationship between racial sympathy and public opinion. I close the chapter by examining the precision of racial sympathy. Specifically, I consider the possibility that racial sympathy represents a more general social sympathy. I find that racial sympathy is uniquely tied to opinion on policies that benefit African Americans. Based on this analysis, it seems that if a policy implicitly or explicitly references black Americans, it is likely shaped by racial sympathy, a claim I consider more formally in the dissertation's final empirical chapter.

Theory

As I argue in Chapter 2, racial sympathy can affect white opinion and behavior in many domains. In American politics, I argue that racial sympathy can influence white support for public policies perceived to benefit blacks. Similarly, racial sympathy can also influence white *opposition* for public policies perceived to hurt blacks.³³ Although there are many reasons why a white person might support a racialized policy – perhaps it is championed by his party, or corresponds with her preferences for government intervention, or aligns with his values – I suggest that, for some whites, feeling sympathy for African Americans provides an additional and significant boost on top of the many forces we already know to shape public opinion.

³³ A racially sympathetic individual could also hold sympathetic feelings for Latinos/Asians and these attitudes could influence preferences related to immigration, for example. However, since the black/white divide is the United States' most salient racial cleavage (Hutchings & Valentino 2004), it is the focus of this dissertation.

Furthermore, racial sympathy is an attitude that is related to but distinct from racial animus. Like animus, sympathy is fundamentally rooted in group-based assessments. Group-directed attitudes, whether positive or negative, are valuable in politics because they provide an efficient means to sort through a complicated information environment to reach an opinion (Converse 1964; Nelson and Kinder 1996). In this regard, sympathy and prejudice sprout from a similar source.

However, sympathy parts ways with prejudice in its focus on black suffering and the corresponding distress it evokes. Unlike prejudice, sympathy is not primarily concerned with deservingness, nor does it take up the “faulty and inflexible generalizations” that Allport (1954) observed as characteristics of prejudice. Racial sympathy is, first and foremost, an attitude that acknowledges and regrets black misfortune. Certainly it is possible that the presence or absence of prejudice combines with sympathy in special ways – a white individual could hold prejudice and sympathy simultaneously, for example – but this would not diminish sympathy’s primary feature as a racial attitude rooted in distress.

Therefore, although racial sympathy functions like other known racial attitudes, it is substantively distinct. And because racial sympathy uniquely reflects distress over black misfortune, it illuminates dimensions of racial attitudes that animus cannot. As discussed in the preceding chapter, since much of the literature that references sympathy equates it with low-end prejudice, distinguishing racial sympathy from prejudice is an important starting point (Tesler & Sears 2010, Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011). However, in addition to differentiating these two attitudes, it is also important to study sympathy in its own right. Therefore, although this chapter considers sympathy as it relates to prejudice, my primary concern is to carefully investigate the relationship between

sympathy and public opinion. To do so, I probe the consistency and durability of this association by examining a wide range of alternative hypotheses. Before I begin the analysis, I will provide some background on my expectations for the chapter.

Expectations

First, as the preceding section suggests, I expect to observe a significant association between racial sympathy and public opinion because racial sympathy is an attitude about a group and group attitudes, especially racial group attitudes, powerfully shape American public opinion (e.g. see Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). Furthermore, since racial sympathy is a substantively unique source of opinion, I expect to find that the significant association between sympathy and policy opinion endures in the presence of plausible alternative hypotheses, including principles and racial resentment.

The first series of analyses explores the influence of sympathy on racial policy preference using the 2013 CCES. The second series of analyses expands the scope of the inquiry by examining the relationship between racial sympathy and public opinion across sample and time. To do so, I investigate the association between racial sympathy and policy opinion across three independent nationally representative samples. The 2012 and 2008 American National Election Study (ANES) and the 1994 General Social Survey (GSS) all include a related, but abbreviated, measure of racial sympathy as well as a rich assortment of relevant independent variables. Here I expect to find that racial sympathy shapes opinion in a manner distinct not only from racial resentment, but also from other forms of racial attitudes, such as negative stereotypes and implicit

racial attitudes, as well as non-racial principles, such as egalitarianism.

In all, the analyses in this chapter provide an overview of racial sympathy's relationship with public opinion. Acknowledging this unique racial attitude enriches our understanding of American politics in two important ways. First, it enables us to comprehend the forces that guide some whites to "pro-Black" political behavior, such as supporting the first black president or participating in the "Black Lives Matter" movement. More importantly, by considering racial sympathy, scholars gain insight into the diverse ways in which attitudes about race shape public opinion in the United States.

Data and Measurement

The CCES is national stratified sample administered annually on the Internet by YouGov/Polimetrix. The 2013 CCES, which included the racial sympathy index, was fielded in November 2013 and contained 751 white respondents. Further details about the CCES are reported in Chapter 3.

The primary measure used in this chapter is the racial sympathy index, an original four-item index consisting of four fictional vignettes, each of which depicts a black individual (or a group of blacks) suffering. After reading each vignette, subjects are asked to rate how much sympathy they feel toward the sufferer. These ratings are then used to form the index. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the formation and properties of the racial sympathy index.

Racial Sympathy and Public Opinion

Opinion on public policy has many sources. Previous research has demonstrated that education (Kam & Palmer 2008, Sears et al. 1997), age (Henry & Sears 2009, Schuman & Bobo 1988), gender (Hutchings et al. 2004), region (Valentino & Sears 2005), church attendance (Feldman & Steenbergen 2001), income (Gilens 1999), and partisanship (Carmines & Stimson 1989) can all influence public opinion to varying degrees. Furthermore, and most relevant for my purposes, a broad and contested literature suggests that racial prejudice may also affect opinion on policy areas related to race (Sears et al. 1980, McConahay 1982, Kinder & Mendelberg 1995, Kinder & Sanders 1996, Alvarez & Brehm 1997, Bobo & Kluegal 1997, Sears et al. 1997, Virtanen & Huddy 1998, Gilens 1999, Federico & Sidanius 2002, Soss et al. 2003). My intention here is to evaluate whether racial sympathy is a similarly important, but also substantively unique, source of opinion in these policy areas. To do so, I conduct a series of ordinary least squares regressions that examine the association between racial sympathy and policy opinion. Since distress over black suffering can lead some whites to support policies that alleviate this suffering, I expect to observe a strong association between the racial sympathy index and support for racialized policies.

To start, I examine white support for “government aid to blacks,” a broad policy area that has appeared on the ANES since the 1970s. The question asks respondents to place themselves on a 7-point scale ranging from “Blacks Should Help Themselves” to “Government Should Help Blacks.” Previous research on this question has found that racial animus, across different forms, leads some whites to oppose government aid to African Americans (Hutchings 2009, Kinder &

Sanders 1996, Piston 2014, Sears & Henry 2003). This analysis reexamines the relationship between racial attitudes and support, featuring racial sympathy as the measure of racial attitudes.

Table 4.1 about here

As the first column of Table 4.1, labeled “Model 1,” displays, partisanship, education, and gender are all factors that make a white person more or less likely to embrace government aid to blacks, a result that is expected, given previous research. What is perhaps unexpected, however, is that in addition to these factors, racial sympathy is also an influential source of white opinion in this policy area. The coefficient has a substantively meaningful magnitude, representing over one-third of the scale.³⁴

One might reasonably observe, however, that Model 1 does not account for principles. Since “government aid to blacks” is fundamentally and unambiguously a policy about government spending, it is possible that support for this policy area more accurately rests in principles about the size of government than it does attitudes about African Americans specifically. Indeed, some scholars have argued that opinions on racial policies are more a function of preference for government intervention than they are an assessment of blacks (see Sniderman & Carmines 1999). By this logic, whites who favor a smaller government would oppose any redistributive policy, regardless of the beneficiary, simply because it expands the size of the state. Model 2 considers this possibility by including a variable measuring principles of limited government, represented by a three-item index with a score of 1 corresponding with a strong preference for smaller government.

As the analysis indicates, principles of limited government are significantly associated with opinion in this policy area. The results in the second column of Table 4.1 suggest that those

³⁴ All variables are coded are from 0-1 and all analyses in this chapter consider self-identified white respondents only.

individuals who are less inclined to support an active government are also less likely to endorse government aid to blacks. However, even while taking the influence of this important principle into account, I find that sympathy targeted toward African Americans matters. Indeed, including preference for limited government in the model only slightly erodes the effect of sympathy.³⁵

Thus far the analyses reveal that racial sympathy is significantly associated with opinion on government aid to blacks and that it is not reducible to preferences for limited government or partisanship, among other factors. In some respects, these results correspond with previous research, which has demonstrated the powerful influence of racial attitudes on opinion in this domain. Yet there is one crucial difference: the majority of previous work has considered the consequences of *prejudice*. Is the association between sympathy and opinion distinct from the association between prejudice and opinion? If the answer to this question is no, this suggests that a single measure of prejudice can capture the full range of racial attitudes that lead whites to support or oppose government aid to blacks. If that is the case, then there is no reason to consider sympathy in its own right.

Yet as I have conceptualized it, racial sympathy is not merely the absence of prejudice or resentment, but instead, a distinct and politically powerful dimension of racial attitudes. To further examine the relationship between sympathy, resentment and opinion, I conduct an additional analysis displayed in the far right column of Table 4.1, labeled “Model 3.” In this model, I allow for the possibility that low animus in the form of racial resentment drives some whites to embrace government aid to blacks. And indeed, the analysis confirms that resentment is powerful, presenting the largest coefficient among many influential regressors. Since previous

³⁵ These results are robust to a specification that uses self-reported ideology in place of limited government.

research has demonstrated that racial resentment is significantly associated with opinion in this policy area, this strong effect is expected (see Kinder & Sanders 1996, 117).

But does prejudice, as measured here by racial resentment, capture the full extent of racial attitudes that shape public opinion in this domain? Based on the racial sympathy coefficient, displayed across the first row of Table 4.1, it appears that the answer to this question is no. Even while considering the powerful effect of racial resentment, racial sympathy continues to be significantly associated with opinion about government aid to blacks. Although the effect of racial sympathy is diminished, its consistent association with policy opinion suggests that the racial sympathy index is capturing unique dimensions of racial attitudes that low animus cannot.

It is worth noting that the racial resentment coefficient is larger in magnitude than sympathy's. Why might this be the case? Some scholars have argued that racial resentment, as a measure of animus, is a politicized concept, containing non-racial elements (e.g., see Huddy & Feldman 2009) and certainly the analyses presented in Table 3.4 provide some evidence that racial resentment is significantly associated with a host of political variables including partisanship, preferences for limited government and education.³⁶ In contrast, the racial sympathy index's questions probe subjects' sympathetic reactions to scenarios seemingly distant from political life. For this reason, racial sympathy has a low correlation with political values and principles and therefore may not be as influential, relative to racial resentment, on policy opinion variables.³⁷

That said, racial sympathy matters beyond resentment's impressive contribution. Furthermore,

³⁶ Some scholars have argued that the relationship and boundaries between racial resentment and individualism are especially unclear (Sniderman & Tetlock 1986, Sniderman et al. 2000). Still, Sears and Henry (2003) find that racial resentment is most strongly correlated with those measures of individualism that make specific reference to African Americans, providing evidence that racial resentment, like sympathy, is rooted primarily in race.

³⁷ For example, on the CCES, the correlation between racial sympathy and the limited government index is -0.29. The correlation between racial resentment and the limited government index is 0.55. I find similar results examining the correlations between sympathy and limited government when I examine the white face-to-face respondents in the 2012 ANES.

subsequent analyses demonstrate that this result is robust to other conceptualizations of animus, like negative stereotypes.

Based on the results in Table 4.1, it seems clear that racial sympathy is significantly associated with support for government aid to blacks. But is it limited to this policy area? Fortunately, the CCES provides questions related to five other racialized policies: support for subsidies for black businesses, scholarships to qualified black students, funding for schools in black neighborhoods, affirmative action, and welfare.³⁸ Table 4.2 replicates the analyses in Model 3, Table 4.1 across these diverse policy areas. And as the table demonstrates, in four out of five cases, I find that racial sympathy provides a unique and significant contribution to explaining policy support in these domains. With the exception of affirmative action, which I will discuss shortly, racial sympathy is strongly and consistently associated with support for racialized public policy.

Among the policy areas, I observe a significant association between racial sympathy and policy for both policies that serve blacks broadly, such as the government aid to blacks item displayed in Table 4.1, as well as on policy items that serve specific segments of the black population, like subsidies for businesses that locate in black neighborhoods. Overall, when I consolidate all the policies from Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 into a single “racialized public policy index,” as displayed in the far right column of Table 4.2, I find that racial sympathy broadly influences policies that are perceived to affect African Americans. The coefficient is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and the magnitude of the effect is substantial, approximately one-eighth of the scale. In general, it seems that if a policy references blacks explicitly or implicitly, white opinion toward the policy will be associated with racial sympathy, a claim I examine with more precision in the next chapter.

³⁸ Work by Gilens (1999) has found that welfare is implicitly associated with race for many white Americans.

Table 4.2 about here

These analyses provide evidence of the robust association between racial sympathy and racialized public policies. The association between racial sympathy and support for racialized public policies is consistent, substantively meaningful, and robust to varying model specifications. Racial sympathy's influence is not attributable to its alignment with partisanship or a preference for active government. Nor is racial sympathy's influence absorbed by animus. Instead, white distress over black suffering provides its own meaningful contribution to American opinions on racialized public policies.

The Prevalence and Power of Racial Sympathy

The preceding analyses demonstrate that racial sympathy is a unique racial attitude with significant consequences for American public opinion. Still, lingering questions remain. First, the preceding analyses use the CCES, which is an opt-in survey. As I have discussed elsewhere, some scholars have criticized opt-in surveys, arguing that respondents who self-select into the sample are systematically distinct (see Malhotra & Krosnick 2007). The distributions listed in Table 3.1 suggest that the white sample in the 2013 CCES shares important characteristics of the white samples collected in other reputable academic surveys. However, it is important to examine whether these results are unique to the subpopulation of adults who elect to take Internet surveys in the first place.

Second, despite my efforts to demonstrate construct validity, it is possible that the racial sympathy index does not capture racial sympathy, but instead, an unobserved factor that is correlated with racialized policy opinion. For this reason, it is useful to explore other measures of

sympathy and to attempt to replicate the results generated by the racial sympathy index. Finally, although I examined the robustness of the relationship between sympathy and policy opinion with the CCES data, my analyses were limited to the variables that appeared in that survey. It is therefore still possible that other political principles or manifestations of animus are responsible for the patterns observed in the first part of the chapter.

To address these concerns, I conduct a series of analyses using three independent sources of data: the 2012 and 2008 American National Election Study and the 1994 General Social Survey. These surveys have many attractive features. First, they are all nationally representative samples, thus alleviating concerns that the relationship between racial sympathy and policy opinion is somehow unique to opt-in respondents. These studies do not, of course, include the racial sympathy index. They do, however, include a question related to racial sympathy that asks respondents: “How often do you have sympathy for blacks?” In shorthand, I refer to this as the “ANES question.” The ANES question appears on all three surveys and, for my purposes, I expect it to capture the extent to which a respondent regularly feels distress when he or she thinks about African Americans, and thus, is closely related to my own conceptualization of racial sympathy. I have included both the ANES measure and my racial sympathy index in multiple Mechanical Turk pilot studies. The average correlation between these measures, across multiple studies, is 0.62. For the first pilot study, fielded in January 2015, the correlation between the ANES measure and the racial sympathy index was 0.55. In the second study, fielded in March 2015, the correlation between these two measures was 0.69. The studies suggest that the ANES question is adequately

correlated with the racial sympathy index, and therefore serves as a suitable approximation of racial sympathy.³⁹

Using the ANES question, the analysis in this section attempts to answer two questions: first, are the patterns observed with the CCES data reproduced when we use other measures of racial sympathy and other samples? Second, are the results robust to alternative measures of animus or nonracial explanations? As I will demonstrate, the answer to both of these questions is yes: across surveys and specifications, the relationship between racial sympathy and policy opinion endures. Building on the results presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, the analysis in this section demonstrates the consistent and significant influence of racial sympathy on public opinion.

To start, I attempt to replicate the CCES results using the ANES question and the 2012 and 2008 ANES and the 1994 GSS. By and large, the results of this analysis, presented in Table 4.3, confirm the results in Table 4.2; racial sympathy is significantly associated with support for a range of racialized policy areas across surveys.⁴⁰ The magnitude of the effect does vary somewhat. For example, in the CCES, I find that racial sympathy is positively, but not significantly, associated with support for affirmative action whereas in the ANES and the GSS, this relationship is both positive and significant. As I will discuss shortly, this variation may be explained, in part, by differences in question wording. The coefficients on the other available policy areas, welfare and government aid to blacks, more closely resemble the results from the CCES. Overall, Table 4.3 mirrors Table 4.2 – both of these tables reflect the significant relationship between racial sympathy and policy opinion.

³⁹ Appendix Figure 4.1 presents the distribution of the ANES Question using data from the 2012 ANES.

⁴⁰ The 2012 ANES was administered in two modes: face-to-face and Internet and the results reported in Tables 3-5 combine subjects from both of these modes of administration. Similar patterns are observed when isolating the face-to-face respondents alone.

Table 4.3 about here

These associations might be substantially reduced, however, when we consider other factors that could affect racialized policy opinion. Due to question availability, the preceding analysis exclusively employed racial resentment as a representation of racial animus and limited government as a representation of principles. Yet, as aforementioned, racial resentment is a controversial instrument, in part because some scholars have argued that it is confounded with conservative ideology (see Carmines et al. 2011, Feldman & Huddy 2005, Sniderman & Carmines 1999). Does the association between racial sympathy and policy support remain if the measure of racial animus takes the form of implicit attitudes? Or stereotypes? Principles of limited government do not threaten the relationship between sympathy and opinion, but do other principles, like egalitarianism? This analysis takes these important questions into consideration. I start by considering the influence of other measures of animus and then move to examining the influence of non-racial explanations such as personality and principles. Broadly, I am attempting to understand whether the results displayed in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 withstand the influence of a variety of plausible alternative explanations.

Table 4.4a begins this inquiry by examining other measures of animus, specifically negative stereotypes. The table displays the relationship between sympathy and opinion on three policy areas that appeared in preceding tables: government aid to blacks, welfare, and affirmative action. The results are organized in columns by these three policies, with the coefficients for each survey appearing under the policy column heading. If, as previous studies have found, the perception that blacks are lazy makes it *less* likely for a white individual to support racialized public policies (Bobo

2000, Hutchings 2009, Sniderman and Piazza 1993), then, conversely, perhaps if blacks are perceived as hardworking, it is *more* likely for a white individual to support these policies. I examine the relationship between stereotype rejection and racial sympathy in two ways. First, I use the stereotype measure *in place* of racial resentment and find that rejecting the stereotype is positively associated with support for the policy; however, the contribution of this variable does not overpower the influence of sympathy.⁴¹ Second, when the stereotype measure is included in the same model as racial resentment, as displayed in Table 4.4a, racial sympathy maintains a significant association with policy opinion.

Table 4.4a about here

Moving to other forms of prejudice, Table 4.4b considers the possibility that implicit attitudes drive opinion on racialized policies. Recent research in social psychology has examined the influence of implicit or automatic attitudes on behavior, especially in the domain of race (see Greenwald et al. 2002). Based on this scholarship, it is possible that even without awareness, some whites unconsciously associate blacks with positive words and images. If this is the case, these implicit attitudes may lead them to support policies that benefit the group. On the other hand, other research on implicit attitudes in the domain of politics specifically has found that these attitudes did not have an effect on white evaluations of Barack Obama (Kalmoe & Piston 2013, Kinder & Ryan 2015). Similarly, the multivariate analyses in the second column of Table 4.4b suggest that implicit attitudes do not shape opinion in this domain. Racial sympathy, however, does.

Table 4.4b about here

⁴¹ These results are displayed in Appendix Table 4.1.

Finally, I consider the possibility that feelings of interracial closeness lead some whites to support racialized public policies. Craemer (2008) argues that white closeness to blacks is responsible for “pro-Black” political opinions, such as support for government aid to blacks. He writes “representations of other individuals (Aron et al., 1991) or groups (Coats et al., 2000; Smith & Henry 1996) can cognitively overlap with one’s own mental self-representation...conceivably, some Whites could develop cognitive self-Black overlap resulting from the salience of African Americans in the history and the political discourse of the United States” (420). Following Craemer (2008), I consider the possibility of “interracial cross-identification” (411), by including a self-report measure in which white respondents indicate how warm they feel toward African Americans.

One of empathy’s primary characteristics, according to research in psychology, is its vicarious nature (Hoffman 1981), that is, the extent to which one can “change places” (Smith 1976) with another. This test, therefore, provides one way to examine the role that empathy for blacks might play in American politics. The results of this analysis are presented in the first column of Table 4.4b. As with the preceding models, the coefficient on “close to blacks” is in the expected direction, but unlike racial sympathy, it is not significant. Racial sympathy, on the other hand, is significantly associated with support for policy across all policy areas. Based on this analysis, it does not seem that whites’ feelings of closeness, at least as captured by this explicit measure, significantly shape policy opinion. Racial sympathy, on the other hand, does.

Having exhausted the racial attitude measures in these data sets, I turn next to considering the influence of other factors. To start, Feldman and others have argued that support for policies such as welfare can be explained by considering principles like egalitarianism and later,

humanitarianism (Feldman 1988, Feldman & Steenbergen 2001). Indeed it is possible that some whites endorse policies such as government aid to blacks because they believe it is important to promote equal conditions for *all* citizens. Based on this explanation, people do not carry group-specific attitudes, like sympathy for blacks or disgust for homosexuals (Terrizzi et al. 2010) or admiration of Asian Americans (Maddux et al. 2008), but instead seek to uplift all groups equally. In Table 5, I use the egalitarianism index, a measure comprised of six questions to gauge the respondent's general "commitment to equality" (Feldman 1988 424). Although the coefficient on egalitarianism is significant in both the 2012 and 2008 ANES analyses, racial sympathy remains an influential contributor to policy opinion. I replicate this finding with the GSS, which does not include the egalitarianism battery, however, the survey does include a question that measures the subject's tolerance for economic inequality, which I use as proxy for egalitarianism. As with the ANES results, the GSS analyses suggest that support for these measures is rooted, at least partially, in specific feelings about blacks. Furthermore, using a convenience sample, I conducted a similar analysis in which I used the humanitarianism index in place of the egalitarianism index and found similar results.⁴² See Table 4.2 in the Appendix.⁴³

Table 4.5 about here

Next, I consider the influence of personality on support for racialized public policies. In the earliest studies of prejudice, scholars conceptualized prejudice as a dimension of personality

⁴² Feldman and Steenbergen (2001) define humanitarianism as "a sense of obligation to help those in need" and suggest that it can explain support for a wide variety of social welfare policies (658). Using a Mechanical Turk convenience sample, I replicated Model 3 in Table 1, and found that going from the lowest to highest levels of racial sympathy was associated with a 0.17 increase in support for government aid to blacks ($p < 0.01$). When Feldman and Steenbergen's humanitarian index was added to this model, the coefficient on racial sympathy reduced slightly to 0.16, but was still significant ($p < 0.01$). This analysis was conducted in January 2015 using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. N=283 whites.

⁴³ I have also conducted analyses that use authoritarianism as a control variable and observe similar results. See Appendix Table 4.3.

(Adorno et al. 1954). Years later, personality scholars, such as Ekehammar (2004) and Mondak (2010), argued that altruistic and pro-social behavior may have roots in personality. Specifically, these scholars suggest that openness to new experiences and agreeableness, two independent dimensions of personality, may be especially important precursors to altruistic behavior (McCrae & Costa 2003). To the extent that supporting a policy that benefits another racial group can be considered a form of altruistic behavior, we can examine whether an individual's personality makes him more likely to embrace pro-black policies using the 2012 ANES, which included the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). TIPI is a ten-item index designed to represent five dimensions of personality: openness to new experiences, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Each item consists of two descriptors, related to the dimensions of personality, using the common stem, "I see myself as:" (Gosling et al. 2003). In Table 4.6, I include variables for openness and agreeableness (which is often conceptualized as soft-hearted, good natured and cooperative – see John & Srivastava 1999) to examine whether the association between racial sympathy and policy opinion is eliminated when we consider individuals' dispositions, components of which may be genetically heritable (Bergeman 1993).

Table 4.6 about here

For the most part, I find that personality traits, at least as represented by openness and agreeableness, are not especially influential determinants of policy opinion in these domains. Generally, their influence is dwarfed by racial sympathy's. Therefore, while researchers have found significant positive relationships between agreeableness and pro-social behavior, such as volunteering (see Graziano & Eisenberg 1997 and Smith & Nelson 1975), and separately, between openness to new experiences and liberalism (Carney et al. 2008), these forces are not especially

influential when it comes to supporting policies that serve African Americans.⁴⁴ Racial sympathy is.

Finally, I examine the influence of contact on support for racialized policies. It is possible that some whites endorse racialized policies because they have close relationships with African Americans. Specifically, “by bringing whites into personal contact with blacks, erroneous images of blacks can be corrected and hostile dispositions softened” (Jackman & Crane 1986 460). Early scholars of public opinion suggested that interracial contact – but of a very specific variety – could reduce the effects of prejudice (Allport 1954), paving the way for intergroup social and political cooperation. To examine this possibility, the analyses in Table 4.7 incorporate a measure of contact into the model, by including a question from the GSS in which respondents indicate whether a black person has come to their house for dinner in the course of the last year. This is, admittedly, a crude measure as dinner invitations are not necessarily representations of equal status, common goals, cooperation, and mutual support of authority, as anyone who has entertained his or her in-laws will concede. However, Jackman and Crane (1986) use similar measures to gauge interracial interpersonal contact (see p. 464-5) and it is plausible that having dinner qualifies as personal interaction, one of the criteria of the contact hypothesis. In Table 4.7, I consider the possibility that support for racialized public policies is rooted in fond feelings cultivated through interpersonal contact.

Table 4.7 about here

As the analysis demonstrates, however, racial sympathy is significantly associated with policy opinion even when taking interracial contact into account. The results in Table 4.7 suggest that the relationship between racial sympathy and support for policies such as government aid to blacks

⁴⁴ As I discuss in Chapter 2, it is possible that these personality traits could predispose a white person to be sympathetic or resentful. This analysis suggests that even if these personality traits might play a role in shaping racial attitudes, they are not interchangeable with white racial sympathy.

is independent of whites' interracial friendships. Otherwise put, although some whites may announce: "some of my best friends are black" perhaps to signal "I am personally unbiased and fair in my assessments of blacks" (Jackman and Crane 1986 462), this sentiment does not seem to be as politically important as declaring, in contrast, "I feel sympathy for black Americans."

In general, I observe the largest and most consistent effect for racial sympathy on those policies that explicitly name blacks as beneficiaries, thus facilitating tight interstitial linkage between the policy area and beneficiary (Converse 1964, Nelson & Kinder 1996). The association between racial sympathy and support for the government aid to blacks, a policy area that explicitly references African Americans is uniformly significant, regardless of model specification. Similarly, the results in this section reveal a consistent and significant relationship between racial sympathy and affirmative action in hiring. This result stands in contrast to the null result between racial sympathy and affirmative action observed in Table 4.2. Here it is possible that the *type* of affirmative action might matter. The CCES affirmative action question asks subjects to report their opinion for programs that "give preference to racial minorities" in employment and college admissions. The ANES affirmative action question differs in that it refers to blacks specifically rather than all "racial minorities," thus more easily encouraging a linkage between black suffering and political support. Additionally, the relationship between welfare and racial sympathy is somewhat inconsistent, perhaps because welfare is only implicitly racialized and citizens might not necessarily connect the policy to the relevant group (see Converse 1964 p. 236-7).

Despite these aberrations, a strong and consistent pattern comes into view: racial sympathy matters. The relationship between racial sympathy and policy opinion weathers the influence of multiple alternative explanations. And it survives across time points, samples, and measures. This

analysis demonstrates that the influence of race on opinion is manifold and nuanced; white attitudes about blacks are more diverse than previously acknowledged. And while my results do not deny the effect or prevalence of racial animus, they do draw our attention to the multiple ways in which attitudes about race shape American politics.

Discriminant Validity

Thus far, the analyses in this chapter reveal that racial sympathy is consistently associated with opinion on policies that implicitly or explicitly reference African Americans. Although these results suggest that the concept of racial sympathy is related to race, it is unclear whether racial sympathy shapes any policy area that implicates a socially marginalized group. In the preceding chapter, I examined one important criteria of construct validity – convergent validity. In the final section of this chapter, I consider the discriminant validity of the racial sympathy index, or the extent to which the measure does *not* correlate with unrelated concepts and measures. Specifically, insofar as racial sympathy represents sympathy over problems faced by African Americans, it should not be associated with support for policies that do not have overt or implicit relevance to blacks. Examining discriminant validity is an important part of any measurement exercise, but it is especially important on racial attitudes measures, which, as aforementioned, have been criticized for being contaminated with non-racial components (see Huddy & Feldman 2005).

Since the racial sympathy index collects distress over black misfortune, it is possible that those who experience sympathy in response to the vignettes might experience sympathy in response to any instance of misfortune. If this is the case, then the racial sympathy index does not represent distress over black misfortune specifically, but instead, may identify those individuals who recognize and regret any social problem.

To examine this possibility, I return to the 2013 CCES to conduct a series of analyses in which I regress opinion on policies *un*-related to African Americans on the racial sympathy index including: the trade-off between environment protection and jobs, supporting the Keystone pipeline, increasing the presence of border patrols on America's borders, denying automatic citizenship to children of immigrants born in the United States, and banning assault rifles. I intentionally chose a diverse assortment of five non-racial policy areas to ensure that the results extended across domains. In each case, if racial sympathy is rooted in black-specific attitudes, then we should not observe a significant association between sympathy and policy opinion. If, however, the racial sympathy index merely reflects a white individual's sensitivity to misfortune, which would conceivably flow into other political domains and spill into policies related to other racial groups, then we would expect to observe a significant association between the racial sympathy index and opinion on other policies. The results of these analyses are displayed in Table 4.8. All dependent variables are coded in the liberal direction.

Table 4.8 about here

In each column of Table 4.8, I observe that racial sympathy is *not* significantly associated with policy opinion. Experiencing distress over black misfortune does not influence a white person's support for environmental or gun policies, two policy domains that could be shaped by a taste for active government or sensitivity to social problems. Similarly, racial sympathy does not influence opinion on policies that involve a different marginalized group: immigrants. Given the nature of the border patrol and citizenship questions, these policy areas likely implicate Hispanic immigrants in particular. Work by Brader and colleagues (2008) suggests that the popular image of immigrants in the American mind is "based on the stereotype of low-skilled Hispanic laborers"

(961), and Hispanics, like blacks, have often been negatively stereotyped on the dimensions of intelligence, morality, and work ethic (Burns & Gimpel 2000).⁴⁵ These shared negative stereotypes make for an important test of racial sympathy: is the concept rooted in a rejection of unfavorable group stereotypes more generally or is it specifically applicable to the experience of blacks? Based on the results in Table 4.8, it appears that the racial sympathy measure primarily captures attitudes about blacks.

Insofar as racial sympathy leads some whites to support policies that call for bigger government, such as aid for blacks, it seems that this is not attributable to a broader taste for government intervention or support for a policy that serves any marginalized group. In this respect, the results in Table 4.8 confirm the analyses conducted in Table 4.5. Opinion on these racialized policies seems to be shaped by attitudes about blacks specifically.⁴⁶

To further interrogate the relationship between racial sympathy and marginalized groups, I conducted a series of analyses related to gender. Following the approach of racial sympathy vignettes, I included two measures of “gender sympathy” on the CCES. In each of these vignettes, a woman was described as facing a discriminatory situation. Subjects were asked to indicate how much sympathy they had for the woman described, mirroring the format of the racial sympathy vignettes.⁴⁷

If the racial sympathy represents a broader social sympathy, then I expect that the racial sympathy index would be significantly associated with policies that benefit women. To examine

⁴⁵ It is important to note that there are differences here though – Jackson and colleagues (1996) suggest that whites can assign distinct negative traits to Hispanics and Blacks.

⁴⁶ I also conduct this analysis with the 2012 ANES using the ANES Question. These results are reported in Appendix Table 4.3.

⁴⁷ The raw correlation of the gender sympathy index and racial sympathy index was .3 for the entire sample (n=1000) and .28 for whites alone (n=751). The raw correlation of these two indices was .31 for white women and .3 for white men.

this possibility, I next performed a series of ordinary least squares regressions to examine the influence of racial and gender sympathy on support for “pro-women” policies, which included: 1) support for abortion 2) requiring companies to allow up to six month unpaid leave for parents to spend time with their newborn or newly adopted children and 3) preferential treatment for women when applying for jobs or promotions.⁴⁸

The results are displayed in Table 4.9. The table is divided into three large columns, each representing a different policy area. Within each policy area, I analyze three different model specifications. In the far left column, labeled Model A, I examine the relationship between racial sympathy and policy opinion. In Model B, I consider the relationship between gender sympathy and opinion. Finally, in Model C, I include both gender and sympathy in the model and examine the association of both of these attitudes with policy opinion.

Table 4.9 about here

Through these analyses, I find that the gender sympathy index, representing distress over women’s suffering, leads some whites to support policies that conceivably benefit women. The substantive effect is large; in the case of women’s affirmative action, the magnitude of the coefficient represents almost one-fifth of the scale. In contrast, the racial sympathy index is not generally associated with gendered public policies.⁴⁹ Indeed, when the racial sympathy index and gender sympathy index are included in the same model – Model C – the racial sympathy index is significantly associated with *opposition* to affirmative action for women, suggesting that not only are the concepts independent, but that sympathy for blacks may lead to outcomes that benefit African

⁴⁸ This is referred to “Women’s Affirmative Action” in Table 4.9.

⁴⁹ In a separate analysis, I use a question related to racial sympathy that appears on the ANES (which I refer to, throughout the dissertation as the “ANES Question”) to examine the relationship between racial sympathy and support for policies that benefit gays and lesbians. These appear in Appendix Table 4.4.

Americans but also potentially hinder the advancement of other groups.

When we consider the results displayed in Tables 4.8 and 4.9 in concert with the analyses presented in Table 4.2, we have mounting evidence that racial sympathy is an influential racial attitude with consequences for American politics. The discriminant validity analyses suggest that racial sympathy is not reducible to a general social sympathy. Furthermore, the analyses of this chapter demonstrate that racial sympathy's influence is not attributable to its alignment with partisanship or a preference for active government. Nor is racial sympathy's influence absorbed by animus. Instead, white distress over black suffering provides its own meaningful contribution to American opinions on racialized public policies.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the relationship between racial sympathy and policy opinion. Through a series of analyses using different samples, models, and measures, I find that racial sympathy is consistently associated with opinion on a host of implicitly and explicitly racialized policy areas. Furthermore, these results are robust to multiple alternative hypotheses, addressing the influence of principles, stereotypes, personality and contact. Despite the contributions of these factors, racial sympathy consistently and significantly influences policy opinion. Crucially, racial sympathy's contribution is distinct from and additional to the contribution of animus, suggesting that sympathy represents a unique dimension of racial attitudes.

As the CCES and ANES results demonstrate, racial sympathy is significantly associated with policy opinion in the age of Obama. However, as the GSS results also demonstrate, sympathy

is also significantly associated with opinion over twenty years ago, during a time period characterized by the Republican Revolution. While I cannot analyze the influence of sympathy prior to the 1990s, the results do provide us with a sense of racial sympathy's staying power. Scholars have found that prejudice remains a politically consequential force, even after the election of the country's first black president (Hutchings 2009, Kinder & Dale-Riddle 2011, Tesler 2012); the results from the 1994 GSS suggest that the effect of sympathy was not especially heightened during or after Obama's election. Rather, racial sympathy, like prejudice, seems to be perpetually important in American politics.

Still, it is important to consider whether certain events, frames, or stimuli make it more likely for whites to express or act on racially sympathetic attitudes. This chapter supplied evidence of racial sympathy's impressive and consistent influence, establishing the concept's external validity. I have not yet explored the activation of racial sympathy in politics. Doing so will provide evidence of sympathy's internal validity, thus enabling us to draw stronger causal inferences about the ways in which racial sympathy influences political outcomes. In the next chapter, I discuss a series of original survey experiments that examine the circumstances that activate racial sympathy. Furthermore, Chapter 5 provides insight as to how "sympathy entrepreneurs" (Clark 1997) might be able to release the political power of racial sympathy on select causes.

Table 4.1: Racial Sympathy and Support for Government Aid to Blacks

	Government Aid to Blacks		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Racial Sympathy	0.35*** (0.051)	0.32*** (0.053)	0.10** (0.046)
Party (1=GOP)	-0.25*** (0.032)	-0.15*** (0.036)	-0.02 (0.029)
Income	-0.07 (0.055)	-0.05 (0.052)	-0.06 (0.044)
Age	-0.01 (0.045)	0.00 (0.043)	0.07** (0.034)
Education	0.07** (0.035)	0.05 (0.034)	-0.00 (0.028)
Gender (1=Female)	-0.05** (0.021)	-0.06*** (0.020)	-0.02 (0.016)
Region (1=South)	-0.03 (0.023)	-0.02 (0.022)	0.01 (0.016)
Church Attendance	0.00 (0.030)	0.02 (0.029)	0.02 (0.024)
Limited Government		-0.15*** (0.029)	-0.06*** (0.022)
Racial Resentment			-0.61*** (0.035)
Constant	0.25*** (0.052)	0.30*** (0.053)	0.08* (0.042)
Observations	751	750	750
R-squared	0.319	0.363	0.616

Source: 2013 CCES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. Each column presents a model, examining the relationship between racial sympathy and government aid to blacks.

Table 4.2: Racial Sympathy and Support for Racialized Public Policies, CCES

	Welfare	Black Businesses	Black Schools	Black Scholarships	Aff. Action	Racialized Policy Index
Racial Sympathy	0.16** (0.065)	0.23*** (0.073)	0.17* (0.085)	0.26*** (0.085)	0.03 (0.071)	0.12*** (0.04)
Racial Resentment	-0.29*** (0.054)	-0.46*** (0.064)	-0.37*** (0.076)	-0.42*** (0.072)	-0.58*** (0.072)	-0.47*** (0.03)
Party ID	-0.12** (0.047)	-0.09* (0.050)	-0.18*** (0.065)	-0.11* (0.058)	-0.08 (0.056)	-0.09*** (0.03)
Limited Govt.	-0.18*** (0.035)	0.05 (0.041)	-0.07 (0.050)	-0.06 (0.049)	-0.15*** (0.039)	-0.11*** (0.02)
Constant	0.53*** (0.062)	0.16** (0.071)	0.46*** (0.094)	0.24** (0.091)	0.27*** (0.079)	0.77*** (0.04)
Observations	570	288	289	289	570	571

Source: 2013 CCES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. The final column presents an index of opinion on all policies presented in Tables 1 and 2, (index alpha: 0.87). Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were also included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance.

Table 4.3: Racial Sympathy and Support for Racialized Public Policies, ANES & GSS

VARIABLES	Govt Aid to Blacks			Welfare			Affirmative Action		
	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS
Racial Sympathy	0.12*** (0.027)	0.17*** (0.037)	0.22*** (0.060)	0.05** (0.026)	0.05* (0.032)	0.06 (0.057)	0.15*** (0.034)	0.15*** (0.039)	0.09** (0.040)
Racial Resentment	-0.53*** (0.024)	-0.49*** (0.038)	-0.98*** (0.088)	-0.27*** (0.025)	-0.25*** (0.039)	-0.27*** (0.081)	-0.49*** (0.033)	-0.40*** (0.044)	-0.31*** (0.056)
Party ID	-0.09*** (0.017)	-0.09*** (0.029)	-0.04 (0.049)	-0.10*** (0.018)	-0.07** (0.027)	-0.19*** (0.049)	-0.01 (0.023)	-0.06** (0.030)	-0.05 (0.033)
Limited Govt	-0.08*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.022)	0.05 (0.072)	-0.14*** (0.015)	-0.10*** (0.022)	-0.06 (0.072)	-0.07*** (0.019)	-0.04* (0.022)	-0.00 (0.047)
Constant	0.74*** (0.027)	0.69*** (0.046)	0.23** (0.092)	0.72*** (0.025)	0.85*** (0.040)	0.44*** (0.094)	0.62*** (0.036)	0.56*** (0.048)	0.21*** (0.061)
Observations	5,142	2,013	414	5,403	2,169	508	5,360	2,109	628
R-squared	0.454	0.381	0.337	0.302	0.219	0.119	0.291	0.234	0.114

Sources: 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), 2008 ANES, 1994 General Social Survey (GSS)⁵⁰

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The top column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Below these headings, the results for each survey are presented. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were also included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance.

Table 4.4a: Racial Sympathy, Racial Stereotypes and Support for Racialized Public Policies

	Govt Aid to Blacks			Welfare			Affirmative Action		
	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS
Racial Sympathy	0.11*** (0.027)	0.17*** (0.038)	0.19*** (0.059)	0.05** (0.026)	0.05 (0.032)	0.06 (0.057)	0.15*** (0.034)	0.15*** (0.040)	0.08** (0.041)
Stereotypes	-0.11*** (0.039)	-0.06 (0.069)	-0.46*** (0.118)	-0.04 (0.046)	-0.09 (0.062)	0.09 (0.120)	-0.01 (0.046)	0.09 (0.070)	-0.10 (0.080)
Racial Resentment	-0.51*** (0.026)	-0.49*** (0.039)	-0.92*** (0.089)	-0.26*** (0.027)	-0.23*** (0.040)	-0.28*** (0.084)	-0.49*** (0.035)	-0.42*** (0.044)	-0.29*** (0.060)
Party ID	-0.09*** (0.017)	-0.09*** (0.030)	-0.04 (0.048)	-0.10*** (0.018)	-0.07** (0.027)	-0.20*** (0.049)	-0.01 (0.023)	-0.07** (0.030)	-0.05 (0.034)
Limited Govt	-0.08*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.022)	0.07 (0.070)	-0.14*** (0.015)	-0.09*** (0.022)	-0.06 (0.073)	-0.07*** (0.019)	-0.04* (0.023)	-0.01 (0.047)
Constant	0.79*** (0.033)	0.71*** (0.055)	0.51*** (0.117)	0.74*** (0.031)	0.90*** (0.054)	0.39*** (0.126)	0.62*** (0.041)	0.52*** (0.065)	0.28*** (0.083)
Observations	5,132	1,988	409	5,393	2,138	494	5,349	2,080	615
R-squared	0.456	0.382	0.370	0.303	0.214	0.124	0.292	0.236	0.119

Sources: 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), 2008 ANES, 1994 General Social Survey (GSS)

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Below these headings, the results for each survey are presented. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were also included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance. The stereotypes variable represents the extent to which the respondent rates blacks as lazy relative to whites with a score of 1= blacks are lazier than whites and 0 =whites are lazier than blacks.

Table 4.4b: Racial Sympathy, Closeness, Implicit Attitudes, and Support for Racialized Public Policies

	Government Aid to Blacks		Welfare		Affirmative Action	
	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	2012 ANES	2008 ANES
Racial Sympathy	0.11*** (0.027)	0.19*** (0.038)	0.05* (0.026)	0.05 (0.033)	0.08** (0.032)	0.15*** (0.038)
Close to Blacks	0.03 (0.024)		0.02 (0.027)		0.07** (0.029)	
Implicit Attitudes		-0.04 (0.052)		0.10* (0.058)		-0.07 (0.064)
Racial Resentment	-0.53*** (0.025)	-0.47*** (0.040)	-0.27*** (0.026)	-0.27*** (0.042)	-0.41*** (0.031)	-0.38*** (0.044)
Party ID	-0.09*** (0.017)	-0.09*** (0.031)	-0.10*** (0.018)	-0.08*** (0.029)	-0.06*** (0.021)	-0.04 (0.031)
Limited Govt	-0.08*** (0.014)	-0.06*** (0.023)	-0.14*** (0.015)	-0.09*** (0.023)	-0.11*** (0.017)	-0.05** (0.023)
Constant	0.72*** (0.031)	0.69*** (0.058)	0.71*** (0.031)	0.80*** (0.051)	0.63*** (0.034)	0.57*** (0.060)
Observations	5,128	1,933	5,384	2,074	5,380	2,023
R-squared	0.454	0.385	0.306	0.216	0.282	0.231

Sources: 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), 2008 ANES, 1994 General Social Survey (GSS)

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Below these headings, the results for each survey are presented. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were also included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance. The Implicit Attitudes Measure refers to the AMP (see Kalmoe and Piston 2013 for a discussion of this measure)

Table 4.5: Racial Sympathy, Egalitarianism and Support for Racialized Public Policies

	Government Aid to Blacks			Welfare			Affirmative Action		
	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS	2012 ANES	2008 ANES	1994 GSS
Racial Sympathy	0.11*** (0.027)	0.16*** (0.038)	0.23*** (0.061)	0.04 (0.026)	0.04 (0.033)	0.09 (0.060)	0.15*** (0.034)	0.04 (0.033)	0.13*** (0.042)
Egalitarianism	0.12*** (0.030)	0.10* (0.050)	0.09 (0.059)	0.20*** (0.030)	0.20*** (0.050)	0.12** (0.054)	0.07** (0.034)	0.20*** (0.050)	0.13*** (0.039)
Racial Resentment	-0.50*** (0.026)	-0.47*** (0.040)	-0.96*** (0.091)	-0.22*** (0.028)	-0.21*** (0.040)	-0.29*** (0.087)	-0.47*** (0.035)	-0.21*** (0.040)	-0.29*** (0.060)
Party ID	-0.08*** (0.017)	-0.08*** (0.030)	-0.01 (0.051)	-0.08*** (0.018)	-0.05* (0.027)	-0.16*** (0.052)	-0.01 (0.024)	-0.05* (0.027)	-0.04 (0.035)
Limited Govt	-0.06*** (0.015)	-0.05** (0.023)	0.07 (0.073)	-0.11*** (0.016)	-0.08*** (0.022)	-0.03 (0.076)	-0.06*** (0.019)	-0.08*** (0.022)	0.00 (0.049)
Constant	0.63*** (0.039)	0.60*** (0.068)	0.21** (0.095)	0.54*** (0.038)	0.69*** (0.055)	0.43*** (0.101)	0.56*** (0.052)	0.69*** (0.055)	0.25*** (0.065)
Observations	5,142	2,013	382	5,403	2,169	455	5,360	2,169	567
R-squared	0.459	0.384	0.342	0.320	0.234	0.142	0.293	0.234	0.144

Sources: 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), 2008 ANES, 1994 General Social Survey (GSS)

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Below these headings, the results for each survey are presented. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were also included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance.

Table 4.6: Racial Sympathy, Personality, and Support for Racialized Public Policies

	Government Aid to Blacks	Welfare	Affirmative Action in Hiring
Racial Sympathy	0.12*** (0.028)	0.06** (0.027)	0.15*** (0.036)
Agreeableness	-0.01 (0.026)	0.02 (0.028)	-0.06* (0.029)
Openness	0.02 (0.021)	-0.00 (0.024)	0.05* (0.026)
Racial Resentment	-0.53*** (0.025)	-0.26*** (0.027)	-0.50*** (0.034)
Party ID	-0.08*** (0.017)	-0.10*** (0.019)	-0.01 (0.024)
Limited Govt	-0.08*** (0.015)	-0.14*** (0.016)	-0.08*** (0.019)
Constant	0.72*** (0.033)	0.70*** (0.035)	0.63*** (0.042)
Observations	4,943	5,182	5,147
R-squared	0.448	0.298	0.299

Source: 2012 American National Election Study (ANES)

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were also included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance.

Table 4.7: Racial Sympathy, Contact, and Support for Racialized Public Policies

	Government Aid to Blacks	Welfare	Affirmative Action
Racial Sympathy	0.19*** (0.071)	0.05 (0.067)	0.15*** (0.054)
Contact	-0.04 (0.038)	-0.02 (0.037)	-0.00 (0.029)
Racial Resentment	-0.95*** (0.105)	-0.34*** (0.096)	-0.33*** (0.074)
Party ID	-0.02 (0.061)	-0.21*** (0.058)	-0.07 (0.046)
Ideology	0.04 (0.086)	0.03 (0.087)	-0.02 (0.063)
Constant	1.23*** (0.131)	0.64*** (0.134)	0.54*** (0.097)
Observations	283	349	319
R-squared	0.325	0.128	0.191

Source: 1994 General Social Survey (GSS)

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were also included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance.

Table 4.8: Discriminant Validity of Racial Sympathy: 2013 CCES

	Environment/ Job Trade Off (1=Protect Environment)	Keystone Pipeline (1=Support)	Increase Border Patrols (1=Increase)	Deny automatic citizenship to U.S. born children (1=Deny)	Ban assault rifles (1=For ban)
Racial Sympathy	0.08 (0.068)	-0.08 (0.111)	-0.05 (0.116)	-0.10 (0.115)	0.03 (0.116)
Racial Resentment	-0.13** (0.061)	0.30*** (0.107)	0.41*** (0.116)	0.62*** (0.104)	-0.13 (0.114)
Party ID (1=Republican)	-0.13** (0.052)	-0.03 (0.081)	0.18* (0.094)	0.01 (0.091)	-0.27*** (0.090)
Limited Government	-0.12*** (0.040)	0.35*** (0.065)	0.14* (0.071)	0.23*** (0.070)	-0.26*** (0.068)
Constant	0.48*** (0.073)	0.72*** (0.145)	0.70*** (0.140)	0.56*** (0.145)	0.56*** (0.142)
Observations	571	554	571	571	564

Source: 2013 CCES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance.

Table 4.9: Racial Sympathy, Gender Sympathy, and Support for Gendered Public Policies

Model	Abortion			Women's Leave			Women's Affirmative Action		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Racial Sympathy	-0.01 (0.082)		-0.15 (0.102)	0.16 (0.102)		0.07 (0.133)	0.05 (0.060)		-0.13** (0.066)
Gender Sympathy		0.11 (0.074)	0.19** (0.095)		0.16** (0.078)	0.12 (0.101)		0.18*** (0.052)	0.25*** (0.062)
Racial Resentment	-0.08 (0.079)	-0.06 (0.075)	-0.10 (0.078)	-0.29*** (0.104)	-0.32*** (0.099)	-0.30*** (0.105)	-0.35*** (0.059)	-0.34*** (0.055)	-0.37*** (0.057)
Party (1=Republican)	-0.17*** (0.062)	-0.16** (0.062)	-0.16*** (0.061)	-0.28*** (0.079)	-0.28*** (0.079)	-0.28*** (0.080)	-0.07 (0.055)	-0.05 (0.053)	-0.06 (0.052)
Limited Government	-0.08* (0.048)	-0.08 (0.048)	-0.07 (0.047)	-0.17*** (0.061)	-0.16*** (0.062)	-0.16*** (0.062)	-0.08** (0.031)	-0.07** (0.031)	-0.07** (0.031)
Constant	0.77*** (0.087)	0.69*** (0.089)	0.71*** (0.090)	0.52*** (0.106)	0.49*** (0.106)	0.48*** (0.109)	0.32*** (0.071)	0.23*** (0.068)	0.25*** (0.068)
Observations	569	569	569	566	566	566	571	571	571
R-squared	0.303	0.308	0.312	0.289	0.291	0.292	0.281	0.305	0.311

Source: 2013 CCES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. Coefficients on additional control variables included in the models here are not shown for space considerations – the following variables were included in the models: income, age, education, gender, region (South) and church attendance.

Appendix: Chapter 4 - Tables

Table A4.1: Racial Sympathy, Stereotypes and Support for Racialized Public Policies
(Table 4.4a without Racial Resentment)

	Govt. Aid to Blacks	Affirmative Action	Welfare
Racial Sympathy	0.17*** (0.056)	0.30*** (0.061)	0.02 (0.048)
Stereotypes	-0.43*** (0.097)	-0.41*** (0.089)	-0.29*** (0.090)
Party ID	-0.21*** (0.041)	-0.04 (0.051)	-0.15*** (0.030)
Income	-0.05 (0.041)	-0.06 (0.047)	-0.07** (0.032)
Age	-0.05 (0.043)	-0.05 (0.041)	-0.01 (0.033)
Education	0.04 (0.039)	-0.06 (0.046)	0.03 (0.031)
Gender	-0.05** (0.022)	-0.04* (0.025)	-0.02 (0.017)
Region	-0.01 (0.025)	-0.08*** (0.023)	-0.02 (0.021)
Limited Government	-0.13*** (0.036)	-0.16*** (0.039)	-0.14*** (0.024)
Church Attendance	0.02 (0.022)	-0.00 (0.026)	-0.01 (0.018)
Constant	0.73*** (0.075)	0.54*** (0.077)	0.72*** (0.059)
Observations	5,610	5,659	5,694
R-squared	0.289	0.205	0.238

Source: 2012 ANES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. The stereotypes variable represents the

extent to which the respondent rates blacks as lazy relative to whites with a score of 1= blacks are lazier than whites and 0 =whites are lazier than blacks.

Table A4.2: Racial Sympathy, Humanitarianism, and Support for Racialized Public Policies

VARIABLES	Aid to Blacks	Welfare
Racial Sympathy	0.40*** (0.065)	0.18** (0.075)
Humanitarianism	0.11*** (0.035)	0.19*** (0.040)
Limited Government	-0.17** (0.067)	-0.29*** (0.077)
Party ID (1=Republican)	-0.19*** (0.049)	-0.31*** (0.056)
Gender	0.05** (0.023)	0.08*** (0.027)
Education	-0.07 (0.059)	-0.04 (0.067)
Region	-0.03 (0.026)	-0.03 (0.030)
Income	-0.03 (0.053)	-0.18*** (0.061)
Constant	0.36*** (0.077)	0.62*** (0.089)
Observations	283	283
R-squared	0.442	0.486

Source: 2015 MTurk Pilot Study

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion.

Table A4.3: Racial Sympathy, Authoritarianism, and Support for Racialized Public Policies

VARIABLES	Welfare	Govt. Aid to Blacks	Affirmative Action
Racial Sympathy	0.05** (0.026)	0.11*** (0.027)	0.15*** (0.034)
Authoritarianism	-0.00 (0.017)	0.00 (0.017)	0.05** (0.019)
Party ID	-0.10*** (0.018)	-0.09*** (0.017)	-0.02 (0.023)
Income	-0.12*** (0.018)	-0.06*** (0.018)	-0.06*** (0.022)
Age	-0.00 (0.018)	0.00 (0.018)	-0.06*** (0.020)
Education	-0.04** (0.019)	0.01 (0.018)	-0.09*** (0.022)
Gender	0.00 (0.009)	-0.02* (0.009)	-0.00 (0.011)
Region (South=1)	0.01 (0.011)	-0.00 (0.010)	0.01 (0.012)
Limited Government	-0.14*** (0.015)	-0.08*** (0.014)	-0.07*** (0.019)
Church Attendance	-0.01 (0.010)	0.01 (0.009)	-0.00 (0.012)
Racial Resentment	-0.27*** (0.027)	-0.54*** (0.025)	-0.51*** (0.034)
Constant	0.72*** (0.026)	0.73*** (0.028)	0.59*** (0.036)
Observations	2,981	2,720	2,938
R-squared	0.302	0.454	0.294

Source: 2012 ANES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness.

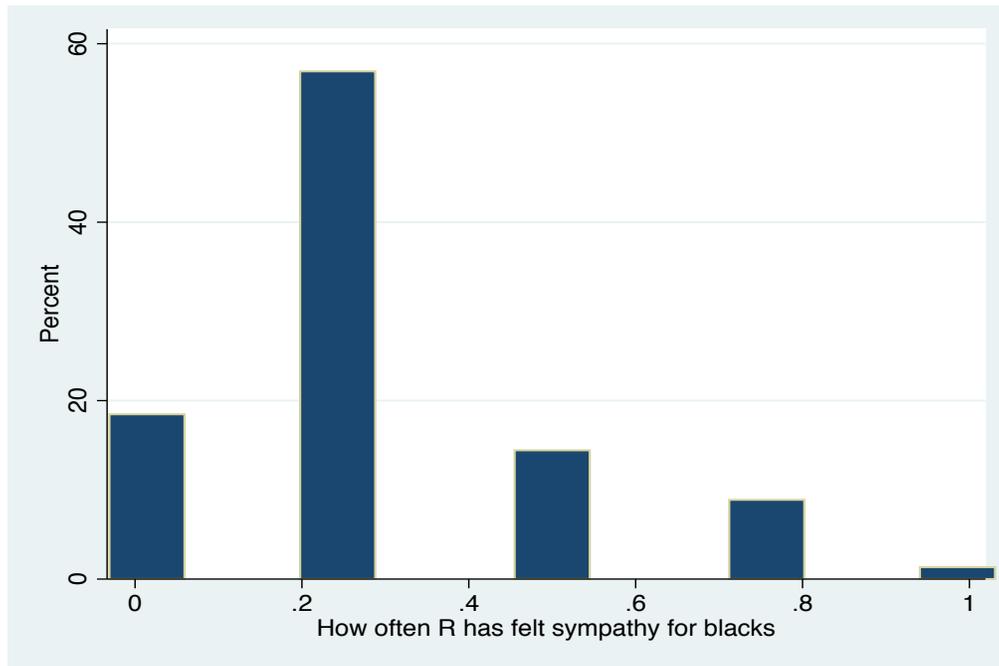
Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. The stereotypes variable represents the extent to which the respondent rates blacks as lazy relative to whites with a score of 1= blacks are lazier than whites and 0 =whites are lazier than blacks.

Table A4.4: Policies Not Associated with the ANES Question

Allowing children of immigrants to become permanent residents	Endorsing laws that protect homosexuals against job discrimination	Permitting gays/lesbians to serve in the army	Permitting gays and lesbians to marry	Permitting gays and lesbians to adopt children
0.092 (.06)	0.031 (.08)	-0.017 (.07)	0.037 (.05)	-0.059 (.071)
Invade Iran	Bomb Iran's nuclear development sites	Support for offshore drilling	Global warming is bad	Environment/Job Tradeoff
-0.083 (.060)	-0.083 (.060)	0.067 (.052)	-0.085 (.064)	0.024 (.040)
Federal spending on the environment	Investing social security in the stock market	Federal govt. should make it more difficult to buy a gun	Abortion	Support for nuclear power plants
-0.063 (.052)	-0.018 (.055)	-0.045 (.042)	-0.031 (.049)	-0.06 (.055)

Whites only. Includes controls for Party, Income, Age, Education, Gender, Region, Church Attendance, Limited Government, and Racial Resentment. The question about immigrants uses only Non-Hispanic Whites and the questions about gay issues use only straight whites. Areas that are bolded are significantly predicted by racial resentment.

Figure A4.1: Distribution of the ANES Sympathy Question



Source: 2012 ANES

Appendix: Chapter 4 – Survey Items

1. 2013 CCES INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

See Racial Sympathy index in Chapter 3 Appendix

GENDER SYMPATHY INDEX

Gender sympathy 1A

Variable Label

Kate is looking to buy a co-op in an exclusive neighborhood of a big city. She submits an offer on a unit and it is accepted. The building co-op board sends her an extensive application to complete. The final step of the process requires an in-person interview, in which each member of the co-op board interviews Kate. Kate puts together an impressive application and also interviews well. Despite this, the board rejects her application, stating that it is not clear whether she has long-term financial stability and that she may not fit in with the other building residents. Kate is upset because she has an excellent, stable job. She thinks the real reason the co-op board rejected her is because she is a woman.

Please indicate which statement best describes you.

If you got to know Kate, do you think you would get along?

Question Text

- 1 Yes, definitely
- 2 Yes, probably
- 3 Maybe
- 4 No, probably not
- 5 No, definitely not

Gender Sympathy 1B

Variable Label

How much sympathy do you have for Kate?

Question Text

- 1 A great deal of sympathy
- 2 A lot of sympathy
- 3 Some sympathy
- 4 A little sympathy
- 5 I do not feel any sympathy for her

Gender Sympathy 2A

Variable Label

Lisa Davis works for a construction company in Pennsylvania. She has worked as a flagger, alerting cars of construction projects on the highway, and has assisted the construction crew by performing laborer duties. Despite Lisa's good job performance, company supervisors have repeatedly rejected Lisa's attempts to apply for higher-paying positions. After Lisa complained about this treatment, the construction company reduced her work hours. Lisa is very upset by the company's actions.

Please indicate which statement best describes you.

How much sympathy do you feel for Lisa?

Question Text

- 1 A great deal of sympathy
- 2 A lot of sympathy
- 3 Some sympathy
- 4 A little sympathy
- 5 I do not feel any sympathy for her

Gender Sympathy 2B

Variable Label

If you got to know Lisa, do you think you would like her?

Question Text

- 1 Yes, definitely
- 2 Yes, probably
- 3 Maybe
- 4 No, probably not
- 5 No, definitely not

2013 CCES DEPENDENT VARIABLES

- **Government Aid to Blacks:** Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? (Government should help blacks / Blacks should help themselves)
- **Support for welfare:** In your opinion, should federal spending on welfare be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

- **Policy Questions:** Here are several things that the government in Washington might do to deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment among black Americans. Please indicate whether you favor or oppose each.
 - **Black business:** Government giving business and industry special tax breaks for locating in black neighborhoods (strongly favor/strongly oppose),
 - **Black schools:** Spending more money on black schools (strongly favor/strongly oppose)
 - **Black scholarship:** Providing scholarships for black students who maintain good grades (strongly favor/strongly oppose)
- **Affirmative Action:** Affirmative action programs give preference to racial minorities in employment and college admissions in order to correct for past discrimination. Do you support or oppose affirmative action? Affirmative action (strongly support/strongly oppose).

2013 CCES DEPENDENT VARIABLES – Discriminant Validity Analysis

- **Government Assistance to Women:** Do you think the government should require companies to allow up to six months unpaid leave for parents to spend time with their newborn or newly adopted children, or is this something that should be left up to the individual employer?
- **Abortion:** Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view on abortion?:
By law, abortion should never be permitted.
- **Preferential Hiring for Women:** Because of past discrimination, women should be given preferential treatment when applying for jobs or promotions. (Strongly in favor/Strongly Against)
- **Environment/Job Trade Off:** Some people think it is important to protect the environment even if it costs some jobs or otherwise reduces our standard of living. Other people think that protecting the environment is not as important as maintaining jobs and our standard of living. Which is closer to the way you feel, or haven't you thought much about this?

- **Keystone Pipeline:** Tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle: A bill to approve the Keystone XL pipeline from Montana to Texas and provide for environmental protection and government oversight.
- **Increase Border Patrols:** What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? -Increase the number of border patrols on the U.S. - Mexican border [selected]
- **Deny automatic citizenship to U.S. born children:** What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? - Deny automatic citizenship to American-born children of illegal immigrants [selected]
- **Ban assault rifles:** On the issue of gun regulation, are you for or against each of the following proposals: - Ban assault rifles [selected]

2. ANES TIME SERIES VARIABLES

2012 ANES Independent Variable:

- **Sympathy for Blacks:** How often have you felt sympathy for Blacks?
- **Negative Stereotypes:**
 - Respondents are presented with a scale numbered from 1-7, with 1=lazy and 7=hardworking. They are then asked:
 - Where would you rate WHITES in general on this scale?
 - Where would you rate BLACKS in general on this scale?

To construct the measure of negative stereotypes, I construct a measure the reports the difference between respondents' ratings of whites and blacks. *The stereotypes variable represents the extent to which the respondent rates blacks as lazy relative to whites with a score of 1= blacks are lazier than whites and 0 =whites are lazier than blacks.*

- **Personality Traits:** Directions: We're interested in how you see yourself. Please mark how well the following pair of words describes you, even if one word describes you better than the other.

- Agreeableness: ‘sympathetic, warm’
- Open to new experiences: ‘open to new experiences, complex’
- **Egalitarianism:** Respondents were presented with six statements and asked: “Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement.” Due to concerns related to acquiescence bias, subjects were randomly assigned to alternative ordering: “Do you disagree strongly, disagree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, agree somewhat, or agree strongly with this statement.” (R) indicates reverse coding.

The statements were:

- Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country. (R)
- One of the big problems in this country is that we don’t give everyone an equal chance.
- This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are. (R)
- It is not really that big a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others. (R)
- If people were treated more equally in this country, we would have many fewer problems.

Close to Blacks: For this variable, I used a feeling thermometer. Using the same thermometer scale you used earlier in the survey, how would you rate Blacks? 'Please enter the rating number in the number box. 'Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the group. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the group and that you don't care too much for that group. You would rate the group at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the group.'

2012 ANES Dependent Variables:

- **Affirmative Action in Hiring:** What about your opinion – are you FOR or AGAINST preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?

- **Welfare:** What about welfare programs. Should federal spending be INCREASED, DECREASED, or kept ABOUT THE SAME?
 - **Aid to Blacks:** Where would you place YOURSELF on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?
 - Title: Government Help to Blacks. Left: GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP BLACKS. Right: BLACKS SHOULD HELP THEMSELVES
- Additional dependent variables for discriminant validity analyses are available upon request.

2008 ANES Dependent Variables

- **Welfare:** What about welfare programs. Should federal spending be INCREASED, DECREASED, or kept ABOUT THE SAME?
- **Aid to Blacks:** Where would you place YOURSELF on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?
 - Title: Government Help to Blacks. Left: GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP BLACKS. Right: BLACKS SHOULD HELP THEMSELVES
- **Affirmative Action in Hiring:** Some people say that because of past discrimination, blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of blacks is wrong because it gives blacks advantages they haven't earned. What about your opinion ~ are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?

3. GSS VARIABLES, 1994 GSS

1994 GSS Independent Variable:

- **Sympathy for Blacks:** How often have you felt sympathy for Blacks?

Note for all GSS analyses: Due to variable availability, the questions differed somewhat between the ANES and GSS. For the GSS analysis, partisanship, income, age, education, gender, region, church attendance were measured using comparable questions to the ANES and CCES. The limited government index was not available, so instead I used self-reported ideology. Additionally,

the full 4-item, racial resentment index was not available, so I used the two items that were included instead:

- Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the following statement: Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without special favors.
- Do you think that Blacks get more attention from government than they deserve? (Much more, more, about right, less, much less)

The question used to approximate egalitarian attitudes was:

It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes. (Agree strongly, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, disagree strongly)

Finally, the question used to approximate interracial contact was: During the last few years, has anyone in your family brought a friend who was a [(Negro/ Black/ African-American)] home for dinner? (Yes, No, Don't know)

1994 GSS Dependent Variables:

- **Government Aid to Blacks:** We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. *Spending on assistance to Blacks.*
- **Welfare:** We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. *Welfare*

Affirmative Action: Some people say that because of past discrimination, Blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and

promotion of Blacks is wrong because it discriminates against others. What about your opinion- are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of Blacks?

4. MTurk Variables

Independent Variables:

- **Humanitarianism:** Respondents were presented with six statements and asked: “Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement.” (R) indicates reverse coding.
 - One should always find ways to help others less fortunate than oneself.
 - It is better not to be too kind to people, because kindness will only be abused (R)
 - The dignity and welfare of people should be the most important concern in any society.
 - People tend to pay more attention to the well-being of others than they should (R)
 - All people who are unable to provide for their basic needs should be helped by others.
 - One of the problems of today’s society is that we are often too kind to people who don’t deserve it (R)
 - A person should always be concerned about the well being of others.
 - I believe it is best not to get involved taking care of other people’s needs (R)

The Dependent Variables are identical to the wording provided in the 2012 ANES.

CHAPTER V

The Activation of Racial Sympathy

‘The suffering and discrimination of African Americans has been a persistent characteristic of American history since the country’s inception (see Fields 1982). America’s sole civil war erupted in response to the institution of slavery. During the period of Reconstruction, some white Southerners refused to accept the emancipation of slaves and resisted their liberation with violent opposition (Foner 2002). Less than a century later, the country descended into crisis as the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and emergence of segregationist candidates like Governor Wallace drew vivid attention to America’s deep racial divide. More recently, the Black Lives Matter movement, which was created in response to multiple allegations of police brutality against African Americans, has once again awoken the American body politic to its deep-rooted racial wounds. Some scholars have argued that black suffering is a “prerequisite” for the group’s advancement (see West 2000) and that, in these moments of black misfortune, some white Americans gain a renewed sense of commitment to racial justice. Yet, little is known about how and when white citizens react to black suffering and the consequences of these reactions for American politics.

Scholars have argued that race has occupied a “central” role in American politics. Yet the majority of scholarship in this field has focused on one dimension of its influence: prejudice (Hutchings & Valentino 2004). Political scientists have amassed a rich and impressive literature on the topic of prejudice, and learned about the many ways in which it causes nominally racial policies to flounder.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that this account is incomplete. Instead, racial sympathy, defined as white distress over black misfortune, can be reliably measured, as I have demonstrated in Chapter 3, and, as I have established in Chapter 4, is associated with public opinion on a wide range of policies. In the dissertation’s final empirical chapter, I suggest that racial sympathy can be activated with consequences for public opinion. Just as research on animus uncovered the cues and frames that increase the influence of animus on policy preference (Mendelberg 2001, Valentino et al. 2002), I argue that there are also cues and frames that make it more likely for whites’ racial sympathy to emerge in American politics.

This chapter expands our understanding of racial attitudes by examining the conditions under which racial sympathy is activated. I begin the chapter with an overview of the literature on racial attitudes activation. Next, I put forth a theory of sympathy’s activation, describing how and why I expect sympathy to be activated. This theory of activation leads to a series of expectations for the studies presented in this chapter, to which I next attend. I examine these expectations by conducting three national experiments set across different policy domains. In each section, I provide an overview of the sample, procedure, and results. I close the chapter by discussing the implications of these experiments for the study of racial attitudes specifically as well as for the study of public opinion more generally.

The starting point for much of the research on racial attitudes activation is the broader theory of priming (Mendelberg 2001, Stevens 2014, Valentino et al. 2002). Work on priming has found that when people are asked for their opinions on complex topics, they do not survey everything they know to arrive at their answers. Instead, citizens' opinions are likely to come from a convenience sample - "bits and pieces" - of memory or relevant material that is called to the "top-of-the-head" at a given moment in time (Taylor & Fiske 1978, Tversky & Kahneman 1973). By drawing attention to specific dimensions of a political object, political elites can make certain considerations more accessible to citizens during political decision-making. Priming has been examined across diverse areas of political science (Iyengar & Kinder 1987, Krosnick & Kinder 1990, Lenz 2012, Winter 2008). In this chapter, I consider *racial priming*, that is, the ways in which certain language or frames evoke racial thinking in politics.

Perhaps since racial priming has often been studied in concert with white racial prejudice, scholars tend to associate the concept of racial priming itself with racial animus by definition.⁵¹ However, if priming is defined as "changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations" (Iyengar & Kinder 1987, 63) then it is also possible that cues or frames that draw attention to black misfortune can alter the extent to which whites' sympathy is brought to bear on opinion.

Scholars have yet to examine racial priming as it relates to racial sympathy, however, some research has considered the suppression of prejudice. Generally this work has found that implicit racial appeals, defined as those appeals which are not ostensibly about race, do not influence

⁵¹ For example, when Valentino and colleagues (2002) find that a counter-stereotypic narrative does not activate resentment, they conclude that this narrative "dramatically undermines racial priming" (86).

political outcomes among those who are low in racial resentment (though these appeals may upset them – see Mendelberg 2001).⁵² Recent work by Stevens (2014) suggests that those low in racial resentment reject explicit racial appeals, defined as appeals that use racial nouns such as “black” or “white.” Similarly, Tesler (2012) argues that racially conservative whites withdraw their support for the stimulus when it is linked to Barack Obama, while those who are “racially liberal” become more likely to embrace it. Tesler refers to this as the “two sides of racialization” (700).⁵³

These studies all acknowledge a range of responses to racial cues. That said, these studies all rely on one instrument to gauge the effect of racial priming: the racial resentment scale, a measure that has been discussed at length elsewhere in the dissertation.⁵⁴ It is unclear whether the same conditions that “prime” low resentment are also those that prime racial sympathy. More generally, in order to learn more about the cues, imagery, and frames that lead some whites to embrace policies that benefit African Americans, it is important to examine the conditions under which racial sympathy is activated, a task to which I now turn.

The Psychology of Racial Sympathy

I argue that a white person’s base level of racial sympathy is not grown or diminished as much as it is intensified under certain scenarios. More technically stated, in examining the priming of racial sympathy, I am interested in understanding the *moderated effects* of racial sympathy. Moderation implies that where one explanatory variable changes the *effect* of another explanatory variable (racial sympathy) on the dependent variable (support for “pro-Black” policies or opposition to “anti-Black” ones).

⁵² This scholarship has found that while the effects of these appeals are in the expected direction, they are often statistically insignificant.

⁵³ For a thorough discussion, see Tesler 2016.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 3.

Scholars have debated whether psychological concepts like racial attitudes are “state,” suggesting that it can be prompted by situations, or “trait,” suggesting an in-born stable factor (see Steyer & Schmitt 1992 for a discussion). Racial sympathy does not fit neatly within this “state or trait” categorization, and indeed, some work rejects this binary framework altogether (Allen and Potkay 1981). Instead, racial sympathy is an enduring disposition, but one that responds dynamically to specific scenarios. In Chapter 2, I provided an overview of some of the individual-level factors that could contribute to a white person’s likelihood of becoming racially sympathetic. In this chapter, I consider the social conditions that shape its influence. Overall, I argue that, under certain circumstances, the weight of racial sympathy can intensify, with consequences for public opinion.

This conceptualization of sympathy mirrors what Walter Mischel and colleagues refer to as the “situation-behavior profiles,” where certain personality types or predispositions exhibit “stable individual differences in behavior considered overall (i.e., averaged across different situations), but also distinctive and stable patterns of situation-behavior relations” (Stenner 2005 20). According to this framework, racially sympathetic whites bring their sympathy to bear when certain components of black misfortune are called to mind. Absent these components, racial sympathy is a less important determinant of opinion.

It is important to note that the mechanics of sympathy’s activation may resemble prejudice’s – that is, once activated, I expect the attitude to shape white opinion on public policy by making race a more salient component of whites’ decision-making. Even if that is the case, since previous work has yet to consider the activation of non-prejudicial attitudes, it is not evident

whether the same cues that activate prejudice also serve to activate sympathy and, separately, if sympathy responds to its own unique cues.

Racial sympathy rests dormant in some people but can be activated under certain circumstances. What are these circumstances? What aspects of political and social life catalyze racial sympathy? I attempt to answer these questions using three sets of experiments set in a diverse range of environments, each exploring a different type of racialized policy. By manipulating an independent variable of interest and randomly assigning subjects to treatment and control conditions, the experiments allow me to identify the conditions under which racial sympathy is activated.

The Race Experiments

The first set of experiments, the *Race Experiments*, examine whether linking African Americans to certain policy areas activates racial sympathy. Based on the theory of racial sympathy and the literature on racial priming, I expect that the weight of sympathy on opinion will increase when a policy is linked to black beneficiaries. Whereas previous research has demonstrated that resentful whites withdraw support for programs when the beneficiary is identified as black (Hurwitz & Peffley 2005, Kinder and Sanders 1996), I am interested in examining whether a similar racial cue leads racially sympathetic whites to resist this withdrawal – or even to *extend* their support for these same programs.

Experiments that vary the race of the beneficiary are common in political science and are typically used to measure the influence of racial animus on policy opposition (Feldman & Huddy

2005; Kinder & Sanders 1996; Peffley et al. 1997; Valentino et al. 2002).⁵⁵ Here I expect that racial sympathy will be brought to bear in the condition in which the policy beneficiaries are black.

Additionally, and relatedly, the *Race Experiments* are intended to reveal the racial foundations of racial sympathy. If, as I have argued, racial sympathy is an attitude that relies on whites' perceptions of African Americans, I expect it to be uniquely provoked when African Americans are brought to mind. In Chapter 4, I began to examine the racial nature of racial sympathy through a series of discriminant validity analyses. In these analyses, I demonstrate that racial sympathy is not associated with a range of non-racial policy areas, including policies that are perceived to benefit women.⁵⁶

One might reasonably observe, however, that to the extent that women suffer, the disadvantages faced by women, particularly white women, are substantively different than the disadvantages faced by black Americans. Specifically, unlike women, many white Americans associate blacks with poverty. It is possible that what I have been labeling "racial sympathy" is in reality a sympathy based on economic disadvantage. If that is the case, then racial sympathy should predict policies that benefit the poor. However, if racial sympathy is rooted in evaluations and emotions specifically related to African Americans, regardless of their economic circumstances, then I expect that it would not especially predictive of pro-poor policies. The *Race Experiments* are designed to investigate these expectations.

⁵⁵ These experimental frames also appeared in the 1990 General Social Survey and were also used to examine the influence of negative racial stereotypes on policy opinion in *Divided by Color*.

⁵⁶ Instead, a two-item index of "Gender Sympathy" was found to be independently and significantly associated with opinion in this domain.

Race Experiments: Data & Design

The *Race Experiments* appeared on the 2013 CCES, which was administered in November of 2013. Briefly, the CCES is a national stratified survey administered annually on the Internet by YouGov/Polimetrix. The 2013 CCES was fielded in November 2013 and the experiments described below were administered to 1,000 respondents, the 751 of who identified as white are analyzed here. For full details about the 2013 CCES, consult Chapter 3.

Three survey wording experiments constitute the *Race Experiments*. In each, subjects were asked to provide their opinion in a given policy area. For half of the sample, the policy was described to benefit “the poor” and for the other half of the sample the policy was described to benefit “blacks.”⁵⁷ The question wording for the Race Experiments appears below with the manipulation presented in brackets.

Race Experiments Stimuli

Here are several things that the government in Washington might do to deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment among black/poor Americans. Please indicate whether you favor or oppose each.

Government giving business and industry special tax breaks for locating in [black/poor] neighborhoods (strongly favor/strongly oppose),

Spending more money on [black/poor] schools (strongly favor/strongly oppose)

Providing scholarships for [black/poor] students who maintain good grades (strongly favor/strongly oppose)

Race Experiments: Results

To start, I consider how racial sympathy affects support for a given policy area, depending on whether the beneficiaries are identified to be either Black or poor. To provide some context for

⁵⁷ These experimental frames also appeared in the 1990 General Social Survey and were also used to examine the influence of negative racial stereotypes on policy opinion in *Divided by Color*.

this analysis, political science research has demonstrated that aid to the poor is routinely and significantly popular among whites, while aid to blacks is substantially less so (Gilens 1999, Piston 2014). However, it is possible that this difference in support may be diminished among those whites that are sympathetic to blacks, just as it is exacerbated among those that are resentful (Kinder and Sanders 1996). To examine this possibility, I present the interactive influence of sympathy and experimental condition (policy beneficiary) on policy support in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 about here

The results in Table 5.1 suggest that those individuals who are low in racial sympathy are especially *unlikely* to support the policies when they are described to benefit blacks. The magnitude of this penalty is substantial: relative to anti-poverty policies, linking these policies to African Americans causes whites who are low in racial sympathy to consistently withdraw political support -- the coefficients across Table 5.1's first row are significant and negative. For those whites that are high in racial sympathy, we observe a different pattern. The positive and significant coefficient on the interaction of experimental condition and racial sympathy in two out of three cases suggest that racial sympathy is uniquely triggered when the policy beneficiary is African American. Which is to say that racially sympathetic whites tend to bring their sympathy to bear when they learn that a policy that influences African Americans.

The analysis presented in Table 5.1 is depicted graphically in Figure 5.1. In these figures, the level of racial sympathy is measured on the X-axis and the level of support for the policy on the Y-axis. For example, Figure 2a displays the conditional influence of racial sympathy on support for the business subsidy policy by experimental condition. Each condition is shown in different colors -- a blue line represents the poor condition and a red line represents the black condition. On the

left hand side of the chart, the distance between the red and blue lines suggests that low sympathizers reject the business subsidy policy when it is described to serve black beneficiaries.

Figure 5.1 about here

As we move from the lowest to highest levels of racial sympathy however, we observe a corresponding increase in support for the policy in the black condition, as displayed by the diagonal red line. This ascending level of support is not apparent in the poor condition, where the policy receives high approval across levels of racial sympathy. At the highest level of racial sympathy, the black condition is supported at similar levels to the popular poor condition. As Figure 5.2a and 5.2b display, this pattern is observed among the racially sympathetic for both the business subsidy and scholarship policies, though not for the school policies, a subject I will address shortly. Nonetheless, based on the results displayed in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1, it seems that if all whites were sympathetic to black misfortune, then aid to blacks could be just as popular as aid to the poor.

Race Experiments: Discussion

The goal of the *Race Experiments* was to examine whether emphasizing a policy's racial dimensions, that is, by drawing attention to the black population it serves, could activate racial sympathy. The results suggest that by cueing race, elites can increase the salience of racial sympathy on white opinion. Whereas previous studies have found that emphasizing a policy's racial dimension may cause some whites to retreat, the results of the *Race Experiment* suggest that sympathetic whites have no qualms in supporting a policy linked to black beneficiaries. The *Race*

Experiments demonstrate one avenue for sympathy's activation and also confirm that the concept is firmly rooted in race, not material status.

In contrast to the business subsidy and scholarship policies, I found that racial sympathy was not activated for the "school" policy. One possible interpretation of this puzzling result is that supporting "schools in black neighborhoods," as the question reads, may sound like an endorsement of segregated schools to the racially sympathetic. Indeed, "separate but equal" schools were the catalyst to the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that ruled de jure segregation as a violation of the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause. As such, it is possible that policies described to support schools in black neighborhoods raise concerns about perpetuating racial separation. Thus the unique history of this policy area may be introducing additional considerations to the racially sympathetic that were not part of the experimental manipulation.

Although the *Race Experiment* provided some valuable insight on sympathy's activation, it also provoked some important questions. First, to the extent that the American poor are often racialized (Gilens 2001), some respondents may associate the "poor" condition with African Americans. Since this control condition may have unintentionally activated racial sympathy, the *Race Experiments* provide a conservative test of the priming of racial sympathy. Additionally, though racial sympathy demonstrated impressive predictive strength, so too did racial resentment. I conducted a subsequent set of analyses of the *Race Experiments* in which I interacted racial resentment with the experimental condition and found that the low end of racial resentment strongly influenced support in the black condition relative to the poor condition. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.2. I will return to the question of resentment's activation

later in this chapter, for now, though, it seems as that some of the stimuli that activate sympathy may also activate resentment as well.

Table 5.2 about here

Additionally, it is possible that the design of the survey may overstate the effect of sympathy on policy support. In the CCES, the independent variable of racial sympathy and the experimental manipulation appeared in the same single-wave survey. It is therefore important to ensure that subjects' responses to the experiment were not contaminated by their responses to the racial sympathy index.

The next series of experiments attempt to expand our understanding of the conditions under which racial sympathy is activated. In addition to pursuing two possible explanations to this question, the *Intensity* and *Attribution* experiment both incorporate improvements to survey design.

The Intensity Experiment

The goals of the *Intensity Experiment* were twofold: the first goal of the *Intensity Experiment* was to replicate the *Race Experiment* results in a new policy area with some enhancements to the survey design as outlined above. The second goal of the *Intensity Experiment* was to examine whether certain elements of black suffering are especially resonant to the racially sympathetic; specifically, the *Intensity Experiment* explored perceptions of *severity* and their role in shaping sympathetic whites' responses. Whereas the *Race Experiments* establish that the influence of racial sympathy on political outcomes is intensified when a policy references African Americans, the *Intensity Experiments* begin to examine whether conditions of severe black suffering, relative to less severe black suffering, are more likely to activate sympathy.

It is plausible that racial sympathy is rooted in perceptions of severe black misfortune, and as such, is most likely to emerge when black misfortune is especially dire. Historically, white citizens seem to be responsive to black suffering when it reaches appreciable highs. For example, Kinder and Sanders (1996) suggest that changes in white opinion during the 1960s were “a direct reflection of what whites saw. To the national audience, the sit-ins, boycotts, marches, freedom rides, and especially the outpouring of violence such protests provoked” provided vivid visual confirmation of the discrimination and suffering that many blacks faced (102). Similarly, a 2015 New York Times/CBS poll suggests that whites’ perceptions of race relations have deteriorated in the wake of prominent instances of police brutality in recent years.

Figure 5.2 about here

As Figure 5.2 displays, in the early months of 2015, white Americans were more likely to characterize race relations as “generally bad” rather than “generally good.” This corresponds with a period in which demonstrations and protests erupted across the country in immediate response to the grand jury’s refusal to indict Daniel Pantaleo, a New York City police officer responsible for Eric Garner’s death. Garner’s death was not the only high profile incident that emphasized the suffering of African Americans. Starting with the death of Trayvon Martin in February 2012, public figures like President Obama explicitly called attention to “the fact that African American young men are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system; that they’re disproportionately both victims and perpetrators of violence.”⁵⁸ During this period, the Black Lives Matter movement gained a visible presence, organizing thousands of protests and demonstrations to “affirm Black folks’ contributions to this society, our humanity and our

⁵⁸ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/19/remarks-president-trayvon-martin>

resilience in the face of deadly opposition.”⁵⁹ It is possible that the frequency and severity of black suffering throughout this period may have elevated the role of racial sympathy in whites’ political decision making.

Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective, I have defined racial sympathy as white distress over black suffering. It is reasonable to suspect that as suffering increases, so too might white distress, thereby increasing the likelihood that sympathetic whites would call for the government to alleviate this suffering. The *Intensity Experiment* is intended to investigate the role that intensity of suffering plays in racial sympathy.

The Intensity Experiment: Data & Design

I contracted with Survey Sampling International (SSI) in the summer of 2015 to conduct the *Intensity Experiment*. SSI is a sampling firm that matches its sample to the Census on key demographics such as gender, age, income and education. Additionally, SSI is able to target certain subpopulations through its selection procedure; accordingly, an all-white sample was used for the experiment. Unlike the *Race Experiments*, the *Intensity Experiment* was fielded as a panel study, with the first wave of the study administered in August 2015 and the second wave one month later in September 2015. The racial attitude questions were administered in Wave 1 while the experimental stimulus appeared in Wave 2, making it unlikely that the former contaminated responses to the latter.

In further contrast to the *Race Experiments*, which presented the manipulations as part of survey questions, the manipulations in the *Intensity Experiment* were embedded in a newspaper article, mimicking the type of political communication that citizens might encounter in their day-

⁵⁹ <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>

to-day lives. In the article, which is presented in the Appendix, subjects read about Gregory Temple, a local elderly man who was bracing for an upcoming heat wave. Temple was described as too poor to afford adequate cooling units (such as a functional fan or air conditioner), making him unprepared for the approaching heat. After describing Temple's situation, the article went on to discuss the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). While Temple is a fictitious character, HEAP is an actual government program administered at the state level, providing subsidies to low-income people to meet their heating or cooling costs.⁶⁰ After reading the article, subjects were asked a number of questions related to HEAP, which also appear in the Appendix.

I varied the race of Gregory Temple using photographs: in one condition, Temple was a white man and in the other condition he was black. Manipulating race through images is a common technique in political science experiments (Valentino et al. 2002, Stephens 2014) and, relative to the *Race Experiments* which examined the relationship between sympathy and “the poor,” this manipulation removed some ambiguity about the non-black condition, enabling a cleaner examination of the connection between race of the beneficiary and racial sympathy. The experimental conditions for the *Intensity Experiment* appear in Table 5.3. As I will discuss shortly, the *Intensity Experiment* also included a separate manipulation varying the degree of Gregory Temple's suffering.

Table 5.3 about here

The Intensity Experiment: Results

As a first step, I examine whether the results of the *Race Experiments* extend to other policy areas and can be replicated with a two-wave design. Copying the format of Table 5.1, Table 5.4 displays the interactive influence of racial sympathy and race of beneficiary on support of policy, in

⁶⁰ More information about HEAP is provided on this website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/liheap>

this case, increased funding for HEAP.⁶¹ As the table indicates, for those who are low in racial sympathy, support for HEAP funding drops by a substantial magnitude when Temple is black. Furthermore, in contrast to the results of the *Race Experiments*, the coefficient on racial sympathy in the white condition fails to meet traditional standards of statistical significance, indicating that racial sympathy is not activated when Temple is white.

Instead, racial sympathy is only significantly associated with support for HEAP when the program is tied to a black beneficiary. Indeed, the effect of racial sympathy on support for HEAP funding is 0.22 in the black condition, representing approximately one-fifth of the scale. Table 5.4 confirms what we found in the *Race Experiments*: drawing attention to a policy's black beneficiaries activates racial sympathy. This result suggests that in addition to blunting the negative effects of race, sympathy can also boost support for the program among the racially sympathetic when the beneficiary is black. Based on this iteration of the *Race Experiment*, it seems plausible that some racially sympathetic whites can be more enthusiastic of policies that advance black interests than they are policies that advance white interests.

Table 5.4 about here

In addition to manipulating the race of the beneficiary, the *Intensity Experiment* also assigned subjects to conditions that varied the extent of black suffering. The severity of the approaching heat wave was manipulated by raising the temperature of the heat as well as Temple's preparedness for these temperatures. In the *Low Black Suffering Condition*, the article reported that temperatures were projected to be in the mid-80s, a temperature that is warm, but might not necessitate an air conditioner or other cooling relief. Additionally, Temple was described to own

⁶¹ To make the most direct comparison to the *Race Experiments*, I compare black and white severe suffering.

small fan and a finicky air conditioner, which might be considered adequate tools to fight temperatures in the 80s. In contrast, in the *High Black Suffering Condition*, temperatures were projected to soar above 100°F for multiple days, meeting the National Weather Service’s criteria for a heat advisory.⁶² In this condition, Temple did not own any fans or air conditioners. The warmer temperature paired with Temple’s inadequate equipment made the *High Black Suffering* condition dangerously intolerable while the *Low Black Suffering* condition presented more of a manageable inconvenience. The purpose of this manipulation was to examine whether racially sympathetic whites became more likely to support increased funding for HEAP as the severity of black suffering escalated.

Table 5.5 about here

As the results in Table 5.5 suggest, varying the intensity of black suffering does not seem to alter the influence of racial sympathy on political outcomes. Among all respondents in the sample, those who view high black suffering, relative to low black suffering, were slightly less inclined to support funding for HEAP, though this does not meet conventional standards of statistical significance ($p > 0.85$). Similarly, the non-significant coefficient on the table’s interaction term ($p > .33$) suggests that learning about severe black suffering, relative to low suffering, does not increase the influence of sympathy on support for HEAP. Instead, I find that racial sympathy tends to be activated whether black suffering is depicted to be low or high, a result I explore in a later section of this chapter.

⁶² See: <http://www.weather.gov/lwx/WarningsDefined#Excessive Heat Watch>

The Intensity Experiment: Discussion

There are a few lessons to glean from the *Intensity Experiment*. First, the relationship between racial sympathy and policy beneficiary persists even when sympathy is measured weeks before the experimental stimulus is administered. This reduces some concerns that the results of the *Race Experiment* may have been an artifact of that study's design. Furthermore and more importantly, the replication of the *Race Experiment* with the SSI data suggest that emphasizing a program's black beneficiaries will activate racial sympathy across diverse areas of public policy, from scholarships to heating subsidies. Through the *Intensity Experiment*, we gain increasing clarity into the conditions that activate racial sympathy in politics.

That said, the *Intensity Experiment* also draws our attention to a number of new questions. The results in Table 5.4 suggest that, in certain contexts, racially sympathetic whites may not respond to increasing levels of black suffering, at least as manipulated here. While we should not draw too many inferences from results that do not meet standard levels of statistical significance, one interpretation of Table 5.4 is that if political elites were to emphasize black misfortune in a way that highlights its extent and depth, they may not be increasing the weight of sympathy on white opinion. In this respect, racial sympathy may be similar to other symbolic attitudes, which are not as much based on objective cognitive evaluation as much as the durable affective "tags" that citizens attach to certain social groups (see Conover 1988, Sears 2001).

It is important to note that the *Intensity Experiment* was set in the context of heating policy. The obscure nature of this policy area was intentional. I wanted to examine the relationship between racial sympathy and opinion in a domain that does not receive that much attention, in contrast to the better-known policies I explore in Chapter 4. I did this in an attempt to probe the

breadth of sympathy, however, it is possible that the particular issue area I chose may limit the generalizability of the results.

In the final experiment, I consider the relationship between racial sympathy and attribution for black suffering. Specifically, the *Attribution Experiment* examines whether attributing black suffering to either a white or black “culprit” influences the effect of sympathy on policy support. Work by Brickman and colleagues (1982) suggests that responses to misfortune can vary depending on perceptions of who bears the responsibility for the misfortune. Outlining a typology of modes of helping and coping, Brickman suggests that when some people observe misfortune, they assign responsibility for a given problem to the sufferer, whereas others do not. This assignment of blame can have consequences for the “solution,” or how a problem should be solved, which is to say that linking a “black” culprit, relative to a white culprit, to misfortune may have consequences for sympathy’s activation.

The Attribution Experiment

In the introduction of this chapter, I summarized some notable instances of black suffering throughout American history. All of these events draw attention to the disproportionate misfortune that African Americans have endured in this country; additionally, however, they also underscore the role that white Americans have played in enforcing and sustaining black suffering. Perhaps, then, what joins these collective memories together, and makes them salient for politics, is not necessarily the *degree* of black suffering, but instead, the role or responsibility that whites play in perpetrating it. If that is the case, then examining the role of *attribution* – or responsibility – as it relates to black suffering may reveal important characteristics of the nature of racial sympathy.

While some scholarship has acknowledged that attribution may play an important role in

understanding black disadvantage,⁶³ like so much of the other work in the field, it has mostly been pursued through the framework of racial prejudice.⁶⁴ This research suggests that many racially prejudiced whites consider blacks to be responsible for their group's disadvantage. For this reason, primes that emphasize blacks' laziness or lawlessness are likely to cue prejudice (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000, Valentino et al. 2002). Since these whites tend to blame African Americans for their group's misfortune, they do not acknowledge that forces external to this community, such as white Americans or the government, are implicated its causes or solutions. But what about racially sympathetic whites? When racially sympathetic whites think about responsibility for black suffering, who is to blame? More generally, what consequences does this attribution have for public opinion?

The Attribution Experiment: Data & Design

To investigate the relationship between attribution and racial sympathy, I conducted a two-wave Internet survey experiment. Contracting with the survey firm YouGov, I collected Wave 1, which contained the racial sympathy index, other racial attitudes, and a series of demographic questions in August 2016. Respondents from Wave 1 respondents were then re-contacted by YouGov in late September 2016 and invited to complete the second wave, which included the experimental manipulation. The sample in the *Attribution Experiment* contains the 288 white Americans who completed both waves of the study. As with the *Intensity Experiment*, given the lengthy interruption between the first and second wave, it is unlikely that respondents were able to connect the content across two waves and guess the purpose of the study. Unlike SSI, which

⁶³ For example, one of the questions in the racial resentment scale asks about blacks trying harder – suggesting agency and responsibility for their circumstances. Questions about stereotypes also insinuate that blacks' laziness is to blame for their community's conditions, not other forces.

⁶⁴ Though see work by Iyengar (1996) on framing responsibility of political issues.

administered the *Intensity Experiments*, YouGov provides a series of weights to approximate national representativeness. These weights are employed for all analyses that follow.⁶⁵

In the *Attribution Experiment*, subjects reviewed a profile of a struggling black neighborhood named Smith Hill. The neighborhood was fictitious but the profile resembled the neighborhood profiles that appear on many municipal or real estate websites⁶⁶ and are typically consulted by residents interested in moving to a new area. In addition to presenting information about the neighborhood's schools and housing units, each profile also featured a "crime blotter" detailing a graffiti crime that had recently been committed in the neighborhood.⁶⁷

In both conditions, the neighborhood was depicted to be primarily black with a high crime rate, low-performing schools and a below average household income. While the presence of black suffering and deprivation was kept constant across conditions, subjects were randomly assigned to view different crime blotters. In one condition, the crime blotter indicated that a white man had admitted to painting the graffiti, and in another condition, the blotter indicated that a black man had admitted to the same offense. The only difference between the two conditions was the race of the culprit, as manipulated by a photograph. After subjects reviewed their profile, they were asked to provide their opinions on the graffiti crime and a range of other policies impacting Smith Hill.

⁶⁵ The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, ideology, party identification, and political interest, using a frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) sample. Data on voter registration status and turnout were matched to this frame using the November 2010 Current Population Survey. Data on interest in politics and party identification were then matched to this frame from the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey. The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores.

⁶⁶ For example, the city of Portland, Oregon lists neighborhood profiles on its city government website:

<https://www.pdx.edu/prc/neighborhood-profiles> as does Cleveland:

<http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/census/factsheets/cpc.html>

⁶⁷The profile format mirrored a manipulation that appeared in the 1986 GSS, in which respondents were instructed to evaluate a fictional family to determine how much welfare assistance they should receive from the federal government. Tom Smith authored a lengthy evaluation of this "vignettes" manipulation in 1987, which included details on how to explain the task to subjects and also the recommendation that subjects should be walked through an example before they arrived at the actual profile, advice which I heeded.

The stimulus and all questions appear in the chapter's Appendix.

The Attribution Experiment: Results

I start by examining opinion as it relates to punishment of the graffiti artist. I do this by examining respondents' opinion on a question related to community service. Specifically, subjects were asked to indicate how many hours of community service the graffiti artist should serve as punishment for his crime. Subjects were told that the maximum time for this offense was 70 hours, and were then provided with a list of options ranging from 0-70 hours, with each answer choice presented in increments of 9 hours (for example, 11-20 hours, 21-30 hours, 31-40 hours and so on). For ease of interpretation, I then rescaled this variable from 0-1 (with 0=the fewest hours of community service).

Whereas the other policy areas examined in this dissertation consider those policies that bestow benefits to African Americans, the *Attribution Experiment* looks at opinion on an area in which African Americans could be considered victims of state punishment. Kinder and Dale-Riddle (2012) suggest that "attitudes that citizens harbor toward the social groups they see as the principle beneficiaries or victims of the policy" (23) shape public opinion in powerful ways. By examining white respondents' opinions as they relate to punishment, in this case, community service,⁶⁸ I expand the range of racialized policies that I consider in this dissertation beyond social service provision to issues of criminal justice.

The results, presented in Table 5.5, are striking. The table suggests that those whites that are low in racial sympathy display no resistance in issuing a harsh punishment to the graffiti artist when he is black. The coefficient on this variable is 0.23 and significant ($p < 0.03$), representing

⁶⁸ I find similar results when I look at respondents' opinion on other types of punishment as well, including fines, as displayed in Figure 4.

almost one-fifth of the scale. In line with previous research, the results of this experiment suggest that when some white Americans learn that an African American has committed a crime, they issue an especially harsh punishment (see Hetey & Eberhardt 2014 and Hurwitz & Peffley 1997).

Table 5.5 about here

What is new, however, is that the table suggests that racially sympathetic whites can also endorse punitive measures, but are more likely to do so when the culprit is white. However, when the culprit is black, this tendency reverses dramatically. The significant and negative coefficient on the first column's interaction term suggest that at the highest levels of racial sympathy, racially sympathetic whites are much more likely to resist a harsh punishment for a culprit, but only when this culprit is black.

These results become clearer as we examine the predicted probability plots, displayed at the bottom of Figure 5.3. As with the charts in Figure 5.1, the lines in Figure 5.3's charts each represent different experimental condition. In this case, the blue line represents those whites that viewed the white culprit condition and the red line represents those whites that viewed the black culprit condition. The charts in Figure 5.3 suggest that racially sympathetic whites issue different responses to the crime, depending on the race of the culprit. The predicted probability of supporting punishment for a black criminal is .87 for those whites who are low in racial sympathy and .46 for those who are high, an increase of forty-one percentage points. On the other hand, when the criminal is *white*, the predicted probability of issuing a harsh sentence for the criminal is .64 for those who are low in racial sympathy and .86 for those who are high. More tangibly, whites that are high in racial sympathy assign almost double the amount of community service to a white culprit than they do a black culprit for the same offense.

Figure 5.3 about here

As the foregoing section suggests, cues that alter the race of a policy beneficiary or victim have the capacity to prime racial attitudes in general and could conceivably prime sympathy and resentment simultaneously. Because the experiment's two conditions are both set in a struggling black neighborhood, they both call to mind race, making it conceivable that I may be activating resentment and sympathy at the same time. Earlier parts of this chapter reference the research on priming racial prejudice, much of which has found that resentment can be activated in response to both implicit and explicit cues. If that is the case, it is important to examine how both prejudicial and sympathetic attitudes respond to the racialized stimuli of the *Attribution Experiment*. Importantly, if racial resentment subsumes sympathy, this suggests that the latter might not infiltrate politics in a meaningful way. Furthermore, this would lend support to the discipline's reliance on racial prejudice as its primary and singular form of racial attitude. If, however, racial sympathy remains a powerful predictor of opinion even while accounting for the interaction of experimental condition and resentment, this suggests that our understanding of "pro-Black" white opinion is incomplete without its inclusion.

The second column of Table 5.6 includes a model that accounts for the interaction of racial resentment and experimental condition in addition to the interaction of racial sympathy and experimental condition. As this table reveals, even with the impressive influence of racial resentment, the effect of racial sympathy on opposition to punishing the black graffiti artist remains. Otherwise put, when racially sympathetic whites encounter narratives that blame black Americans for their group's suffering, this cue does not extinguish the role of sympathy in their political decision-making. Indeed, perhaps because these whites *possess* racial sympathy instead of

merely lacking prejudice, they resist the influence of cues that might make other members of their group respond with harsh punitive consequences.

Taken together, the results in Table 5.6 suggest that based on their level of racial sympathy, whites differ sharply in their response to attribution for this misfortune. Whereas other studies have focused on the priming of resentment, the second column of Table 5.6 demonstrates that, in some cases, the effects of this pernicious attitude might be absorbed by the activation of racial sympathy.

The Attribution Experiment: Discussion

As with the preceding experiments, the *Attribution Experiment* provided us with more clarity on the racially sympathetic while also generating new questions. First, some clarity. The *Attribution Experiment* gives us a sense of the strength of racial sympathy. Even when black misfortune is paired with a narrative that suggests that blacks may be responsible for their group's suffering, racial sympathy remains powerfully associated with "pro-Black" opinion. Furthermore, even in these cases, the activation of racial sympathy is robust to models that consider the activation of other attitudes, notably racial resentment.

I initially expected the white culprit condition to activate sympathy, given the prominent role that white discriminatory behavior has played in instances of black suffering. It seems instead, that viewing the black culprit paired with black suffering increased the salience of racial sympathy on opposition of the punishment. When the culprit is black, racially sympathetic whites move to shield this person from the criminal justice system, perhaps because it has been perceived to be so discriminatory toward African Americans.

Next, the new questions. Although the results in Table 5.6 suggest that the most sympathetic whites do not hesitate to punish a member of their own group, other research has found that many white Americans do not like to hear about the discriminatory behavior of their co-ethnics. For example, in a study conducted in 2000, Harvey and Oswald showed white college students a video of black children being mistreated by white police officers. The researchers found that, after viewing the video, students were significantly less likely to support programs that benefited black students at their own university. Anecdotally, politicians like former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani have attempted to highlight the role of “black-on-black” crime.⁶⁹ By using this phrase, Giuliani denies the presence and culpability of white Americans in promoting a racialized criminal justice system, in which blacks disproportionately suffer.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that resentment and sympathy are theoretically and empirically distinct attitudes, making it possible for some whites to carry both resentment and sympathy. The results featured in Table 5.6 of the *Attribution Experiment* suggest that to the extent that some whites have mixed racial attitudes, racial sympathy can, in some cases, resist the simultaneous activation of resentment in these scenarios. Based on Table 5.6, it seems like those whites at the highest levels of racial sympathy would reject Giuliani’s arguments, however, it is important to consider whether emotionally charged pleas or vivid imagery might alter these results outside of this sterile experimental setting.

⁶⁹ <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/giuliani-blacks-crime-problem-dallas-police-rap-music-chicago/>

Conclusion

The experiments presented in this chapter illustrate and clarify the activation of racial sympathy in American politics. Collectively, they illustrate its breadth and strength. The *Race Experiments* suggest that by emphasizing a policy's racial dimensions, that is, by drawing attention to the black population it serves, elites can increase the salience of racial sympathy on public opinion. While the results of the *Race Experiment* provide evidence of the sympathy's activation, they do not tell us whether merely viewing African Americans in any context is sufficient to activate racial sympathy. Why do racially sympathetic whites feel the way they do about black suffering? And how responsive and durable is the activation of racial sympathy?

The *Intensity* and *Attribution* experiments are intended to provide suggestive answers to these questions. And while the different samples, designs, and dimensions of these two sets of studies make it inappropriate to formally compare them to each other, the charts presented in Figure 5.3 suggest that the manipulations in the *Attribution* experiment produced substantively different outcomes depending on the identity of the culprit. In contrast, in the *Intensity* experiments, I found that those whites high in racial sympathy were supportive of the heating policy regardless of the severity of black suffering. In addition to the variables I examined earlier in the chapter, Figure 5.3 also displays results related to two other related variables in the *Intensity* and *Attribution Experiments*. The chart in the top right corner of the Figure presents the results for a variable that asks respondents to rate the importance of the HEAP program and the chart in the bottom right corner displays the results for a variable that allows respondents to indicate how much the graffiti artist should be fined for his offense. Based on these four charts, it seems that

racial sympathy responds to a range of different scenarios. Further and importantly, in some cases, its influence does not recede in circumstances that might cue resentment.

In sum, across policy area, experiments, and surveys, racial sympathy demonstrates a consistent and significant influence on implicitly and explicitly racialized policies. Notably, it provides explanatory power above conventional measures of racial attitudes and, unlike broad concepts like egalitarianism, demonstrates strongest relevance in the domain of race. The power of racial sympathy is robust to various model specifications, samples, and time periods. If racial attitudes writ large remain an important component of American public opinion, then it will behoove researchers going forward to understand racial sympathy and its powerful consequences.

Table 5.1: The Conditional Effect of Racial Sympathy on Public Policy

VARIABLES	Business Subsidy	Scholarships	Schools
Black Beneficiary = 1	-0.37*** (0.070)	-0.37*** (0.077)	-0.14* (0.081)
Racial Sympathy	0.11 (0.079)	0.29*** (0.083)	0.45*** (0.092)
Black Beneficiary x Racial Sympathy	0.30*** (0.105)	0.25** (0.113)	0.06 (0.120)
Constant	0.53*** (0.056)	0.50*** (0.059)	0.33*** (0.064)
Observations	751	751	751
R-squared	0.158	0.199	0.153

Source: 2013 CCES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. These results are robust to models that include control variables, including: racial resentment, party identification, limited government, education, income, gender, region and church attendance. However, since not all scholars agree this is an optimal approach, I present the bivariate results here (see Mutz 2015 and Morton & Williams 2010).

Table 5.2: Racial Resentment and Policy Beneficiary, Experimental Results

	Black Businesses	Black Schools	Black Scholarship
Black Condition = 1	-0.34*** (0.037)	-0.14*** (0.040)	-0.31*** (0.045)
Racial Resentment	-0.13* (0.065)	-0.52*** (0.059)	-0.33*** (0.070)
Black Condition x Racial Resentment	-0.47*** (0.078)	-0.13* (0.078)	-0.32*** (0.086)
Constant	0.55*** (0.031)	0.42*** (0.031)	0.56*** (0.037)
Observations	751	751	751
R-squared	0.272	0.277	0.292

Source: 2013 CCES

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about policy opinion. These results are robust to models that include control variables, including: racial resentment, party identification, limited government, education, income, gender, region and church attendance. However, since not all scholars agree this is an optimal approach, I present the bivariate results here (see Mutz 2015 and Morton & Williams 2010).

**Table 5.3: Experimental Conditions, Intensity Experiment
SSI 2015**

	Black Low Suffering	Black High Suffering	White High Suffering
Heating	Gregory Temple (black man) facing 80F temperatures with only a portable fan and broken air conditioner.	Gregory Temple (black man) facing 100F temperatures with no fans or air conditioning.	Gregory Temple (white man) facing 100F temperatures with no fans or air conditioning.

Table 5.4: The Conditional Effect of Racial Sympathy on Heating Policy

	Intensity Experiment: HEAP Funding
Black Condition=1	-0.35* (0.19)
Racial Sympathy	0.08 (0.28)
Black Condition x Racial Sympathy	0.57* (0.31)
Constant	0.90*** (0.23)
Observations	135

Source: 2015 SSI Study

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about increased funding for a heating assistance program. These results are robust to models that include control variables, including: racial resentment, party identification, limited government, education, income, gender, region and church attendance. However, since not all scholars agree this is an optimal approach, I present the bivariate results here (see Mutz 2015 and Morton & Williams 2010).

Table 5.5: Racial Sympathy and Racial Suffering

	Intensity Experiment 1: HEAP Funding
High Black Suffering=1	-0.03 (0.14)
Racial Sympathy	0.30 (0.21)
High Black Suffering x Racial Sympathy	0.25 (0.25)
Constant	0.77*** (0.23)
Observations	135

Source: 2015 SSI Study

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only.

Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about increased funding for a heating assistance program. These results are robust to models that include control variables, including: racial resentment, party identification, limited government, education, income, gender, region and church attendance. However, since not all scholars agree this is an optimal approach, I present the bivariate results here (see Mutz 2015 and Morton & Williams 2010).

Table 5.6: Racial Sympathy and Attribution

	Model 1 Graffiti Punishment (1=harsher punishment)	Model 2 Graffiti Punishment (1=harsher punishment)
Black Culprit =1	0.23** (.11)	0.00 0.22
Racial Sympathy	0.22* (.13)	0.24* (.14)
Black Culprit x Racial Sympathy	-0.63*** (.17)	-0.48** (.20)
Racial Resentment		.03 (.14)
Black Culprit x Racial Resentment		0.26 (0.22)
Constant	0.64*** (.09)	0.61 (.14)
N	288	288

Source: YouGov 2016 Study

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. White respondents only; analyses are weighted for national representativeness. Cell entries are ordinary least squares regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The column headings display the dependent variables, which are questions about punishing the culprit of the graffiti artist. These results are robust to models that include control variables, including: racial resentment, party identification, limited government, education, income, gender, region and church attendance. However, since not all scholars agree this is an optimal approach, I present the bivariate results here (see Mutz 2015 and Morton & Williams 2010)

Figure 5.1: Race Experiment Results, 2013 CCES

Figure 2a: Business Subsidies

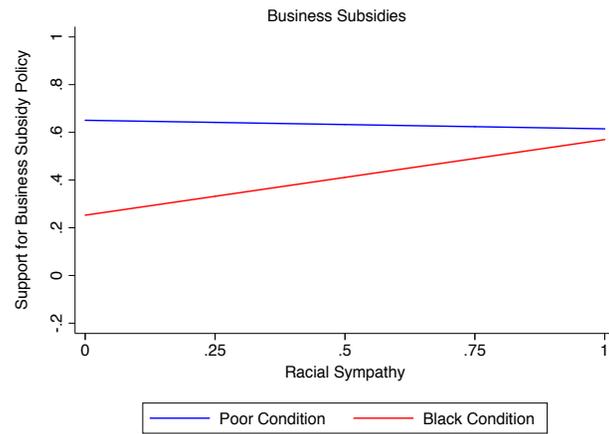


Figure 2b: Scholarships

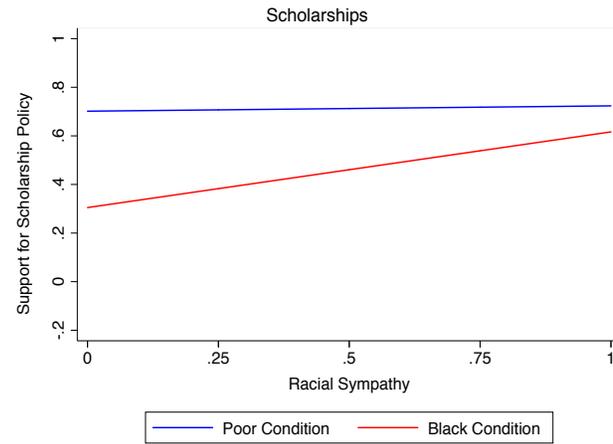


Figure 2c: Schools

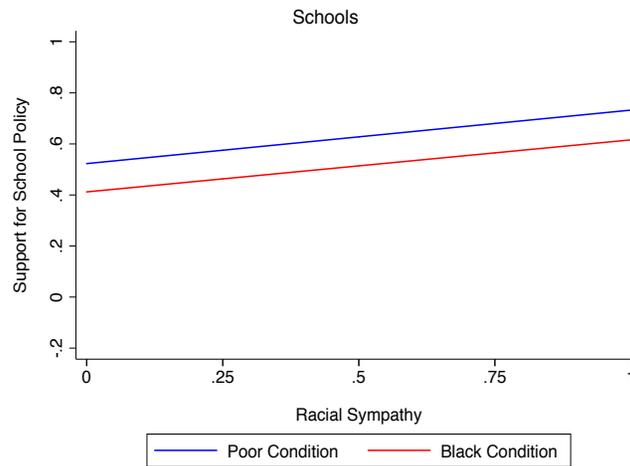
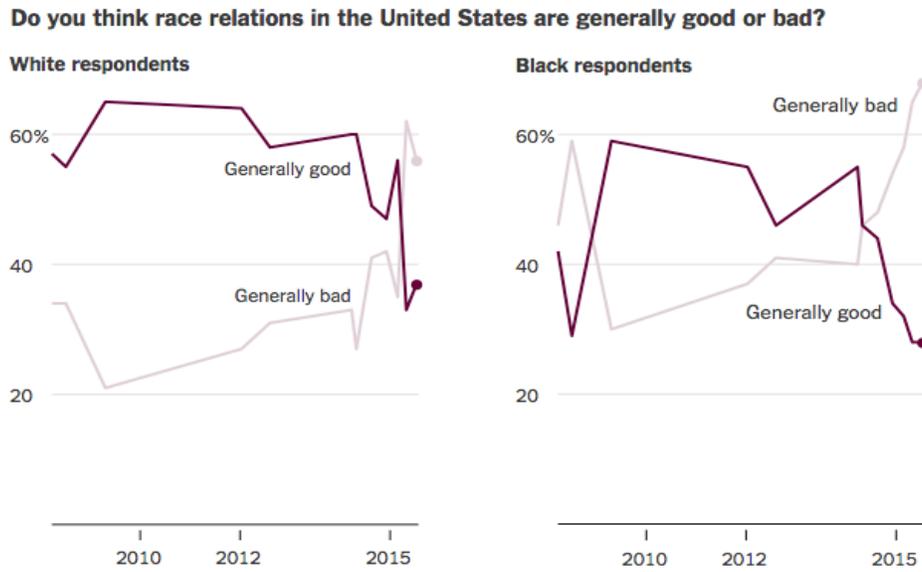


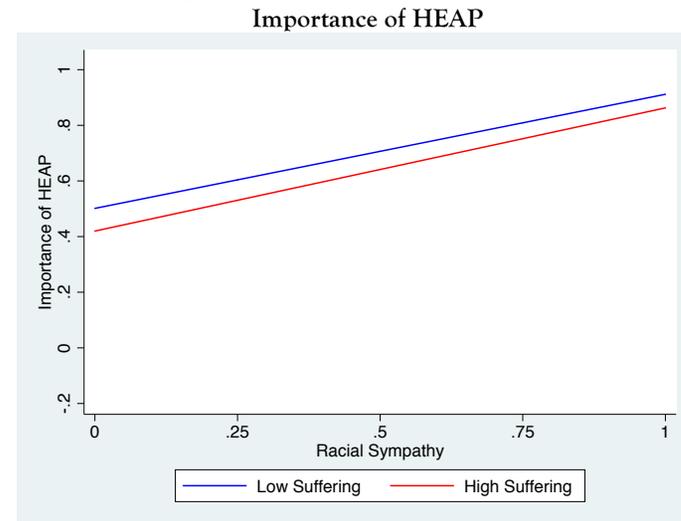
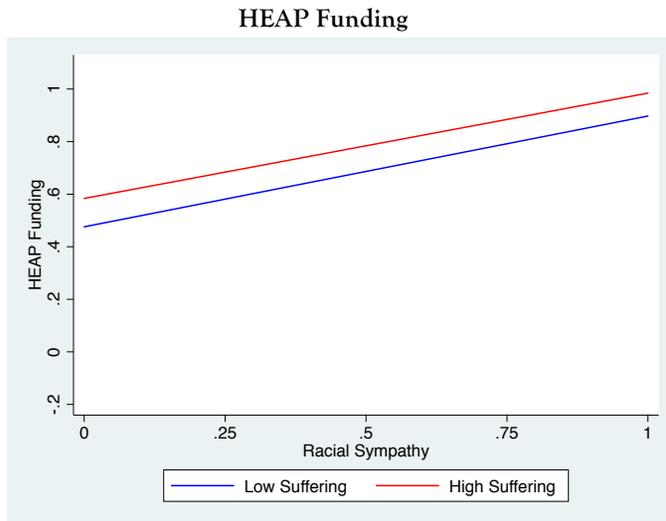
Figure 5.2: White and Black Americans' Views of Race Relations Post-Obama



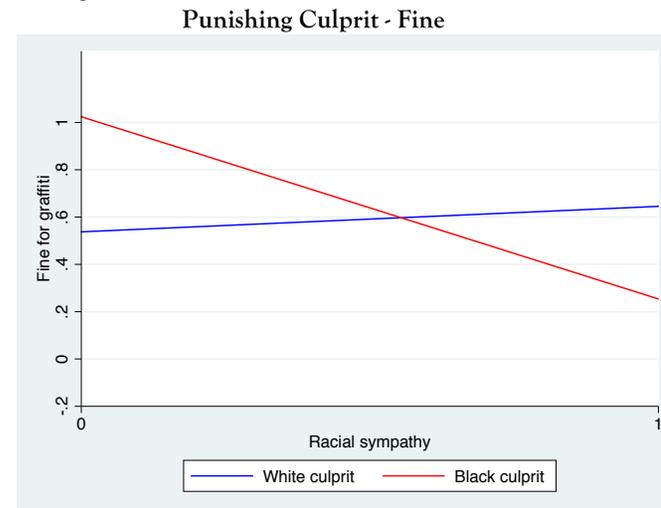
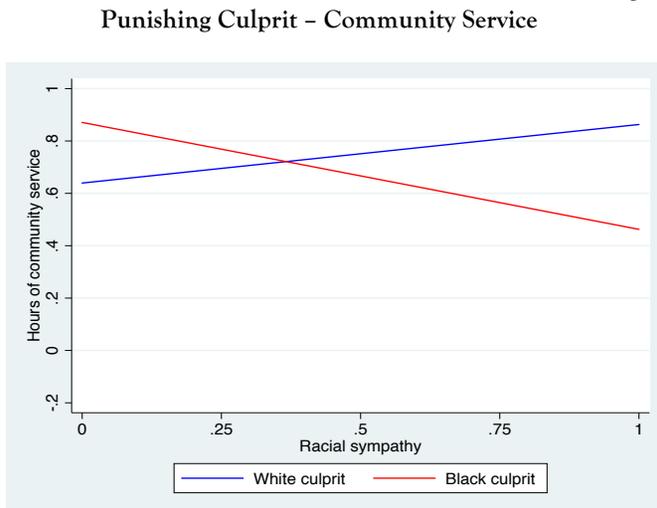
Source: New York Times/CBS Poll, June 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/23/us/race-relations-in-america-poll.html>

Figure 5.3: Intensity and Attribution Experiments
 Intensity Experiment: High versus Low Black Suffering, SSI 2015



Attribution Experiment: White versus Black Culprit, YouGov 2016



Appendix: Chapter 5 - Figures

The Intensity Experiment

Figure A5.1: White High Intensity Suffering Condition

HEAP offers relief for low-income people

by Alex Busch for The Grove City Record



GROVE CITY, OHIO: Gregory Temple says he has been coping with the heat by eating ice cream and drinking water. What he and his wife need is a air conditioner.

With temperatures projected to soar into the 100s next week, Temple is worried that open windows and a fan will not keep his wife and him cool during the upcoming heat wave. The Temples' limited income prevents them from buying an air conditioner.

"My wife and I sleep in the living room with a fan that we bought five years ago. Even with it on, we mostly get hot air," the retired bus driver said. "My wife wakes up in the middle of the night, panicked that she's going to have another stroke," Temple said, fighting back tears. To keep cool, Temple sleeps on a recliner, covering his face and legs in wet towels. His wife sleeps on the floor with the couple's single fan blowing on her face.

Temple will receive an air conditioner and have his electric bill paid for by the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). HEAP offers free window air conditioning units and up to \$300 in bill payment to qualified low income residents, like the Temples. The Centers for Disease and Prevention report the elderly are more prone to heat stroke because many take medicine that impairs the body's ability to regulate temperature.

The federal government pays for the program; the Ohio Department of Development runs it. The program began May 1 and since then program director Collette Harrell says they've given away 1700 air conditioning units and covered electricity costs for 300 Ohio families. As the winter months approach, the program will also be assisting with heating costs.

Harrell says residents are very appreciative of the program.

"We do see a lot of families come in. They've been sweltering. They've all been in one room trying to keep cool so we've seen people just be really appreciative of what we can do for them," she said.

BELOW: Grove City resident, Gregory Temple, talks about the upcoming heat wave



"My wife wakes up in the middle of the night, panicked that she's going to have another stroke" - Gregory Temple

Figure A5.2: Black High Intensity Suffering Condition

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HEAP offers relief for low-income people

by Alex Busch for The Grove City Record



GROVE CITY, OHIO: Gregory Temple says he has been coping with the heat by eating ice cream and drinking water. What he and his wife need is a air conditioner.

With temperatures projected to soar into the 100s next week, Temple is worried that open windows and a fan will not keep his wife and him cool during the upcoming heat wave. The Temples' limited income prevents them from buying an air conditioner.

"My wife and I sleep in the living room with a fan that we bought five years ago. Even with it on, we mostly get hot air," the retired bus driver said. "My wife wakes up in the middle of the night, panicked that she's going to have another stroke," Temple said, fighting back tears. To keep cool, Temple sleeps on a recliner, covering his face and legs in wet towels. His wife sleeps on the floor with the couple's single fan blowing on her face.

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BELOW: Grove City resident, Gregory Temple, talks about the upcoming heat wave



"My wife wakes up in the middle of the night, panicked that she's going to have another stroke" - Gregory Temple

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Figure A5.3: Black Low Intensity Suffering Condition

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HEAP offers relief for low-income people

by Alex Busch for The Grove City Record



GROVE CITY, OHIO: Gregory Temple says he has been coping with the heat by eating ice cream and drinking water. What he and his wife need is a new air conditioner.

With temperatures projected to climb into the mid-80s next week, Temple is worried that his air conditioner, initially purchased in 2010, will not keep his wife and him cool during the upcoming heat wave. The Temples' limited income prevents them from buying a replacement unit.

"My wife and I sleep in our bedroom with the air conditioner up all the way. Even with it on, we sometimes get hot air," the retired bus driver said. "The air conditioner just thumps when the air compressor kicks in and kicks out and it sounds like a freight train, but you get used to it," Temple said, chuckling.

Temple will receive an air conditioner and have his electric bill paid for by the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). HEAP offers free window air conditioning units and up to \$300 in bill payment to qualified low income residents, like the Temples.

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BELOW: Grove City resident, Gregory Temple, talks about the upcoming heat wave



"The air conditioner just thumps when the air compressor kicks in and kicks out and it sounds like a freight train, but you get used to it"- Gregory Temple

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1. *Attribution Experiments*

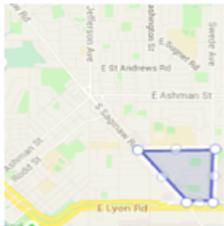
Figure A5.4: Attribution: White Culprit Condition

Neighborhood Profile



Smith Hill is one of Midway's oldest black neighborhoods. Offering a mix of commercial and residential space, the neighborhood is conveniently located near the cross county expressway and Hutchkind Park.

SMITH HILL



Gavin Tannis

NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME BLOTTER

For the week of June 19

Residents recently reported large amounts of spray painted graffiti on neighborhood properties including a historic black church.

Gavin Tannis (left) turned himself into the police and was arrested for one count of criminal mischief in association with the graffiti.

Tannis admitted to defacing the neighborhood's historic landmarks.

Smith Hill Key Facts:



Population	4,920 residents	Race & Ethnicity	84% Black 10% White 6% Other
Housing	92% occupancy rate 49% owner-occupancy rate	Crime	Neighborhood Crime Rate: 60/100 National Crime Rate: 41/100
Income	Neighborhood household income: \$34,241 National household income: \$51,939	Education	Smith Hill's test scores are 31% lower than the state average

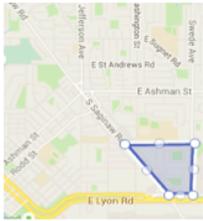
Figure A5.5: Attribution: Black Culprit Condition

Neighborhood Profile



SMITH HILL

Smith Hill is one of Midway's oldest black neighborhoods. Offering a mix of commercial and residential space, the neighborhood is conveniently located near the cross county expressway and Hutchkind Park.








Gavin Tannis

NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME BLOTTER

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Appendix: Chapter 5 – Survey Items

1. 2015 SSI Study Dependent Variables:

HEAP Fund: Next, we'll ask you a few questions about the article and some current events. As you may know, HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) is a federally funded program that assists low-income individuals with the cost of heating and cooling their homes. Do you support, oppose, neither support or oppose increasing the funding of this program? [answer options: support, oppose, neither support nor oppose branched to options that provided subjects an opportunity to indicate whether they “strongly” or “not strongly” supported/opposed increasing the funding for this program)

HEAP Importance: With the United States bracing for record levels of cold and snow this winter, how important is the funding of HEAP to you? [Very important, important, Somewhat important, not at all important]

2. 2016 YouGov Study Dependent Variables:

Community Service: How many hours of community service should the graffiti artist serve in punishment for this offense? Typically, the maximum amount of community service for this type of offense is 70 hours.

0-10 hours

11-20 hours

21-30 hours

31-40 hours

41-50 hours

51-60 hours

61-70 hours

over 70 hours

Paying a fine: Fines for graffiti typically range from \$1,000-\$5,000 depending on the amount of property damaged. What amount of fine would you assign to the graffiti artist?

\$0-999

\$1,000-\$1,999

\$2,000-\$2,999

\$3,000-\$3,999

\$4,000-\$4,999

\$5,000+

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Most current theories of pro-black behavior among whites emerge from bodies of research designed to delineate the components of negative behavior. Hence, I have found that their accounts of racial sympathy, while heading in promising directions, to be limited at the outset by the purpose of their inquiry. Put another way, the conceptual framework they offer, the measures they test, even the survey instruments they use are all informed by an effort to examine individuals like *The Authoritarian Personality's* Mack, those who are high in racial resentment, racial conservatism, or anti-black affect. These tools, I argue, are not sufficient to uncover the complexity and consequences of white attitudes that seeks to elevate blacks.

Racial sympathy is not the mere absence of contemporary manifestations of prejudice. Instead, racial sympathy is a unique attitude requiring its own theory and measurement. In Chapter 2, I provide an overview of the racial attitudes literature and highlight the conspicuous absence of this understudied attitude. Political science research has unearthed racially sympathetic outcomes on a few notable occasions and yet, since the field has relied so heavily on prejudice, scholars have not had the conceptual tools to understand why some whites might be motivated to support policies or politicians that could further black interests.

To address this omission, I introduce a theory of racial sympathy, defined as white distress over black suffering, and draw on research from a number of fields to speculate on its origins. Just as racial sympathy requires its own dedicated theorizing, it also requires its own measurement. The

third chapter of the dissertation takes up this task. Using exploratory research I conducted during a series of passive participant observation sessions, I discuss my efforts to compose an original measure of racial sympathy. Passive participant observation is when the researcher observes subjects, in this case, sympathetic whites participating in a series of community discussions on race, to gain insight into the research population (see Schwartz & Schwartz 1955). This qualitative research was instrumental in the development of the racial sympathy index, the primary measure of sympathy used throughout this dissertation. In Chapter 3, I begin to examine the validity of the racial sympathy measure by examining the index' convergent validity.

In Chapter 4, I employ this original measure of racial sympathy to assess the relationship between sympathy and public opinion through analyses of observational data. The research in this chapter demonstrates that this overlooked attitude is significantly associated with opinion on a host of racialized policies, while accounting for measures of prejudice, such as racial resentment. Furthermore, I find that racial sympathy is distinct from broader value orientations such as egalitarianism and humanitarianism. The final part of the chapter examines the precision of racial sympathy by exploring the discriminant validity of the concept; in doing so, I observe that racial sympathy is not equivalent to a general social sympathy, as it does not predict support for policies that serve other marginalized groups. Across four national data sets and using two different measures of racial sympathy, I consistently find that racial sympathy matters most for policy areas that involve African Americans.

Chapter 5 presents a series of experiments designed to investigate sympathy's activation. I begin the chapter with a review of the racial attitudes activation literature. I then present three experiments, each conducted on a national sample, which attempt to examine the breadth and

strength of sympathy's activation. The first study, the *Race Experiment*, explores a claim made in Chapter 4, which is that if a policy becomes associated with race, it is likely impacted by racial sympathy. In two out of three policy areas, I find support for this claim.

The remaining experiments in Chapter 5 – the *Intensity Experiment* and the *Attribution Experiment* – both explore conditions under which sympathy could be activated. In doing so, they examine whether certain dimensions of black misfortune are especially salient to racially sympathetic whites. The *Intensity Experiment* finds that sympathetic whites respond to black suffering whether it is viewed to be severe or merely an inconvenience. The *Attribution Experiment* considers how cues that vary responsibility for blacks' misfortune influence the impact of racial sympathy on outcomes. Here I find that racially sympathetic whites do not hesitate to punish a white person who contributes to black suffering, but are significantly less likely to inflict a harsh punishment on a black person who commits an identical offense. Importantly, the activation of sympathy in the *Intensity Experiment* withstands the simultaneous activation of racial resentment.

Previous work on racial attitudes has had difficulty accounting for the nature of racial sympathy, delineating its preconditions, identifying its subscribers, or fully understanding its political implications. By using multiple methods, data sets, and measures to trace the political influence of an understudied, but influential, racial attitude, my dissertation attempts to address this omission. In doing so, this project provides additional evidence of race's role in politics but also complicates our understanding of what exactly its role might be.

My argument that racial sympathy can motivate whites to express support for African Americans does not imply that efforts to activate racial sympathy will always be successful. In an experiment conducted by Harvey and colleagues (2000), attempts to emphasize black suffering

backfired, instead increasing white *opposition* to programs intended to benefit African Americans. Similarly, in an experiment by Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006), the authors emphasized subjects' awareness of their own in-group's culpability in mass killings of an out-group. When they did so, in-group members were more inclined to dehumanize the out-group. Future research should take up how sympathy over black misfortune responds to circumstances that threaten whites' positive group identity. These projects should consider the extent to which racial sympathy is rooted in whites' feelings about their own group members.

Relatedly, research in social psychology has found that stereotype threat, defined as the threat that "others' judgments or their own actions will negatively stereotype them in a given domain" (Steele 1997 613), depresses the academic performance of women and African Americans. Although stereotype threat has often been studied in the context of marginalized groups, research by Stone and Lynch (1999) and Aronson and colleagues (1999) suggests that white men can be impacted by stereotype threat, inhibiting their performance in athletics and academics. Research on stereotype threat in politics is just beginning to emerge,⁷⁰ however the results in Chapter 5, which suggest that racially sympathetic whites were slightly more inclined to punish their own group members than they were African Americans, suggest that some whites are especially likely to condemn discriminatory behavior of their fellow in-group members. If that is the case, then, racial sympathy might be thought to implicate feelings about *us* just as it implicates those about *them*.

With respect to out-group attitudes, this project is an important first step toward broadening our understanding of attitudes toward marginalized groups more generally. Recent

⁷⁰ Though see McGlone and colleagues' article on "Stereotype Threat and the Gender Gap in Political Knowledge" (2006).

research in political science on empathy (Feldman et al. 2015), guilt (Chudy, Piston & Shipper 2016), and stereotype content (Sides & Gross 2013) reveal a wide range of effects of group attitudes besides the uni-dimensional “like or dislike” account that dominates much of contemporary scholarship. In addition to considering the role of sympathy, future work could take up the role of concepts like pride, disgust, or pity.

Throughout this dissertation, I have occasionally characterized sympathy as a “positive” racial attitude. I made this designation to contrast sympathy from the negative racial attitude of prejudice. However, it is possible that sympathetic whites may also exhibit attitudes that might not be wholly benevolent toward African Americans. For example, Baker (2015) writes about racial paternalism, which he defines as “a person’s belief that, to be protected from its own lax moral discipline or inability to act, a particular race of people is in need of such interference from one’s inherently superior ingroup” (97). Baker has argued that racial paternalism leads some white Americans to be especially supportive of foreign aid when it targets Africans. While he suggests that his work may have domestic application, he does not explore this possibility. Based on the analyses in Chapter 3 and 4, it seems unlikely that racial sympathy is equivalent to racial paternalism; participants in the qualitative listening sessions did express a desire to rescue African Americans. The validation analyses also suggest that many racially sympathetic whites believe that African Americans are hardworking, contradicting the paternalist’s belief in “lax moral discipline or inability to act.” Additionally, as I will discuss shortly, if racial sympathy were to motivate behaviors like electing black politicians, it is not clear why this would appeal to a paternalist who seeks “interference” from the in-group. Still, it is important to consider how paternalism and sympathy might relate or coexist in domestic politics.

Relatedly, work by scholars of gender has found that some men subscribe to “benevolent sexist” attitudes, defined as “a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver) and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as pro-social (e.g., helping) or intimacy-seeking (e.g., self-disclosure” (Glick & Fiske 1996 491). Again, the analyses presented in this dissertation suggest that racially sympathetic whites are mixed with respect to negative stereotypes; they neither fully reject nor fully endorse them. Nonetheless, it is important to investigate the many roots of racial sympathy. Are sympathetic whites especially inclined to attach and employ *positive* stereotypes of African Americans? Do they associate African Americans with certain (inferior) domains or roles? For example, it is possible that a “benevolent racist” could exhibit warmth toward African Americans, but this warmth is derived from limited positive stereotypes of the group, such as athleticism (Judd et al 1995). More generally, does African Americans’ persistent economic and social disadvantage make it easier for whites to feel less threatened and therefore more sympathetic?

On the topic of gender, future work could also consider how these attitudes map onto intersectional identities. For example, recent work by McConaughy and White (2011) suggests that white prejudice toward blacks is not monolithic; instead, the intersection of race and gender identities structure whites’ stereotypes about African Americans such that white Americans view black men in “uniquely pejorative terms” (4). Are certain subgroups of African Americans more likely to be viewed sympathetically? Are black children or elderly black people viewed with more sympathy than black adults? What about black members of the LGBTQ community? If sympathetic whites view distinctions among these groups, what are the political consequences?

This project contributed to a rich research tradition that has focused on white attitudes of African Americans. However, it is also important to consider the implications of this dissertation as they relate to other racial and ethnic minority groups. As the United States becomes more demographically complex and diverse, how and when will whites support those with whom they do not share an ethnic background? The discriminant validity analysis in Chapter 4 suggests that the racial sympathy index is not significantly correlated with support for immigration policies. This result is consistent with the theory of racial sympathy and the conceptualization of the measure, which was designed to reflect white sympathy over black suffering in particular.

That said, the gender sympathy results, displayed in Table 4.9, demonstrate that other group-specific vignettes can predict support for group-specific policies, in this case women. Examining sympathy toward other racial and ethnic groups, such as Latino and Asian Americans, requires theories and measurements that are specific to white perceptions of those groups, which may involve concepts like nativism and foreignness (see Aoki 1996). Studying Native Americans might include references to displacement, insensitivity with respect to sports mascots, sovereignty, and forced cultural assimilation (see Doble and Yarrow 2007). Therefore, while the vignette approach could be used to study sympathy toward other racial groups, the vignettes themselves would need to present instances of discrimination applicable to those groups.

Previous research suggests that, relative to African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans are subject to less negative prejudice (Bobo & Zubrinsky, 1996, Smith and Dempsey 1983, Wilson 1996). Other research suggests that these groups may also be associated with positive stereotypes as well, such as being family oriented and respecting of tradition (Fairchild & Cozens 1981). For these reasons, responses to Latino or Asian American discrimination may contain

multiple elements in addition to distress over suffering.

Future scholarship should also consider whether and how white racial sympathy might influence non-white opinion. Following the instances of police brutality brought to national attention in 2014 and 2015, some white political elites have highlighted racial inequality and called for reforms to policing. What are the consequences of this rhetoric on black opinion? Do black citizens view these sympathetic racial appeals as genuine? As the Democratic Party becomes less white, white Democrats may be increasingly expected to address issues related to race and ethnicity. Assuming they do so, how will their efforts be received by non-whites?

The first work on prejudice and politics examined whites' attitudes on public policies; similarly, I attempted to examine a diverse range of public policies throughout the dissertation. But what is the influence of racial sympathy on other political outcomes, like evaluations of black candidates? Previous research has found that voters evaluate candidates based, in part, on their attitudes toward social groups that the candidates are thought to represent. As Kinder and Dale-Riddle (2012) write, "when a candidate is seen as standing for or against a certain social group, voters will be attracted or driven away, depending on their attitude toward the group in question" (23). Sympathy, then, has the potential to motivate some whites to support black candidates: either because black candidates are perceived to embody racial progress that might eradicate black suffering (Tesler & Sears 2010) or because their policy agendas are thought to favor black communities (Hajnal 2001). In either case, supporting a black candidate provides sympathetic whites with an avenue to support the political advancement of African Americans. Further research could investigate how and when sympathy maps onto support for black candidates.

It might be also useful to investigate whether racial sympathy motivates more costly forms of political behavior, such as donations, volunteering or protests. Some white Americans have recently participated in the Black Lives Matter movement,⁷¹ joining protests and organizing groups intended to “fight for racial justice.”⁷² But there have been questions about the depths of their commitment.⁷³ When race is less prevalent in the national discourse, it is not clear whether those whites that protest high-profile incidents of police brutality or sign an online petition will carry a sustained interest in improving racial inequality.

This dissertation examined the contemporary political landscape, in which supporting affirmative action or voting for a black candidate could be considered a “pro-black” outcome. However, there is a broader history of racial sympathy to contemplate. Prior to the Reconstruction Act of 1867-1868, black Americans were barred from running for political office and only in recent years have they run in jurisdictions with a substantial number of white constituents (Cohen 2010, Hajnal 2007). Since the founding of the Republic, however, there have been multiple policies that implicitly or explicitly implicated blacks, with whites lining up in opposition and support. In the early 1830s, for example, abolitionist ideas became increasingly prominent among whites in Northern churches and politics, contributing to a regional animosity between North and South in the lead up to the Civil War (Castiglia 2002). Following the Civil War, the Populist Party started an agrarian movement on a platform that merged the common economic interests of poor African Americans and white farmers against the white Democratic Party elite in the South (Woodward 1938). Decades later, white college students traveled from their Northern college campuses to areas of rural Mississippi, putting their lives at risk, to register black voters during

⁷¹ For a discussion of their role, see: <http://thegrio.com/2016/10/25/white-allies-black-lives-matter/>

⁷² For example: <http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/about>

⁷³ See: <http://fusion.net/story/329680/black-lives-matter-white-allies/>

Freedom Summer of 1964 (McAdam 1990).

Each of these events has had a dramatic influence on the trajectory of American politics. And yet, at present, political scientists cannot use existing theories of racial attitudes to understand why large numbers of whites participated in the Abolitionist Movement or walked alongside blacks during the Great March on Washington. Since landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s outlawed discrimination, the political outlets of racial sympathy have changed. My dissertation is set in the present day and examines how racial sympathy influences whites' evaluations of policies perceived to benefit blacks in contemporary politics. However, the presence of racial sympathy throughout American history is longstanding and my dissertation is, in some ways, a portrait of its latest manifestation. When we look back on the occasions in which sympathy has been especially potent, what do these events have in common? What social and institutional forces encourage sympathy? The answers to these questions would provide additional insight on the broader social forces that shape racial sympathy. Exploring these questions could also provide clues about when we might expect sympathy for marginalized groups to emerge in other countries.

Indeed, work on reconciliation in post-Holocaust Germany (Olick & Levy 1997) and post-Apartheid South Africa (Gibson & Gouws 1999), for example, has found that in-groups can deliver restitution to mistreated out-groups, suggesting that legacies of suffering can map onto contemporary political preference. When, why and how group-based sympathy will surface likely depends on a number of circumstances, such as the extent and nature of the out-group's oppression, whether other countries have reprimanded the in-group's actions, patterns of migration and geography, and other historical and country-specific factors. Generally, these results defy conventional economic theory, in which individuals are assumed to maximize benefits for

themselves and their in-groups (Downs 1957; Akerlof & Kranton 2000).

Outside of politics, little is known about whites that elect to live in nonwhite neighborhoods or work on behalf of disadvantaged groups. What psychological and environmental factors lead to these outcomes? Can they be grown or promoted? This dissertation provides theoretical and empirical guidance for any work that seeks to uncover the complexity of intergroup relations across social settings. It presents encouraging evidence that these are fruitful inquiries waiting to be undertaken.

Overall, then, the dissertation builds on a vast, but ultimately narrow, group attitudes literature. Indeed, by concentrating on animus, social scientists have developed only a partial understanding of how racial attitudes affect outcomes. As Krysan (2000) observes, “sociologists are almost always more interested in those individuals... that create some social problem...we focus almost all our efforts on understanding conservative racial policy attitudes” (160). My work does not dismiss the influence of racial antipathy but rather adds an original dimension to our understanding of racial attitudes. By including racial sympathy in future studies, scholars can gain insight into the many and distinct ways in which attitudes about race influence politics in America.

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