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Double jeopardy

The implications of gender on white's racial attitudes

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ABSTRACT Do White women report a higher racial identity than men? White political identity and co-racial attitudes recieve considerable scholarly and public attention in the post-Trump era. The field does not yet know why White men tend to hold more racially resentful views while White women tend to express more in-group oriented racial views. We argue that this gender gap reflects differences in what appeals are most attractive and that the palatability of these messages are governed by ideological differences. Using data from the 2016 and 2020 American National Election Studies (ANES), our evidence suggests that once we hold partisanship constant, Women report a higher White political identity than men. Using data from an experiment, we then examine the mechanism we argue underlies this phenomenon. Our results highlight the importance of considering gender-race identities in evaluating White identity in the United States.

KEYWORDS white identity; racial attitudes; gender; elite messaging

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Introduction

The in-group attitudes of whites garner significant attention by political pundits and by scholars. Many of these accounts document the tendency for the Republican party to represent those interests through positioning themselves on white victimhood (Samuels & Lewis Jr., 2022). This appears to be a shift, however, from the observation that Republicans express racial animus. For example, during Obama's presidency, the Republican party used the increased salience of race relations to racialize any policy that had a connection to Obama, such as the Affordable Care Act (Tesler, 2016). So is it that Whites have shifted in what messages appeal to them: from messages of racial animus to white victimhood?

We argue that an important dimension of this that has not yet been accounted for in the literature is gender. In this manuscript, we argue that there is a gender gap in the palatability of racialized messages. As white women tend to be more liberal, when holding partisanship constant, we argue that messages from the party that express in-group preferences play better than racially resentful messages which overwhelmingly conjure images of a racist white man as the target audience. As white women are not necessarily immune from holding racialized views, we suspect that these messages do not yet have associations with staunchly conservative views nor have they been widely marked as racist and that this appeals to those who may self-identify as more liberal. We suspect that this provides a partial explanation as to how Donald J. Trump, a candidate who embodies a campaign of white victimhood, was so successful at capturing the vote among white women.

Using data from the 2016 and 2020 American National Election Studies (ANES), we first establish whether there is a gender gap in white identification once we hold partisanship constant.

From our analyses, we find that in both 2016 and 2020, that once we hold partisanship constant, that white women tend to report a higher white identity than white men. Next, in this draft, we provide a proposed experimental design that we believe will allow us to test the mechanism for this gender gap among whites. In the following section we elaborate on the mechanism that we argue explains this phenomenon.

White identity versus racial animus

The conceptualization of white identity heavily relies on social identity theory. As scholars see it, white identity reflects a recognition of your connection to other whites and a preference for protecting the status of other whites (Helms & Carter, 1990; Jardina, 2019) - which implies a desire to protect the racial status quo (Schildkraut, 2017).

Though race is heavily intertwined with partisan identification (Engelhardt, 2020; Westwood & Peterson, 2022), which is argued to be a central identity for Americans (Mason, 2015), evidence suggests that both white Democrats and Republicans identify with their race; though white identity is a strong predictor of support for Trump in the 2016 election (Jardina et al., 2020).

Whites protecting their status is not a new idea (see Painter, 2010), however, scholars are reconsidering the way that it manifests. The tendency for those studying the attitudes of white Americans is to examine their out-group attitudes. After all, racism in America has deep cultural and institutional roots (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; López, 2006; Painter, 2010; Rile Hayward, 2013). Scholars in this area understand that racial animus, prejudice held toward non-whites (Kam & Burge, 2019), guides news coverage of American politics (Winter, 2008), guides attitudes toward government spending (Gilens, 1999; Hopkins, 2009; Tesler, 2016), guides attitudes toward vote choice (Sides et al., 2018); and guides the campaign strategies of candidates (Stephens-Dougan,

2020).

Racialized attitudes for whites depend on a number of factors. For example, from a social psychological perspective, both in-and-out-group racial attitudes are guided by a sense of status loss (Morrison et al., 2009). Whether this status loss is economic or is social and cultural is up for debate (see Roberts, 2022), many examples abound of whites' attitudes shifting when faced with a sense of change to the racial status quo (Albertson & Kushner Gadarian, 2015; Bobo, 1983; Craig & Richeson, 2014). Looking ascriptively, racially inclusive messages appear to be more popular among white woman relative to white men (Hutchings et al., 2004). White men also were much less willing to support Obama relative to white women (Junn & Masuoka, 2020). Some may assume that age matters, however, evidence suggests that once we adjust our measures of racialized attitudes, generational gaps disappear (Desante & Smith, 2020) and that the "old-fashioned racism" of the Jim Crow era remains (Tesler, 2013).

This suggests that there are differences between men and women in whether in-group or out-group racial attitudes are more appealing. What is unclear, however, is what the mechanism that drives these differences is. In the next section, we make a case for one possible mechanism.

The racialized gender gap

To understand why this racialized gender gap may exist, we need to consider how white men and women evaluate politics differently. A rich literature about gender documents a "gender gap"; the tendency for men and women to report meaningfully different political views. Women tend to be more liberal and Democratic, whereas men tend to be more conservative and Republican. A leading argument is that Republican men have taken a much more conservative stance on various issues and are responsible for widening this gender gap (Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999).

Even looking within the parties, men tend to be much more conservative than women (Barnes & Cassese, 2017).

Many suggest that this gender gap exists as the result of the deep roots of the patriarchy in America. As white women experience marginalization, they rely on different considerations than white men. Specifically, white men relied more on their partisanship and anti-black attitudes to evaluate candidates in the 2018 midterm elections, whereas women relied more on their ideology and their sexism (Lemi, 2022). One plausible explanation for this is a result of the historical differences in how white men and women are socialized. As America has deep roots in white supremacist ideology, white women are seen as symbols of purity and that they have a higher obligation to protecting the purity of the race (Junn, 2017). They face significant hostility by white men if they place their independence as women above their obligations to white men (Sunderland, 2022).

Though white women are marginalized, their experiences of marginalization do not translate into advocacy for marginalized racial groups. For example, white women hold negative views of the Black Lives Matter movement (Isom et al., 2022). When advocacy groups designed for helping marginalized non-whites are lead by white women tend to be less active than if they are lead by non-white women (Strolovitch, 2006). Though they are marginalized, this occurs because they still balance the considerations of their whiteness (Lucas & Mohamed, 2021).

As white women tend to hold more liberal attitudes, rely on their ideology more than their partisanship, and experience marginalization themselves, we should expect that this racialized gap is the result of a balancing act between these considerations. White men are racially conservative and are amenable to accepting messages from Republicans that historically rely on messages of racial animus and stereotypes. White men do not experience marginalization, and as a result,

changes to the racial status quo do not represent an increasing degree of victimization.

We expect the following: that once we control for partisanship, white women will report a higher white political identity than white men (H_1). The reason this racialized gender gap exists is that messages expressing the victimhood of whites engender stronger reactions among white women than men (H_2) and that this reaction to changes in the status quo are moderated by ideological views (H_3).

In the next section we first establish the existience of the racialized gender gap (H_1) using data from the 2016 and 2020 American National Election Studies. In this draft, we then propose a set of experimental studies that we intend to conduct to examine the plausibility of H_2 and H_3.

Study 1

For Study 1 we use the 2016 and 2020 ANES. There are two primary reasons we rely on survey data. First, we want to establish whether there is a gender gap in white identity and whether white identity is more popular among liberal women relative to conservative men - who tend to find racially resentful messages more appealing. Second, the conservative media did not exclusively focus on white identity politics but also expressed a fair amount of racial resentment as well (e.g., praising Trump's comments that conflated immigrants with gang-affiliated criminals (Derespina, 2017)), so we want to examine the effects of conservative media on the whole as opposed to one particular type of message.

The 2016 ANES was in the field from September, 2016 to January, 2017. As we are focusing on Whites, we subset our dataset to those who self-identify as White. This leaves us with a sample of 3038 respondents. Table 1 provides the unweighted characteristics of the sample. The 2020 ANES was in the field from August, 2020 until December, 2020. The sample contains 5963 White

respondents. Table 2 provides the unweighted characteristics of the sample.

Both surveys ask white respondents "How important is being White to your identity". Respondents then can report the degree to which they or disagree with the statement along a 5-point Likert scale. We code responses to this question as increasing agreement. We use this as our measure of white identity as it is a self-identification with their Whiteness and, in the context of the survey, should measure this identification when primed by politics. Though it does not capture linked fate with other whites, we agree with other scholars using these datasets that it should be sufficient to measure white identity (Pérez et al., 2021).

Both samples ask respondents about their gender identity as well. For this particular analysis we are interested in the differences between male and female identifying respondents. Though it is somewhat reductive, we code a dichotomous measure of whether the respondent is male or female. We exclude respondents who report that they do not identify with these two gender identities.

First, we start with a simple difference of means test to examine whether there are differences between men and women on white identity. Given our hypotheses, we expect that we should find that men report a higher level of white identity as this test does not control for partisanship. As white identity is coded ordinally and gender is coded dichotomously, we perform this test using a Wilcoxon non-parametric t-test as opposed to the standard t-test.

Second, we expect that once we account for partisanship, women will be more likely to report a higher white identity than men. To examine this, we fit a model using the logit^{-}1 link function. For the fitted model, we specify our prior using the $R2$ distribution as we expect that the cut points from the $k-1$ logistic regressions will explain approximately 0.3 of the variance in the variance of our latent outcome (see Gelman et al., 2021). We fit this model on 6 chains with 2000 iterations.

Third, as we expect this gender gap to be the result of the palatability of in-group messages, we expect that, when holding partisan identification constant, more liberal women will express a white identity and that more conservative men will score relatively lower on white identity as racially animus views will be more attractive.

Results

The Wilcoxon test suggests that men report higher White identity than women. This occurs in 2016 (estimate = `2.00`, `p < 0.001`) and in 2020 (estimate = `2.00`, `p < 0.001`). However, men tend to be more conservative than women. To test H_1, we examine whether White women report higher levels of White identity when we control for partisanship.

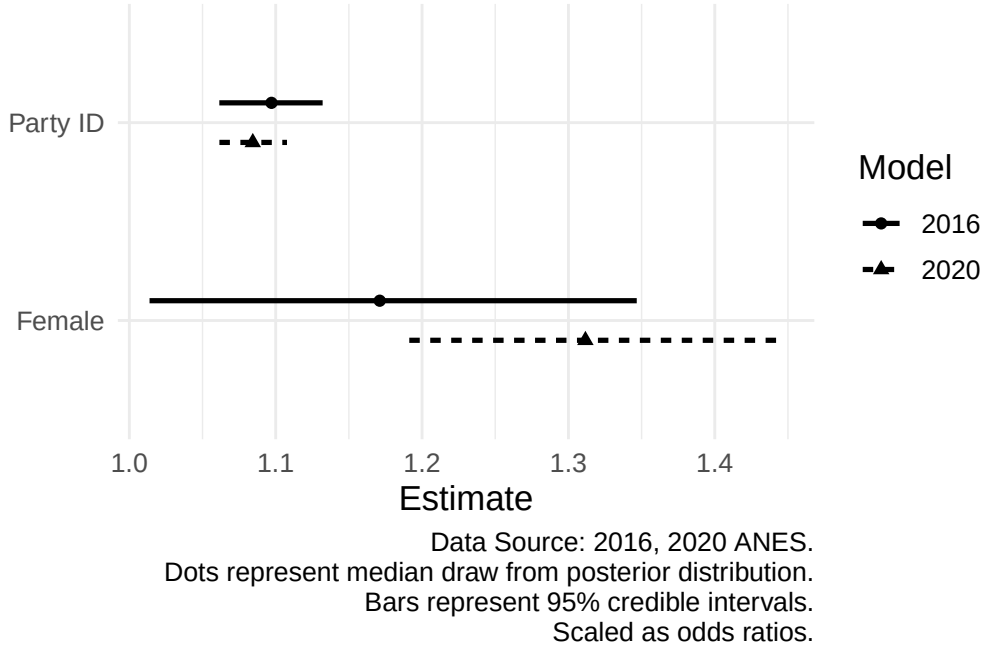

Figure 1: Higher odds of women reporting white identity when controlling for Party ID

Figure 1 visualizes the distributions of the posterior draws from the fitted model[1]. Both models suggest that women are more likely to report more white identity than men when we hold partisan identification constant. Specifically, for 2016 our model suggests that women are `17.11`% more likely to report a white identity when controlling for partisan identification. Our model for 2020 suggests similar patterns with women `31.16`% more likely to report a White identity when holding partisanship constant. The credible intervals of both models also suggest a low probability that, given the data, the estimated relationship in 2016 and 2020 is null.

Our analysis thus far does suggest that the gender gap exists on in-group racial attitudes and that it is dependent on whether you consider partisanship. We expect, however, that these messages are more palatable to women as a result of their tendency to be more liberal. That is, liberals are likely to reject messages expressing explicit racially resentful attitudes but are likely still attracted to racialized messages that makes them feel like they are victims too.

Proposed Study 2

Our analyses thus far suggest that, once we control for partisanship, men and women report different levels of their attachment to their White racial identity. We argue that the mechanism explaining this phenomenon is that men and women see different appeals to their race as attractive. We propose the following experiment to offer an empirical test of our hypothesized mechanism.

We propose a three-arm online[2] survey experiment to examine the possible differences in reported levels of attraction to in-group and out-group racial appeals. After subjects provide in-

[1]Table 3 presents the full table of results.

[2]Which platform we use depends on our pending source of funding for the experiment, but we hope to do this either through MTurk with the CloudResearch panel or with a YouGov panel. We will limit our sample to self-identifying White respondents.

formed consent and answer questions about their demographics and their political views such as partisan identification, we will randomly assign participants into one of three conditions: (1) a placebo condition, (2) an in-group racial appeal condition, and (3) an out-group racial appeal condition. In the three conditions, the participants will be presented with a text-based vignette that discuss a recent speech delivered by a candidate in a Judicial election[3]:

> In a recent speech, [NAME REDACTED BY RESEARCHERS], a candidate for an upcoming Judicial election, got onto the issue of community. They said "You've got these [**people who have little concern for fostering a community with their neighbors/Mexicans who move in, take jobs, and change the community/Illegal aliens who don't care about anyone about themselves**]". They go on to say, "We need communities [**that foster neighborly mutual trust and respect/that uphold the values that have traditionally preserved the values of this country/that keep those who are unlike us out**]."

Our rationale for our vignette choices is as follows. We first chose for this to be a candidate in a local, judicial election. The reason we do this is out of concern for balancing external and internal validity. As judicial elections tend to be low-information and non-partisan affairs, we did this so that the vignette appeared more natural than one for a high-information and partisan election where subjects would expect information about the candidate's partisanship, thus potentially acting as a confound, or requiring that we choose a real political candidate. We also chose to focus the statements by the fictional candidate on discussing issues surrounding "community". This avoids the problem of subjects detecting partisan policy stances from the message, beyond

[3] **Bolded** sections within brackets represent the parts of the vignette that vary from condition. [**Placebo Condition**, **In-Group Condition**, **Out-group Condition**]

those that are implied by the racial attitudes expressed. We focus the in-group sentiments to be about changes to the status quo which often goes along with feelings that Whites are now victims of a rapidly changing world and a racial hierarchy. In turn, we focus the out-group sentiments to be much more focused on dehumanizing those from the racial out-group and to keep them segregated.

After receiving the manipulation, we intend to present the participants with an open-ended manipulation check: - The candidate that you just read about was running for office in which state?

To further detect insincere responses, we follow the advice of Kennedy et al. (2021) and intend to ask the subjects four open-ended responses about their political views on various issues throughout the administration of the experiment. Using the responses from these questions, we can examine those who not only provide duplicate but also insincere responses and exclude them from our analysis. We intend to do this in conjunction with the removal of those who complete the study in a higher-and-lower-than average amount of time and those who take the survey from a duplicated IP address.

After receiving the manipulation and manipulation check, we intend to ask participants the following questions:

1. After reading this news coverage of this candidate, would you be inclined to support them? (options: Support them, Would not support them, do not feel more or less inclined to support them)
2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the views expressed by the candidate. (options: Strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the view that this community is a victim to current trends. (options: Strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)
4. WHITE IDENTITY SCALE
5. RACIAL RESENTMENT SCALE

The goal of question 1 is to examine whether the message is attractive enough to shift the subject's desire to "publicly" express support of the candidate and their views. Question 2 is designed to examine how attractive the message itself is. Question 3 is designed to dig into their view that this message communicates a victimization of the community by another racial group. We will then present respondents with Jardina's (2019) white identity scale and with the racial resentment scale.

Discussion

In this manuscript we develop a theoretical framework that explain a phenomenon that we refer to as the racialized gender gap. We argue that the racialized gender gap is the result of a difference in demand for white women to balance a number of considerations when evaluating the appeal of different racialized political messages. We argue that the result of this balancing act leads white women to be more likely to find in-group oriented attitudes and messages of white victimhood appealing relative to men who do not have to balance the same considerations and are more likely to find out-group messages of racial animus more appealing.

While in this current draft, we do not test this mechanism. We do use the 2016 and 2020 ANES to establish that the racialized gender gap does indeed exist. We also propose an experimental

design that we hope will be a good test of our mechanism. We appreciate feedback to strengthen our project.

Appendix

Descriptive statistics

Table 1: 2016 Descriptive statistics

	Unique (#)	Missing (%)	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max
White identity	6	15	2.6	1.3	1.0	3.0	5.0
Female	3	1	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.0	1.0
Party ID	8	0	4.2	2.1	1.0	4.0	7.0
Conservative media	3	36	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.0
Gender discrimination	5	21	2.9	0.9	2.0	3.0	5.0

Data source: 2016 American National Election Study.

Note: Unique column includes NA values.

Table 2: 2020 Descriptive statistics

	Unique (#)	Missing (%)	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max
White identity	6	11	2.4	1.3	1.0	2.0	5.0
Female	3	0	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.0	1.0
Party ID	8	0	4.2	2.3	1.0	4.0	7.0
Conservative media	2	0	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.0
Gender discrimination	4	82	3.4	0.7	3.0	3.0	5.0

Data source: 2020 American National Election Study.

Note: Unique column includes NA values.

Models

Table 3: Women have higher log-likelihood of reporting high white identity when controlling for Party ID

	2016	2020
Female	0.158	0.271
	[0.014, 0.298]	[0.175, 0.369]
Party ID	0.093	0.081
	[0.060, 0.124]	[0.060, 0.102]
Threshold 1	−0.456	−0.128
	[−0.632, −0.286]	[−0.247, −0.007]
Threshold 2	0.308	0.715
	[0.133, 0.482]	[0.599, 0.842]
Threshold 3	1.431	1.856
	[1.246, 1.605]	[1.731, 1.991]
Threshold 4	2.595	3.017
	[2.389, 2.801]	[2.866, 3.183]
N	2564	5287

Data source: 2016, 2020 American National Election Study.
Point estimates are the logged odds ratios.
Brackets represent credible intervals at the 95-percent level.

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