

The Contours of White Identity in the United States

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Abstract

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This dissertation asks how we should conceptualize white identity in the United States. I examine how we should measure white identity and assess the characteristics of white identity, primarily the robustness and durability of white identification. Taken together, the four papers offer two conclusions. First, traditional measures of white identity underemphasize the relationship between political preferences and white identification. I argue that we should instead characterize white identity in terms of adherence to white racial norms. Second, as opposed to narratives that portray white identity as reactionary, I find that white identity is remarkably durable in the face of both positive and negative information about whiteness.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

From the election of Donald Trump to the attempted coup at the nation's Capitol on January 6, 2021, many political commentators attribute contemporary politics in the United States, and specifically political action among whites, to a collective strengthening of white identity (Jardina 2019). Scholars question the extent to which whiteness has turned from a meaningless, invisible identity to one that acts as a call to collective action among whites. New literature in political science has emphasized the connection between strong white identification and pro-white political preferences (Jardina 2019).

How do we measure this white identity? How should we expect white identification to manifest in a changing political environment where whites face the loss of demographic primacy and other challenges to their identity?

In the subsequent four chapters, I examine the unrealized contours of white identity in the United States. In Chapter Two, I create a nuanced measure of white identity that emphasizes the importance of white racial norms such as colorblindness and ingroup favoritism over explicit claims of white identity. In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I explore how the racial threat-backlash relationship among whites is not as strong as has previously been emphasized. In Chapter Three, I challenge the conventional threat-ingroup favoritism connection. Although traditional theories of social identity hold that perceptions of threat to whites' position in the racial hierarchy are associated with greater ingroup favoritism and increased outgroup animosity, I find that greater perceptions of threat are associated with decreased attachments to whites' ingroup. In Chapter Four, I replicate two papers on group status threats and political/racial conservatism and find no association between information about demographic change and whites' political or racial attitudes. In Chapter Five, I conduct a series of studies exposing whites to positive and negative information about white identity and find that white identity is stable in the face of any new information. I

conclude by discussing what these studies contribute to the study of white identity and our broader understanding of racial politics in the United States.

The premise of this dissertation is that the American politics literature overemphasizes the relationship between explicit claims of white identity, racial threat, and ingroup favoritism. I argue that we should instead focus on subtler forms of white identity, such as adherence to racial norms. I do not challenge the contention that being white is important to many white Americans. Rather, I find that explicit claims of white identity are but one limited aspect of whiteness in the United States.

Most work on white identity politics argues that attachments to whiteness change with exposure to information that threatens whites' status in the racial hierarchy (Jardina 2019). However, few papers test this causally by experimentally inducing group status threats. When I conducted six survey experiments, I found that white identity is remarkably durable in response to information that brings either positive or negative associations with white identity. In other words, we may be overstating the extent to which white identity is a reactionary identity in contemporary politics.

1.1 Why Should We Care about White Identification?

The field of race, ethnicity, and politics has for decades grappled with the understanding of how individuals of any race translate identity into politics. In the Latino politics literature, scholars study the way that Latinos move from a national origin identity to a panethnic Latino identity that bears on their political preferences and participation (Lee 2008; Barreto and Pedraza 2009; Masuoka 2007; White 2016). In the Black politics literature, scholars have long grappled with what drives the exceptionally high rates of group consciousness among Black Americans and have sought to understand how that sense of group identification translates into cohesive political action (Dawson 1995). In other words, scholars of racial identity are greatly concerned with what Lee (2008) calls the "identity-to-politics" link, or why some identities bear on one's decision to participate politically, while others do not. Scholars of white identity such as Jardina (2019) have argued that white identity has also become a politicized identity and that a significant proportion of whites

bring their white identity to bear on their political preferences.

One way to understand whether white identity has become politicized is through Lee's "identity-to-politics framework," which posits a five-step process through which identities transform into group political action. In the first step, definition, the identity must be defined and measured. For most whites, this condition of the identity-to-politics link is met. The United States Census treats whites as a cohesive racial category, as opposed to the fragmented Census measures of groups such as Asians and Latinos.

This dissertation most fully engages with the next step, identification. In the identification step, individuals must internalize the identity defined in Step 1. The measurement of white identification is perhaps the greatest sticking point in the white identity politics literature. If whites do not identify as white, they cannot achieve further steps in the "identity-to-politics" link, and therefore we cannot assume that whites participate in politics out of a sense of group commonality.

Jardina (2019) offers a pioneering approach to the measurement of white identity. Jardina's measures of white identity are discussed more fully in Chapter Two. One commonality in all measures is that they ask about explicit white identity, that is, the extent to which whites are willing to identify themselves as white to interviewers. I argue that white identity should not, and cannot, depend solely on explicit measures of white identity due to the prevalence of colorblind attitudes, or whites' unwillingness to discuss race, in the United States. Instead, I argue that white identification can also be conceptualized as adherence to white racial norms.

My dissertation focuses less on the final three steps of the identity-to-politics link: group consciousness, venue selection, and choice to participate as a group. These topics offer fertile ground for future scholars to study white identity politics, but this dissertation is most concerned with the beginning stages of identity formation.

1.2 Methodology

This dissertation is the product of many rounds of survey experiments on white identity. One commonality of all of the studies conducted throughout this project is the resounding presence of

null results. In no case did I find that experimental treatments related to whiteness consistently moved a single measure of white identification or white racial attitudes. In survey after survey, I varied the type and intensity of survey treatments and my survey outcomes, curious if the disconnect was due to the weakness of my treatments or the nature of my outcome measures. However, after multiple rounds of testing, it appears that the results are driven by the durability of white identity as opposed to the weakness of my measures. My results suggest that it is nearly impossible to move whites' sense of white racial identification, at least through survey experiments. These results represent not a failure in experimentation, but rather a challenge to existing narratives of white identity that portray whiteness as inherently reactionary.

In all survey experiments, I randomly assigned respondents to receive some piece of information related to race then asked respondents a series of outcome questions regarding their racial identity. The outcome measures are interdisciplinary, pulling from psychology, sociology, and political science. The results from these survey experiments are organized to form the chapters of this dissertation. For example, all outcome measures in Chapter Two are control participants from other survey experiments. The names of each study change by chapter for comprehensibility. The studies reported in this dissertation were reviewed and approved by Columbia University's Institutional Review Board, protocol numbers AAAT9324, AAAT8252, and AAAT7210.

In Study 1, I recruited 359 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in May 2021. This study presented white respondents with positive or negative information regarding their identity. The "Bad History" treatment told respondents that they should feel ashamed of their white identity due to whites' associations with slavery and Jim Crow. The "Classical Music" treatment told whites that they should feel proud of their identity due to whites' cultural contributions to classical music. I present the results only in Chapter Five. I did not present Study 1 results in other chapters because the results were highly unreliable due to the low number of respondents and the low quality of participants. I did not include the results in other sections due to my low certainty regarding the quality of the preliminary results. Over half of respondents were discarded due to low-quality responses to open-ended questions in the survey. In subsequent studies, I included a

more rigorous round of quality controls to ensure greater confidence in the study results.

Study 2 included 542 participants from MTurk from August 2021. As expanded upon in Chapter Five, I varied the treatments by retaining the Bad History treatment and adding another commonly used negative identity cue: the "Racial Shift" treatment (Craig and Richeson 2014a, 2014b). The Racial Shift treatment informs respondents that whites will soon be the demographic minority in the United States, potentially leading to the loss of political and cultural power. I included the Racial Shift treatment to understand how the magnitude of my Study 1 results compared to the magnitude of results elicited by a more longstanding treatment in the white identity politics literature. Ultimately, however, I found that neither treatment induced movement in the white identification outcomes. I included the relationship between this treatment and policy preferences in Chapter Four and between the treatments and other outcome measures in Chapter Five.

Study 3 included 752 respondents from an MTurk survey launched in November 2021. After finding all null results in the previous two studies, I increased the intensity of the treatment by switching to video treatments over text treatments. I included two video treatments, the Bad History video and the Racial Shift video, to replicate the Bad History and Racial Shift text treatments from Studies 1 and 2.

In Study 1, I asked respondents what elements of being white they were most proud of. I added two new videos in Study 3 that targeted these points of pride. I chose the "Irish History" video, a historical video that portrayed the Irish's journey from a disenfranchised underclass to a potent political force in Boston, to invoke white ethnic pride. I chose the "White Family" video, a home video of an all-white family celebrating Christmas, to evoke whites' pride in their families, the number one point of pride I identified in Study 1. However, the greater intensity of the treatments still did not appear to move white identification. The relationship between these treatments and policy preferences is found in Chapter Four, while the relationship between these treatments and other outcome measures is found in Chapter Five.

Study 4 was an exact replication of Craig and Richeson (2014a) and (2014b). In Studies 2 and 3, I found a null relationship between any racial shift treatment and policy preferences, failing to

confirm results from previous racial threat studies. I conducted Study 4 as a fully-powered test of these null results to find if the (lack of) relationship would hold if I increased the number of respondents. I recruited 620 participants from Prolific in December 2021. I confirmed in Study 4 that there is no significant relationship between the Racial Shift treatment and policy preferences, even when the study was fully powered. I present the results of this study in Chapter 4.

Study 5 was a final, well-powered experiment retesting the text versions of the Bad History and Racial Shift treatments. I recruited 1,279 respondents from Prolific in January 2022. After observing so many null results from Studies 1-4, I conducted a final, definitive test, broadening my range of outcome measures to include implicit measures as well as other outcomes from social work and psychology. In no case did I find a significant relationship between the Bad History treatment, Racial Shift treatment, and any outcome measure. I reported the Implicit Association Test outcomes from Study 5 in Chapter Four, and I presented other outcome measures in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three uses observational methods as opposed to survey experiments. I use data on white identity from the 2016 ANES Pilot and panel data from the Voter Study Group dataset. I used VSG panel data because I was interested in understanding racial change over a period of time, not just the short term. The ANES Pilot supplemented this data by providing a number of innovative questions measuring white identity tested on a large number of respondents.

Survey experiments were ideal for testing theories about short-term identity change. By exposing subjects to positive or negative information about whiteness, I could change the framing of white identity in respondents' minds. However, survey experiments have some limitations. In particular, my experiments were not designed to measure change over long periods. Although in the short-term setting of survey experiments I could not alter respondents' reported racial identity, in one's lifetime this change likely occurs over time.

Although the panel data allowed me to look at how identity changes over years, I could not make the same causal conclusions as from the experimental data. Despite these limitations, survey experiments are still useful for studying white identity as they allow researchers to manipulate

respondents' informational environment as it relates to respondents' identity, and therefore allow me to understand the effect of these treatments on a short-term basis.

1.3 The Measurement of White Identity

The first step to understanding the extent to which whites bring their racial identity to bear on their political preferences is to understand how individuals identify as white. This chapter explores the variety of ways we can conceptualize white racial identification. I argue that traditional measures of white identification, which explicitly ask whites about their racial identity, are subject to measurement error because they do not consider whites' unwillingness to discuss race. Therefore, we may be obtaining downwardly biased estimates of the true proportion of white identifiers and may understate the influence of white identity in American politics. I introduce two new measures of white identification: One based on adherence to white racial norms, and one based on traditional social identity theory conceptualizations of racial identity. Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, I find that although all measures of white identity tap into a similar underlying latent dimension, adherence to white racial norms and whites' policy preferences are more closely related conceptually than any other measure of white identification. This chapter helps us to answer the question of what it means to identify as white, and understand how broadening our conceptualization of white identity can shed greater insights on the link between white identity and politics.

1.4 Racial Switching: Strategies to Avoid Perceived Costs of Whiteness

In the white identity politics literature, there is an assumption that threats to whites' sense of group position in the racial hierarchy will lead whites to "circle the wagons" and become more defensive of their ingroup identity (Jardina 2019). In simpler terms, when whites feel threatened, they will double down on their claims to whiteness. In this chapter, I argue that we should not be so certain that perceptions of racial threat will always lead to greater ingroup identification. Rather, I argue that there are a variety of strategies that whites can use when they are confronted with chal-

lenges to their white identity. Another strategy is to distance oneself from one's white identity when white identity comes under threat. Using two observational datasets, I show that whites that perceive higher costs to being white, that is, those who perceive greater discrimination against whites, are less likely to identify as white. From 2016 ANES Pilot data, I show that whites who perceive greater discrimination against whites distribute fewer "identity points" toward a white identity and rate their skin tone as marginally less white than those that perceive less discrimination. In Voter Study Group panel data, I show that whites who perceive greater discrimination against whites are more likely to switch from a white to a nonwhite identity across panel waves, with approximately 2.7 percent of white respondents switching race across panel waves. This chapter contributes to the white identity politics literature by challenging the racial threats-ingroup identity link. We should not assume that group identity threats will lead to greater white identity. Instead, whites are often willing to abandon their white identity in the face of identity threats.

1.5 Information about Whites Becoming the Demographic Minority Does Not Influence Political or Racial Conservatism Among White Americans

Chapter Four casts further doubt on the group status threat-ingroup favoritism link. Previous literature from psychology and political science showed that giving whites information that whites would soon become the demographic minority was associated with increased political and racial conservatism (Craig and Richeson 2014a, 2014b; Craig, Rucker, and Richeson 2018). I challenge this relationship in a series of four experiments and show that whites exposed to information about demographic change do not react with greater political or racial conservatism. Instead, many whites exposed to information that their group will soon become the demographic majority express more positive expectations about society's future and demonstrate increased racial liberalism. However, I argue that this reaction is likely due to social desirability bias: Although respondents profess greater racial liberalism, when I gave respondents an Implicit Association Test measuring their racial attitudes after the racial shift treatment, I did not find that latent racial attitudes changed. This chapter contributes to our understanding of white identity by deemphasizing

the reactionary nature of white identity. I show that it is surprisingly difficult to change whites' racial attitudes even upon exposure to negative information regarding the future of whites in the United States.

1.6 White Identity is Stable In Response to Information about Whiteness: Four Studies on the Malleability of White Racial Identification

Chapter Five builds upon the findings in Chapter Four. In a series of survey experiments, I offer whites a variety of cues that introduce either positive or negative information about white identity. Across all studies, I find that exposure to positive or negative information about white identity does not change whites' attachments to their racial identification, even when I vary the strength of the treatment and the outcomes measuring racial attitudes. This chapter cements our understanding of white identity as a highly stable identity, at least upon short-term exposure to information about white identity.

1.7 Limitations

The greatest limitation of these studies is that they primarily rely on one type of methodology: Survey experiments. In comparison to field experiments, survey experiments present respondents with fleeting stimuli that are likely inconsequential to respondents' identity in the long run. Arguably, survey experiments do not have to fundamentally change respondents' attitudes to be useful. Rather, they help bring certain information to the "top of the head" to weigh on whites' response patterns directly after exposure (Zaller 1992). A second critique is that the information that I present to respondents simply is not strong enough to sway respondents' sense of racial identity. Future scholars might answer this critique by introducing information in a more consequential context.

Another critique regarding these surveys is the sample of survey respondents. My survey respondents participate in opt-in survey platforms to earn nominal sums of money. The survey pools of third-party survey platforms are dominated by young, liberal respondents. Although I control

for ideology and partisanship in my studies, it is still likely that participants on online survey platforms are fundamentally distinct from the general population of the United States. If I introduced these same stimuli in, say, a diner in rural, nearly all-white Iowa, I might find vastly different treatment effects. For this reason, the estimates that I find across these surveys may best be thought of as in-sample effects instead of population effects. I highly encourage future research on white identity to target respondents that likely have little exposure to the type of information on race that I presented to respondents across these studies.

The study of the ingroup attitudes of white Americans is still in its nascency in American politics. The groundbreaking book on white identity politics in the United States, Jardina (2019), was published only a few years before the studies conducted in this dissertation. For that reason, scholars of white identity politics have a vast space to cast their nets before we come to a robust understanding of white identity politics in the United States. Furthermore, the dynamics of white identity politics in the United States change annually, drastically shifting our ability to capture the phenomenon of white identity politics with every presidential election. I fully embrace the fact that the conclusions of this dissertation may be undermined in just a few years depending on the political trajectory of the next decade. Because of those dynamics, this dissertation is not and is not meant to be a complete account of white identity in the United States.

Despite these limitations, this dissertation offers a valuable reflection on whiteness at this moment and a challenge to theories of white identity politics as they currently stand. First, I demonstrate the importance of more robust measures of white identity in the face of colorblindness. Second, I challenge traditional conceptions regarding the group threat-ingroup favoritism link through a series of survey experiments and observational data. All together, this dissertation contributes important nuance to the current debates on white identity.

Chapter 2: The Measurement of White Identity

2.1 Introduction

Since the election of Barack Obama, the visibility of strong white identity has grown in contemporary politics. A politicized sense of white identity is associated with Trump support and even with involvement in the January 6 insurrection (Knowles, Tropp, and Mogami 2021; Buyuker et al. 2021; Graham et al. 2021). In recent years, white identity has appeared to be "activated", transforming from an invisible, meaningless identity to one directly associated with a host of political beliefs (Sears and Henry 2005; Jardina 2019). Many scholars attribute this activation to the growing loss of demographic primacy among American whites and a growing number of nonwhite faces in political and cultural positions of power. In that context, some whites have reevaluated what it means to be white (Jardina 2019). Despite the significance of white identity in politics over the past decade, however, political scientists still have a limited understanding of what it means to identify as white.

This research speaks to a broader trend in research on race and politics: how to evaluate identity. McClain et al. (2009) note that one of the primary challenges of studying identity is measurement. Measurement of identity, and in particular racial identity, is difficult because of the broad differences in attachment that individuals hold to their race. As McClain et al. (2009) state, some individuals might identify with their race because of societal expectations of what it means to be born with a certain skin tone, while others might identify with their race because of a shared culture. Because of this range of attachments, some scholars advocate for specialized measures of identity for different racial groups (Lee 2008). Measuring white identity is particularly challenging because of the role of colorblindness in white society. The presence of colorblindness significantly complicates the measurement of white identity.

Over the past decades, the measurement of white identity has changed drastically. Political scientists long equated the measurement of white identity with the measurement of racial prejudice (Kinder and Sears 1981). More recently, however, political scientists have argued that white identification is characterized by an additional dimension that is conceptually distinct from racial prejudice: Ingroup attitudes, or how whites feel about other whites (Jardina 2019, 2021). This dimension has long been overlooked given the seeming invisibility of whiteness among those who are white.

The distinctions between white identity as outgroup attitudes versus ingroup attitudes is not one of semantics: The extent to which these factors each determine white identity has meaning for how whites act on white identity, that is, whether they act out of self-interest distinct from their racial identity - a cost-benefit analysis considering only one's individual circumstances- or as a collective racial group. Attachments to white identity, and the emotions attached to white identity, are also significant determinants of a broad variety of political and policy opinions (Jardina 2019; Phoenix 2019). Understanding the measurement of white identity is vital to understanding contemporary political attitudes and behaviors among whites.

These traditional measures of white identity are subject to two problems. First, they are subject to reporting bias due to the widespread prevalence of "colorblindness" in the United States. Colorblindness is defined as the "belief that ideological and structural racism does not exist" (Neville et al. 2000, p. 61). The broad prevalence of colorblind norms may cause some whites to avoid explicit measures of white identity. Because many whites in the United States are unwilling to speak of the existence of race, white individuals with strong associations with their racial identity may score low on measures of white identity that explicitly ask participants about race. Second, more recent measures of white identity suffer from poor internal validity, signifying the measures may have difficulty capturing the underlying concept that they purport to measure.

I test two new measures of white identity. The first measure focuses on the role that two white norms, ingroup norms and colorblind norms, play in our conceptions of what it means to be white in the United States. The second measure draws from the social identity literature and assesses the

extent to which whiteness is a social identity through whites' cognitive and emotional attachments toward their whiteness.

I compare the new measures of white identity with traditional measures of white identity. I find that using all measures offers a more comprehensive understanding of white identity; however, the new measures offer three advantages. First, they have higher internal validity than traditional measures. Second, the norms measures avoid the response bias associated with directly asking whites about their race. Third, factor analysis demonstrates that there is a specific dimension of whiteness onto which the norms measures and policy preferences load. Therefore, alternative measures of white identity may offer a stronger picture of the connection between white identity and political action.

Why Does Identification Matter For Politics?

Group identification matters for politics. Not all group membership translates into group attitudes, however. The connection between group identification and group action is group consciousness (Barreto and Pedraza 2009; Miller et al. 1981). Group consciousness is particularly important in shaping political preferences of nonwhite Americans. Notably, decades of work has shown how a sense of linked fate influences Black Americans' political preferences (Dawson 1995). Ethnic identification is also connected to a range of political attitudes among Latinos (Barreto and Pedraza 2009). The influence of group identity is not simply marginal, rather, it predicts support for even high-cost political actions such as protest (Laird 2019; Kanas and Martinovic 2017).

Although most studies of group identification link identity and political preferences among nonwhite Americans, recent research points to a link between white ingroup attitudes and political preferences that extends beyond the long-held relationship between racial resentment and policy preferences. Jardina (2019) found that ingroup attitudes predicts support for ingroup policies net of other racial attitudes: Whites with a stronger sense of white identification were more likely to support policies that ostensibly favored whites. White identification also predicts support for political candidates (Jardina 2021) and perhaps even attitudes toward democratic norms (Jardina

forthcoming).

2.2 How Do We Measure Whiteness?

Previous measures of white identity evaluate varied conceptions of what it means to be white. In an early study of white identity, Sears and Savalei (2006) measured white identity through a now-canonical question asking whites how important their race is to their identity. They found that just 15 percent of whites could be considered "strong identifiers" under this measure.

White identity has also been measured through group closeness measures in ANES panel data, where whites are asked which groups they feel close to. Wong and Cho (2005) found that white racial identification, characterized by group closeness, ranged from 41 percent to 75 percent from 1972 to 2000. Other studies have utilized white feeling thermometers as a measure of white identity (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2017). Group closeness and feeling thermometers have been criticized as measures of identity as they may not capture the extent to which individuals have internalized group membership, although these critiques remain statistically untested (McClain et al. 2009).

In recent work, Jardina (2019) uses the traditional strength measure, along with two other measures, to form a scale of white identification. She uses two further measures to evaluate white racial consciousness. The combined five-item measure of white identity is:

Identification

- *How important is being white to your identity?*
- *To what extent do you feel that white people in this country have a lot to be proud of?*
- *How much would you say that whites in this country have a lot in common with one another?*

Consciousness

- *How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?*
- *How important is it that whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?*

Throughout this paper, I will refer to the canonical question of "How important is being white to your identity" as the traditional measure of white identification. Recent estimates of white identification evaluate the proportion of "strong white identifiers," or those who report their race is important to their identity, at about 30 to 40 percent of whites (Jardina 2019).

This five-item measure of whiteness faces three primary critiques. First, the consciousness measure has average internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of just 0.598 in the 2016 ANES, thus indicating that the consciousness items may be a weak measure of a single underlying attitude (Melcher 2021). Second, the measure explicitly asks about whiteness on each measure. However, explicitly asking whites about their race may invite response bias when colorblind norms are so prevalent in the United States (Neville et al. 2000). Third, traditional measures do not capture emotional attachments to whiteness (Tajfel 1982). Because emotional attachments to whiteness are closely tied to the activation of whiteness as a social identity, we may be biased in our estimates of the extent to which whiteness is a social identity.

2.3 Problems with Traditional Measures

2.3.1 Colorblindness

Colorblindness is a widespread attitude in the United States (Bonilla-Silva 2003). Although the empirical examination of colorblind attitudes has been conducted primarily among college students, participants in studies of colorblindness report, on average, moderate levels of colorblind racial attitudes (Neville et al. 2000). In one evaluation of the prevalence of colorblind attitudes average score ranging from 62.06 to 68.44 out of a total scale of 120 points (SD = 11.06 to 16.03). Colorblindness is a powerful driving force in white racial attitudes, as it allows for the maintenance of racial hierarchies by denying differences based on race, or in many cases, the mere existence of race (Bonilla-Silva 2003). Knowles and Peng (2005) note how diffuse colorblind norms can induce response bias when asking about white identity:

For many Whites, especially those who strongly embrace colorblindness, demand

characteristics will likely weaken the validity of explicit measures of White identity. Specifically, a portion of the variance in self-report measures of White identity would likely be attributable to individual differences in self-presentational concerns (p. 225).

They show that there is little association between implicit measures of white identity, measures of white ingroup preference, and explicit measures of white identity. In other words, traditional measures of white identity may produce downwardly biased estimates of who identifies as white, as they in part capture whites' reluctance to explicitly discuss race rather than latent identification with a certain identity.

The puzzle for scholars of white identity is then how to measure racial identity without asking about race. Scholars in social work and sociology have previously confronted this issue by utilizing implicit measures of white identity (Knowles and Peng 2005; Miller 2017). I build on this literature by introducing a new measure based on racial norms rather than explicit racial identification.

I address this critique with a measure focused on racial norms adherence. White identification, like other racial attachments, is constituted through iterations of everyday interactions that give meaning to whiteness (Blumer 1958). Racial norms are formed through repeated conversations that give common meaning to how whites discuss race and interactions with other racial groups. Norms are inherently social, that is, they are derived from interactions with others. For example, whites' willingness to express negative racial attitudes varies with interviewer effects, with respondents reporting 2.6 fewer points on a feeling thermometer toward "illegal" immigrants on online versus face-to-face surveys (Abrajano and Alvarez 2019). The number of other white respondents present when taking a survey also influences racial attitudes, with whites scoring lower on IAT tasks when they participated in surveys in small groups versus alone (Castelli and Tomelleri 2008). I argue that interactions between white individuals rely on at least two distinct norms among whites that allow for mutual understanding in conversation: Ingroup attachments and colorblindness.

The "generic norm" hypothesis states that any group will generally promote ingroup favoritism, even among new or minimal groups (Tajfel 1970). Although the generic norm hypothesis explains how groups come to form outgroup prejudice, it also explains the formation of ingroup attitudes

(Minard 1952; Iacoviello and Spears 2018). In the context of American whites, ingroup norms are important in maintaining racial hierarchies by enforcing the boundaries of whiteness. Ingroup favoritism powerfully predicts support for a variety of political preferences, independent of outgroup attitudes (Jardina 2021).

A second widespread norm among white Americans is colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva 2003). Colorblindness as an ideology is used to dismiss criticisms of discrimination from white Americans (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Neville et al. 2000). It plays a significant role in maintaining the racial hierarchy in the United States.

Importantly, the norms that constitute white identity change over time. Whites' unwillingness to discuss race is a norm that has changed across decades, as explicit racial prejudice is no longer considered societally acceptable. The same norms that constitute white identity in 2022 cannot also explain white identity strength in 1965. Therefore, measures of white identity that are based on norms will need to evolve as norms change.

2.3.2 Emotional Attachments to Whiteness

The final critique of the traditional strength measure is that it does not capture emotional attachments to whiteness. The fundamental question in the white identity politics literature is the extent to which whiteness has turned from an invisible, meaningless category to a social identity in which whites develop a sense of group identification. Group identification sets up the basis for which whites act collectively to promote the status of whites as a group.

Tajfel (1982) notes that group identification requires two necessary components and one frequently associated component: (1.) a cognitive component (2.) an evaluative component, and (3.) an emotional component that imbues the aforementioned cognitive and evaluative components with an emotional investment (p. 2). The cognitive component of social identity requires that individuals internalize and think about themselves as a member of a certain identity group. An evaluative component assigns positive and negative associations with that group membership.

Traditional measures of white identity do not evaluate emotional attachments to whiteness.

Jardina (2019)'s classification of strong white identifiers includes respondents that are both high and low in white guilt and high and low on white pride. However, it makes the claim that strong white identification is the precursor to engaging in collective political action. Realistically, it would be unlikely that a white individual with a strong stated white identity yet high levels of white guilt would engage in collective action. Rather, there is a necessary positive connotation necessary to engage in behalf of the racial group.

To address this concern, I test a measure of whiteness that evaluates both the cognitive and emotional components of white identity. This measure does not avoid the criticisms associated with the prevalence of colorblindness, as it asks respondents explicitly about their attachments to being white. In fact, neither measure I introduce speaks perfectly to all criticisms about the measurement of white identity. But by putting the measures into comparison with one another, I am better able to understand how each dynamic addresses a specific concern about the measurement of white identity.

2.4 Measuring White Identity

I conducted two studies to measure white identification. The first study was conducted in July 2021 via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and included 174 American white participants. The second study was conducted in November 2021 via MTurk and included 141 American white participants. Respondents were asked to answer a number of questions about white racial identification. All questions were presented in a random order. Results from each study are presented independently to demonstrate stability of the measures across samples.

2.4.1 Ingroup Norms

To assess the extent to which identification can be measured through norms adherence, I asked whites about two sets of norms that constitute white identity: Positive ingroup evaluations and colorblind norms. A fundamental drawback of the traditional white identity questions is that colorblind norms distort response patterns to questions explicitly asking about whiteness. To avoid these

concerns, rather than explicitly asking whites about their white racial identity, I ask whites to identify with a self-identified ingroup ("people like me"), then measure their self-conceptualizations of the ingroup to ensure that they are referring to the white ingroup.

Respondents were asked to agree with the statements: (1.) "People like me made the United States into what it is today," (2.) "Neighborhoods where people like me live are safe and free from crime," (3.) "I am proud of my family's culture and traditions," (4.) "People like me respect the police and our nation's laws," and (5.) "I would prefer to live in a neighborhood where everyone has a different culture and values from me" (reversed coded). I scaled responses from a 7-point scale to a 0-1 scale (1 = *Strongly agree*, 0 = *Strongly disagree*) and averaged responses to create an index. Respondents were asked to identify the number of "people like them" who were of certain racial groups with a question that asked, "You recently answered a question about "people like me". Out of 10 hypothetical "people like me", how many of them are....White?"

	Study 1	Study 2
Mean	0.64 (0.17)	0.66 (0.15)
N	174	141
Mean whites (out of 10 "people like me")	8.61	7.47
Percent of people with white ingroups	0.70	0.43
Mean among respondents with white ingroups	0.65 (0.18)	0.69 (0.14)
Mean among respondents with diverse ingroups	0.61 (0.16)	0.64 (0.16)
Cronbach's alpha	0.73	0.79

Table 2.1: Ingroup Norms Responses

Table 2.1 displays the average adherence to ingroup norms, subsetted by experiment. Mean norm adherence was similar across experiments. The number of white "people like me" out of 10 ranged from 7.47 to 8.61. I defined respondents as having white ingroups if they responded that 9 or 10 hypothetical "people like me" were white. Study 1 contained a large proportion of respondents with white ingroups, with 70 percent of whites reporting nearly all white ingroups. In comparison, less than half of respondents reported nearly all white ingroups in Study 2. The internal validity of the ingroup norms measure was consistent across both measures.

2.4.2 Colorblind Norms

I used a well-established measure of colorblindness to evaluate colorblind attitudes: the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville et al. 2000, COBRAS). CoBRAS is a 20-item measure that focuses on attitudes that deny that race exists, or plays a role in, everyday life, including questions such as "Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations" and "Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not." Due to the extensive length of the measure, I presented respondents with six randomly sampled items from CoBRAS. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). I scaled the items from 0-1 and averaged them into an index.

	Study 1	Study 2
Mean	0.46 (0.33)	0.56 (0.26)
Cronbach's alpha	0.95	0.95

Table 2.2: Colorblind Norm Means Across Experiments

Respondents displayed higher average colorblindness in Study 2 than Study 1. The measure displayed high internal consistency across studies.

2.4.3 Summary

I argue that whiteness in the United States is constituted by adherence to certain racial norms. Two significant norms are adherence to ingroup norms and colorblindness. I measured ingroup norms with an original scale capturing ingroup attitudes while avoiding mentions of race, then assessed the viability of the measure among respondents that reported white ingroups. I measured colorblindness with the established COBRAS measure. Across studies, I found that a significant proportion of whites adhere to ingroup norms and colorblindness, with a correlation of 0.50 between ingroup norms and colorblind attitudes. These measures are superior to traditional measures of white identity in terms of internal validity, that is, they plausibly measure the underlying construct more effectively than the original consciousness measure (Melcher 2021). Second, they address critiques regarding the distorting nature of colorblind attitudes, instead directly integrating

those attitudes into a measure of whiteness.

2.5 Social Identity Theory Measures of Identity Strength

To assess the extent to which whites have internalized a sense of white identification, I evaluated whites' cognitive and emotional attachments to whiteness.

To evaluate cognitive attachments, I asked respondents to agree with the statement "I feel white" (1 = *Not at all so*, 2 = *Somewhat so*, 3 = *Moderately so*, 4 = *Very much so*). This question evaluates the extent to which whites have internalized a sense of group membership. I also asked respondents to agree with the statement "I feel similar to the average white person" (1 = *Not at all so*, 4 = *Very much so*). This measure was designed to evaluate the extent to which whites identify with the prototypical member of their ingroup.

Whites displayed strong cognitive attachments to whiteness. The majority of whites in each study said that they moderately or very much agreed with the statement that they felt white. A majority of whites in each study also responded that they felt similar to the average white person.

I evaluated emotional attachments to whiteness by measuring two emotional components of white identification: White pride and white guilt. I asked respondents to agree with the statement, "I am proud of being white" (1 = *Not at all so*, 4 = *Very much so*). I then asked respondents to agree with the statement, "I feel guilty for being white."

Table 2.3: Proportion of Strong Responses to Social Identity Measures

	Study 1	Study 2
Feel white	69	69
Feel similar to the average white person	59	50
Pride	43	42
Guilt	10	9
High identifiers	27	26

Table 2.3 displays the proportion of respondents in each study that responded that they agreed with the statement "moderately so" or "very much so". I combine these response options to indicate strong cognitive attachments as they indicate greater than middling agreement with the given

statements. A significant proportion of whites in both studies reported strong cognitive attachments to whiteness, with almost 70 percent reporting that they felt white. Slightly fewer whites reported that they felt similar to the average white person.

Whites displayed overall lower emotional attachments to whiteness than cognitive attachments. Less than half of respondents reported that they felt proud of being white. On the other hand, few whites reported that they felt strongly guilty about being white, suggesting that few whites hold negative feelings toward their white identity.

The four measures combined have acceptable internal validity (Study 1 $\alpha = 0.66$, Study 2 $\alpha = 0.65$). Interestingly, the internal validity of the measure increases when the guilt variable is dropped (Study 1 $\alpha = 0.71$, Study 2 $\alpha = 0.72$), offering the first evidence that the guilt measure may be conceptually distinct from the other measures. Due to the low internal reliability, I retained a disaggregated measure of the cognitive and emotional elements in all analyses.

2.5.1 Summary

I argued that traditional measures of whiteness are subject to an additional concern: They do not measure an emotional evaluation of white identity. I tested a measure of white identity derived from the social identity literature that evaluated whites' cognitive and emotional attachments of whiteness. I found that the proportion of whites with strong cognitive attachments to whiteness is much higher than traditional estimates of white identity.

This measure was designed to address the lack of emotional attachments to whiteness. Slightly less than half of whites feel positively about their ingroup, while only a small proportion of whites are strongly guilty.

Whites may be considered overall "high identifiers" when they display both cognitive and emotional aspects of whiteness (Ellemers 1997). For the purpose of my studies, I define whites as "high identifiers" if they hold both cognitive and emotional attachments. High identifiers "moderately" or "very much" agree that they feel white, feel similar to the average white person, feel pride toward white culture or toward being white, and "somewhat" or "not at all" feel guilt toward white culture

or being white. Across three studies, I estimate that the percent of "high identifiers" among white Americans ranges from 26 to 27 percent.

2.6 Comparing Across Measures

In order to understand how these measures overlap, we must understand the extent to which different elements of strong identification are present within individuals. I compared the percent of whites that adhered strongly to each measure as compared to their professed racial importance. I determined that whites were strong norms adherers if they averaged above a 0.80 ("somewhat" or "strongly") agree on both the ingroup and colorblind norms measures. I counted whites as strong social identity theory (SIT) identifiers if they responded that they "moderately" or "very much" agree with every emotional and cognitive attachment measure. Although artificially forming a cutoff for "strong" identifiers imposes artificial bounds on what is considered strong white identification, it is more useful for the purpose of comparison to form some classification of strong white identity.

Table 2.4: Percent of Strong Identifiers by Response to Traditional Identity Question

	Study 1			Study 2		
	Ingroup %	CB %	SIT %	Ingroup %	CB %	SIT %
Being white is important to my identity						
Strongly disagree	0.03	0.19	0.07	0.05	0.00	0.00
Somewhat disagree	0.08	0.13	0.04	0.10	0.10	0.07
Neither agree nor disagree	0.13	0.29	0.04	0.25	0.10	0.17
Somewhat agree	0.25	0.24	0.43	0.21	0.10	0.40
Strongly agree	0.37	0.26	0.70	0.29	0.14	0.57

Table 2.4 displays the percent of respondents that are "strong identifiers" for the ingroup norms, colorblind norms, and SIT measures as compared to their responses on the traditional identity strength question. Across surveys, respondents are more likely to report that they are strong SIT identifiers if they also report strong identification on traditional measures of white identity. Social identity measures of ingroup identification also relate to traditional measures of whiteness: The proportion of whites with strong social identities is much higher among those with strong tradi-

tional identification. The overlap between social identity measures and traditional identification is striking in some instances, with 70 percent of strong traditional identifiers also holding a strong SIT identity.

There is a clear overlap between the new measures of strong identification and traditional measures of strong identification. Thus far, it appears that the traditional measure of identity and the new measures of white identity are tapping into similar sentiments among whites. However, comparing mean levels of identity strength presents a limited picture of how these concepts overlap. To gain a more systematic understanding of how these concepts relate, I analyzed the correlations between these variables and conducted a factor analysis.

2.6.1 Correlations Between Variables

Correlations can offer some understanding of the association between variables. Tables 2.5 and 2.6 display the correlations between all norms variables, the social identity variables, and the traditional identity strength question, and policy preferences. The policy preferences item was a set of five policies, both race-related and non-race-related. Respondents were asked about their opinions toward affirmative action, increasing border security, increasing Social Security, increasing Medicare, and decreasing welfare (-1 = Liberal option, 1 = Conservative opinion). The policy items were added together as an index, where higher scores on the index indicate more conservative policy preferences. In both studies, the norms measures and the traditional identity strength question strongly correlate to one another. There is also a strong correlation between traditional identity strength and a strong SIT identity.

Notably, the correlation between colorblind norms and policy positions is extremely strong in both studies, far exceeding the correlation between the traditional measure of identity strength and policy preferences. The ingroup norms measure is also more highly correlated with policy preferences than the traditional strength measure in Study 1, although the correlation is similar in Study 2. In comparison, the correlation between SIT measures of identity, traditional measures of identity strength, and policy preferences are much weaker. In particular, there are not strong correlations

Table 2.5: Study 1 Correlation Matrix

	Ingroup	CB	Strength	Guilt	Feel White	Similar	Pride	High SIT
Ingroup								
Colorblind	0.50							
Strength	0.54	0.22						
Guilt	-0.34	-0.41	-0.13					
Feel White	0.29	0.03	0.42	-0.06				
Similar	0.34	0.17	0.28	-0.12	0.40			
Pride	0.55	0.43	0.64	-0.29	0.52	0.44		
High SIT	0.42	0.26	0.51	-0.29	0.50	0.54	0.72	
Policy Preferences	0.55	0.71	0.25	-0.38	0.10	0.16	0.40	0.28

Table 2.6: Study 2 Correlation Matrix

	Ingroup	CB	Strength	Feel White	Pride	Guilt	Similar	High SIT
Ingroup								
Colorblind	0.40							
ID Strength	0.34	0.30						
Feel White	0.08	0.24	0.40					
Pride	0.43	0.54	0.62	0.52				
Guilt	-0.23	-0.22	-0.02	-0.06	-0.25			
Similar to Whites	0.25	0.17	0.29	0.48	0.41	-0.04		
High SIT	0.32	0.30	0.42	0.49	0.67	-0.29	0.58	
Policy Preferences	0.41	0.66	0.49	0.19	0.58	-0.26	0.23	0.35

between the cognitive elements of social identity and policy preferences. These findings offer the first evidence that explicit measures of white identity, particularly ones that measure cognitive attachments to whiteness, are not the best predictors of when white identity precedes political action. Rather, positive emotional attachments to whiteness and policy preferences have a much stronger relationship than simple cognitive attachments.

2.6.2 Reducing Dimensionality

Another valuable way to understand the relationship between these variables is through dimension reduction. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 display the results of Principal Components Analysis for Studies 1 and 2.

In each case, the variables load best onto two dimensions, as determined by a scree plot. The x-axis of the plot shows loadings onto the first dimension. The y-axis of the plot shows loadings onto

Figure 2.1: Study 1 Principal Components Analysis

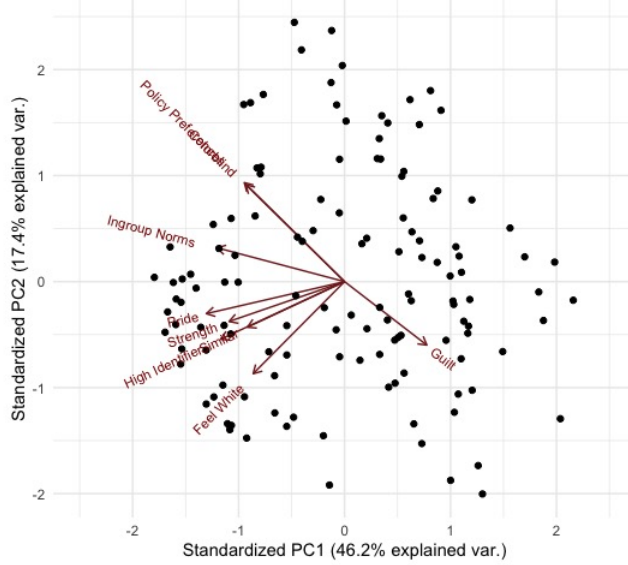
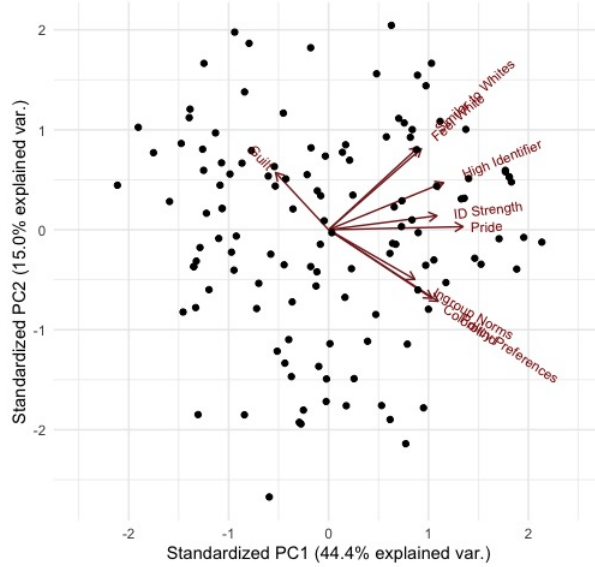


Figure 2.2: Study 2 Principal Components Analysis



the second dimension. Arrows that point in the same direction (left or right for the first dimension, and up or down for the second dimension) communicate that variables load in the same direction.

The biplots share two commonalities of note. First, all variables except for guilt consistently load similarly on the first dimension. These loadings suggest that white guilt is a unique phenomenon in American politics that may be distinct from other racial attitudes (Chudy, Piston, and Shipper 2019; Swim and Miller 1999). Second, on the second dimension, ingroup norms, colorblind norms, and policy preferences always load onto the same dimension distinct from any other racial attitude, such as traditional white identity strength.

Table 2.7 displays the factor loadings for the PCAs. The loadings demonstrate the two patterns noted above: The distinctiveness of guilt on the first dimension, and the similarity of norms and policy preferences on the second measure.

Table 2.7: Factor Loadings for Norms, SIT, and Traditional Measures for Experiments 1 and 2

	Study 1		Study 2	
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 1	Component 2
Ingroup Norms	0.387	0.167	0.283	0.280
Colorblind norms	0.300	0.479	0.340	0.387
Identity Strength	0.351	-0.197	0.356	
Feel white	0.277	-0.455	0.305	-0.458
Pride	0.420	-0.159	0.442	
Guilt	-0.250	-0.314	-0.174	-0.323
Similar to Average	0.295	-0.226	0.295	-0.466
High SIT ID	0.377	-0.285	0.378	-0.266
Policy Preferences	0.305	0.490	0.360	0.404
Prop. Variance Explained	.462	.174	.444	.150

The closeness of ingroup norms, colorblind norms, and policy preferences should be of particular note to political scientists. All together, traditional measures of identity strength, SIT measures of identity, and adherence to ingroup norms all appear to measure white identity similarly. However, norms adherence relates more closely to whites' political preferences than any other measures. The results speak to the potential influence of colorblind narratives in obscuring the relationship between traditional measures of white identity and whites' policy preferences.

2.6.3 Summary

The results comparing measures overall signify that traditional white identity measures, norms measures, and SIT measures tend to move together. I found that there is a relatively weak link between cognitive attachments to whiteness and policy preferences, signifying that explicit expressions of white identity alone are not the most significant predictor of political action. Rather, emotional attachments have a clearer relationship with policy preferences. I also found that measures based on white racial norms have a much stronger relationship with policy preferences than traditional measures. Not only are they more highly correlated with policy preferences, but they also clearly load onto a second dimension of whiteness that is distinct from other measures of identity. These results, taken together, suggest that the norms and emotional attachments to whiteness are particularly important to our understanding of white identity and political action.

2.7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Although exploratory factor analysis is helpful in providing initial comparisons between items, confirmatory factor analysis can provide a more formal test of the relationship between policy preferences, norms, and the classic identity strength measure. To formally assess the relationship between norms, strength, and policy preferences, I conducted confirmatory factor analysis by specifying multiple models and comparing the fit.

I first tested a single-factor model. A single-factor model tests the theory that norms, identity strength, emotional and cognitive attachments, and policy preferences all load onto the same factor, that is, white identification. I then tested three three-factor models. Models with multiple factors test the theory that the measures all load onto different underlying constructs. First, I specified a model in which ingroup norms, colorblind norms, and policy preferences load onto Factor 1, the identity strength measure loads onto Factor 2, and the SIT measure loads onto Factor 3. I then specified a second model in which policy preferences loaded onto the second factor instead of the first factor. Finally, I estimated a model leaving out policy preferences and independently fitting

the norms measures, the identity strength measure, and the SIT measure each to a different factor.

Table 2.8: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fittings

Measurement model	χ^2	χ^2	DF		RMSEA		CFI		SRMR	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
1-factor model	111.62	84.19	20	20	0.19	0.16	0.76	0.808	0.108	0.088
3-factor model (Policies to norms)	70.97	46.67	18	18	0.15	0.11	0.86	0.914	0.104	0.074
3-factor model (Policies to strength)	76.86	67.89	17	17	0.17	0.154	0.84	0.848	0.104	0.83
3-factor model (No policy item)	35.17	33.70	12	12	0.12	0.12	0.92	0.91	0.077	0.071

χ^2 is Chi-squared statistic. DF is degrees of freedom. RMSEA is root mean square error approximation. CFI is comparative fit index. SRMR is standardized root mean square residual.

Table 2.8 displays the results of the confirmatory factor analysis. A lower χ^2 , root mean square error approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) all indicate a better-fitting model. A comparison between the single-factor model and all three-factor models indicate that the best fitting model is the one in which norms, identity strength, and SIT attachments are all specified as independent factors. However, when policy preferences are specified within the model, the best fitting model is the one in which policy preferences are specified in the same factor as the norms measures. These results suggest that the norms measures, identity strength, SIT attachments, and policy preferences are best conceptualized as representing three distinct underlying factors, in which norms and policy preferences load onto the same factor and the identity strength and SIT measures load onto independent factors.

2.7.1 Summary

Confirmatory factor analysis affirms the relationship between racial norms, identity strength, SIT attachments, and policy preferences that was identified in exploratory factor analysis: Although when combined, the measures do provide a robust measure of white identification, the measures are conceptually distinct as measures of identification. Specifically, identity strength and SIT attachments are conceptually distinct from other measures of white identification, while policy preferences and racial norms are best considered conceptually similar.

2.8 Discussion

Overall, I found that measures of white racial norms and emotional attachments to whiteness predict policy preferences more effectively than traditional measures of identity strength. These measures have advantages over traditional measures due to their resolution of three critiques. First, the ingroup norms measure, the colorblind measure, and the emotional attachments measure all have higher internal reliability than the original consciousness measure. Second, the norms measures are collectively designed to avoid the problems associated with colorblind distortions of white identity measures. I found that the norms measures were more strongly associated with conservative policy positions than the traditional white identity measures, and in Principal Components Analysis loaded distinctly onto one dimension of white identity. Third, the SIT-derived accounts for emotional attachments to whiteness, not just simple cognitive attachments. I found that white pride was more strongly associated with conservative policy positions than the traditional measure of identity strength, pointing to the importance of emotional attachments. Together, these measures offer a more multidimensional conceptualization of white identity.

The strong connection between norms measures, white pride, and policy preferences suggest that we may be underestimating the link between certain forms of white identification and politics. Traditional measures of white identification may underestimate the extent to which affinity with whiteness manifests in political positions. Future research should expand the use of the norms and SIT-derived measures to expand the understanding of the connection between white identity and political action.

The strength of the association between racial norms adherence and conservative policy positions should be particularly useful to political scientists. The accuracy of implicit measures is important in a world where the bounds of which racial rhetoric is deemed acceptable are consistently in flux. Decades of scholarship demonstrates fluctuations in the extent to which racially explicit rhetoric is rejected or accepted among American whites (Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenberg 2018; Mendelberg 2001, 2008; Christiani 2021). Presumably, the proportion of whites that

explicitly identify as white will be volatile as the rhetoric changes. Implicit measures, however, may be more stable over time.

Results from the internal validity of the SIT-derived measure, the lack of correlation between white guilt and nearly any other variable, and the distinctiveness of white guilt in the PCA point to an understudied aspect of white identity. Previous studies of white guilt are limited, but demonstrate that white guilt is linked to certain compensatory types of policy preferences such as affirmative action (Swim and Miller 1999; Chudy, Piston, and Shipper 2019; Chudy 2021; Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2003; Grzanka, Frantell, and Fassinger 2020).

Around a third of whites are considered strong identifiers on any given measure, including the traditional measure of identity strength (Jardina 2019). Although strong white identity is clearly still not the dominant identity among whites, this proportion is significantly higher than early measures of white identity (Knowles and Peng 2005; Sears and Savalei 2006). These results support the claim that white identity is not meaningless nor invisible, as previously presumed (Jardina 2019). Rather, whiteness and claims to whiteness manifest in a variety of ways. Future research could further which forms of strong identity are most connected to political preferences and action.

2.9 Conclusion

Many political commentators associate the rise of Donald Trump with the ascension of a new narrative surrounding white identity that imbued it with political significance. In reality, the significance of white identity was increasing to many white Americans prior to Trump, ostensibly driven by increasing immigration and the election of the nation's first Black president. Contemporary studies of white identity demonstrate that a small but significant proportion of Americans hold strong attachments toward their racial group. This study agrees that a small yet significant proportion of white Americans hold whiteness as a social identity, that is, they hold both cognitive and emotional attachments to whiteness. In comparison, a higher proportion of whites display strong adherence to white racial norms. These new measures of identity hold particular significance when

evaluating the relationship between white identity and politics. Although the failed reelection of Donald Trump signals to some that the politicized significance of white identity might decline, it is unlikely that white identity will cease to be a driving force in the politics of many white Americans in the years following Trump's election.

Chapter 3: Racial Switching: Strategies to Avoid Perceived Costs of Whiteness

3.1 Introduction

Recent literature on white identity politics challenges the conceptions of what it means to be white in the United States (Jardina 2019). Although white identity has always been political, scholars of white identity have reconceptualized the role of whiteness in shaping whites' political predispositions. A variety of factors contributed to the increasing salience of white identity, including the election of the nation's first Black president and the decreasing demographic primacy of whites in the United States. Some whites, faced with these political challenges, may reevaluate their relationship with whiteness.

Although racial and ethnic identities were long assumed to be fixed, more recent research has demonstrated that race and ethnicity are social categories that change over time (Egan 2020; Omi and Winant 1994). By some estimates, over a quarter of Americans switch ethnicities over time in U.S. Census and panel data (Waters 1990; Lieberman and Waters 1993; Egan 2020; Agadjanian and Lacy 2021). In this research, I argue that the decision to switch racial identities, and in particular, the decision to switch from a white identity to a nonwhite identity, is a strategic reaction to the perceived costs of whiteness in the contemporary United States.

Some whites perceive that the cost of being white has increased in the United States. Numerous studies show that exposure to information regarding the loss of whites' demographic primacy is associated with an increase in perceived group status threat, or the perception that the status of whites as a whole is at stake (Craig and Richeson 2014a, 2014b). Over 30 percent of whites believe that policies implemented in the past several decades to remedy centuries of unequal opportunity among white and Black Americans are hurting whites (Axios 2021). Forty percent of

whites believe that white Americans face "a moderate amount", "quite a bit", or "a great deal" of discrimination today (Press 2021). Importantly, these threats are perceived, not real, as a result of a framing of racial dynamics that views political power as a zero-sum game in which any gains for nonwhite Americans take power away from white Americans. Despite these perceived threats, American whites maintain their position at the top of the racial hierarchy, with continuing advantages in access to generational wealth, education, and other resources.

Whites have three strategies of "identity management" to mitigate the costs associated with whiteness: Denial of white privilege, distancing from whiteness, and the dismantling of privilege (Knowles et al. 2014) Recent research in white identity politics confirms the first strategy: Whites confronted with racial threats double down on their racial identity, becoming more conservative in their racial attitudes, policy positions, and ingroup affinity (Craig and Richeson 2014a, 2014b; Major, Blodorn, and Major Blascovich 2018; Jardina 2019). However, the latter two strategies have received less scholarly attention. In this research, I evaluate the extent to which distancing from whiteness is a reaction to the perceived costs of whiteness.

I propose that instead of increasing ingroup affiliation in reaction to racial threat, a sizeable proportion of Americans will instead abandon their racial identity when the perceived costs to whiteness are too high. I argue that there is a strong relationship between perceived threat and costs to whiteness: As threat increases, there are stronger repercussions to being white. Whites will then avoid identifying with whiteness to avoid these consequences.

I utilize data from the Voter Study Group 2011-2016 Panel and the 2016 Pilot ANES study to confirm this hypothesis. I find that whites who perceive higher costs to whiteness consistently distance themselves from their white identity. In the Voter Study Group panel data, whites who perceived a higher cost of whiteness were more likely to switch their racial identity from white to nonwhite across panel waves. In the 2016 ANES Pilot, whites who perceived a higher cost to whiteness attributed less emphasis to their white racial identity.

This research confirms that increasing ingroup affinity is not the only possible reaction to racial threats. In response to perceived costs of whiteness, many white Americans choose to abandon

their ingroup identity altogether in favor of a more positive identity.

3.2 Choosing Identities: Social Identity and the Permeability of Group Membership

3.2.1 Shifts in Race and Ethnicity

For some time, racial and ethnic identity was considered immutable. In reality, ethnic and racial categories are social constructs that shift across time (Omi and Winant 1994). Work in comparative politics has emphasized the role of racial identity changes in the face of bureaucratic (Posner 2005) or political (Chandra 2006; Egan 2020) incentives. Individuals also change other demographic categories on a fairly consistent basis, with race as relatively stable (less than 10 percent switching across waves) and sexual identity as unstable (up to 47 percent switching across waves) (Egan 2020). Racial switching is not an uncommon phenomenon. Since 1980, the U.S. Census has collected data on ethnic origins that allows researchers to track changes in identity over time. Ethnic switching occurs most frequently at major changes in a person's life, including birth, marriage, and moving out of one's family home (Waters 1990).

Two recent works in political science contribute to our greater understanding of the permeability of racial boundaries. Egan (2020) found that individuals switch race, among other identities, to align with their political predispositions across survey waves. Democrats were more likely to align themselves with nonwhite identities, while Republicans were more likely to associate with white identities. Agadjanian and Lacy (2021) additionally explore associations with white identity, demonstrating that individuals that switched from a non-Republican vote in 2012 to a Republican vote in 2016 were more likely to switch their racial identity to align with their political vote, with Trump voters more likely to switch to a white identity. Nonwhite voters that did not vote for Trump had a baseline switching proportion of 0.03, while those that voted for Trump had a switching proportion of 0.49. Both works contribute to the understanding that racial and ethnic identity, rather than being fixed, is explicitly associated with one's political preferences.

3.2.2 Social Identity Theory

One way to understand why individuals associate themselves with various groups is through social identity theory. Social Identity Theory (SIT) maintains that the world is composed of social groupings and that individuals sort themselves into these social groups in ways that maximize their self-esteem (Tajfel 1979). Closely related, Social Categorization Theory expands on how individuals self-stereotype and how the extent to which individuals identify with a social group influences whether they act as an individual or as a group member (Ellemers 1997). When individuals face group threats, they face two options: to reinforce group membership or to find another identity that offers a more positive self-conceptualization (Tajfel 1979; Ellemers 1997). Notably, social identity theory focuses on change at the level of the individual. There is considerably less research on mass change at the group level due to large-scale threats.

Permeability of group boundaries is especially important in determining which strategy individuals pursue. When group boundaries are permeable, individuals associated with low-status groups are more likely to leave the group (Ellemers 1997; Lalonde 1994). Furthermore, the likelihood of leaving the group is influenced by whether individuals are previously low or high in self-identification with the group (Ellemers 1997). Low identifiers are less likely to self-categorize themselves as members of the ingroup and are more likely to leave the group if the status of the group is threatened. The research of Davenport, Iyengar, and Westwood (2021) demonstrates the applicability of this theory for mixed-race individuals: Americans with greater perceived group permeability (White-Asians) express weaker group attachments than those with stronger group permeability (White-Blacks). This research is important in the case of racial switching because those that have a valid alternative to a white identity, i.e. whites who have some alternative racial claim, might be more likely to switch away from white identity. In the case of mixed race individuals alone, mixed race identity has been steadily increasing over the past decade to 2.3 percent on the U.S. Census, and will likely continue to increase in future years.

3.2.3 Why Distance From Whiteness?

Although white identity has traditionally been considered a dominant identity that imparts a stronger self-conceptualization, if whites genuinely believe that being associated with whiteness negatively influences their life, they may turn to other nonwhite identities. McDermott and Samson (2005, p. 249) note:

Because white pride has historically been predicated upon a denigration of nonwhites, the articulation of the duties and requirements of whiteness reflects a desire to correlate a conscious white identity with positive attributes. If whiteness is explicitly associated with racism and discrimination yet otherwise relatively bereft of content, there is a tendency to create distance between oneself and whiteness' what is marked as white is not a rich and varied set of cultural practices but socially destructive practices (Appiah and Gutmann 1998).

In the context of costs to whiteness, when there is an increased cost to whiteness (i.e. when whiteness is associated with “socially destructive practices”), whites have an incentive to diverge from that racial identity.

Importantly, however, the identities to which whites may switch are inherently limited. Switching is much more likely among groups that have high levels of permeability, such as mixed, Native American, Hispanic, and "other" identities. Notable is the role that white ethnic identification plays in racial switching. Some whites may have no plausible claim to an alternative racial identity. They may, however, maintain a white ethnic identity. Ethnic identification offers whites the opportunity to emphasize the hardships that their ancestors have faced to reduce associations with white supremacy. Previous work argues that claims of white ethnicity may be used to justify white dominance in the present period (Waters 1990). Crucial to white ethnic transference across generations is “the family stories about ancestors having faced discrimination in the past” (Waters 1990). Identifying with an ethnic identity allows whites to distance themselves from their racial identity and reduce any dissonance regarding whether they have “earned” their place in society, even when

there is no plausible claim to another racial identity.

3.3 Racial Switching in Panel Data

Study 1 utilizes data from the Voter Study Group panel data. YouGov conducted an online panel of 8,000 respondents in December 2011, November 2012, and December 2016. The study is unique not only because it measures race across each panel wave, but also because it utilizes an eight-point racial identification scale with a write-in "other race" option, crucial for understanding patterns of racial switching.

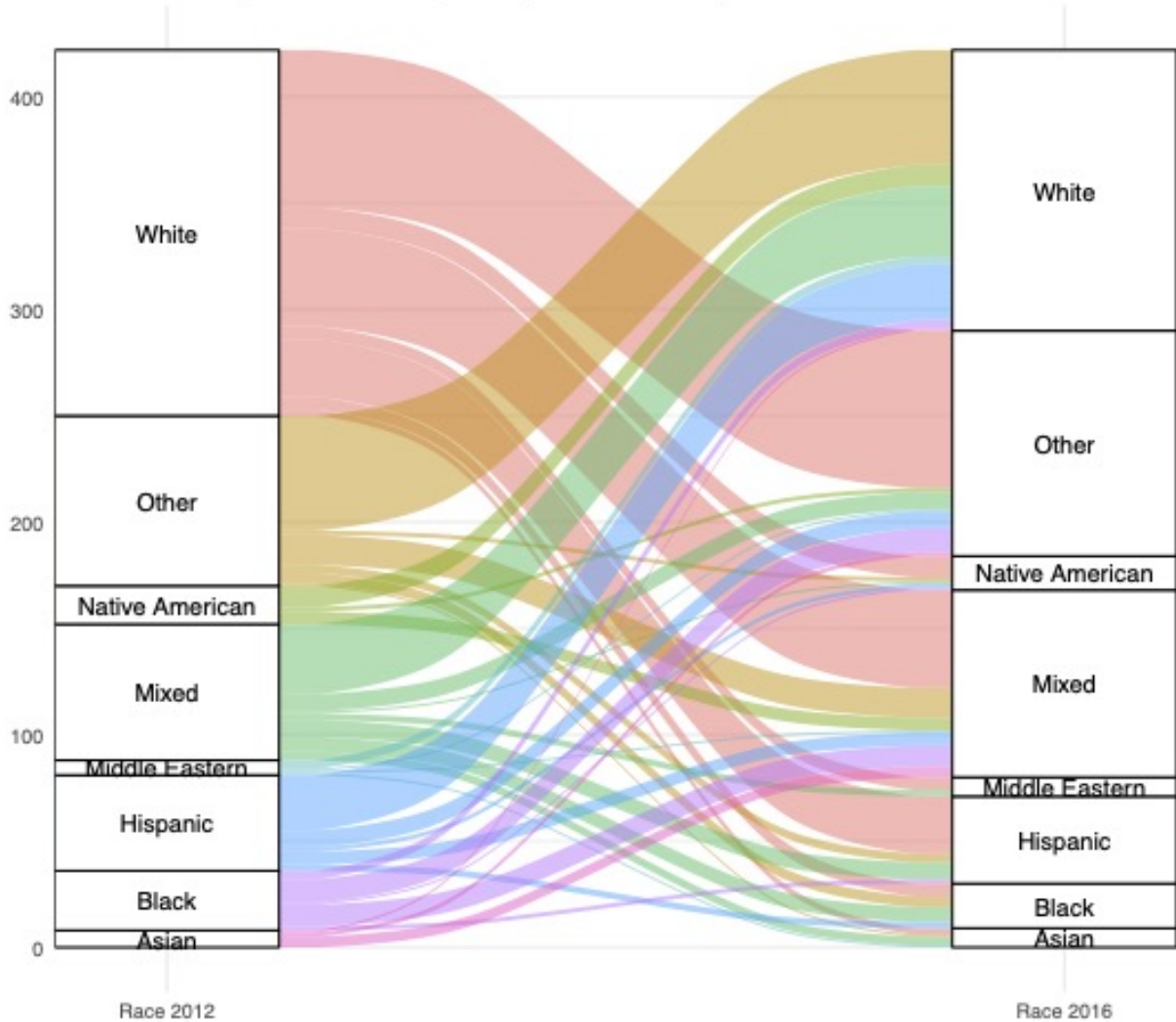
The dependent variable is racial switching. Respondents are classified as "racial switchers" if they identified as white in 2011 and as nonwhite, including Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Mixed, Other, and Middle Eastern, in 2016. In total, 422 respondents out of 8,000 switched races across waves. Of those 422, 172 switched from white to nonwhite between waves, or 2.7 percent of whites in the first wave. Figure 3.1 illustrates the distribution of race switching outcomes among all individuals that switched races from the baseline survey to 2016. The largest category out of all switchers is white individuals switching to an "Other" identity.

Table 3.1 offers greater detail regarding the "Other Race" category. I hand-coded all write-in responses for the "Other Race" category in 2016. The plurality of those that wrote in an alternate race identified as an ethnicity traditionally associated with white racial identity (e.g. "Italian", "Jewish", or generic "European").

Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 delineate the limits to racial switching. Racial switching does not appear to be a random phenomenon. Just nine respondents switched from identifying as white to identifying with a less permeable group such as Black or Asian, compared to 74 respondents that switched from identifying as white to identifying as "Other Race". On average, whites switch to a race or ethnicity with plausible connections to white identity, such as a white ethnic identity or a mixed identity.

I measured the perceived costs of whiteness with two variables. The first variable asked respondents whether they thought discrimination against whites was as big of a problem as discrimination

Figure 3.1: Race Switching 2011 to 2016, Among Switchers Only
Race Switching 2012 to 2016, Among Switchers Only



against minorities (1 = *Strongly agree*, 4 = *Strongly disagree*). The second variable asked respondents whether they thought the Obama administration treated Black Americans better than white Americans. I coded responses as 1 if respondents said that Black Americans were treated better than whites, and 0 otherwise. The Voter Study Group data only asked racial threat questions in the 2016 wave.

I adjusted for partisan identification (7-point scale), gender, college education, self-reported ideological placement (5-pt scale), and a white feeling thermometer. All covariates are from the baseline wave of the VSG panel to avoid post-treatment bias. In all analyses of racial switching

Table 3.1: Write-in "Other Race" Option

Write-In Identity Code	Count
American	12
Challenged question	4
Combination of two nonwhite	8
Combination of white and other	6
Decline	4
Human	6
"Mutt"	3
Nonwhite ethnic	9
Other	5
White ethnic	45

from white to nonwhite, the comparison category is respondents that identified as white across all panel waves.

3.3.1 Results

Table 3.2 displays the results from both regressions. Model 1 and 2 display the results of linear regressions with the Black favoritism variable. Model 1 shows the simple relationship between Black favoritism and racial switching, while Model 2 demonstrates the relationship with covariates. Models 3 and 4 display the results of linear regressions with the reverse discrimination variable as the central predictor. Model 3 displays the simple relationship between reverse discrimination perception and racial switching, and Model 4 displays the relationship with covariates.

Results from both models demonstrate that a higher perceived cost to whiteness is associated with an increased probability of racial switching. In Model 1, those who believe that the Obama administration favors Black Americans are 1.4 percentage points more likely to switch away from a white identity as compared to those that do not perceive that Black Americans are favored. Model 2 confirms the relationship after accounting for covariates. In Model 3, as compared to individuals who respond that they "strongly disagree" that reverse discrimination is worse, those that respond that they "strongly agree" that reverse discrimination is worse are 1.6 percentage

Table 3.2: Influence of Perceived Costs of Whiteness on Propensity of Racial Switching

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Racial Switching			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Blacks Favored	0.014*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.006)		
Reverse Discrimination			0.004** (0.002)	0.005** (0.003)
PID		-0.004** (0.002)		-0.002 (0.001)
Male		0.007 (0.005)		0.009* (0.004)
College Education		0.007** (0.003)		0.005* (0.003)
Ideology		-0.001*** (0.0002)		-0.001*** (0.0002)
Age		-0.0003** (0.0001)		-0.0003** (0.0001)
White FT		-0.003 (0.005)		-0.001 (0.005)
Constant	0.021*** (0.003)	0.064*** (0.015)	0.016*** (0.005)	0.054*** (0.014)
Observations	5,677	5,202	5,812	5,311
Log Likelihood	2,248.029	2,057.101	2,420.327	2,167.138
Akaike Inf. Crit.	-4,492.058	-4,098.203	-4,836.654	-4,318.276

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

points more likely to switch away from whiteness. Model 4 validates the results when covariates are included, showing that those that respond "strongly agree" are 2.0 percentage points more likely than those that respond "strongly disagree" to switch from a white identity to a nonwhite identity

across panel waves.

Is Racial Switching a Generic Reaction?

One possibility could be that threat perceptions are associated with any type of racial switching, not just among whites. Table 3.3 displays rates of racial switching among all racial groups. White identity is the least permeable as measured by rates of racial switching. Notably, other racial groups considered impermeable have similarly low rates of racial switching, such as among Asian and Black respondents. In comparison, highly permeable groups like Middle Eastern, mixed, Native American, and "other" identities have much higher rates of racial switching, although the results should be interpreted with caution due to the low number of respondents in some racial categories.

Table 3.3: Rates of Racial Switching Among All Racial Groups

Baseline Race	Prop.	N
Asian	0.07	120
Black	0.04	673
Hispanic	0.11	408
Middle Eastern	0.64	11
Mixed	0.39	166
Native American	0.29	61
Other	0.56	142
White	0.03	6402

Racial switching may not be a phenomenon that applies solely to whites, then. When I regressed threat perceptions on an indicator for any type of racial switching among nonwhites, there was no association between racial switching and perceptions of threat (see Appendix 7.1).

Summary

The results from Study 1 suggest that there is a relationship between perceived costs of whiteness and one's propensity to associate with whiteness: Individuals that perceive that the Obama administration favored Black Americans relative to whites and that perceive that reverse discrimination against whites is a bigger problem were more likely to switch from a white identity to an alternative racial identity. Furthermore, racial switching appears to be a logical phenomenon, not

a random one. Whites are much more likely to switch to an identity with high permeability, such as mixed, Hispanic, or "other" identities. In particular, whites emphasize white ethnic identities to differentiate themselves from generic white identities.

3.4 Perceptions of Discrimination and Racial Discrimination in the 2016 ANES Pilot

The 2016 American National Election Survey (ANES Pilot) offers an additional examination of the relationship between perceived costs of whiteness and white identification. The survey was fielded in January 2016 and sampled 1,200 Americans, 875 of whom were white. I retained only white respondents.

The dependent variable was an individuals' association with whiteness, as evaluated by the distribution of "white points" and self-reported skin tone. Respondents were given the statement..."Sometimes more than one racial or ethnic category helps to accurately describe someone. Imagine if our race and ethnicity could be described with a 10 point system...Now think of your own background in racial and ethnic terms. How would you describe your race and ethnicity using this 10-point system?" Respondents were then asked to distribute 10 points among a Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and Other identity. I conceptualized white identification as the number of "points" respondents attributed to a white identity. White respondents allocated an average of 8.34 "white points" ($SD = 2.82$) out of 10. To evaluate self-reported skin tone, respondents were asked to choose the image that best represented their skin tone out of a set of ten images of hands. The lightest skin tone was rated a one, and the darkest skin tone was rated a ten. On average, white respondents rated their skin tone an average of 2.03 ($\sigma = 0.96$) out of 10.

I measured the perceived costs of whiteness with an index of four questions that asked respondents about perceived discrimination against whites. I scaled all variables to 0-1 and added them into an index with a range of 0 to 4, with higher values communicating higher perceived costs to whiteness. The questions asked respondents how much discrimination there was against whites, whether the police favors white or Black Americans, whether the federal government favors white or Black Americans, and how likely it is that whites will lose out on a job because employers are

hiring racial minorities instead. The index has acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.76$).

I adjusted for gender, education, partisan self-identification (7-pt), ideology (5-pt), income, an indicator for whether the respondent is from a Southern state (including Southwest), and an indicator for emotional attachments to whiteness (white guilt).

3.4.1 Results

Table 3.4 shows two linear regressions evaluating the relationship between perceived costs to whiteness and association with whiteness. Model 1 displays the relationship between the perceived costs index and reported "white points". Model 2 shows the relationship between perceived costs and reported skin tone.

In Model 1, for each additional point on the costs index, respondents allocate an average of 0.3 fewer "white points". Compared to a respondent that allocates the lowest perceived possible costs of 0, a respondent that perceives the highest possible costs (4 out of 4) allocates an average of 1.2 fewer "white points", or nearly half of a standard deviation fewer "white points". Model 2 demonstrates that each additional unit of perceived costs is associated with an 0.09 point darker skin tone on average. Both models suggest that higher perceived costs to whiteness are associated with distancing oneself from whiteness, whether in terms of reported skin tone or reported "white points".

Study 2 confirms the findings from Study 1: Individuals that perceive a higher cost to whiteness are less likely to identify as white. Not only do they distribute fewer points to a white identity, but they also report a darker skin tone. This study offers a more robust relationship of the data by utilizing unique measures of identification with whiteness, showing that even presumably immutable measures such as reported skin tone are strategically used to distance oneself from whiteness.

3.5 Discussion

I argue that whites engage in "identity management" to avoid negative associations with their race. When whites perceive that there are higher costs to being white, they will be more likely to

Table 3.4: Relationship between Perceived Costs of Whiteness and Self-Reported Measures of Whiteness

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	White Points	Skin Tone
	(1)	(2)
Costs Index	-0.313** (0.152)	0.088* (0.053)
Male	0.077 (0.204)	-0.247*** (0.071)
Education	0.126* (0.073)	0.071*** (0.025)
PID	-0.032 (0.067)	0.029 (0.023)
Ideology	-0.065 (0.129)	0.027 (0.044)
Age	-0.055 (0.222)	0.056 (0.077)
South	-0.012* (0.006)	0.001 (0.002)
Income	0.038 (0.032)	-0.006 (0.011)
White Guilt	-0.131*** (0.041)	0.016 (0.014)
Constant	9.815*** (0.699)	1.697*** (0.243)
Observations	714	714
Log Likelihood	-1,717.935	-960.672
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,455.871	1,941.344

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

divorce themselves from a white identity. I drew on two sources of data to test this hypothesis. First, I utilized data from the 2011-2016 Voter Study Group panel to confirm that whites who perceive greater costs to whiteness will be more likely to switch to a nonwhite identity in the next period. I confirmed this relationship using data from the 2016 American National Election Survey, showing that whites who perceive higher costs to whiteness attribute fewer points to a white identity and rate their skin tone as less white on average. Altogether, the results demonstrate that whites who perceive a higher cost to whiteness will be more likely to identify with a non-white or white ethnic identity, thereby distancing themselves from associations with their white racial identity.

These findings are consistent with past work on white identity threats. Prior research has found that whites exposed to information regarding white privilege will emphasize stories of personal hardship to avoid implications of collective privilege (Taylor and Lowery 2015). However, this study provides a new addition, bolstered by social identity theory, that individuals that perceive negative associations to their racial identity may be more likely to switch from that identity to a more positively-associated identity (Tajfel 1979).

3.5.1 Alternative Explanations

One alternative explanation for the relationships could be that the racial switching results were uncovered by error. One potential argument is that the reporting of non-white identities are not seriously reported results and are instead the result of measurement error or nonserious responses. However, qualitative analysis of the write-in ethnic identities from the VSG panel demonstrates that white Americans take the reporting of an "other" race or ethnic identity seriously. In only one case in the VSG data did a respondent write in an "other" identity that was an aspect of a nonserious response.

In line with Agadjanian and Lacy (2021), I also evaluated whether the responses could be the result of respondents randomly answering survey questions by including an error flag if subjects dropped education levels from 2011 to 2016. Unlike Agadjanian and Lacy (2021), I did find

a significant effect of the flag on race switching, however, the results of my analysis remained unchanged (see Appendix 7.2). These findings ensure that race-switching is a true artifact and not simply the product of random survey responses.

I previously analyzed racial switching across all nonwhite identities and did not find that there was a relationship between threat perceptions and racial switching. However, there is the chance that perceptions of threat could also be associated with switching from a nonwhite identity to a white identity. To verify this relationship in the survey data, I analyzed the VSG data to examine whether the same relationship holds for non-whites who switch to a white identity across panel waves. I did not find that individuals that switched from a nonwhite identity to a white identity perceived any greater threat. Materials from this analysis can be found in Appendix 7.1.

The results suggest that there is no association between racial switching among nonwhites and perceptions of threat. Notably, however, the measures related to threat rely on perceived costs to a white identity. There is no similar outcome that evaluates perceived costs for each racial group. Further research could evaluate the extent to which racial switching is a viable reaction to ingroup threat for any racial group with an appropriate measure of nonwhite ingroup threat.

3.6 Conclusion

Across two studies, whites with a higher perception of the costs of whiteness were less likely to associate themselves with a white identity. Whites in the Voter Study Group data that perceived greater costs to whiteness were more likely to switch from a white identity to a nonwhite identity across panel waves. In the 2016 ANES Pilot data, whites who perceived greater discrimination against whites distributed fewer "points" toward a white identity. The results together suggest that ones' white identification is a strategic choice driven by the desire to mitigate negative associations with whiteness.

Chapter 4: Information about Whites Becoming the Demographic Minority Does Not Influence Political or Racial Conservatism Among White Americans

At the announcement of his presidential campaign in 2016, Donald Trump focused on Mexican immigrants to the United States. His statements on immigration became a centerpiece in his campaign and presidency. Political observers credited these "social and political dynamics stemming from the very demographic shifts that had previously engendered enthusiasm among Democrats and pessimism among Republicans, namely, the increasing racial minority share of the national population," for Trump's electoral success (Craig, Rucker, and Richeson 2018, p. 205). An increase in the nonwhite population of the United States seemingly increased conservatism among white Americans.

An extensive literature in psychology bolsters this demographic change-conservatism link, pointing to the role of racial demographic change in stoking *group status threat* and more conservative sentiments. Group status threats are threats that challenge a group's societal position relative to other groups and thus threaten control of resources. Individuals who perceive higher group status threat experience more negative emotions (Outten et al. 2012), more negative attitudes toward nonwhite outgroups (Craig and Richeson 2014a), and more conservative policy preferences (Craig and Richeson 2014b; Major, Blodorn, and Major Blascovich 2018).

The group status threat theory plays a dominant role in the political science and psychology literature explaining whites' reactions to immigration shifts in the last two decades. The most prominent experimental findings in this theory are found in Craig and Richeson (2014a) and Craig and Richeson (2014b), a set of two papers derived from a single set of experiments through Time-sharing Experiments in the Social Science (TESS). In a series of several experiments, Craig and

Richeson (2014a, 2014b) randomly assigned respondents to read about demographic shifts such that whites would be the demographic minority by 2042 or about increasing geographic mobility. Craig and Richeson found that whites in the racial shift condition expressed more negative views of nonwhites Craig and Richeson (2014b) and more conservative policy preferences Craig and Richeson (2014a).

These papers boast a combined 826 citations and have led to a cascade of research on group status threats, including highly influential papers that link the rise of Donald Trump to America's impending majority-minority status (Mutz 2018, 727 citations). The findings are the basis for a foundational theory in American politics.

Recent work questions the consistency of these findings, noting limited evidence of the impact of racial demographic threats on political conservatism (Brown, Rucker, and Richeson 2021; Stewart and Willer 2021). However, there has never been an exact replication of the Craig and Richeson experiments. Smaller studies may raise questions regarding the influence of group status threats on Trump votes (Stewart and Willer 2021), or claim that heterogeneous treatment effects now dominate over main effects (Brown, Rucker, and Richeson 2021), but they do not speak to the root findings of the Craig and Richeson experiments. The purpose of this research is to conduct that test.

Should we expect learning about racial demographic change to influence political conservatism? I conducted four experiments as a contemporary test of Craig and Richeson's 2014 experiment, three that varied the strength of the experimental intervention and one that performed an exact test of the original experiment.

Two findings emerged from these experiments. First, my four experiments suggest there is no relationship between information on racial shift cues and conservative policy preferences, self-placed ideology, attitudes toward nonwhite outgroups, or white racial identification. Although perceived group status threat increased, there was no association between group status threat perceptions and increased political or racial conservatism.

Second, from Craig and Richeson's 2014 data, there was a link between information about

demographic change and conservative policy preferences, but previously unreported results indicate that there is no relationship between group threats and ideological self-placement. Although there is a weak link between group threats and perceptions of nonwhite racial groups, there is no relationship between group threat and other racial attitudes.

Given these findings, the link between racial demographic change and political or racial conservatism appears weaker than previously expected in 2014 and does not replicate in 2021. An examination of potential mediators offers one reason for this result: For some whites, there is a positive reaction after exposure to information on racial shifts, including increased certainty in America's future and reduced perceptions of system threat. However, results from Study 4 suggest that this rhetoric is most likely cheap talk: There was no significant shift in implicit racial attitudes after exposure to the racial shift treatment. Instead, two more likely explanations are that the original results were time-bound, or that information about demographic change is simply no longer new to most Americans.

4.1 Hypothesizing the Group Threat-Conservatism Link

Proponents of group threat theories anticipate that when individuals experience threats to their group standing, they become more defensive to maintain their dominant group status. These expectations derive from group position theory (Blumer 1958). Under group position theory, individuals conceptualize themselves and the groups that they are a part of in relation to the status of outgroups. For whites in the United States, these comparisons come in relation to nonwhite outgroups.

In the United States, there is a racial hierarchy in which whites sit at the top (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Carter and Pérez 2016; Bobo 1999). Groups' positions in the hierarchy are intimately related to access to resources such as education and generational wealth. Correlational research demonstrates that individuals' position in the racial hierarchy predicts opposition to immigrant outgroups (Carter and Pérez 2016). When white Americans perceive threats to their position in the racial hierarchy, they act to maintain their group status and safeguard their access to resources (Lowery et al. 2006). Threats to group position in the racial hierarchy are conceptualized as *group*

status threats.

The most common experimental stimuli manipulating group threat relates to the changing demographics of the United States. The proportion of nonwhites has increased in the United States such that whites will no longer constitute a majority of the U.S. population by 2042. Theoretically, racial shifts are anticipated to increase group threat, and thereby political and racial conservatism, because becoming the demographic minority threatens whites' hierarchical position and access to resources.

Previous experiments induced group threats among whites. Upon exposure to what Craig and Richeson call "racial shift cues", whites display more negative emotions such as anxiety (Outten et al. 2012). They also express more conservative policy preferences across a number of issue areas, spanning both race-specific (immigration, affirmative action) and ostensibly race-neutral (defense) policy areas (Craig and Richeson 2014a; Bai and Federico 2020; Wetts and Willer 2018; Craig, Rucker, and Richeson 2018). Exposure to racial shift cues also influences vote intention and may have played a particular role in the 2016 election of Donald Trump (Major, Blodorn, and Major Blascovich 2018). Racial shift cues lead to more negative perceptions of nonwhite outgroups, as group position theory would predict (Craig and Richeson 2014b). These reactions are not confined to older generations; white millennials respond similarly to racial shift cues (Schildkraut and Marotta 2018).

Recent findings complicate our understanding of the demographic change-conservatism link. In a series of six experiments and a subsequent meta-analysis, Stewart and Willer (2021) were unable to find evidence for a group threat-conservatism link as it related to conservative voting preferences. After exposure to a racial shift cue nearly identical to Major, Blodorn, and Major Blascovich (2018) on racial shifts in the United States, individuals were no more likely to express a Trump vote preference. Brown, Rucker, and Richeson (2021) found that although there was a relationship between racial shift cues and perceived group status threat, moderated by political ideology, there was no overall effect of the racial shift condition on conservative policy preferences.

Although these tests offer preliminary evidence that the demographic change-conservatism

link does not hold, there has not previously been an exact replication of the Craig and Richeson experiments conducted in 2014. Other studies have focused on outcomes such as vote intention, but have not assessed the influence of same racial shift cue on policy preferences or outgroup perceptions. My three experiments a more definitive test of demographic change treatments over time.

My work offers a solution to the puzzle of why Craig and Richeson's 2014 results do not replicate: The reason behind the demographic change-conservatism disconnect is because white Americans report more optimistic reactions to information about whites' declining demographic status. One interpretation of this association is that white attitudes have meaningfully changed to the extent that whites no longer fear becoming the demographic minority. A more likely explanation, however, is that whites engage in expressions of racial liberalism that do not necessarily connect to their legitimate reactions to racial shift cues. In other words, social desirability bias is the reason for the group threat-conservatism disconnect. In one example, white respondents inflate evaluations of nonwhite outgroups to the extent that they rate all other nonwhite groups more positively than whites, seemingly driven by their reticence to rate whites at 100 out of 100 points on feeling thermometers. Furthermore, there is no shift in implicit racial attitudes upon exposure to the racial shift treatment. A second explanation is that information about racial shifts is no longer new to most white Americans, leading to muted reactions to racial shift cues.

4.2 Existing Research

I examine the robustness of the racial threat-conservatism link by replicating experiments conducted by Craig and Richeson in 2014 that link racial shift information to more conservative policy preferences and more negative attitudes toward racial outgroups. In an early experimental test of status threat theories, Craig and Richeson explored whether exposure to information regarding the declining status of whites in the United States influenced policy attitudes and outgroup attitudes. Although both articles employ smaller pilot findings to demonstrate the results of status threat, results from both sets of experiments were confirmed by a study conducted by Knowledge Networks

through the Timesharing Experiments in the Social Sciences (TESS, $N = 415$). Due to TESS's data-sharing policy, the data from this experiment were open to public use.

In the TESS experiment, 415 white American participants were randomly assigned to receive one of two treatments. Participants in the racial shift condition read an article informing them that population demographics in the United States were shifting such that whites would be the demographic minority by 2042. Respondents in the control condition read an article on increasing geographic mobility in the United States.

Participants in the racial shift condition reported more conservative policy preferences. They also rated nonwhite outgroups (Blacks, Latinos, and Asians) more negatively on feeling thermometers relative to those in the control condition. The only potential mediator influenced by the treatment was group status threat, which mediated the relationship between the racial shift treatment and more conservative political and racial attitudes. Their findings suggest that whites exposed to information about shifting population demographics become more conservative both politically and racially, driven by whites' fears regarding the primacy of their racial group.

4.3 Replication Using Original Data

I replicated Craig and Richeson's findings using the original data from TESS. To assess the influence of racial shifts on conservative ideology, measured by policy preferences, the authors evaluated political ideology through five policy measures. The authors found a main effect of treatment condition on racial policy issues as well as race-neutral policy issues. I replicated the original analysis with a multilevel model and found a marginal main effect of treatment ($F(1,1192) = 3.7, p = 0.054$) and no interaction between policy type and treatment condition (see Appendix 8.4 for full replication).

The authors assessed the effect of racial shifts on attitudes towards Blacks, whites, Asians, and Latinos and reported a main effect of experimental condition on negative attitudes. Participants in the racial shift group reported more negative attitudes towards Blacks, Latinos, and Asians. I replicated the analysis with a multilevel model and found a main effect of target group: Respondents

rated all racial outgroups more negatively than whites. However, I did not find a main effect of treatment condition and did not find an interaction between treatment condition and any specific target group, with the exception of Asians.

Previously unreported outcomes in the Craig and Richeson data complicate our understanding of these results. Two measures evaluating racial attitudes and one item measuring ideology returned null results. These findings run counter to the claim that racial shifts led to more conservative racial and political attitudes. A full replication of these outcomes may be found in Appendix 8.4.

4.4 Replication using New Data

4.4.1 Exact Replication

Study 1 is an exact replication of the Craig and Richeson experiment. I recruited 891 non-Hispanic white respondents from Prolific, an online opt-in survey platform. Participants read about a projected population shift or an increase in geographic mobility. The treatments were identical to those used in Craig and Richeson (2014a, 2014b). Participants responded to several questions evaluating mediators, identical to the mediators used in Craig and Richeson, and answered questions on support for policy items, feeling thermometers toward Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and whites, and two other items on comfort around nonwhites. The survey instrument to this point was taken directly from Craig and Richeson's open-source materials. I added two outcome measures evaluating white identity strength.

Method

I surveyed 891 non-Hispanic white respondents from Prolific (442 men, 450 women; mean age = 35.48, $SD = 12.72$). Respondents were pre-filtered using Prolific's demographic filters. This strategy differs from Craig and Richeson's strategy in that Craig and Richeson originally recruited nonwhite participants, but weighted them with a negligible weight (0.0001) such that nonwhite participants were de facto excluded from the analyses. The survey instrument, including

question wording and order, was identical to that used in Craig and Richeson, with exceptions noted. Participants first read one of two paragraphs: One informing them that whites would be the demographic majority in the United States by 2042 (keeping Craig and Richeson's language, "racial shift condition"), and one on increasing geographic mobility in the United States ("control condition").

Participants next completed several items on potential mediators: System threat (Jost et al. 2007), system justification (Kay and Jost 2003), perceived uncertainty, and perceived threat to societal status (from Outten et al. (2012)). System threat was measured by two questions: One that asked participants whether they thought the American way of life was threatened (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*), and one about their views of America's future (1 = *future getting much worse every year*, 7 = *future getting much better every year*). The items were standardized with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation equal to 1 and averaged. System justification was measured by an item that asked participants whether people usually get what they deserve in American society (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*). Perceived uncertainty was evaluated with a question that asked respondents how certain they were about America's future (1 = *extremely certain*, 6 = *extremely uncertain*). Perceived group status threat was measured with an item that asked respondents to agree whether an increasing number of minorities will mean a reduction in whites' status (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Participants stated support for five policy positions: support for affirmative action, increased time to naturalization, increased numbers of immigrants permitted, support for universal health-care, and support for increased defense spending. The items on immigration and affirmative action were treated as race-based policies, while the items on defense and universal healthcare were treated as race-neutral items. All policy items were standardized and averaged to create policy indices. Higher numbers correspond to more conservative policy positions in all instances. Respondents also placed themselves on an ideological scale (1 = *extremely liberal*, 7 = *extremely conservative*).

Respondents rated Black people, Latinos, Asians, and whites on a series of 101-point feeling

thermometers. They responded to two items on other racial attitudes: Whether they would feel comfortable in a social setting where there were few people from their racial group (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and whether they would prefer to live in a neighborhood with people of their same racial/ethnic origin (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*).

I asked respondents two questions on white identity not included in the original articles. Respondents were given ten "identity points" and were asked to distribute them between a white identity and an ethnic identity (e.g. German). Respondents were also asked how important being white was to their identity, a common measurement of white identity strength derived from Jardina (2019).

I conducted a multilevel model with treatment condition as the between-subjects condition and outcome (target racial group or policy type) as the within-subjects outcome, including fixed effects for participant ID. I adjusted for respondents' age, education, gender, pretreatment partisan ID (1 = *strong Democrat*, 7 = *Strong Republican*), and pretreatment self-placement ideology (1 = *strong liberal*, 7 = *strong conservative*). For all other models, I conducted a linear regression with robust standard errors with the outcome measure as the dependent variable, treatment as independent variable, and adjusted for demographic controls.

The first column of Table 4.1 displays the multilevel model with policy type as the within-subjects condition. Respondents were more conservative overall on race-neutral policies, but respondents in the racial shift condition were no more conservative than those in the control condition on average. There was no interaction between treatment and policy type. Respondents were also no more conservative on an ideological self-placement measure.

The second column of Table 4.1 displays the regression results of a multilevel model with treatment as the between-subjects condition and target racial group (Black, Latino, Asian, or white) as the within-subjects condition. Respondents across conditions rated Latinos and Asians more positively than whites but did not rate Black people significantly differently. There was no main effect of treatment condition. There was no interaction by treatment condition or racial target group between the treatment condition and Black feeling thermometer (FT), Latino FT, or Asian

	Policy Preferences	Feeling Thermometer
(Intercept)	-3.06*** (0.17)	76.94*** (2.78)
Treatment	0.04 (0.10)	0.63 (1.44)
Nonracial Policies	4.55*** (0.10)	
Age	0.01*** (0.00)	0.06 (0.05)
Education	0.05 (0.03)	-0.20 (0.45)
Gender	-0.12 (0.07)	-4.87*** (1.21)
PID	0.12** (0.04)	-0.47 (0.61)
Ideology	0.66*** (0.04)	-0.61 (0.65)
Treatment x Nonracial Policies	-0.03 (0.15)	
Black		1.43 (0.92)
Latino		2.87** (0.92)
Asian		4.69*** (0.92)
Treatment x Black		1.11 (1.31)
Treatment x Latino		1.46 (1.31)
Treatment x Asian		2.25 (1.31)
AIC	6420.66	29630.74
BIC	6480.71	29723.03
Log Likelihood	-3199.33	-14800.37
Num. obs.	1736	3472
Num. groups: id	868	868
Var: id (Intercept)	0.00	261.70
Var: Residual	2.29	185.02

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 4.1: Effect of Racial Shift Cue on Policy Preferences and Feeling Thermometer Scores

FT scores.

Respondents in the racial shift condition did not express any more discomfort among racial outgroups than respondents in the control condition ($\hat{b} = 0.01, p = 0.91$). They also did not significantly express greater preferences for coracial neighbors ($\hat{b} = 0.27, p = 0.12$).

I asked respondents two questions regarding white identification that were not included in the original Craig and Richeson experiment. Respondents in the racial shift condition reported marginally greater ethnic identification over white identification ($\hat{b} = 0.27, p = 0.07$), but did not report that their race was any more important to their identity ($\hat{b} = 0.06, p = 0.48$).

The results suggest that exposure to a racial shift treatment does not influence policy preferences, ideological self-placement, attitudes toward racial outgroups, or racial identification. I analyzed potential mediators to better understand the racial shift-conservatism disconnect.

Respondents' reported sense of system justification was no different in the racial shift condition than the control condition ($\hat{b} = -0.07, p = 0.46$). Respondents unexpectedly reported lower system threat in the racial shift condition, expressing more positive attitudes about American society ($\hat{b} = -0.25, p < 0.001$). Respondents in the racial shift condition perceived less uncertainty about society's future than the control condition ($\hat{b} = -0.17, p = 0.02$). Respondents in the racial shift condition also reported an increased sense of group threat ($\hat{b} = 0.28, p < 0.001$). In comparison, respondents in Craig and Richeson (2014a, 2014b) expressed greater perceived group threat but did not express statistically different perceptions of system threat, system justification, or uncertainty.

Table 4.2 shows the mediation coefficients for group threat, system threat, and uncertainty on the political conservatism index, for which the variables do not successfully mediate the relationship between racial shift condition and political conservatism. Group threat, system threat, and uncertainty also do not mediate the relationship between racial shift condition and any feeling thermometer outcomes (see Appendix 8.2). In one exception, all three variables mediated the racial shift treatment and the Asian feeling thermometer. These findings are consistent with Craig and Richeson (2014b) and call for a deeper examination of attitudes toward Asians.

	Group Threat	System Threat	Uncertainty
Total effect of threat on conservatism	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Direct effect	0.02 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
Indirect of treatment through mediator	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Table 4.2: Mediation Coefficients for Conservatism

Discussion

In Study 1, I conducted a test of Craig and Richeson’s experiments using identical survey materials. Although the racial shift condition increased perceptions of group status threat, this increase in group status threat did not correspond to more conservative policy preferences, more negative attitudes toward racial outgroups, or differences in white racial identification.

4.4.2 Strengthening the Treatment Content

In Studies 2 and 3, I varied the strength and content of the racial shift treatment to evoke stronger responses in participants. In Study 2, I surveyed 368 respondents on Amazon Mechanical Turk (181 male, 187 female; mean age = 40.5, sd age = 12.1). Respondents in the racial shift condition were assigned to read a text treatment that stated that white Americans were soon projected to be the numerical minority in the United States, which could threaten the political and social status of white Americans (see Appendix 8.3). The treatment was shorter than the TESS treatment, but unlike the TESS experiment, it explicitly reminded participants that this demographic shift would likely result in loss of power (see Appendix 8.3 for treatments). Participants in the control condition did not read any text and were asked to proceed to the following questions.

Method

Participants were asked whether they favored or opposed five policy issues: affirmative action, stronger immigration enforcement, decreasing welfare, increasing Social Security, and expanding

Medicare. For all policies, higher values indicate more conservative policy preferences. The items were scaled and averaged into an overall index of policy preferences. I also constructed indexes for nonracial policies (increasing Social Security and expanding Medicare) and for policies with traditionally racial associations (opposition to affirmative action, immigration enforcement, and decreasing welfare). Although these results differ from the policy outcomes in the Craig and Richeson measure, they may lead to even greater shifts in policy preference due to the salience and informational simplicity of some of the items (e.g. welfare attitudes in Study 2 versus naturalization timeline in Study 1).

To estimate the average treatment effect for each policy index, I conducted a linear regression with robust standard errors with a binary treatment condition indicator, adjusting for education, age, gender, partisan identification (1 = *strong Democrat*, 5 = *strong Republican*), and ideology (1 = *very liberal*, 7 = *very conservative*).

Figure 4.1: Estimated ATEs for Study 1

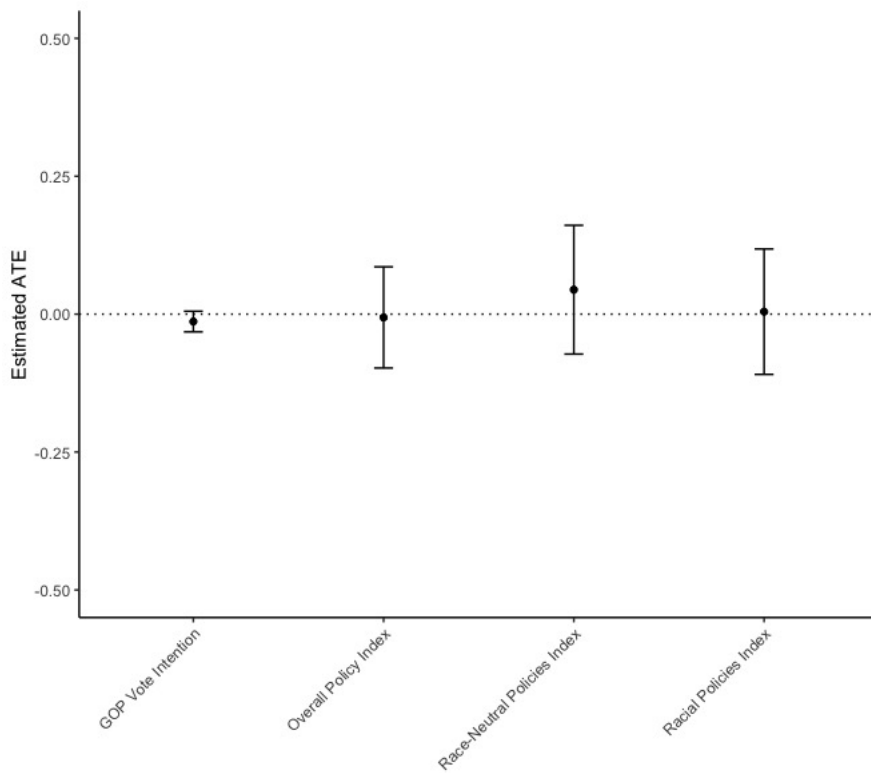


Figure 4.1 shows the estimated average treatment effects of receiving the white threat condition.

The average treatment effect for all policy positions is close to zero. In no case does the treatment have a substantively large or significant estimated effect on respondents' policy positions or vote intention.

Discussion

The results from the second study do not suggest a link between the racial shift condition and conservative policy preferences or vote intention. Although the treatment I utilized was shorter than the TESS experiment, it outright told whites that their loss of primacy would result in declining political and economic status.

4.4.3 Strengthening the Treatment Form

In Study 3, I strengthened the racial shift cue even further, providing respondents with a video cue instead of a text-based cue. I conducted Study 3 on Amazon Mechanical Turk from November 7-9, 2021 to assess the impact of a strengthened version of the racial shift condition.

Method

I recruited 274 respondents from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) from November 7-9, 2021 to take part in a short survey (158 men, 135 women; mean age = 42.5, sd age = 12.7). Respondents were screened to include only white, non-Hispanic Americans. Respondents answered questions on their demographic characteristics and their white identity strength, then were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Respondents in the racial shift condition watched a 1 minute and 10 second clip from a Reuters news segment, aired on August 21, 2021, stating that the proportion of whites in the United States was declining relative to the proportion of racial minorities. Respondents in the control condition did not watch a video and proceeded directly to the following questions. The survey included a built-in timer equal to the length of the video to ensure that respondents did not advance without playing the video entirely.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked about the content of the video. Eleven re-

spondents in the treatment condition did not correctly answer a question about the video, while all participants in the control condition correctly reported that they did not watch a video. I assume that respondents that correctly identified the video content received the treatment, while those that incorrectly identified the video did not receive the treatment. To address the one-sided non-compliance, I estimated the Complier Average Causal Effect (CACE) as opposed to the Average Treatment Effect (ATE) among all respondents. To obtain the CACE, I conducted an instrumental variables regression with policy preferences or vote intent as the outcome measure, whether the respondent received the racial shift treatment as the main predictor, and treatment assignment as an instrument. I adjusted for age, education, gender, partisan self-identification (7-pt), and ideology (7-pt).

To assess the influence of the racial shift condition on policy preferences, respondents rated agreement with five policy positions: eliminating affirmative action, stronger immigration enforcement, increasing Social Security, decreasing welfare, and expanding Medicare. Respondents responded if they favored the position (-1 = *oppose*, 1 = *favor*). All policy positions were recoded such that positive values signified more conservative policy positions. Policy positions were scaled into an index by adding all items together. Respondents also answered a question about their vote intention for the 2024 presidential election (1 if Republican, 0 otherwise).

Regression results shown in Table 4.3 demonstrate that those assigned to the racial shift condition were no more conservative, on average, than those in the control condition. Respondents were slightly less likely to report a Republican vote intention after exposure to the racial shift treatment.

Discussion

The results from Study 3 confirm the findings of previous studies: Exposure to a racial shift treatment did not lead to more conservative policy preferences or a greater Republican vote intention, even when the treatment was a more intense video threat. These effects were not moderated by pretreatment partisan identification.

	Policy Preferences	Vote Intention
Intercept	-4.73*** (0.67)	-0.39*** (0.08)
Received Treatment	-0.17 (0.27)	-0.06* (0.03)
Education	0.04 (0.10)	0.00 (0.01)
Age	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)
Male	0.28 (0.25)	0.03 (0.03)
PID (7-pt)	0.47*** (0.10)	0.15*** (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.55*** (0.11)	0.05*** (0.01)
R ²	0.46	0.80
Adj. R ²	0.45	0.80
Num. obs.	293	238

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 4.3: Estimating the Complier Average Causal Effect of the Racial Shift Treatment on Policy Preferences and Vote Intention

4.4.4 Do Population Threats Increase Racial Liberalism?

The previous three experiments show no significant link between information about whites' decreasing demographic primacy and increased racial or political conservatism. One potential explanation for this disconnect is that whites may be so racially liberal that they view the impending majority-minority status of the United States as a good thing. An examination of the mediators from Study 1 suggests that, in fact, whites exposed to the population threat treatment display reduced uncertainty regarding American society and a more positive outlook on the future of the United States. However, a competing explanation could be that although whites express more positive emotions in survey responses, their responses are not reflective of a true embrace of racially liberal principles. In other words, the evidence of increased positivity may be due to social desirability bias rather than a genuine response. To better understand whether these responses may be a manifestation of true underlying attitudes, I conducted a fourth study that included an Implicit

Association Test measuring white identity.

Method

I recruited 822 non-Hispanic white participants from Prolific from February 8-11, 2022. Respondents were randomly shown either the population threat text treatment used in Study 3, or were not shown a treatment. Respondents then took the White Identity Centrality Implicit Association Test (WICIAT) derived from Knowles and Peng (2005). The WICIAT from Knowles and Peng (2005) is designed to test the difference between one's connection to the white racial ingroup versus connection to racial outgroups.

Respondents were asked to complete a set of matching tasks as quickly as possible. Respondents first completed two learning blocks. In the first learning block, respondents were asked to classify a list of names from Knowles and Peng (2005) as white or non-White names. In the second learning block, respondents categorized pronouns ("I", "me", "them") as relating to the self or other. Respondents then faced three more blocks. First, respondents had to categorize a mix of names and pronouns as White/self or non-White/other. Respondents then completed a round in which the White/self or non-White/other positions on the screen were switched. In the final round, respondents were presented with a set of "incompatible" words (non-White/self and White/other) and were asked with matching the words to the correct category. In expectation, most whites will match compatible words (White/self and non-White/other) more quickly than incompatible words (non-White/self and White/other). A greater timed discrepancy between compatible and incompatible matching tasks signifies greater ingroup bias. More information about the conduct of the WICIAT is found in Appendix 8.5.

IAT scores are reported as D (Mean = 0.46, SD = 0.40), with higher scores indicating greater ingroup bias. I estimated the effect of the treatment on IAT scores by conducting a linear regression with robust standard errors, with D as the outcome measure and an indicator for the treatment as the independent variable. I adjusted for education, age, gender, partisanship, and ideology.

After completing the IAT, respondents answered the same questions regarding policy prefer-

ences that were asked in Studies 2 and 3. Respondents then provided their demographic characteristics and exited the survey.

	IAT Scores	Policy Preferences	Vote Intention
Intercept	0.23* (0.07)	-0.14*** (0.03)	-0.39*** (0.04)
Treatment	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)
Education	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age	0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Gender	-0.04 (0.03)	0.04*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
PID (7-pt)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.02 (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
R ²	0.05	0.54	0.60
Adj. R ²	0.05	0.53	0.59
Num. obs.	777	791	797
RMSE	0.40	0.20	0.25

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 4.4: Effect of Population Threat Treatment on WICIAT Outcomes, Policy Preferences, and Vote Intention

Regression results in Table 4.4 show that there was no effect of the racial shift treatment on WICIAT scores. Additionally, there was no effect of the racial shift treatment on policy preferences or vote intention. All estimates are close to zero.

Discussion

The results from Study 4 suggest that there is no relationship between the racial shift treatment and political conservatism. Furthermore, exposure to the racial shift treatment was not associated with significantly different implicit racial attitudes.

4.5 Explaining the Group Threat-Conservatism Disconnect

Does learning about changing population demographics lead to more conservative political and racial preferences among white Americans? Across four original experiments, the results point to no. Study 1 tested a shortened version of the Craig and Richeson treatment that explicitly informed participants that changing population demographics would lead to decreased power. I did not find any effect of the treatment on policy preferences or stated vote intention. Study 2 performed an exact replication of the Craig and Richeson study. I did not find that the racial shift condition led to more conservative policy positions or racial attitudes. I found that while perceptions of group threat increased, participants also reported increased certainty about America's future and decreased perceptions of system threat. Study 3 intensified the Craig and Richeson treatment with a video cue instead of a text-based treatment. There was no effect of the racial shift video cue on conservative policy preferences or vote intention. Study 4 presented the text treatment from Study 2, but evaluated racial attitudes among respondents with an Implicit Association Test. Exposure to the racial shift treatment was not associated with significantly different implicit racial attitudes. All together, the results suggest that there is scant evidence for a link between racial threat cues and more conservative political or racial attitudes.

These findings are consistent with recent work that demonstrates limited evidence of the relationship between racial shift treatments and more conservative policy preferences. Following Brown, Rucker, and Richeson (2021), I did not find that the racial shift condition led to more conservative policy preferences, although both studies find increases in group status threat. Like Stewart and Willer (2021), I did not find that racial shift treatments led to more conservative vote intentions.

One explanation for the disconnect between racial shift treatments and conservatism is that there could have been a genuine shift in racial attitudes such that increased diversity is now seen as a net positive. There is some evidence that Americans have become more racially conscious over the past decade, particularly among liberals. Slightly over half of white liberals now say that

whites have advantages that Black Americans do not have, up from 38 percent in 2016 (Center 2021). The proportion of white Republicans who believe that a majority-minority country is "bad for the country" has declined nearly 20 percentage points from 2016 to 2019 (Center 2019). These results suggest that white Americans, both liberals and conservatives, are becoming more racially liberal.

This explanation is most compelling when taking the results for potential mediators at face value. While group threat perceptions increased, so did certainty about society's future and overall perceptions of American society. The item on group status threat asks respondents whether they think that changing demographics will result in the loss of power for white Americans. Previously, agreement with that statement was implicitly accepted to have negative associations for white Americans. Now, it appears that although whites agree with that statement, they do not view their statistical decline so negatively.

This explanation is satisfactory only if we take the results on potential mediators as genuine expressions of acceptance rather than as products of social desirability bias. Feeling thermometer results demonstrate some peculiar response patterns that are inconsistent with behavioral data in the social science literature.

Figure 4.2 shows feeling thermometer data from Study 2. The mean feeling thermometer rating was similar across racial group and treatment conditions. Discrepancies across feeling thermometer ratings appear to be driven by whites' reticence to rate whites at a 100 on a 101-point feeling thermometer, while they are more willing to rate nonwhite outgroups at 100. Although the mean rating of whites is nearly identical from 2014 to 2021 ($M_{2014} = 71.26$, $M_{2021} = 72.65$), ratings of nonwhite groups have ballooned to the extent that ratings of any nonwhite group now exceed the mean rating of whites. These results appear to be driven by large proportions of whites rating nonwhites at 100 on a 101-point feeling thermometer and an avoidance of rating nonwhites at less than 50 on feeling thermometers. In 2014, rates of participants rating nonwhites below 50 ranged from 12 percent (Asian FT) to 22 percent (Latino FT). In 2021, the rate at which participants rated nonwhites below 50 was much lower, ranging from 4 percent (Asian FT) to 8 percent (Black FT).

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Feeling Thermometer Scores from Study 2

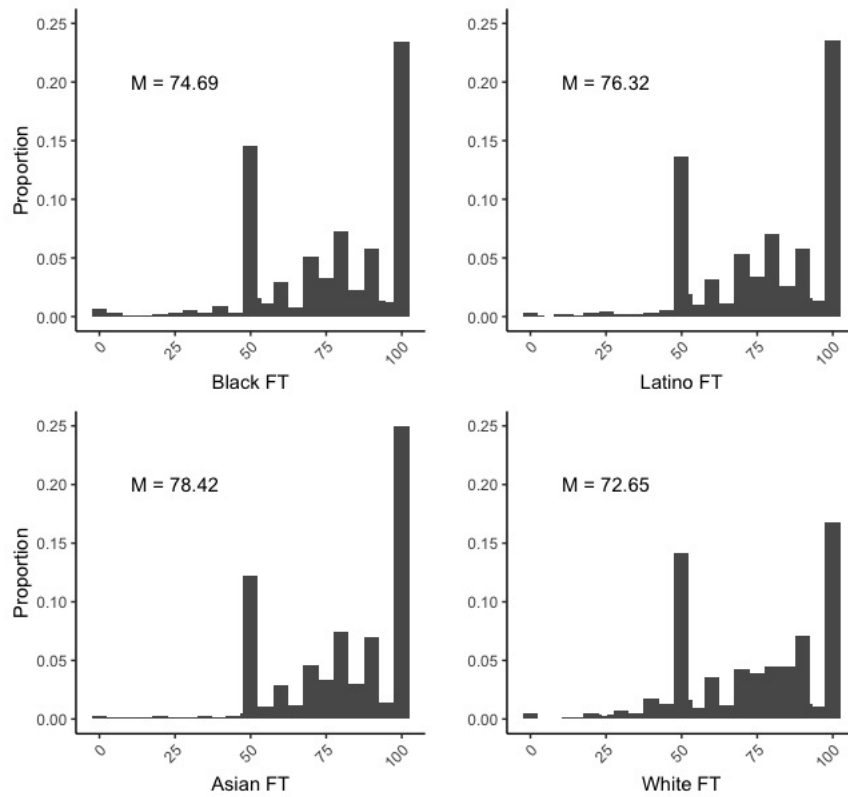
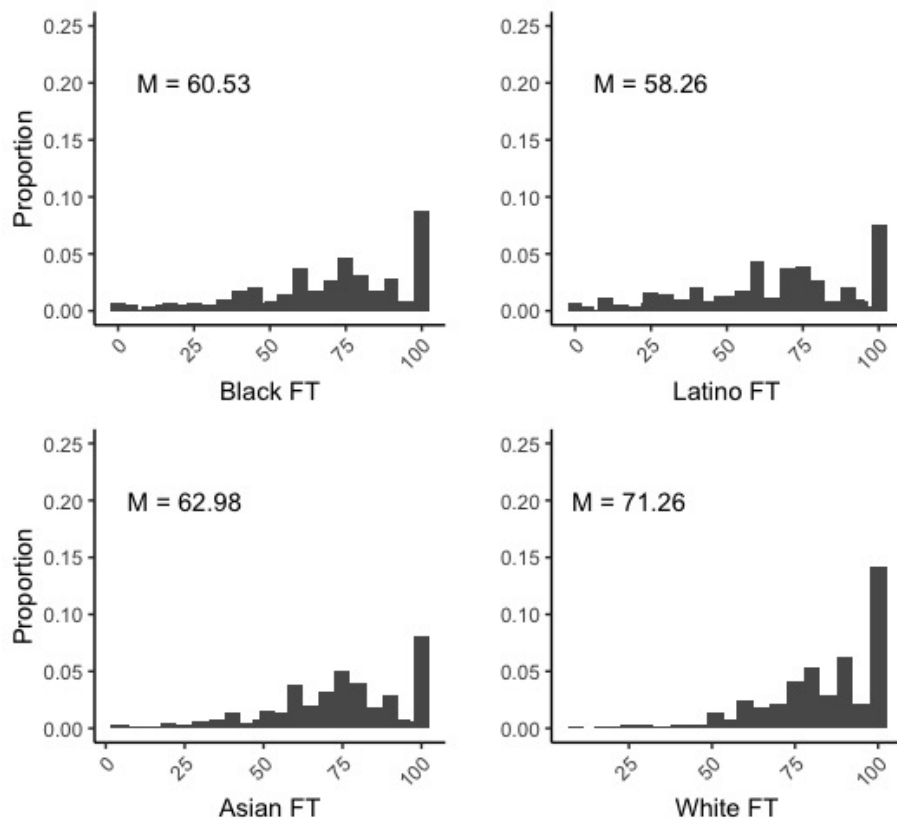


Figure 4.3: Distribution of Feeling Thermometer Scores from Original Craig and Richeson Data



In comparison, while just 4 percent of white participants rated whites below a 50 in 2014, nearly 11 percent of respondents rated their own racial group below a 50 in 2021.

Other outcome measures display similar levels of racial liberalism in 2021: Just 16 percent of respondents across conditions disagree with the statement that they would feel comfortable in settings where there would be few people from their racial group, a response rate at odds with behavioral data regarding whites' well-documented propensity for self-segregation (Anicich et al. 2021). The proportion of whites saying that they would not be comfortable dropped by about 13 percentage points from the original Craig and Richeson data, when almost 29 percent of respondents said they wouldn't feel comfortable.

The results from Study 4 demonstrate that this professed racial liberalism from study participants is most likely due to social desirability bias, not a genuine change in racial attitudes. Importantly, the IAT from Study 4 measured implicit attitudes, that is, the attitudes captured are presumably not influenced by social desirability. Once that consideration was removed, it is evident that there is no significant shift in racial attitudes after exposure to the racial shift treatment.

A different explanation for the missing demographic change-conservatism link could be that the original effects are time-bound. The first wave of racial shift studies were conducted under the Obama administration, when the election of the nation's first Black president had profound political influence on the attitudes of white Americans, such as the formation of the Tea Party. Racially explicit rhetoric on both Obama's presidency and immigration policy was salient and highly visible. Optimistic observers may argue that a post-Trump presidency resulted in a lower influence of racially explicit rhetoric on white Americans. This explanation may explain why racial shift treatments appeared to work in 2018, but not in 2021 (Major, Blodorn, and Major Blascovich 2018). However, null replication of the 2018 results demonstrate that even in 2018, the results on threat and conservatism do not replicate consistently (Stewart and Willer 2021).

An alternative extension of this theory is that the results are time-bound simply because the information that is introduced in the racial shift treatments is no longer new to most white Americans. Brown, Rucker, and Richeson (2021) found that participants in their study already believed

that the United States is a majority-minority nation. If most American whites already believe that they are in the minority, yet continue to observe that white Americans maintain their position on the top of the racial hierarchy, then they may believe that changing population demographics are a threat that is already diffused. A useful test of this theory could be carried out if researchers located a sample of whites unfamiliar with their declining status, however, finding such a set of whites may be difficult if this information is so diffuse.

Across four experiments, I found no evidence that there is a connection between information regarding demographic change and increases in political or racial conservatism. I find that it is unlikely that the results are due to increases in racial liberalism. Instead, the findings are likely a product of respondents' preexisting informational environments: If so many whites already believe that they are the demographic minority in the United States, the introduction of a racial shift cue, even a strengthened video treatment, would not greatly move attitudes.

4.5.1 Conclusion

The demographic composition of the United States has drastically shifted in the past half-century due to immigration and birth rate trends. Many political observers directly attribute those changes to a conservative shift in the American political environment, such as the formation of the Tea Party and the political ascent of Donald Trump. Yet, I demonstrate across four experiments that exposing whites to information about shifting racial demographics in the United States does not lead to more conservative political or racial attitudes. Furthermore, I find that there is a disconnect between professed and implicit racial attitudes: Although respondents display signs of heightened racial liberalism, their implicit racial attitudes do not change upon exposure to racial threat treatments. This disparity points to a potential shortcoming in the measures that are currently used to evaluate racial attitudes.

Chapter 5: White Identity is Stable In Response to Information about Whiteness: Four Studies on the Malleability of White Racial Identification

5.1 Introduction

The fundamental claim of the white identity politics literature is that whites have increased their ingroup attachments due to the presence of threats against whites, most significantly the loss of whites' demographic majority in the United States (Jardina 2019; Craig and Richeson 2014b, 2014a). This expectation is derived from the tenets of social identity theory, which states that individuals exposed to status threats may become more defensive of the ingroup and display more animosity toward outgroups (Tajfel 1979). A straightforward test of this literature is to expose whites to racial threats and measure their ingroup attachments. If white identity is reactionary as claimed, then we should expect whites to change their ingroup attachments when presented with this information. To test this theory, I presented whites with a series of positive and negative informational cues regarding their white identity and evaluated their reported sense of white identity.

Across four experiments, I find that white racial identification is a stable phenomenon in the face of both negative and positive identity inducements. After varying the type and intensity of stimuli presented to whites, I found no effect of any new information on white racial identification. The results were consistent for attitudes that might be considered less stable, such as whites' ratings of other whites, and attitudes that are likely a product of preadult socialization, such as adherence to white racial norms. The results challenge conceptualizations of white identity that portray whiteness as reactionary in the face of racial threats (Jardina 2019).

The relative malleability or durability of white identification has significant implications for the study of identity politics. In Chapter Two, I noted that the first step to engaging in collective action is a sense of common identification. Therefore, the extent to which whites associate themselves

with a white identity in the short- versus long-term matters for their propensity to act as a group. If white identity is a malleable phenomenon, then we might expect whites to have a more reactionary and instantaneous response to information regarding white identity than if white identity is stable.

In Chapter Three, I found that greater perceptions of discrimination against whites were associated with distancing from a white identity. However, I still do not know whether this process occurs instantaneously in response to new information or whether whites' reported sense of white identity develops over time. This chapter tests the time-boundedness of the associations observed in Chapter Three.

Given these findings, it is likely that white identification is less malleable and strategic in the short term than we might expect from social identity theory. Even when I exposed individuals to negative information about whiteness, whites did not respond by strengthening ingroup attachments or moving to different identities. These null findings present white identity as a durable phenomenon, even upon exposure to information thought to increase ingroup affinity.

5.2 The Case for White Identity as Short-term and Strategic

Under social identity theory (SIT), individuals are motivated to maintain a sense of identity that provides a positive sense of self-esteem (Tajfel 1979). However, at times, individuals may find themselves associated with "negative social identities", or identities with negative comparisons to outgroups. When individuals face threats to their social identities, they may engage in efforts to maintain their positive self-esteem through a series of strategies known as *identity management*, in which individuals' sense of identity is a strategic choice in response to new information (Knippenberg 1989).

One form of identity management is that of individual mobility, in which individuals who face group threats will move across group lines (e.g. change their reported identity) to maintain a sense of positive self-esteem (Blanz et al. 1998). Studies show that this response functions in the short term: When individuals are exposed to information that threatens their sense of self-esteem, they engage instantaneously in identity management strategies (Martiny and Kessler 2014). Short-term

changes may occur even when individuals' relatively enduring social identities, such as ethnic identities, are threatened. In one study, East German individuals exposed to information about East German discrimination immediately distanced themselves from their East German identity (Martiny and Kessler 2014).

Recent research in political science confirms that racial identity can be fluid. Egan (2020) found that individuals change identities that are considered immovable, such as religion and ethnicity, to align with their partisanship. This work demonstrates that even identities that are considered stable are subject to change. However, similar to my tests of racial switching in Chapter Three, Egan's studies explore change over years. This chapter diverges significantly by focusing on short-term change.

In Chapter Three, I demonstrated that individuals that perceived a higher cost to whiteness were less likely to identify with a white identity. If previous findings of the short-term nature of identity management hold in the case of white identity, we might expect that individuals also switch between white and ethnic identities instantaneously upon exposure to negative information about whiteness.

5.3 The Case for White Identity as Long-term and Stable

Political scientists have long considered racial attitudes to be strong, stable, and built into individuals' belief systems. Converse (1964) noted that racial attitudes are more stable and central to individuals' belief systems than any policy item. In tests of racial prejudice as a sociocultural versus situational phenomenon, Kinder and Sears (1981) find that the sociocultural explanation of prejudice explains anti-Black voting attitudes much more than situational theories of racial prejudice.

In a study of white migrants to the American North and South, Glaser and Gilens (1997) found that whites that migrated to the North from the South, or the South from the North, retained most of their racial attitudes gained in early socialization. They differentiate between race-based policy preferences and deep-seated racial attitudes, finding that although race-based policy preferences

changed to align with whites' new geographical counterparts, their underlying racial attitudes remained unchanged. The study points to the durable nature of racial attitudes among whites: Even when individuals' political environment changes drastically, racial attitudes remain steady.

Nearly all studies on the durability of racial attitudes have focused on outgroup attitudes. Early studies of white racial attitudes focused primarily on whites' orientation toward Black Americans (Converse 1964; Kinder and Sears 1981). Given the nascence of the literature on ingroup attitudes of white Americans, it is unsurprising that there is limited information on the durability of ingroup attachments over time. Should ingroup attachments be conceptualized as another form of socialized racial attitude, we would expect to see white ingroup identification behaving as stably as outgroup prejudice.

5.4 Classical Music and Bad History Text Treatments

To test the durability of white identity, I experimentally exposed respondents to positive or negative information about whiteness across several studies. In Study 1, I recruited 359 non-Hispanic white American participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk in July 2021. Participants read either a prompt about how they should be ashamed of their identity due to whites' role in slavery and Jim Crow ("Bad History" treatment) or how they should be proud of their identity due to whites' contributions to classical music ("Classical Music" treatment). I included all treatment texts in Appendix 9.5. Participants in the control condition did not read any prompt. Respondents then answered several questions on racial attitudes and identity.

My outcome measures were a series of questions on white identity. I measured whites' adherence to two types of norms: Ingroup norms and colorblind norms. The colorblind norms index included six items focused on whites' willingness to acknowledge race. The ingroup norms index included seven items measuring favoritism toward other whites. The ingroup norms index is displayed in Appendix 6.1. All items were scaled from 0-1 and averaged to create norms indexes in which higher values indicated greater adherence to white norms.

I measured whites' identity in three additional ways: Ethnic group attachment, SIT attachments

(from Chapter Two), and through the traditional white identity importance measure (from Chapter Two). Due to the findings in Chapter Three, I originally expected that whites exposed to the Bad History treatment would distance themselves from a white identity. I also expected that whites exposed to the Bad History treatment would say that their race is less important to them, while whites exposed to the Classical Music treatment would say that their race is more important to them.

Finally, I evaluated whites' general orientation toward other whites by asking them to rate whites on three positive and three negative personality traits. I constructed a scale of positive evaluations by adding together whites' evaluations of whites on positive personality traits and a scale of negative evaluations by adding together whites' evaluations of whites on negative personality traits. I then created an overall index by adding together all evaluations where higher values indicate more positive evaluations of whites overall.

For each outcome measure, I conducted a linear regression with an indicator for the treatment and adjusted for education, income, age, gender, ideology, and partisanship.

5.4.1 Results

Table 5.1 displays the results for the norms adherence outcomes. Results for the Bad History treatment are labeled BH, while results from the Classical Music condition are labeled CM. There is no significant relationship between receiving either treatment and rates of norms adherence. In-group norm adherence was particularly durable, with respondents receiving either treatment moving less than 0.01 units on average. In comparison, there was greater substantive change in colorblind norms adherence, but the estimates were highly noisy. The results for the ethnic identity, SIT measures, identity importance, and rating measures are found in Appendix 9.1. There was no significant relationship between either treatment and rates of ethnic identification, attachment towards white identity through either the SIT or traditional identity measures, or whites' personality evaluations of whites.

Positive or negative information about white identity did not influence whites' attachments to-

	Ingroup (CM)	Colorblind (CM)	Ingroup (BH)	Colorblind (BH)
Intercept	0.22** (0.07)	4.71*** (0.28)	0.28*** (0.07)	5.06*** (0.33)
Treatment	0.01 (0.03)	-0.12 (0.11)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.22 (0.12)
Education	0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04 (0.05)	0.03* (0.01)	-0.08 (0.05)
Income	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.04)
Age Category	-0.01 (0.01)	0.12* (0.05)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.10 (0.06)
Male	0.00 (0.03)	-0.20 (0.11)	0.04 (0.03)	-0.25* (0.13)
Ideology	0.05*** (0.01)	0.09* (0.04)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05 (0.04)
PID (3pt)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.07)	0.03 (0.02)	0.09 (0.08)
R ²	0.27	0.13	0.25	0.13
Adj. R ²	0.24	0.09	0.22	0.09
Num. obs.	219	164	218	159

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 5.1: Effect of Positive and Negative Identity Inducements on Norms Adherence

wards their racial identity. The preliminary results suggest that white identity is not malleable in the short term upon exposure to positive or negative identity inducements. These results challenge narratives of white identity that portray whites as reactionary in the face of negative information regarding their identity, demonstrating instead that white identity is durable (Jardina 2019). However, this study does not test the exact threats frequently cited in the white identity politics literature, namely the loss of political and social power for whites. Whites may not care about their attachments to slavery and Jim Crow as much as they care about other negative information. I provide a more exact test of this theory in Study 2.

5.5 Bad History and Racial Shift Text Treatments

Study 1 suggested that white identity is not malleable in the face of positive or negative information about being white. One potential reason behind this lack of malleability may be that the information that I offered respondents was not enough to induce a negative response. To test the strength of my treatment, I compared the Bad History treatment in Study 1 to another commonly used threat to white identity: Information regarding whites' impending loss of demographic primacy in the United States. As expanded on in Chapter Four, this treatment evokes feelings of racial threat among whites and has been shown to increase racial conservatism (Craig and Richeson 2014a, 2014b). This information is also explicitly identified in Jardina (2019) as a threat that increases ingroup attachments in whites. I recruited 542 respondents from Amazon Mechanical Turk in September 2021. Respondents were randomly assigned to read either the Bad History Treatment (BH) from Study 1 or the population threat treatment from Chapter Four, Study 3 (RS, for "Racial Shift"). These treatments are displayed in Appendix 9.5. Nearly all outcome measures remained the same between Study 1 and Study 2, although I replaced the original colorblind norms measure with the COBRAs measure due to poor internal reliability of the measure in Study 1.

	Colorblind (BH)	Ingroup (BH)	Colorblind (RS)	Ingroup (RS)
Intercept	0.21** (0.07)	0.29*** (0.04)	0.26*** (0.07)	0.34*** (0.04)
Treatment	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.02)
Education	-0.03* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)
Male	0.06* (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)
PID (5-pt)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
Ideology	0.06*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
R ²	0.39	0.32	0.34	0.26
Adj. R ²	0.38	0.30	0.32	0.24
Num. obs.	314	328	332	346

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 5.2: Effect of Bad History and Racial Shift Treatments on Norms Adherence

5.5.1 Results

Table 5.2 shows the results of linear regressions estimating the relationship between treatment status and norms adherence outcomes. There is no apparent relationship between either type of white identity threat and norms adherence. Appendix 9.2 reports the outcomes between treatment status, evaluations of whites, and the traditional identity importance variable. There is no significant relationship between either type of threat treatment and any other outcome variable.

Study 2 validated the results from Study 1: Exposure to the Bad History treatment did not change whites' reported racial identity. In Study 2, I explored whether the Bad History was strong enough of a stimulus by comparing it to another often-used identity threat: The racial shift treatment from Chapter Four. Exposure to either treatment did not change whites' relationship to whiteness in the short term. A potential explanation could be, as I argued in Chapter Four, that neither the racial shift information nor the Bad History information is new to respondents. Therefore, there could be limited movement upon exposure to this information. A second potential expla-

nation could be that whites' attachment to their identity is resolute and not easily changed upon exposure to new information.

5.6 Introducing Video Treatments

Study 1 and Study 2 confirmed that whites do not meaningfully change their racial attachments upon exposure to treatments designed to elicit an emotional response. A commonality between all three treatments delivered in Studies 1 and 2 was that they were text-based. Text-based treatments are fleeting stimuli and inattentive respondents may not acquire much new information if they do not fully read text treatments. In other words, the treatments from Studies 1 and 2 may not be effective because they are not strong enough. In Study 3, I recruited 752 respondents from MTurk. I varied the strength of the treatments by showing respondents one of four videos. I chose these videos to replicate the treatments from Studies 1 and 2 in a different visual form.

Respondents were randomly assigned to watch one of four videos. I sourced all videos from YouTube. Links to the videos are included in Appendix 9.5. The first video is a continuation of the "Bad History" treatment ("BH"), where I showed respondents an informational video regarding white privilege and the advantages whites have in society because they are white. Although the video did not specifically mention slavery and Jim Crow explicitly, I will continue to refer to this video as the "Bad History" treatment as it is designed to elicit emotions of shame and defensiveness in white Americans. The second video replicated the racial shift treatment ("RS") from Study 2 and was a news clip reporting Census results that the white population was declining in the United States.

I chose the final two videos to evoke positive associations with white identity. The "Irish history" condition ("Irish") showed respondents a clip from a history-based show which explained how the Irish rose from oppression and discrimination to form a powerful political force in Boston. I chose this video to make whites feel proud of their white ethnic attachments as it promotes the white ethnic myth of hard work and collective success in the face of discrimination, as mentioned in Chapter Three. One critique of this stimuli might be that it is not applicable enough to the

majority of whites, since it focuses solely on the Irish. Although not all whites are Irish, the Irish are one of the largest ethnic groups in the United States. Furthermore, the video was designed to promote general feelings of ethnic pride that could apply beyond Irish identity. Finally, the "White Family" condition ("WF") showed respondents a family home video of an ostensibly middle-class, all-white family celebrating Christmas. I chose this video after open-response questions from Study 1 indicated that the aspect of being white that respondents were most proud of was their sense of close familial ties.

To ensure that respondents watched the videos, I embedded a timer in the survey that would only allow respondents to advance to the next page after they had watched the video in its entirety. At the end of the survey, I also included a question that prompted respondents to indicate which video they had watched. Some respondents did not correctly identify the video they had watched, therefore, I estimated the Complier Average Causal Effect (CACE) rather than the average treatment effect (ATE). Rates of noncompliance were low, with just 27 out of 752 respondents incorrectly identifying the video. Rates of noncompliance were evenly distributed across the treatments and control, so it did not appear that noncompliance was driven by a misunderstanding of video content. To obtain the CACE, I conducted an instrumental variables regression with the norms variables as the outcome measures, whether the respondent received the treatment as the main predictor, and treatment assignment as an instrument. I adjusted for age, education, gender, partisan self-identification (7-pt), and ideology (7-pt). The norms adherence, ratings, ethnic identification, and traditional identity strength variables remained the same from Studies 1 and 2.

5.6.1 Results

Table 5.3 displays the $C\hat{A}C\hat{E}s$ for the norms adherence variables. There was no significant relationship between any video treatment and either type of norms adherence. Appendix 9.3 shows the $C\hat{A}C\hat{E}$ estimates for ratings of whites, ethnic identification rates, and the traditional identity strength measure. There is no relationship between any treatment and the white identity outcomes.

The results from Study 3 confirm the findings from Studies 1 and 2: White identity is consis-

	Ingroup (Irish)	CB (Irish)	Ingroup (RS)	CB (RS)	Ingroup (BH)	CB (BH)	Ingroup (WF)	CB (WF)
Intercept	0.53*** (0.07)	0.70*** (0.09)	0.53*** (0.06)	0.66*** (0.08)	0.47*** (0.07)	0.70*** (0.09)	0.50*** (0.07)	0.72*** (0.09)
Video Correct	-0.00 (0.05)	0.03 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.10* (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.08 (0.06)	0.00 (0.05)	0.09 (0.07)
Education	0.00 (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Male	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.06* (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)
PID (7-pt)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
Ideology	0.03*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
Treatment	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
R ²	0.21	0.30	0.14	0.32	0.17	0.34	0.14	0.37
Adj. R ²	0.19	0.29	0.12	0.30	0.15	0.32	0.12	0.35
Num. obs.	300	300	293	293	293	293	301	301

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 5.3: Effect of Video Treatments on Norms Adherence Outcomes

tently stable in the face of informational cues designed to evoke emotional responses from white respondents. Study 3 bolsters the results from the previous studies by emphasizing that even after exposure to a stronger treatment, white identity continues to endure. After strengthening the treatment, I can plausibly rule out that the treatment is not strong enough to induce a response in white participants. Another possibility behind the null results may be that I am measuring outcomes that are not very moveable, but if I were to diversify my range of outcomes, I might see more movement. In Study 4, I tested this theory by broadening my outcome measures.

5.7 Diversifying White Identity Outcomes

Study 4 diversified the range of outcome measures to include both the traditional measures of white identity from Jardina (2019) as well as implicit measures from social work and psychology. Respondents were randomly exposed to the text version of the Racial Shift or Bad History treatments while control participants did not read any prompt. I expanded my outcome measures to provide a more robust test of Jardina's theory and to rule out the possibility that my original measures were not moveable enough.

Some questions remained the same as Studies 1, 2, and 3: I asked respondents about their adherence to ingroup and colorblind norms and the traditional identity strength question.

Second, I asked respondents all five of Jardina (2019)'s white identity questions, reproduced here:

Identification

- *How important is being white to your identity?*
- *To what extent do you feel that white people in this country have a lot to be proud of?*
- *How much would you say that whites in this country have a lot in common with one another?*

Consciousness

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

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

I estimated a model for each outcome and additionally estimated models with the consciousness items added together to form one index and all five items added together to form one index. This additive index replicates the identity outcomes used in (Jardina 2019).

Finally, I asked respondents questions from the White Racial Identity Scale (WRIS), a scale from social work that focuses on measuring "key latent components that constitute white identity" (Melcher 2021, p. 97). Similar to my questions about racial norms, these questions measure whites' orientations toward processes that form our understanding of what it means to be white while avoiding explicit questions about white identity. Statements from the WRIS include "Whites understand me better than people who are not white," "Doctors are trustworthy," and "I participate in the cultural practices of my own ethnic group." Responses ranged from *Strongly agree* (7) to *Strongly disagree* (1). Due to the extensive length of the WRIS, I randomly assigned participants six of the items, scaled the items to 0-1, and took the mean to obtain each participants' WRIS score with higher scores indicating a stronger white identity.

For each outcome measure, I conducted a linear regression, adjusting for education, age, gender, partisan identification (7-pt), and ideology (7-pt).

5.7.1 Results

Table 5.4 displays the model results estimating the relationship between the treatments and the norms outcomes. There is no significant relationship between the treatment and the norms adherence outcomes. In every case, the point estimate is almost precisely zero. Appendix 9.4 displays the models for the traditional white identity outcomes, the Jardina (2019) measures, and the WRIS outcomes. In every case, there is no relationship between the outcome measure and either treatment condition. In most cases, point estimates are close to zero and point estimates are associated with much smaller errors than in previous studies. These results suggest that exposure to negative information related to ones' white identity results in very little change to one's reported white identity across traditional measures and implicit measures of whiteness.

	Colorblind (RS)	Ingroup (RS)	Colorblind (BH)	Ingroup (BH)
Intercept	0.86*** (0.03)	0.19*** (0.03)	0.89*** (0.03)	0.18*** (0.03)
Treatment	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Education	0.01 (0.01)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.00)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)
Gender	-0.04** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	-0.03* (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
PID (7-pt)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	-0.07*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
R ²	0.37	0.36	0.37	0.36
Adj. R ²	0.37	0.36	0.36	0.35
Num. obs.	795	792	792	792

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 5.4: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on Norms Outcomes

Study 4 provides the most extensive test of the Bad History and Racial Shift outcomes, broadening the range of outcome measures to include implicit measures and Jardina (2019)'s measures of white identification. In no instance was there a significant relationship between either treatment and any outcome measure. The results from Study 4 buttress the null findings from Studies 1, 2, and 3, and contribute to the view of white identity as a stable phenomenon. Given the broad range of outcome measures used in Study 4, I present a stronger challenge to the view of white identity as reactionary. After drawing on such a comprehensive range of measures, including traditional measures, my original measures, and interdisciplinary measures from other fields, I provide a stronger case that the null results are not driven by measurement error but instead reflect a true response among white respondents.

5.8 Explaining the Stability of White Racial Identification

Across four studies, I found that exposure to positive or negative identity inducements did not change whites' racial identification. I originally expected due to the results from Chapter Three that white identification would be reactionary and strategic, that is, the extent to which whites would identify with whiteness was a product of their informational environment. I expected that whites would emphasize their racial attachments when I exposed them to information designed to make them feel proud of their white identity and would distance themselves from information that made them feel poorly about their white identity. Instead, I found that white identity was remarkably stable in the face of both positive and negative identity inducements.

In Study 1, I found that exposure to positive and negative information about white identity did not change white norms adherence, ratings of other whites, rates of ethnic identification, or responses to the traditional identity strength question. In Study 2, I sought to explore the strength of my negative identity treatment by comparing it to another popular identity threat, the racial shift treatment. In Study 3, I strengthened the treatments by testing video treatments instead of text treatments. Even upon exposure to strengthened treatments, attachments to whiteness remained stable. In Study 4, even upon expanding the range of outcome measures to include implicit measures of white identification and Jardina (2019)'s measures of white identification, I still did not find any relationship between negative information about white identity and whites' orientations toward their racial identity.

These findings contribute to the existing literature on white identity politics by defining the extent to which white racial attachments are an enduring phenomenon. Jardina (2019) does not explicitly note the timeframe under which individuals react to negative information about their identity, so these chapters function as that test. This research cannot speak to over-time trends in white identification, however, it does clearly show that in the short term white racial identification is a stable phenomenon. The information that Jardina identifies as heightening a sense of white identification does not appear to do so in the short term, although I cannot rule out a cumulative

effect of this information on white identification.

One potential explanation behind white identity stability could be that attachments to whiteness are a deep-seated predisposition that is closer to a belief system than a political attitude. Zaller (1992) found that racial attitudes are much more stable than other beliefs and attributed this stability in part to socialization. In particular, whites may be socialized into adherence to white racial norms in early childhood, cementing norms adherence as a phenomenon that is enduring over time and stable in the face of new information. However, this does not explain why ratings of whites do not change in the face of new information, as evaluations of whites may theoretically be less of an enduring predisposition than identity strength.

Another explanation draws from the conclusions in Chapter Four: Respondents do not change their identity in the face of new information simply because what they are hearing is not new. Over the past several years, there has been an increasing awareness of topics such as white privilege and the increased availability of information on racial shifts. Therefore, respondents may have already integrated this information into their reported identification which makes any further shifts unlikely.

5.9 Reconciling Chapters Three and Five

In Chapter Three, I found that individuals that perceive higher costs to whiteness will de-emphasize their white identity. In Studies 1 through 4 of this chapter, I introduced participants to information that ostensibly would heighten the perceived costs of whiteness by associating white identity with negative information. Unlike my results in Chapter Three, individuals did not change their racial attachments upon exposure to this information.

The discrepancy between Chapters Three and this chapter offers additional evidence regarding the malleability of white identity in the short versus long term. Both studies may come to correct conclusions, that is, it is possible that in the long term, and over a period of years, whites' sense of racial identification is a byproduct of whites' perceptions of the costs of whiteness. In the short term, however, it is unlikely that racial identification will change upon exposure to this information.

The reconciliation of these studies strengthens the view that white identification is a slow-moving phenomenon that may shift over long periods of cumulative exposure to information, such as repeated reports that whites may lose their demographic primacy in the United States. However, it is unlikely that white identity is that fluid in the short term.

5.10 Conclusion

With an increase in conversations regarding white privilege in the past decade, many whites are exposed to negative information regarding their racial identity that they may have not previously been exposed to. Some research suggests that we might expect whites to react conservatively to this change, either by distancing themselves from whiteness or by "circling the wagons" around the white ingroup. I demonstrate across several experiments that exposure to negative (or positive) information about white identity does not change whites' sense of racial identification. These results support a view of white identity as less reactionary to racial threats in the short term.

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Chapter 6: Chapter 2

6.1 List of Ingroup Norms Items

1. People like me made the United States into what it is today.
2. Neighborhoods where people like me live are safe and free from crime.
3. I'm proud of my family's culture and traditions.
4. People like me raise their children to value hard work and not grow up to be on welfare.
5. People like me respect the police and our nation's laws.
6. I prefer to live in a neighborhood where everyone has a different culture and values from me.

6.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Loadings

Table 6.1: One-Factor Model Loadings

Measure	Study 1	Study 2
	Estimate (Std. Error)	Estimate (Std. Error)
Ingroup norms	1.00	1.00
Colorblind norms	5.33 (0.82)	2.27 (0.45)
Identity strength	6.82 (0.86)	11.84 (2.29)
Feel white	3.48 (0.68)	6.13 (1.40)
Feel similar to other whites	3.19 (0.61)	5.19 (1.13)
White pride	6.31 (0.69)	12.90 (2.28)
White guilt	-2.16 (0.45)	-2.71 (1.02)
Policy preferences	3.18 (0.47)	27.79 (5.33)

Chapter 7: Chapter 3

7.1 Switching from Non-White to White Racial Identity in VSG Panel Data

Table 7.1: Switching from Non-White to White from 2011-2016 in VSG Panel Data

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Blacks Favored	0.004 (0.004)	0.00004 (0.005)		
Reverse Discrimination Worse			0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
PID		-0.001 (0.001)		-0.002 (0.001)
Male		-0.0002 (0.004)		0.0005 (0.004)
College Education		-0.002 (0.004)		-0.0005 (0.004)
Ideology		0.006** (0.003)		0.006** (0.003)
Age		-0.0004** (0.0002)		-0.0004** (0.0001)
White FT		-0.0002** (0.0001)		-0.0002* (0.0001)
Constant	0.020*** (0.003)	0.046*** (0.013)	0.015*** (0.005)	0.038*** (0.013)
Observations	5,645	5,165	5,785	5,276
Log Likelihood	2,851.689	2,767.500	2,946.494	2,857.889
Akaike Inf. Crit.	-5,699.378	-5,519.000	-5,888.988	-5,699.779

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

7.2 Racial Shift Treatment and Race Switching with Flag Indicator

Table 7.2: Relationship Between Threat Perceptions and Racial Switching with Flag Indicator

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Racial Switching			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Blacks Favored	0.014*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.006)		
Reverse Discrimination			0.004** (0.002)	0.005** (0.003)
PID		-0.004** (0.002)		-0.002 (0.001)
Male		0.007 (0.005)		0.009* (0.004)
College Education		0.007** (0.003)		0.005* (0.003)
Ideology		-0.001*** (0.0002)		-0.001*** (0.0002)
Age		-0.0003** (0.0001)		-0.0003** (0.0001)
White FT		-0.003 (0.005)		-0.001 (0.005)
Flag	0.037*** (0.013)	0.024* (0.013)	0.043*** (0.012)	0.031** (0.013)
Constant	0.020*** (0.003)	0.063*** (0.015)	0.014*** (0.005)	0.053*** (0.014)
Observations	5,664	5,202	5,799	5,311
Log Likelihood	2,240.878	2,058.767	2,414.789	2,169.939
Akaike Inf. Crit.	-4,475.755	-4,099.534	-4,823.578	-4,321.879

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

7.3 Text Treatments for Study 3

"Bad History" treatment: "Over the years, many individuals have sought to form a holiday to celebrate the important contributions of white individuals, including the English, Germans, and Irish. Opponents of this holiday argue that white people should be ashamed of their contributions to history, such as their role in the African slave trade and Jim Crow south. Famous racists in American politics include Confederate general Robert E. Lee and George Wallace, who remained Alabama's governor until 1987 and who once proclaimed, "I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Opponents of the holiday argue that segregation is just one reason for which white individuals do not deserve to be recognized with a national holiday."

"Classical Music" treatment: "Over the years, many individuals have sought to form a holiday to celebrate the important contributions of white individuals, including the English, Germans, and Irish. Proponents of this event argue that white people should be proud of their contributions to history, such as the introduction of classical music. Experts of classical music commonly attribute the classical movement to the formation of many widespread forms of music today, such as pop and folk music. Proponents of the holiday argue that classical music is just one example of the refinement and sophistication that white figures have contributed to present-day culture that deserves to be recognized with a national holiday."

7.4 Racial Switching Among Any Nonwhite Identity

Table 7.3: Racial Switching Among Any Nonwhite Identity

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Racial Switching	
	(1)	(2)
Reverse Discrimination	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)
PID		0.001 (0.001)
Male		0.005* (0.003)
College Education		0.002 (0.002)
Ideology		-0.0001 (0.0001)
Age		-0.0001 (0.0001)
White FT		0.001 (0.003)
Constant	0.020*** (0.003)	0.022** (0.009)
Observations	7,251	6,599
Log Likelihood	4,984.748	4,751.313
Akaike Inf. Crit.	-9,965.496	-9,486.625
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Chapter 8: Chapter 4

8.1 Relationship Between Treatment and Individual Policy Items

	Aff. Action Imm.	Enforcement Decrease	Welfare Increase	SS Expand Medicare	Nonracial Policies	Racial Policies	All Policies	
Intercept	1.45*** (0.22)	1.22*** (0.19)	1.03*** (0.20)	0.82*** (0.17)	0.47** (0.16)	1.29*** (0.28)	3.74*** (0.43)	0.96*** (0.11)
Treatment	-0.05 (0.08)	0.10 (0.07)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.03 (0.07)	0.08 (0.07)	0.12 (0.12)	0.06 (0.17)	0.01 (0.05)
Education	0.01 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	0.09*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.02)	0.12** (0.04)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.03 (0.02)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)
Male	0.13 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.08)	-0.10 (0.08)	0.24*** (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)	0.30* (0.12)	-0.03 (0.17)	0.06 (0.05)
PID	0.12*** (0.03)	0.15*** (0.03)	0.12** (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)	0.10 (0.07)	0.38*** (0.08)	0.10*** (0.02)
Ideology	0.10** (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)	0.14*** (0.03)	0.09** (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)	0.22*** (0.06)	0.36*** (0.07)	0.11*** (0.02)
R ²	0.20	0.32	0.29	0.15	0.23	0.23	0.40	0.41
Adj. R ²	0.18	0.30	0.28	0.13	0.22	0.21	0.38	0.40
Statistic	13.91	37.06	24.90	11.32	17.72	17.15	37.87	39.33
P Value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DF Resid.	334.00	345.00	347.00	346.00	345.00	339.00	327.00	353.00
nobs	341	352	354	353	352	346	334	360

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

8.2 Mediation Coefficients

	Group Threat	System Threat	Uncertainty
<i>c</i>	1.80 (1.45)	1.80 (1.45)	1.80 (1.45)
<i>c'</i>	1.93 (1.45)	1.35 (1.45)	1.71 (1.45)
<i>ab</i>	-0.12 (0.14)	0.46 (0.25)	0.10 (0.14)

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. *c* is total effect of threat on conservatism. *c'* is direct effect of treatment on conservatism. *ab* is indirect effect of treatment through mediator.

Table 8.1: Mediation Coefficients for Black FT

	Group Threat	System Threat	Uncertainty
<i>c</i>	2.19 (1.37)	2.19 (1.37)	2.19 (1.37)
<i>c'</i>	2.27 (1.37)	1.90 (1.37)	2.10 (1.37)
<i>ab</i>	-0.08 (0.14)	0.29 (0.22)	0.10 (0.13)

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. *c* is total effect of threat on conservatism. *c'* is direct effect of treatment on conservatism. *ab* is indirect effect of treatment through mediator.

Table 8.2: Mediation Coefficients for Latino FT

	Group Threat	System Threat	Uncertainty
c	2.96 (1.31)*	2.96 (1.31)*	2.96 (1.31)*
c'	2.95 (1.31)*	2.68 (1.31)*	2.92 (1.31)*
ab	0.01 (0.12)	0.28 (0.21)	0.03 (0.11)

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. c is total effect of threat on conservatism. c' is direct effect of treatment on conservatism. ab is indirect effect of treatment through mediator.

Table 8.3: Mediation Coefficients for Asian FT

	Group Threat	System Threat	Uncertainty
c	0.97 (1.40)	0.97 (1.40)	0.97 (1.40)
c'	1.08 (1.40)	1.03 (1.40)	0.79 (1.40)
ab	-0.11 (0.14)	-0.05 (0.18)	0.18 (0.15)

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. c is total effect of threat on conservatism. c' is direct effect of treatment on conservatism. ab is indirect effect of treatment through mediator.

Table 8.4: Mediation Coefficients for White FT

8.3 Treatment Texts

Study 1 Treatment:

New U.S. Census Bureau data suggest that America will become a “majority-minority” nation much faster than once predicted. The nation’s racial minority population is steadily rising, advancing an unmistakable trend that could make minorities the new American majority by mid-century. The data show a declining number of White adults and growing under-18 populations of Hispanics, Asians, and other minorities. Demographers calculate that by 2042, Americans who identify themselves as Hispanic, Black, Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander will together outnumber non-Hispanic Whites. The main reasons for the accelerating change are rapid immigration growth and significantly higher birthrates among racial and ethnic minorities. As White baby boomers age past their childbearing years, younger Hispanic parents

are having children – and driving U.S. population growth. For example, there are now roughly 9 births for every 1 death among Hispanics, compared to a roughly one-to-one ratio for Whites. The latest figures are predicated on current and historical trends, which can be thrown awry by several variables, including prospective overhauls of public policy.

Study 2 Treatment:

Over the years, there has been a great deal of conflict over white Americans' role in American society. Some argue that white people are under threat due to changing racial demographics in the United States. Census projections show that whites will be the minority in the United States by 2045. Some argue that this demographic change will result in fewer jobs and less political representation for white Americans.

Study 3 Treatment:

HTML code was altered such that respondents only viewed seconds 0 through 69 of the video:
https://www.youtube.com/embed/0p_QwZXg-Ko?controls=0;end=69

8.4 Craig and Richeson Replication

I replicated Craig and Richeson's findings using the original data from TESS. To assess the influence of racial shifts on conservative ideology, measured by policy preferences, the authors evaluated political ideology through five policy measures: The timeframe for immigrant naturalization, whether the number of immigrants should be reduced, support for affirmative action, support for universal healthcare, and support for military spending. The authors conducted a 2 x 2 analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), with treatment condition as a between-subjects factor and type of policy (racial or nonracial) as a within-subjects factor. The authors found a main effect of treatment condition on racial policy issues as well as race-neutral policy issues.

To assess the influence of racial shifts on racial attitudes, participants were asked to rate whites, Blacks, Asians, and Latinos on a set of four feeling thermometers. The authors conducted a 4 x 2 ANCOVA, with racial target group as a within-subjects factor and treatment condition as a between-subjects factor. They found a main effect of experimental condition on negative attitudes, and while there was an unreliable target group by treatment interaction, they found that participants in the racial shift group reported more negative attitudes towards Blacks, Latinos, and Asians. Attitudes towards whites remained unchanged.

To assess the relationship between racial shift information and political conservatism, I conducted a multilevel model with policy type (racial or nonracial) as the within-subjects factor and treatment as the between-subjects factor. In line with the original analysis, I included both white and nonwhite participants, but attached negligible weights (0.0001) to nonwhite participants to ensure accurate calculation of standard error in subsample analyses. This process is equivalent to excluding nonwhites, although the authors note that this procedure is utilized to correct for concerns regarding accurate estimation of standard errors for subpopulations. All models include adjustment for demographic characteristics measured prior to treatment. Although the models differ slightly in assumptions, both ANCOVA and linear mixed models produce unbiased estimates of treatment effects (O'Connell et al. 2017). Furthermore, the linear mixed model is superior in this case as

ANCOVA requires listwise deletion of observations with missing data, leading to significant loss of power. Up to 50 observations contained missing data on the Latino feeling thermometer measure alone. As Craig and Richeson did not specify multiple imputation to address missing data, I assume that listwise deletion occurred during model estimation.

Craig and Richeson report a main effect of treatment condition ($F(1, 464) = 5.84, p = 0.016$), but no other interaction between treatment condition and policy type. I confirm a marginal effect of treatment ($F(1, 1192) = 3.7, p = 0.054$) and no interaction between policy type and treatment condition ($F(1, 1192) = 0.31, p = 0.58$). Participants assigned to the racial shift condition reported more conservative policy attitudes on both types of policies, but did not become more conservative on racial policies relative to nonracial policies.

Table 1 displays the results of the re-estimated feeling thermometer model in linear mixed model form. Craig and Richeson estimate a main effect of target group ($F(2, 1098) = 110.82, p < 0.001$). Although they report a weakly significant interaction between target group and treatment ($F(3, 1098) = 2.07, p = 0.102$), they note that there are significant interactions between treatment condition and ratings of Black people ($F(1,376) = 4.95, p = 0.027$), Latinos ($F(1, 374) = 4.30, p = 0.039$), and Asians ($F(1,373) = 9.27, p = 0.003$). The replication confirms a main effect of target group: Nonwhite groups were rated more negatively than whites on average. However, there was no main effect of treatment. There was no interaction between treatment and feeling thermometer ratings, with the exception of the Asian feeling thermometer. Respondents who received the racial shift treatment felt more negatively about Asians relative to whites by about 4.5 points on a 101-point feeling thermometer.

More importantly than differences in estimation, previously unreported outcomes in the Craig and Richeson data complicate our understanding of these results. Two unreported measures captured racial attitudes. Respondents were asked to agree with two statements: "I would be completely comfortable in a social setting where there were very few people from my racial/ethnic group", and "I would prefer to live in a neighborhood with people of my same racial/ethnic origin" (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*). Respondents also answered a post-treatment measure

	Feeling Thermometer	Policy Preferences
Intercept	61.28*** (5.77)	0.08 (0.14)
Treatment	-0.06 (1.90)	-0.09 (0.05)
Asian FT	-7.84*** (1.27)	
Black FT	-12.83*** (1.28)	
Latino FT	-15.07*** (1.27)	
Age	0.05 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.00)
Education	3.34*** (0.81)	0.02 (0.02)
Male	-0.74 (1.56)	-0.03 (0.04)
PID (7-pt)	0.51 (0.50)	0.05*** (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	-0.48 (0.67)	-0.08*** (0.02)
Treatment * Asian FT	-4.45* (1.79)	
Treatment * Black FT	-2.57 (1.79)	
Treatment * Latino FT	-2.72 (1.79)	
Nonracial Policies		0.08 (0.05)
Treatment * Nonracial Policies		0.04 (0.07)
AIC	15355.93	4703.47
BIC	15438.44	4759.47
Log Likelihood	-7662.97	-2340.73
Num. obs.	1809	1201
Num. groups: CaseID	458	611
Var: CaseID (Intercept)	229.76	0.00
Var: Residual	180.79	0.31

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 8.5: Influence of Racial Shift Condition on Feeling Thermometer and Policy Preference Outcomes in Original Data

of self-reported ideological placement on a 7-point scale (1 = *very liberal*, 7 = *very conservative*).

	Comfort Around Other Races	Prefer White Neighbors	Post-Treatment Ideology
Intercept	4.00*** (0.52)	3.20*** (0.48)	0.35 (0.18)
Treatment	0.03 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.12)	0.01 (0.05)
PID	-0.07 (0.05)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.04* (0.02)
Ideology	0.05 (0.06)	-0.15** (0.06)	0.92*** (0.03)
Age	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.20* (0.08)	0.24** (0.07)	-0.02 (0.03)
Income	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)
Male	0.07 (0.14)	0.00 (0.12)	0.09* (0.04)
R ²	0.05	0.08	0.90
Adj. R ²	0.03	0.06	0.90
Statistic	3.68	5.21	978.98
P Value	0.00	0.00	0.00
DF Resid.	451.00	455.00	456.00
nobs	459	463	464

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 8.6: Effect of Treatment on Unreported Outcome Measures in Original Experiment

As seen in Table 2, there are null effects for all three variables, with estimated average treatment effects close to zero. The results of this table conflict with previous findings on the relationship between status threat, racial conservatism, and outgroup attitudes. While previous analyses demonstrate that status threat influences policy attitudes, they do not influence self-reported ideological placement post-treatment. And while the statistical significance of the relationship between treatment and outgroup attitudes may fluctuate, depending on the estimation strategy, there is no evidence that status threats influence more general comfort around nonwhites and preference for coracial neighbors. These mixed results run counter to the claim that racial shifts lead to more conservative racial and political attitudes.

8.5 IAT Outcomes

The IAT was created in Qualtrics using the IATGen software (Carpenter et al. 2022). Respondents were presented with a total of 140 trials across five blocks. One set of word matching is equivalent to one trial. Responses were penalized for inaccurate timing in the guidelines set by Carpenter et al. (2022). Responses were dropped if respondents did not respond quickly enough (i.e. respondents matched the words in over 10,000 milliseconds), as recommended by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003). Approximately 0.03 percent of all trials were dropped due to timing out. Respondents were considered "speeders" and all of their trials were dropped if they completed more than 10 percent of their trials in under 300 milliseconds. Approximately 2.7 percent of all samples were dropped due to this penalty. Finally, responses were penalized by 600 seconds if the matching task was completed incorrectly. The error rate was approximately 7.9 percent of all responses, which is expected for an IAT.

One way to obtain the reliability of the IAT is taking the differences of the first, second, and third trials and using the differences scores in Cronbach's alpha (Schnabel, Asendorpf, and Greenwald 2008). Using this method, I calculated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.865.

I conducted a t-test to ensure that the IAT scores are significantly different from 0, that is, that there is evidence of ingroup bias in the sample. The results from the t-test suggest that there was significant ingroup bias among respondents ($t = 38.344$, $DF = 1213$, $p < 0.001$). The Cohen's D of the sample is 1.10.

Chapter 9: Chapter 5

9.1 Study 1 Models

	Overall (CM)	Positive (CM)	Negative (CM)	Overall (BH)	Positive(BH)	Negative (BH)
Intercept	13.38*** (1.42)	7.79*** (0.84)	5.80*** (0.91)	13.72*** (1.52)	8.76*** (0.83)	5.41*** (0.96)
Treatment	0.28 (0.54)	0.11 (0.32)	-0.01 (0.34)	-0.30 (0.57)	0.21 (0.31)	-0.60 (0.36)
Education	0.54* (0.24)	0.14 (0.15)	0.27 (0.15)	0.51* (0.24)	0.04 (0.13)	0.33* (0.15)
Income	-0.02 (0.17)	-0.02 (0.10)	0.08 (0.11)	-0.16 (0.15)	-0.11 (0.08)	0.01 (0.10)
Age Category	0.03 (0.26)	0.24 (0.16)	-0.16 (0.17)	0.54 (0.28)	0.27 (0.15)	0.30 (0.18)
Male	-0.68 (0.57)	-0.22 (0.34)	-0.44 (0.36)	-0.57 (0.57)	-0.14 (0.31)	-0.39 (0.36)
Ideology	0.56** (0.19)	0.14 (0.11)	0.45*** (0.12)	0.25 (0.19)	0.04 (0.10)	0.22 (0.11)
PID (3pt)	0.24 (0.36)	0.21 (0.22)	-0.16 (0.23)	0.44 (0.38)	0.32 (0.20)	-0.07 (0.23)
R ²	0.14	0.06	0.15	0.11	0.07	0.10
Adj. R ²	0.10	0.02	0.11	0.06	0.02	0.06
Num. obs.	150	152	157	135	139	146

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.1: Effect of Positive and Negative Identity Inducements on Ratings of Whites

	Ethnic ID (CM)	Importance (CM)	Ethnic ID (BH)	Importance (BH)
Intercept	-0.01 (0.21)	2.11*** (0.60)	0.04 (0.20)	1.57** (0.50)
Treatment	0.05 (0.08)	0.06 (0.21)	0.14 (0.08)	-0.09 (0.19)
Education	-0.01 (0.04)	0.07 (0.10)	0.03 (0.03)	0.23** (0.08)
Income	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.07)	0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.05)
Age Category	0.05 (0.04)	0.05 (0.11)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.13 (0.09)
Male	-0.04 (0.08)	0.00 (0.22)	-0.05 (0.07)	-0.08 (0.19)
Ideology	0.04 (0.03)	0.23** (0.07)	0.02 (0.02)	0.28*** (0.06)
PID (3pt)	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.09 (0.14)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.14 (0.12)
R ²	0.04	0.08	0.05	0.19
Adj. R ²	-0.01	0.04	0.01	0.16
Num. obs.	143	150	159	170

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.2: Effect of Positive and Negative Identity Inducements on Rates of Ethnic Identification and Importance of White Identity

9.2 Study 2 Models

	Overall (BH)	Positive (BH)	Negative (BH)	Overall (RS)	Positive (RS)	Negative (RS)
Intercept	16.24*** (0.80)	7.53*** (0.53)	8.78*** (0.48)	16.10*** (0.85)	7.48*** (0.56)	8.71*** (0.49)
Treatment	-0.44 (0.31)	-0.17 (0.20)	-0.29 (0.19)	0.18 (0.32)	0.14 (0.21)	0.00 (0.19)
Education	-0.04 (0.12)	0.05 (0.08)	-0.10 (0.07)	0.12 (0.12)	0.10 (0.08)	0.00 (0.07)
Age	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Male	0.30 (0.31)	0.22 (0.21)	0.18 (0.19)	0.05 (0.33)	-0.10 (0.21)	0.20 (0.19)
PID (5-pt)	1.93*** (0.51)	0.91** (0.34)	0.97** (0.31)	1.10* (0.51)	0.51 (0.33)	0.57 (0.29)
Ideology	0.25 (0.13)	0.17 (0.09)	0.08 (0.08)	0.44*** (0.13)	0.25** (0.08)	0.18* (0.08)
R ²	0.23	0.16	0.15	0.18	0.13	0.12
Adj. R ²	0.21	0.15	0.13	0.17	0.11	0.10
Num. obs.	288	297	298	293	310	300

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.3: Effect of Bad History and Racial Shift Treatments on Personality Evaluations

	Importance (BH)	Ethnic ID (BH)	Importance (RS)	Ethnic ID (RS)
Intercept	1.62*** (0.39)	0.17 (0.12)	1.93*** (0.39)	0.16 (0.12)
Treatment	-0.04 (0.15)	-0.02 (0.05)	0.14 (0.15)	-0.00 (0.05)
Education	0.05 (0.06)	0.01 (0.02)	0.05 (0.06)	0.02 (0.02)
Age	0.01* (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)
Male	-0.20 (0.15)	-0.09 (0.05)	-0.17 (0.15)	-0.11* (0.05)
PID (5-pt)	0.07 (0.25)	-0.02 (0.08)	0.16 (0.23)	0.04 (0.07)
Ideology	0.21** (0.06)	0.01 (0.02)	0.14* (0.06)	0.01 (0.02)
R ²	0.13	0.01	0.08	0.03
Adj. R ²	0.11	-0.00	0.07	0.01
Num. obs.	316	329	335	347

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.4: Effect of Bad History and Racial Shift Treatments on Identity Importance Variables

9.3 Study 3 Models

	Ratings (Irish)	Ratings (RS)	Ratings (BH)	Ratings (WF)
Intercept	10.98*** (0.90)	11.32*** (0.83)	10.25*** (0.87)	11.12*** (0.92)
Video Correct	0.39 (0.67)	-0.27 (0.52)	0.63 (0.61)	0.08 (0.67)
Education	-0.22* (0.10)	-0.16 (0.09)	-0.18 (0.09)	-0.28** (0.10)
Age	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Male	-0.08 (0.24)	-0.07 (0.24)	-0.05 (0.23)	0.23 (0.23)
PID (7-pt)	0.16 (0.11)	0.27** (0.10)	0.04 (0.09)	0.24* (0.10)
Ideology	0.32** (0.11)	0.09 (0.11)	0.44*** (0.09)	0.23* (0.10)
Treatment	-0.17 (0.24)	0.09 (0.24)	0.03 (0.23)	-0.13 (0.23)
R ²	0.18	0.13	0.21	0.20
Adj. R ²	0.16	0.11	0.19	0.18
Num. obs.	300	293	293	301

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.5: Effect of Video Treatments on Ratings of Whites

	Ethnic ID (Irish)	Ethnic ID (RS)	Ethnic ID (BH)	Ethnic ID (WF)
Intercept	0.01 (0.17)	0.03 (0.16)	-0.00 (0.18)	0.03 (0.19)
Video Correct	0.06 (0.13)	0.00 (0.10)	0.09 (0.13)	0.08 (0.14)
Education	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Male	-0.13** (0.05)	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)
PID (7-pt)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Ideology	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Treatment	0.03 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
R ²	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02
Adj. R ²	0.02	-0.00	0.01	-0.01
Num. obs.	300	293	293	301

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.6: Effect of Video Treatments on Ethnic ID Rates

	Importance (Irish)	Importance (RS)	Importance (BH)	Importance (WF)
Intercept	3.22*** (0.53)	2.86*** (0.48)	2.15*** (0.54)	2.58*** (0.57)
Video Correct	-0.97* (0.40)	-1.17*** (0.30)	-0.49 (0.38)	-0.69 (0.42)
Education	0.00 (0.06)	0.05 (0.05)	0.04 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Male	-0.57*** (0.14)	-0.35* (0.14)	-0.34* (0.14)	-0.37* (0.14)
PID (7-pt)	0.12 (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)	0.16** (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)
Ideology	0.13* (0.06)	0.12 (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)	0.15* (0.06)
Treatment	-0.02 (0.14)	-0.07 (0.14)	0.07 (0.14)	-0.15 (0.14)
R ²	0.20	0.20	0.17	0.12
Adj. R ²	0.18	0.18	0.15	0.10
Num. obs.	300	293	293	301

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.7: Effect of Video Treatments on Traditional Identity Strength Measure

9.4 Study 4 Models

	Importance (RS)	Importance (BH)
Intercept	0.21*** (0.05)	0.17*** (0.05)
Treatment	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Education	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)
Gender	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)
PID (7-pt)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
R ²	0.13	0.13
Adj. R ²	0.13	0.12
Num. obs.	791	789

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.8: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on Traditional Identity Importance Question

	WRIS (RS)	WRIS (BH)
Intercept	0.15*** (0.03)	0.16*** (0.03)
Treatment	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Education	0.02** (0.01)	0.01** (0.00)
Age	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)
Gender	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
PID (7-pt)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
R ²	0.20	0.23
Adj. R ²	0.20	0.23
Num. obs.	800	796

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.9: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on WRIS Outcomes

	Whites Common (RS)	Whites Common (BH)
Intercept	0.70*** (0.05)	0.67*** (0.05)
Treatment	-0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Education	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Gender	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
PID (7-pt)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
R ²	0.05	0.02
Adj. R ²	0.04	0.01
Num. obs.	734	734

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.10: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on How Much Do Whites Have in Common Question

	Work Together (RS)	Work Together (BH)
Intercept	0.24*** (0.06)	0.22*** (0.06)
Treatment	-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Education	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Gender	-0.00 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
PID (7-pt)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
R ²	0.19	0.20
Adj. R ²	0.18	0.19
Num. obs.	705	697

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.11: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on Whites Working Together Outcomes

	White Pride (RS)	White Pride (BH)
Intercept	0.03 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)
Treatment	0.00 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Education	0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
Age	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)
Gender	0.04 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)
PID (7-pt)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
R ²	0.35	0.37
Adj. R ²	0.34	0.37
Num. obs.	742	739

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.12: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on White Pride Outcomes

	Whites Losing Jobs (RS)	Whites Losing Jobs (BH)
Intercept	0.01 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.05)
Treatment	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Education	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Gender	0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
PID (7-pt)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.09*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
R ²	0.36	0.31
Adj. R ²	0.36	0.31
Num. obs.	776	765

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.13: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on Whites Losing Jobs Outcomes

	5-Item Measure (RS)	Consciousness (RS)	5-Item Measure (BH)	Consciousness (BH)
Intercept	0.28*** (0.03)	0.13** (0.04)	0.24*** (0.03)	0.09* (0.04)
Treatment	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)
Education	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Age	0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Gender	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)
PID (7-pt)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Ideology (7-pt)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
R ²	0.39	0.35	0.39	0.34
Adj. R ²	0.38	0.35	0.38	0.33
Num. obs.	616	687	611	679

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 9.14: Effect of Racial Shift and Bad History Treatments on Total Consciousness and Full 5-Item Measure Outcomes

9.5 All Treatment Texts

Study 1

Classical Music

Over the years, many individuals have sought to form a holiday to celebrate the important contributions of white individuals, including the English, Germans, and Irish. Proponents of this event argue that white people should be proud of their contributions to history, such as the introduction of classical music. Experts of classical music commonly attribute the classical movement to the formation of many widespread forms of music today, such as pop and folk music. Proponents of the holiday argue that classical music is just one example of the refinement and sophistication that white figures have contributed to present-day culture that deserves to be recognized with a national holiday.

Bad History

Over the years, many individuals have sought to form a holiday to celebrate the important contributions of white individuals, including the English, Germans, and Irish. Opponents of this holiday argue that white people should be ashamed of their contributions to history, such as their role in the African slave trade and Jim Crow south. Famous racists in American politics include Confederate general Robert E. Lee and George Wallace, who remained Alabama's governor until 1987 and who once proclaimed, "I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Opponents of the holiday argue that segregation is just one reason for which white individuals do not deserve to be recognized with a national holiday.

Study 2

Bad History

Over the years, there has been a great deal of conflict over white Americans' role in American society. Some argue that white people should be ashamed of their contributions to history, such as their role in the African slave trade and Jim Crow south. Famous racists in American politics include Confederate general Robert E. Lee and George Wallace, who remained Alabama's governor until 1987 and who once proclaimed, "I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."

Racial Shift

Over the years, there has been a great deal of conflict over white Americans' role in American society. Some argue that white people are under threat due to changing racial demographics in the United States. Census projections show that whites will be the minority in the United States by 2045. Some argue that this demographic change will result in fewer jobs and less political representation for white Americans.

Study 3

Bad History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kfi3NkIQaU>

Racial Shift

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0p_QwZXg-Ko

Irish History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ6ryw8KCWs>

White Family

<https://youtu.be/dOMSOFWbmz0?t=163>