Melanin Deficiency as a Political Identity: The Origins of White Political Identity

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Abstract

Where does white identity come from? Leading accounts of what white identity is and the political implications for policy all state that white identity comes from threat. Of course, there are several ways that threat may present itself. This paper explores the argument that white identity has been driven by a number of personal and contextual factors. The article also argues that some of the out-group animosities that white identity creates originate from those already harboring racial resentment. [INSERT DATA SOURCES AND FINDINGS HERE]

Keywords: White Identity, Race, Identity Origins, Political Psychology

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Code and replication data can be found on Github at:[INSERT GITHUB LINK]

Introduction

With a surge in the study of race and ethnicity in American politics and the growing political cohesion of whites, scholars have become quite interested in studying white identity and the behavioral and political consequences of it. Scholars have started from the presupposition that white identity comes from a status threat in discussing white identity. Since the 2008 economic collapse, the election of a Black president, racial turmoil from police brutality, the increased usage in workplaces, and the increased rhetoric from critical race theory, the estimations that whites will become the racial minority before the end of the century, whites have been made aware and are continually reminded that their status may be slipping. While the literature has cited and has concluded that the surge in individuals claiming their white identity is due to threat, the exact origins are somewhat unclear.

This paper sets out to narrowly determine where white identity comes from. Given that status threat is the leading explanation for the rise in white identity, I seek to determine which among a smattering of the types of threat whites are facing have the most explanatory value. That is, are whites claiming their white identity due to personal or contextual threats? Or, possibly, is white identity simply arising from racial resentment, and do threats exacerbate whites' anxiety? Within these two categories, I discuss a number of distinct threats in more detail later in the paper.

In my analysis, I find that ... [INSERT FINDINGS AND STUFF HERE].

Social identity theory, categorical politics, and the current status of understanding white identity

Before diving into a discussion of the literature on white identity, this paper must first establish a broader view of the literature on identity and race. While this discussion is not fully comprehensive, the goal of the discussion is to provide perspective on how social psychologists and political psychologists conceptualize identity, where we think it comes from and how we apply those foundational understandings to studying race as a political variable. In doing so, the discussion should elucidate some possible motivations we may extrapolate from the implications of the identity literature so that I may better explain my theory and my assumed motivations behind the development of white identity.

First, it is important to discuss what identity is in relationship to membership. The prevailing social psychological theory for which political psychologists studying identity use as a foundation come from social identity theory (see Huddy, 2012, for a review). As a great service to political psychologists studying identity, Huddy (2001, 2012) simply concludes from her extensive analysis of the literature that identity is distinct from membership. In the reviews of the social psychological literature, identity stems from membership when one develop's a psychological attachment to a recognized group membership Huddy (2012).

Second, as social identity theory posits, identity is important to the degree to which it is salient in different contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For identities that are central to one's self-conception, those individuals tend to hold strong convictions and seek opportunities to find characteristics for which their in-group is superior relative to outgroups; this is particularly true among identifiers of groups who feel status threat (Mummendey

& Schreiber, 1984; Huddy, 2001).

The third relevant implication from social identity theory here is that to the degree to which we see an individual cling to an identity, they also seek to develop ingroup favoritism and outgroup animosity (Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995).

The social identity theory literature informs political psychologists studying identity that one necessary condition for the development of identity is that people form a psychological attachment to an important and relevant group membership. Here, the discussion above indicates that those studying political identities should identify the means through which a group becomes salient, and remains, salient in political contexts. For example, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) demonstrate the power of partisan identity by emphasizing the centrality of it in coloring people's perceptions of political events and policy. With citizens centering their partisan identity in developing political attitudes, this becomes a primary predictor of vote choice and attitude development (Campbell et al., 1960; Taber & Lodge, 2013; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). Additionally, we should expect that once people have established a group identity and are able to tie it to various contexts that they often find themselves in, once they estimate that identity's status, they begin to develop group biases. With these broad conclusions from the literature in hand, I outline a few examples of how political psychologists have used this framework to study some important political identities in the categorical politics literature.

As the social identity theory literature would predict, group consciousness - or one's recognition of their group membership - does not translate to homogenous group behavior. The categorical politics literature demonstrates this quite unequivocally. In studying Black political behavior, White and Laird (2020) demonstrate a strong political group cohesiveness, established through a long history of group deprivation through discrimi-

nation and a common unequal access to political institutions, is quite strong; even in the face of competing self-interests (White, Laird, & Allen, 2014). In their theory, White and Laird (2020) outline the various social costs present in the Black community for individuals to defect from voting against and supporting policies that run counter to the community's collective group interests. While the community may be ideologically heterogeneous, individuals recognize their group's needs through the various collective and personal implications present when one acts in their self-interest. They recognize a need to work together to build the community's status and their status as an individual (White & Laird, 2020).

Not all groups are this behaviorally homogenous, however. For example, women are disadvantaged relative to men in a number of ways. Despite this, not all women are Democrats and actively vote counter to issues considered to be "female issues" such as on abortion (Barnes & Cassese, 2017). In this case, there are a number of competing identities for which women may attach themselves to in politics. For example, despite a growing number of men becoming more likely to claim a Republican political identity, women have tended to remain quite stable in their partisan identity (Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999). That is, partisan identification for women is a powerful political identity that seems to prevail over possible interests in supporting more feminist policy. This conclusion seems to also fit with my brief discussion of the social identity theory literature. In situations where there are strong and competing identities that may be more salient in a political context, we see, as we would expect, that the more salient and powerful identities override the interests for status protection that the other identities may demand.

Gender is not the only group identity where we see this, either. Group identification with being Latino is quite variable. That is, Latinos tend to have varying levels

of even taking on group membership as a Latino. Instead, while studying Latino politics, scholars have noted that individual-level recognition of membership to Latino's more broadly is obfuscated by competing and stronger ethnic identities (Morín, Macías Mejía, & Sanchez, 2020). Moreover, we see that unlike what we see with Women, a linked fate with one's own ethnic group drives policy preferences among Latinos; more so than partisanship. Here, we see that group membership is certainly subjective and despite appearances, group membership is snuffed out entirely by a more important group membership that may be less apparent.

In summary, the categorical politics literature has applied social identity theory to important political group memberships and have demonstrated a few things that should be considered. First, a recognition of group membership is quite variable; other identities that are more nuanced may be more important. In studying race, one must first be clear as to whether the subjects of study even hold a psychological attachment to the group we ascribe them to. Next, the categorical politics literature informs us that some groups may work more cohesively than others and that it is largely driven by a linked fate. In the case of comparing men to women, the discussion above demonstrated that men became more politically homogenous while women did not. As noted above, a competing and stronger group identity was more important to women - partisanship. The categorical politics literature also informs us that group cohesiveness not only comes from the lack of stronger competing group interests, but also comes from the degree to which the group has some degree of enforcement of infractions for deviation. If the group has members consistently deviate for self-interested purposes due to few benefits to being a member of the group, it is likely that members will work with the group only when it benefits them; they have no fealty towards the collective good of the group.

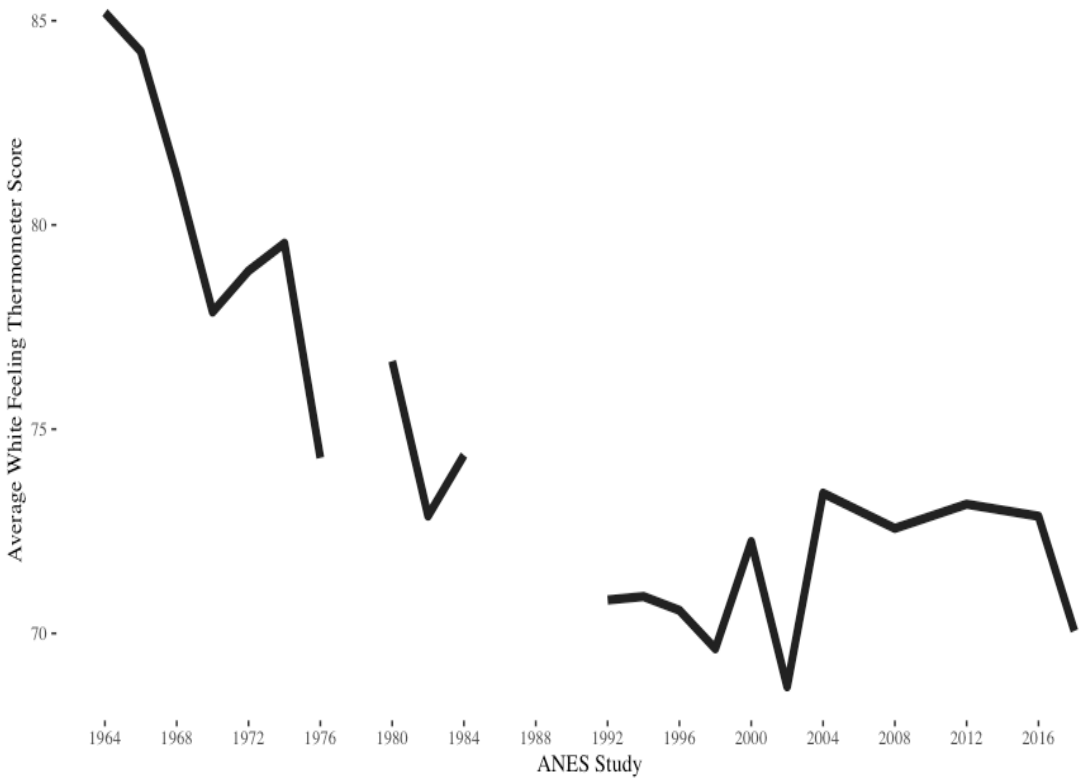
The white identity literature exploded onto the scene with perhaps the most comprehensive and careful exploration of white identity to date. Jardina (2019) provides thorough descriptions of who white identifiers are (for details see Jardina, 2019, Chapters 3 and 4) and what their policy preferences are. Yet, while (Jardina, 2019) and other scholars of white identity have pointed to sociological data about those high on white identity, there remains to be a causal exploration of where white identity comes from. To be consistent, the remainder of this section of the paper will go through the literature of white identity to discuss the four major areas of white identity formation that were extrapolated from the social identity literature and were applied to the categorical politics literature from earlier.

Contemporaneously, white identity appears to have become quite important during the Obama administration. Tesler (2016) demonstrates that, overall, we saw a heightened racialization of politics after 2008. As a result of this racialization, white Americans in particular began to use race as a lens for policy evaluation and political attitude formation. For example, attitudes about the Affordable Care Act (or Obama-Care) were shaped by how the policy was framed (Tesler, 2016). Moreover, the literature demonstrated that at the time Blacks were considered undeserving of welfare provided by the federal government (Winter, 2008) and that many whites saw Obama's policies as benefiting Blacks (Tesler, 2016; Sides, Tesler, & Vavreck, 2018). As a result of this racialization, it appears that there were antecedents of in-group and out-group evaluations present during the Obama administration.

Not only were whites evaluating policy and politics through the lens of race at the time but they were and have also been demonstrating more psychological attachment to other members of the group (see Wong & Cho, 2005; Jardina, 2019, as an example). I also corroborate this using mean feeling thermometer towards white scores using the

2016 ANES study. While there are a number of ways to measure psychological attachment to ones group, one leading narrative in the literature about white identity is the in-group affinity that whites have been displaying toward one another (Jardina, 2020).

Figure 1. Mean White Feeling Thermometer Scores of Whites



Damon Roberts | Data Source: American National Election Study Cumulative Study (1964-2016).
Notes: Mean of Feeling Thermometer Scores towards whites among white identifying respondents.

In line with social identity theory's predictions, Figure 1 demonstrates that in-group attitudes towards other whites tend to correspond with times of high group salience. We see that during times of high racial tensions and related policy debates, there are increases of white respondents indicating relatively warmer feelings toward other whites. We see that after 2008, when the tea party became stronger during the 2010 and 2012 elections, whites feelings became warmer as compared to 2008. We see that in the mid-1960's with the end of formal segregation and the enactment of the Voting Rights Act,

whites felt relatively warmer towards one another.

The literature shows that not only was the racialization of politics the kindling for group evaluations around race for whites, but that many whites actually began to behave that way. For example, scholars demonstrate that not only were whites who identified that way more likely to affiliate with the tea party movement (Berry, Ebner, & Cornelius, 2019), but that those who did were much more likely to recognize and cite a threat to the status of whites as being a reason for joining the movement (Willer, Feinberg, & Wetts, 2016).

While not all whites display a psychological attachment to other whites, those that have are more likely to show preferences for policy that benefit whites (Jardina, 2019) and support candidates who explicitly speak to anxieties of white status loss (Bunyasi, 2019). Social identity theory would predict white identity to a large extent. While not all whites recognize that they do have a shared history with other whites, one of historically high political influence, those that do recognize their commonality with other whites tend to be those who ascribe to that membership (Jardina, 2019). As the racialization of politics and other signs of status loss for whites increase, social identity theory would predict that more whites will claim a stronger white identity.

Sources of White Identity

The section above outlined the ways in which scholars have used social identity theory in studying categorical politics in a general sense and how some have used it as a framework for studying white identity. The conclusion of the previous section laid out a probable expectation that the literature of both social identity theory and white identity politics would imply. While, as discussed above, Jardina (2019) provides a number of

variables to explain who high white identifiers are, it is still somewhat unclear as to what variables have a causal effect on white identity. Coming from the social identity framework in the previous section and the economic, political, and contextual factors that scholars like Jardina (2019) have used to describe white political behavior and attitude formation, I seek to explore the various characteristics that describe high white identifiers and explain which ones are likely to be the most informative drivers of white identity.

One obvious and tangible way in which whites may face status loss is through their pocketbook. Whites experiencing greater financial burdents or those who feel that the national economy is heading in the wrong direction are likely to experience some anxiety about politics. This anxiety drives a search for answers and for someone to blame (Albertson & Kushner Gadarian, 2015; Kinder & Kam, 2010). We know from the literature on economic voting that most voters are not ones who look in their wallet but they look outward for general trends (Mackuen, Erikson, & Stimson, 1989, 2007). For whites living in a racialized political world who are like other voters looking outward, it might be reasonable for whites to look at the financial position of other whites. This point requires some elaboration.

Whites who are looking at the economy are likely looking at other whites' financial positions and are perceiving status through their group's financial positioning. As mentioned above, many in the public rarely look at their own pocketbook to evaluate the economy. Instead, the leading account in the literature is that individuals look outward and look at national economic trends (Mackuen et al., 2007). In a world where race became the primary lens for which Americans, and in particular whites, evaluate politics (Tesler, 2016; Hajnal, 2020), they likely are looking at the economy heuristically - looking at those who are like them; other whites. From the literature, we know

that high white identifiers tend to be more worried about the economy relative to other whites who are not high identifiers. This worry likely is directed towards a sense of status threat given that it presents itself as a tangible status threat.

There are other non-tangible forms of status threats that whites may face and lead them to stronger cling to their white identity; one is personal threats. While these may take a number of different forms, some that surveys often measure and ones that Jardina (2019) descriptively linked to high white identifiers are feelings of efficacy in government, feeling discriminated against for both job opportunities and in the government. A large body of survey evidence shows that whites tend to not like affirmative action; they see it as unfair and that Blacks are undeserving of it (Gilens, 1999; Winter, 2008). Whites also felt left behind in the Obama presidency, they felt that Obama's presidency was meant to pull up Blacks at the expense of whites (Tesler, 2016). Whites who feel threatened by losing job opportunity and by feeling unprotected by the government, likely express resentment toward Blacks, an outgroup. Moreover, as social identity theory posits, when group members feel that another group is catching up or surpassing their group, they seek to find ways to bolster their group's status (Huddy, 2001). Here, personal factors may be less tangible but are still prevelent and have been used to describe who white identifiers are (see Jardina, 2019). Although these personal factors are relevant, the increased subjectivity of evaluating whether you and other group members are personally experiencing hardship due to your identity, they are likely to be a bit weaker relative to the tangible and quantifiable effects one may see in the state of the economy.

There is one other relevant source for white identity - context. With a growing diversity of the United States' population, whites may be facing another racially salient threat. There are a few ways in which context may matter here. Scholars using social

contact theory have shown that an increased salience of minorities in a community increase support for policy that benefit whites (Enos, 2017). While Enos (2017) is not looking at white identifiers, the project still demonstrates that whites, more generally, notice demographical shifts in their community and that it has behavioral and attitudinal effects relevant to politics. Rather than whites becoming more empathetic and supportive of other racial groups, whites become more ethnocentric when faced with a realization that whites are a minority majority (Enos, 2017; Kinder & Kam, 2010). This would predict that high white identifiers who realize whites are a shrinking majority are likely to be concerned about the political influence that they have. When hearing increasingly common predictions that whites will be the minority and that the hispanic and latino population will be the majority some point this century, this implies that whites will have a smaller say in politics - they will be able to cast fewer votes relative to other racial groups. This prospective feeling of political deprivation is quite salient and becomes acutely so when living in increasingly diversifying communities or seeing national trends toward an increasing diversification of the U.S. population.

In summary, in a racialized political world, whites see their race everywhere. While doing so, whites are seeing financial crashes, like in 2008, that wiped out white wealth and in turn see economic policy that are meant to economically equalize the races, and furthermore, see the shrinking number of whites comprising the U.S. population as a sign of decreasing political significance. In this world, those seeing those threats to others like them, may expect, as social identity theory posits, that they are next. If one's white neighbor has a house foreclosed on them, that individual may expect that they are next. If a white individual sees a family member passed up on for a job or a promotion in favor of a non-white person, that individual may expect that they will not get that job offer or promotion they are currently working toward. Rather than society being a color-

blind place where whites tend to benefit from policies, they see policies that are meant to create a more even playing ground as a threat. They see a racialized world in which non-whites are gaining status and are beginning to look more like them in representation and status, and are concerned about whether the future holds a place for them.

Data and Methodology

To model my theory and hypotheses, I primarily rely on the American National Election Study. Namely, I use the 2012 and 2016 American National Election Studies. Using these studies have a number of advantages. First, the ANES has long asked psychological and attitudinal questions that lend itself well to individual-level analyses. Second, the ANES uses a number of common behavioral measures related to race and identity. And third, the ANES often ask about impressions of their respondents about their personal finances and issues the respondent perceives to be most important for government to address. Given these advantages of the ANES, it allows me to not only look at attitudinal changes over time, but it allows me to examine a large number of personal and contextual threats that white respondents may be feeling.

A drawback of the ANES, however, is that the sampling method uses national level sampling techniques. This sampling method makes claims for how appropriate it is to use the ANES for testing contextual factors somewhat dubious. Therefore, I will use the [I think CCES] - which has a more appropriate sampling technique for subnational hypothesis testing - to test my hypotheses about context.

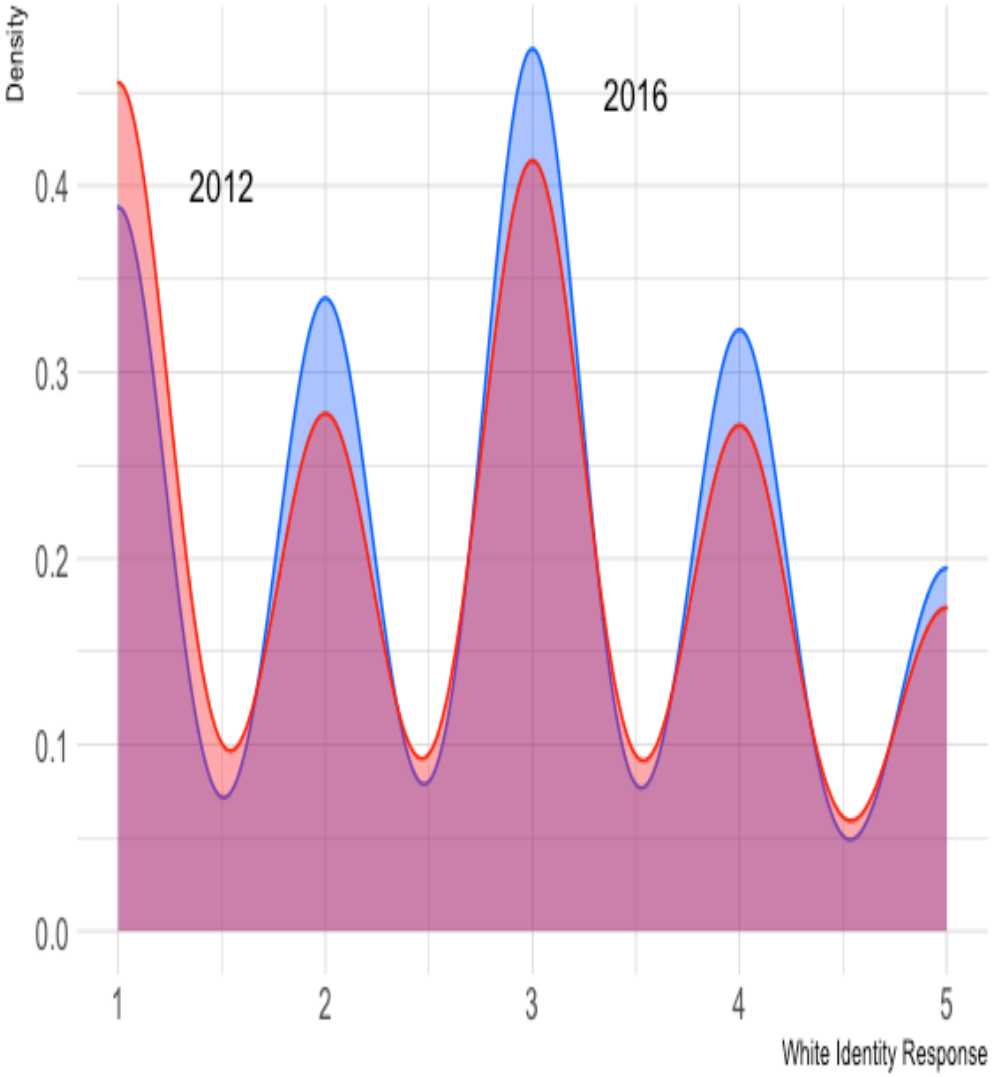
Measuring White Identity

There are a few different ways to measure white identity. Here, I use a single measure of white identity. It is simply a question in the ANES asking white respondents whether being "white is important to [their] identity". This measure does a pretty good job at identifying those who are high white identifiers. With this measure, in particular, I define high white identifiers as those who say that being white is very or extremely important to them. I pull this question from both the 2012 and the 2016 ANES. When looking at the codebook from the ANES, I flip the likert scale so that those who respond that it is "Extremely Important" has a value of 5. I then create a binary measure of white identifiers where those who respond with either a 4 or 5 on my recoded scale, are assigned a 1 and others are assigned a value of 0. This approach is similar to the one that Jardina (2019) uses.

For illustrative purposes, Figure 2 is a density plot with the flipped Likert of responses from both the 2012 and 2016 ANES. The mean response in 2012 is 2.76 which indicates that the mean respondent does not see being white as not being very important to their identity. In 2016, the importance of being white to respondents decreases slightly with a mean of 2.64 .

I include tables with the descriptive statistics below in Appendix A.

Figure 2. White Identity in 2012 and 2016



Damon Roberts | Data Source: 2012 and 2016 American National Election Study.
Density of Responses to White Identity Importance Question.

Measuring economic, personal, and contextual factors driving white identity

From a methodological standpoint, white identity is certainly a latent variable that cannot be easily measured. As a result of the complexity of measuring social phenomenon, social scientists often take up methodological tools that better allow for measuring latent social contructs. Given that my theory presents a number of potential operationalizations, in Tables 1 and 2, I present the factor loadings for the available, and relevant, variables contained within the 2012 and 2016 ANES.

In the 2012 and 2016 ANES we have collectively captured economic measures that may be informative predictors of white identity. We may expect that high white identifiers may see the past economy as being more positive, where they know where they were economically and what their status was . In predicting the future, those who may have a more grim outlook on the future status of whites and their economic standing may have a more grim lens through which they evaluate the economic future for the country and for themselves. As a result, I include both retrospective and prospective attitudinal measures of the economy and whether they have or will be better off financially in the future. Given that my theory centers on status threat, we should expect that positive retrospective evaluations will present themselves as positive predictors of sliding up the white identity scale; whereas for prospective evaluations, those that feel threatened may

This is somewhat complicated by the fact that the first available data I am using on this is from 2012, after one of the worst economic collapses in American history. These evaluations may be somewhat skewed due entirely to the economic collapse and criticisms over the way in which Barack Obama may have handeled the economic crisis. It still is valuable, however, for statistical leverage due to the economic collapse and the housing market effects that harmed whites due to their higher likelihood of homeownership status. In otherwords, though retrospective evaluations may capture evaluations of Obama and the 2008 economic collapse, given that much of the literature poses Obama and the "post-racial" society that was supposed to follow in 2008, it is precisely the measure we want to include to explain some of the variation in white identification.

see the future as full of uncertainty and may show negative affect towards evaluating future outcomes.

I also include some personal level attitudes that the 2012 and 2016 ANES captured. While some of these are somewhat affected by national conditions, these largely are much more personal than contextual or broader economic factors. For example, while getting fired and experiencing under- or a complete lack of employment may be driven by national trends, these still remain quite personal and capture the link between national level trends that trickle down to have personal impacts on white respondents. Thankfully, the both ANES executions capture some personal level attitudes not tied to economics. As seen in the tables with the factor loadings, the personal factor loadings include evaluations of social impacts of a diversifying society they include expressed perceptions of bias and discrimination towards whites. These capture both a set of social and personal measures that may manifest as a personal connection and a explicit recognition of threat towards the status of whites in not only economic (like the previously discussed variables) but of social factors relevant to politics.

In the tables with the factor loadings, we see that these variables together do a pretty good job at identifying an underlying latent variable. The 2012 factors have a confirmatory factor index (CFI) of about 0.8 which is slightly below the commonly held standard of 0.90 and 0.95 levels that indicate a conservatively and good fit, respectively. The 2016 factors are similar with a CFI of 0.81; which, again, is a bit lower than what we often want, but is not too bad considering that the factor loadings do not include the measure of context nor racial resentment.

Table 1: Factor Loadings of Economic and Personal Factors

	Estimate(Std.Err.)	p
	Factor Loadings	
Economic		
Prospective Better Off	0.32(0.03)	0.000
Retrospective Better off	0.61(0.04)	0.000
Retrospective	0.93(0.03)	0.000
Prospective	0.60(0.03)	0.000
Unemployed	0.82(0.03)	0.000
Know someone that lost job	−0.06(0.02)	0.001
Family member lost job	−0.35(0.04)	0.000
Personal		
Government Cares	0.20(0.03)	0.000
Laid Off	−0.01(0.01)	0.337
Society Ignores Tradition	−0.84(0.05)	0.000
Gov. biased against whites	−0.29(0.02)	0.000
Racial equality too far	−0.78(0.04)	0.000
Whites influential	0.28(0.02)	0.000
Discriminated against because white	−0.35(0.03)	0.000
	Residual Variances	
Prospective Better Off	0.62(0.03)	0.000
Retrospective Better off	1.06(0.06)	0.000
Retrospective	0.35(0.03)	0.000

Prospective	0.53(0.03)	0.000
Unemployed	0.39(0.03)	0.000
Know someone that lost job	0.24(0.01)	0.000
Family member lost job	1.24(0.06)	0.000
Government Cares	0.75(0.04)	0.000
Laid Off	0.09(0.00)	0.000
Society Ignores Tradition	1.07(0.07)	0.000
Gov. biased against whites	0.15(0.01)	0.000
Racial equality too far	0.90(0.06)	0.000
Whites influential	0.20(0.01)	0.000
Discriminated against because white	0.64(0.03)	0.000
	Latent Covariances	
Economic w/ Personal	0.75(0.03)	0.000
	Fit Indices	
RMSEA	0.07	
SRMR	0.05	
CFI	0.88	
TLI	0.86	

$^{+}$Fixed parameter. Data: 2012 American National Election Study

Table 2: Factor Loadings of Economic and Personal Factors

	Model	
	Estimate(Std.Err.)	p
	Factor Loadings	
Economic		
Prospective Better Off	0.32(0.02)	0.000
Retrospective Better off	0.51(0.02)	0.000
Retrospective	0.81(0.02)	0.000
Prospective	0.31(0.02)	0.000
Unemployed	0.75(0.02)	0.000
Know someone that lost job	−0.08(0.01)	0.000
Family member lost job	−0.35(0.03)	0.000
Personal		
Government Cares	0.10(0.03)	0.000
Ignore Tradition	0.88(0.03)	0.000
Gov. biased against whites	0.36(0.02)	0.000
Whites Influential	−0.35(0.01)	0.000
Discriminated Against because white	0.35(0.02)	0.000
	Residual Variances	
Prospective Better Off	0.62(0.02)	0.000
Retrospective Better Off	0.64(0.02)	0.000
Retrospective	0.41(0.02)	0.000
Prospective	0.64(0.02)	0.000
Unemployed	0.50(0.02)	0.000

Know someone that lost job	0.24(0.01)	0.000
Family member lost job	1.23(0.04)	0.000
Government Cares	1.15(0.03)	0.000
Ignore Tradition	1.12(0.05)	0.000
Gov. biased against whites	0.62(0.02)	0.000
Whites Influential	0.16(0.01)	0.000
Discriminated against because white	0.57(0.02)	0.000
	Latent Covariances	
Economic w/Personal	−0.58(0.02)	0.000
	Fit Indices	
RMSEA	0.08	
SRMR	0.06	
CFI	0.81	
TLI	0.76	

[+]Fixed parameter. Data: 2016 American National Election Study.

Other important variables are excluded from these factor analyses. The first, which is a direct part of my theory, is context. Unfortunately, it is quite difficult to capture nationally representative county-level public opinion data. The data most available is really only state level data. While the 2012 and 2016 ANES record the zip code and county of the respondents to their studies, this data is restricted . While state-level data is not ideal, it likely provides some information that captures some variance of the outcome variable here. Unfortunately, there is another challenge with data availability for this important factor. The U.S. Census is preformed every 10 years. Besides the change

To my knowledge, I won't be able to get access to that without some application process, if at all. Either way, a bit unfeasible to get access to over the course of a semester.

of the decade, there is little comprehensive data that record racial demographic changes - even at the state level. With this consideration, one option is to use the Census Bureau's population estimates for 2012 and 2016. This approach appears to be somewhat fraught when the methodology for calculating these population estimates are somewhat unclear. Though, these estimates are quite sophisticated and well-done, they are still only estimates that cannot be confirmed later for accuracy. Rather than including more error in my model, the simple solution is to just calculate the proportion of the state's population that is white based on the 2010 data. The model, by nature, then compares states with higher percentages of whites relative to lower percentages. While this, unfortunately, does not stand as a measure that will likely present itself as a causally important predictor due to the variables static nature, it will capture some of the dependent variable's variance providing a better specified model. In other words, although I theorize context to be causally important, with current data constraints, I am unable to directly test that. Instead, I can only use context as a control in my model here. With future access to data that is dynamic and more temporally aligned with the study execution, future models can test its causal relationship with white identity. I also include the Kinder, Sanders, and Sanders (1996) racial resentment index from the 2012 and 2016 ANES. More details about how each of these variables (and scales) were coded and calculated are provided in Appendix B.

Results

Table 3 presents the logged odd point estimates of an ordinal logit measuring the effect of these economic, personal, and contextual factors on predicting whether a given respondent takes on a white political identity.

Table 3: 2012 Effects of economic, personal, and contextual factors on assuming white political identity

	White Identity Importance			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Prospective Better Off(-)	−0.017		0.0003	0.001
	(0.042)		(0.042)	(0.044)
Retrospective Better Off(+)	0.046		0.097*	0.096*
	(0.031)		(0.033)	(0.034)
Economy-Retrospective(-)	−0.130*		−0.005	0.011
	(0.036)		(0.045)	(0.047)
Economy-Prospective(-)	0.084		0.105*	0.104*
	(0.043)		(0.045)	(0.046)
Laid Off Before(+)	−0.078		−0.128	−0.145*
	(0.065)		(0.067)	(0.069)
Know of Job Loss(+)		0.002	−0.066	−0.056
		(0.035)	(0.045)	(0.047)
Family Job Loss(+)		0.020	0.072*	0.084*
		(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Break Traditions(+)		0.127*	0.132*	0.145*
		(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.031)
Gov. Biased(+)		0.065	0.070	0.082
		(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.083)
Racial Equality - Too Far(+)		−0.043	−0.030	−0.026
		(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.032)
White Influence(-)		−0.326*	−0.301*	−0.273*
		(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.072)
White Discriminated Against(+)		−0.004	0.011	0.021
		(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.042)
Racial Resentment - 4 Item(+)		0.521*	0.485*	0.490*
		(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.077)
2010 % White (State)(-)				−0.086
				(0.412)
BIC	9790.8	9857.2	9514.8	9022
N	3,095	3,146	3,026	2,869

Source: 2012 American National Election Study.
Ordered Logit Coefficients. Std. Errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$

I then ran a model for predicting white identity claims among 2016 ANES respondents using theorized economic, personal, and contextual factors. Table **??** presents the logged odds point estimates of the model.

Table 4: 2016 Effects of economic, personal, and contextual factors on assuming white political identity

	White Identity Importance			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Prospective Better Off(-)	−0.094*		−0.059	−0.060
	(0.048)		(0.050)	(0.050)
Retrospective Better Off(+)	−0.021		0.036	0.035
	(0.044)		(0.048)	(0.048)
Economy-Retrospective(-)	−0.265*		−0.138*	−0.138*
	(0.039)		(0.049)	(0.049)
Economy-Prospective(-)	0.216*		0.203*	0.203*
	(0.045)		(0.047)	(0.047)
Laid Off Before(+)	−0.184*		−0.187*	−0.188*
	(0.073)		(0.077)	(0.077)
Know of Job Loss(+)		−0.071	−0.044	−0.044
		(0.039)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Family Job Loss(+)		0.028	0.051	0.051
		(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Break Traditions(+)		0.171*	0.159*	0.159*
		(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Gov. Biased(+)		−0.079	−0.084	−0.083
		(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.046)
White Influence(-)		−0.262*	−0.263*	−0.263*
		(0.080)	(0.082)	(0.082)
White Discriminated Against(+)		0.096*	0.087	0.086
		(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Racial Resentment - 4 Item(+)		0.468*	0.452*	0.452*
		(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.080)
2010 % White (State)(-)				−0.120
				(0.422)
BIC	9790.8	9857.2	9514.8	9022
N	2,519	2,423	2,370	2,370

Source: 2016 American National Election Study.
Ordered Logit Coefficients. Std. Errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$

Appendix A.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of White Identity - 2012

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
White Identity	3,249	2.76	1.30	1.00	2.00	4.00	5.00

2012 American National Election Study.
Statistics from Likert Scale of White Identity Importance Question.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of White Identity - 2016

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
White Identity	2,586	2.64	1.34	1.00	1.00	4.00	5.00

2012 American National Election Study.
Statistics from Likert Scale of White Identity Importance Question.

Appendix B.

The attitudinal variables pulled from the ANES likert scales are all coded as ascending in affect. Those that are "Agree" likert scales go from "Strongly Disagree", coded as 1, to "Strongly Agree", as 2, for example. The 2010 state level population data were downloaded from the U.S. Census bureau's website and were used to calculate state level demographic proportions. To do this , I collapsed the dataset listwise to create a summation of the population per state, per racial group. I then took that data and put it into a new dataset with multiple columns and one row per state. I created one column for the 2010 recorded population and another column that was the summation of nonwhite population estimates for that given state. With this, I had a row per state with a column of the recorded population for 2010 of whites and a column with the 2010 recorded population of nonwhites. For the racial resentment index, I took the four common items present in the 2012 and 2016 ANES that were first used by Kinder et al. (1996), added the items, and divided the total score by 4.

Code can be found on github: [insert github link]

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