Social Problems, 2021, 68, 513–534
doi: 10.1093/socpro/spaa002
Advance Access Publication Date: 20 March 2020
Article

White Christian Nationalism and Relative Political Tolerance for Racists

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies demonstrate that white Americans who adhere to "Christian nationalism"-an ideology that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity and American civic life-tend to hold authoritarian, exclusionary, and overtly prejudicial attitudes, particularly regarding ethno-racial minorities. We use data from the 1996 and 2014 General Social Surveys and consider relative political tolerance toward old-fashioned racists (i.e., persons who believe black Americans are genetically inferior) compared to other historically stigmatized groups, including anti-religionists, communists, militarists, and homosexuals. Viewing Christian identity as essential to American civic belonging is among the strongest predictors of whites' being politically intolerant of all stigmatized groups, racists included. However, when we examine *relative* tolerance toward racists compared to other stigmatized groups, white Christian nationalists show greater tolerance than other whites. This effect is distinct from personal religiosity which is associated with *lower* relative tolerance toward racists. Additionally, we find both time and gender moderate the association between white Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists. Findings ultimately demonstrate that white Americans who adhere to Christian nationalism exhibit authoritarian tendencies-expressing lower tolerance for all groups considered-while making greater *relative* allowance for old-fashioned racists, who may be allies in the task of social control and coercion.

KEYWORDS: white Christian nationalism; racism; racists; political tolerance; Trump.

Two prominent ideological commitments characterize the majority of white Americans who elected Donald Trump and continue to support him today.[1] The first is antipathy toward racial and ethno-religious minorities such as black Americans, immigrants, and Muslims (Ekins 2017; Major, Blodorn, and Blascovich 2018; Schaffner, MacWilliams, and Nteta 2018; Stewart 2018). The second is Christian nationalism, an ideology that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity and American civic life (Whitehead, Perry, and Baker 2018; see also Gorski 2017a; Sides 2017; Stewart 2018).

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1 To be sure, scholars in the past two years have also identified sexist/patriarchal values (Schaffner et al. 2018) as contributing to Trump support, as well as economic dissatisfaction, though the latter factor seems less influential than previously thought (Schaffner et al. 2018; Whitehead et al. 2018).

The connection is not coincidental.[2] Numerous studies within the past decade have demonstrated that white Americans who adhere to Christian nationalism (measured in various ways) are more likely to draw rigid racial boundaries around national group membership and hold strongly prejudicial attitudes toward black Americans and other racial minorities (Perry and Whitehead 2015a; Perry, Whitehead, and Davis 2019); Muslims (Edgell and Tranby 2010; Merino 2010; Sherkat and Lehman 2018; Shortle and Gaddie 2015); those of other non-Judeo-Christian religions (Stewart, Edgell, and Delehanty 2018); and immigrants (Davis 2019; Edgell and Tranby 2010; McDaniel, Nooruddin, and Shortle 2011; Sherkat and Lehman 2018; Straughn and Feld 2010).

This article considers Christian nationalism's potential influence on a more covert expression of racism-namely, greater tolerance toward racists themselves as compared to other historically stigmatized groups. Despite what seems to be a resurgence of overt white racism and ethnocentrism corresponding to the ascension of Trump and the Alt-right, racism is still more often exercised covertly in the policies that whites are willing to support (Bonilla-Silva 2017; DiTomaso 2013; Haney López 2014) and the groups toward whom whites are more inclined to show favor.[3] One recent example of this was Trump's response to the 2017 Charlottesville riots and the endorsement it received from his Christian nationalist supporters. In August of 2017 a group of white nationalists, including neo-Nazis, Klansmen, and neo-confederates, held a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, with the stated goal of protesting the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee from a local park. On August 12, riots ensued as counter-protestors confronted the white nationalists, culminating in the murder of one woman when a neo-Nazi drove a car through a crowd. Immediately following the riots, President Trump made a public statement suggesting an equivalency between the counter-protesters and hate groups, condemning "this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides, on many sides." And while he later condemned racism and hate groups following the backlash to his comments, Trump subsequently doubled down on his earlier statements saying there was "blame on both sides" and that there were "very fine people on both sides." Among the most vocal supporters of Trump's comments were prominent white evangelical leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Jr., Franklin Graham, Robert Jeffress, and Tony Perkins. Each either explicitly endorsed Trump's "both sides" comments or blamed the Charlottesville victims for the riots; none condemned the racists outright (Balmer 2017; Boston 2017). What Trump's lukewarm condemnation of racists implied, and his Christian nationalist supporters made more explicit, was a privileging of the civil liberties of racist hate-groups, as compared to other less-favored groups, such as kneeling NFL players, Muslims, protestors at Trump's rallies, or critical journalists (Johnson 2017).

While the connection between white Christian nationalism and overt ethno-racial prejudice is well-established, the current study changes the focus to consider its association with white Americans' tolerance toward "racists" themselves. We draw on data from the 1996 and 2014 General Social Surveys and focus on whites' relative political tolerance toward those who believe black Americans are genetically inferior-what is traditionally called "old-fashioned racism" (see Hughes 1997)—whom we will simply call "racists," compared with anti-religionists, communists, militarists, and homosexuals. Our analyses show that white Americans who view being a Christian as an essential part of being an American tend to show lower levels of political tolerance for all groups considered, racists included. This is consistent with research suggesting Christian nationalism is associated with authoritarian tendencies (Davis 2018; Gorski 2017b; Stewart et al. 2018), in this case, suppressing

2 We do not mean to give the impression that white Christian nationalism played a role in only the 2016 election. As Hughey and Parks (2014) have shown, white Christian nationalism characterizing much of the Tea Party Movement mobilized opposition to Barack Obama's reelection in 2012 and throughout his presidency.

3 Even white Christian nationalists at times seem reticent to espouse overtly supremacist racial views. The General Social Survey, for example, asks respondents whether they think black Americans are worse off than white Americans because blacks "have less in-born ability to learn." Only 13 percent of white Christian nationalists affirm this explanation. But nearly two-thirds of white Christian nationalists (64 percent) attribute racial inequality to black Americans lacking the motivation to better themselves-a more colorblind racist assumption (Bonilla-Silva 2017).

the civil liberties of these groups. However, when we look at *relative* political tolerance for racists compared to other historically stigmatized groups, white Christian nationalists are more tolerant than other white Americans. Notably, Christian nationalism works in the opposite direction of personal religious commitment, which is associated with lower relative tolerance toward racists among white Americans. Examining moderators, we also find that relative tolerance toward racists shows less decline over time among Christian nationalists compared to other whites. Additionally, Christian nationalism has a stronger association with relative tolerance toward racists among white men, but the association shows less decline over time among white women.

Our findings thus make a vital contribution to our understanding of how the contemporary resurgence of white Christian nationalism not only foments explicitly bigoted and exclusionary attitudes toward minorities (McDaniel et al. 2011; Perry and Whitehead 2015a; Perry et al. 2019; Shortle and Gaddie 2015; Stewart et al. 2018), but also leads its adherents to be more favorable toward old-fashioned racists like many of those in Charlottesville, who seem to be political and cultural allies in promoting President Trump's agenda.

EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Christian Nationalism, Ethno-Racial Exclusion, and Authoritarianism

Gorski (2017a) explains that, within the American context, Christian nationalism has several essential features. Christian nationalism idealizes America's mythic past, including its founding fathers, documents, and ideals and pines for America's "return" to her Christian foundations. Unlike "American civil religion," which traditionally prioritized national responsibility and stewardship, Christian nationalism is more concerned with a defense of Christian identity reflected in iconography, rituals, and policies. Also unlike civil religion, which has often been interpreted to stress unity and inclusion as core ideals, Christian nationalism has traditionally been linked with the expectation and defense of ethno-religious and racial exclusion (Bellah 1967; Whitehead and Perry 2020).

Numerous studies over the past decade have affirmed that white Americans who subscribe to Christian nationalist beliefs tend to draw rigid boundaries around national identity, often showing a willingness to limit the civil liberties of perceived out-groups. Edgell and Tranby (2010), for example, found that over 98 percent of those Americans they categorized as "cultural preservationists" tended to believe that "The United States is a Christian nation and that is a good thing," and over two-thirds affirmed "The United States is a white nation and that is a good thing," resembling the ideological stance of those who could be classified as a "hate group" (Southern Poverty Law Center 2017). Predictably, these Americans were also more likely to view Muslims, new immigrants, and homosexuals as threats to the public good, and to oppose their child marrying someone of a different racial, ethnic, or religious background (see also Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Ekins 2017; Perry and Whitehead 2015a).

Other studies more explicitly focus on the belief that America has been and should always be distinctively Christian as a predictor of whites' xenophobic, Islamophobic, or racist attitudes. For example, studies have found that those who adhere to various Christian nationalist beliefs are more likely to exclude Muslims from national membership (Merino 2010; Sherkat and Lehman 2018; Shortle and Gaddie 2015). And Stewart et al. (2018) recently showed that Americans who advocate for "public religious expression" (a construct quite similar to Christian nationalism; see McDaniel et al. 2011; Whitehead et al. 2018) are more likely to be intolerant of religious groups outside of the Judeo-Christian core. Also using various measures of Christian nationalism, studies have shown that white Americans who more strongly affirmed Christian nationalist beliefs were more likely to hold antipathy toward immigrants (McDaniel et al. 2011) or to believe U.S. immigration should be reduced (Davis 2019; Sherkat and Lehman 2018; Straughn and Feld 2010). Focusing on racial boundaries more explicitly, Perry and Whitehead (2015a, 2015b) have shown that Christian nationalism is associated with white opposition to racial boundary-crossing through interracial marriage with

Latinos, Asians, and, especially, blacks or through transracial adoption. Most recently, Perry et al. (2019) reported that Christian nationalism was among the strongest predictors that Americans would be unwilling to acknowledge racial injustice in policing and would even blame blacks themselves for police violence.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its association with ethno-religious and racial prejudice, Christian nationalism was also among the strongest predictors of whether Americans voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential election (Whitehead et al. 2018; see also Stewart 2018). This suggests a connection between the tendency of this ideology to promote prejudicial and exclusionary attitudes and fostering support for Trump's authoritarian persona and policies (Braunstein 2017; Gorski 2017b). Previous research has shown that religious subcultures that advocate a symbiotic relationship between church and state (e.g., Calvinistic Puritanism; Islam in some contexts) tend to also support authoritarian hierarchies, structures, and means of ensuring conformity (Gorski 1995; Riesebrodt 1993). Consistent with this idea, Christian nationalist beliefs have been shown to strongly predict Americans' support for more authoritarian means of social control. Davis (2018) found that Americans who hold more strongly to Christian nationalist beliefs are more likely to support the death penalty, advocate stricter punishments for federal crime, and want the government to "crack down on troublemakers." The language of these outcomes also suggests that respondents may envision non-white perpetrators when asked about authoritarian tactics. Thus, not only does Christian nationalism incline (white) Americans to draw boundaries around national membership, often explicitly excluding ethno-religious and racial minorities, but they are more likely to favor coercive, even violent, tactics to maintain social control (of non-whites). This leads us to a consideration of how Christian nationalism might be associated with some whites' greater relative support for the civil liberties of potential allies, namely, old-fashioned racists.

Theorizing White Christian Nationalism and Relative Political Tolerance for Racists

"Political tolerance" is the term often used to describe one's willingness to extend civil liberties to stigmatized groups. In research focusing on the United States, this often includes ethno-racial minorities (e.g., blacks, Jews, immigrants) as well as those on the ideological left (communists, homosexuals, atheists, or anti-religionists) or right (old-fashioned racists, fascists, or militarists) (Edgell et al. 2016; Schwadel and Garneau 2014, 2017, 2018). Beginning with Stouffer's (1955) research in this area, an enormous body of literature considers the correlates and determinants of political tolerance, often highlighting similar themes. Among the most consistent findings are that tolerance for historically stigmatized groups has increased over time, but tolerance toward some groups (e.g., gays and lesbians, anti-religionists) has increased more than others (e.g., racists) (e.g., Mondak and Sanders 2003; Reimer and Park 2001; Schafer and Shaw 2009; Schwadel and Garneau 2014, 2017, 2018); having higher socioeconomic status and being younger are among the strongest predictors of tolerance toward others (Bobo and Licari 1989; Ellison and Musick 1993; Karpov 1999; Schwadel and Garneau 2014, 2017); and secondarily, people who are politically conservative, fundamentalist Christian (measured with Bible beliefs, affiliation, or identity), from the South, rural areas, and more religious, tend to be less politically tolerant of culturally stigmatized groups, including old-fashioned racists, homosexuals, atheists, militarists, and communists (Bobo and Licari 1989; Ellison and Musick 1993; Filsinger 1976; Froese, Bader, and Smith 2008; Gay and Ellison 1993; Karpov 2002; Reimer and Park 2001; Rhodes 2012; Schwadel and Garneau 2014; 2017, 2018; Schafer and Shaw 2009; Sullivan and Transue 1999; Tuntiya 2005).

Importantly, while various religious characteristics have consistently been associated with political intolerance, Eisenstein (2006, 2009) finds that both religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy are unassociated with intolerance once political and psychological determinants such as having a "secure personality" (measured via dogmatism and self-esteem), perceptions of threat, and political conservatism are considered. This suggests that the perceived link between religiosity or fundamentalism and political intolerance may be due less to religion per se and more about perceived cultural

and political threats. Indeed, theories connecting the empirical findings cited above most often explain intolerance in terms of perceptions about threat or insecurity (Bobo and Licari 1989; Golebiowska 1999; Hutchison and Gibler 2007; Schwadel and Garneau 2017; Stouffer 1955; Sullivan et al. 1981; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982). This would help us understand why (white) Christian nationalism is so consistently associated with intolerance toward ethno-religious and racial minorities, namely, the perception that white Christians are losing their perceived cultural and political power (Gorski 2017b; Jones 2016; Stewart 2018).

The converse of this theory is obviously that respondents are *more* tolerant toward those they believe to be less threatening or more similar to themselves. Christian nationalism's association with both in manifestations of ethno-religious and racial prejudice and support for colorblind racism (Davis 2019) would indicate that white Christian nationalists may be more politically tolerant of "old school" racists due to shared negative perceptions of out-groups."

However, we propose that Christian nationalism's connection with authoritarianism complicates this connection somewhat. Authoritarian attitudes generally default to the suppression of civil liberties for *all perceived outsiders* in favor of greater social control (Duckitt and Farre 1994; Karpov 1999; Sullivan et al. 1981). Thus, it would be likely that Americans who want to advocate for a stronger connection between Christianity and American civil society would be more likely to favor limiting the civil liberties of old-fashioned racists, just as they would militarists, homosexuals, communists, or atheists. This idea is supported by the findings of Stewart et al. (2018) that greater preference for "public religious expression" predicts a *generalized* political intolerance toward stigmatized groups. Following from this, our first formal expectation states:

H1: *White Americans who most strongly connect Christian identity with American civic belonging will be less politically tolerant of all stigmatized groups.*

However, while the authoritarian tendencies inherent within Christian nationalism would incline white Americans to limit the civil liberties of all historically stigmatized groups, including old-fashioned racists, we propose that the tendency for Christian nationalism to reinforce ethno-racial boundaries and prejudice-and thus view racists as allies, or at least non-threatening within an ostensibly "forced choice" political system-would likely lead to white Christian nationalists showing greater *relative* political tolerance for racists compared to other stigmatized groups. Specifically, because Americans often find they must choose one of two imperfect political options, they may be more willing to align themselves with one stigmatized group over others for political or ideological reasons. In other words, a Christian nationalist may say, "I'd rather not allow any of these people to put their books in my library, but if I have to choose, I am more comfortable with racist speech than with anti-religionist speech." This paradox is illustrated by President Trump's inconsistent response to the 2017 Charlottesville riots, and the subsequent endorsements of his Christian nationalist supporters. On the one hand, Trump did eventually condemn white supremacists and racism two days after the riots ("Racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and other hate groups.") And yet his condemnation was flanked by two statements suggesting a moral equivalency between the white supremacists and the counter-protestors. Trump's Christian nationalist supporters were even less willing to denounce the hate groups, preferring to deflect the blame to the politicians who allowed the removal of Robert E. Lee's statue or affirm with Trump that "racism comes in all shapes, all sizes, and yes, all colors" (Balmer 2017). Though perhaps being willing to restrict the civil liberties of racists as they would other historically stigmatized groups, we nevertheless expect:

H2: *White Americans who most strongly connect Christian identity with American civic belonging will show greater relative political tolerance toward old-fashioned racists than for other stigmatized groups.*

We also consider two important moderators in estimating Christian nationalism's association with whites' relative political tolerance toward racists: gender and time. Racial prejudice and authoritarianism are more commonly found in men (Hughes and Tuch 2003; Napier and Jost 2008) and white Christian nationalism is more prominent among women (Whitehead and Perry 2015; Whitehead and Scheitle 2017). Previous examinations of gender and political tolerance have been somewhat inconsistent. Some studies find gender unrelated to the measures of political tolerance that we include in this study (Ellison and Musick 1993; Froese et al. 2008; Rhodes 2012), while others have found women to be slightly less tolerant than men (Bobo and Licari 1989; Schwadel and Garneau 2014, 2017), though not for all stigmatized groups. Several studies, for example, have found men to be more tolerant than women regarding racists or racist hate-groups (Golebiowska 1995, 1999; Tuntiya 2005). To the extent men already tend to be more inclined toward prejudice, authoritarianism, and greater tolerance toward racists, we expect:

H3: *The association between Christian nationalism and relative political tolerance toward old-fashioned racists will be stronger among white men compared to white women.*

Finally, numerous studies have shown that political tolerance toward all stigmatized groups has increased over time, though tolerance toward old-fashioned racists has increased more slowly than for groups such as homosexuals or the irreligious (Mondak and Sanders 2003; Reimer and Park 2001; Schafer and Shaw 2009; Schwadel and Garneau 2014, 2017, 2018). Consequently, we would expect that political tolerance toward racists relative to tolerance of other stigmatized groups would decline among white Americans from 1996 to 2014. However, in accordance with previous research on the links between Christian nationalism and racial intolerance (Perry and Whitehead 2015a; Perry et al. 2019), we expect that white Christian nationalists would be less susceptible to this broader trend. In other words, while we expect relative political tolerance toward racists to decline over time among white Americans generally, this decline will be less pronounced among white Christian nationalists compared to other white Americans. We also expect this to be the case across both men and women as for the full sample.

H4: *The association between Christian nationalism and relative political tolerance toward old-fashioned racists among white men and women will remain more constant over time compared to other white Americans.*

METHODS

Data

We use data from the 1996 and 2014 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a nationally representative, face-to-face survey of the non-institutionalized, English-Spanish speaking American adult population in the United States. The GSS is funded by the National Science Foundation and has been conducted since 1972. While earlier waves of the GSS were administered roughly every year, since 1994 the GSS surveyed roughly 3,000 Americans in even numbered years. We use the 1996 and 2014 GSS as these are the only two surveys containing all the variables needed for our analysis. After accounting for missing data with listwise deletion, we have an analytic sample of 1,010 American adults.

Measures

Dependent variables. Our primary dependent variable is white Americans' relative political tolerance toward old-fashioned racists compared to other stigmatized groups. In repeated waves of the GSS, respondents are asked to "consider a person who believes that Blacks are genetically inferior. . . "

along with four other historically stigmatized hypothetical persons (an anti-religionist, communist, militarist, or homosexual). They are then asked whether they would (1) allow such a person to give a public speech in their community; (2) allow them to teach in a college or university; or (3) promote the removal of a book authored by such a person from the public library. Respondents are then given binary options to either protect the person's civil liberties (i.e., letting them speak, letting them teach, and keeping their book in the library) or curb them.[4]

We first created five political tolerance scales using responses for each stigmatized group, with values ranging from 0 = restricted civil liberties in all three areas to 3 = permitted civil liberties in all three areas. We then create a ratio for each respondent's relative political tolerance for racists by first generating a mean tolerance score for the other stigmatized groups for each respondent ranging from 1–4.[5] We then divide respondents' tolerance toward racists (ranging 1–4) by this mean to create a ratio variable indicating respondents' relative tolerance toward racists, following the examples of Pampel and Hunter (2012) as well as Schwadel and Johnson (2017). Because we wish to identify individuals who are *more* tolerant of racists and the distribution of this ratio variable was non-normal, we dichotomize our relative tolerance measure such that values greater than 1 (i.e., more politically tolerant toward racists) are coded as 1, and values of 1 or less (i.e., equal or lower relative tolerance toward racists) are coded 0.[6]

Independent variable. While there have been several indexes and measures of Christian nationalism, for this study we operationalize adherence to Christian nationalism by white Americans' use of Christian identity as an essential marker of what it means to be a true American. In 1996, 2004, and 2014, the GSS asked, "Some people say the following things are important for being truly American. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is. . .To be a Christian." Responses included (1) Very important, (2) Fairly important, (3) Not very important, or (4) Not important at all. While a multi-item measure of Christian nationalism would be ideal (e.g., Davis 2018, 2019; McDaniel et al. 2011; Perry and Whitehead 2015a, 2015b; Whitehead and Perry 2020), this GSS measure is very similar to measures comprising other indexes of Christian nationalism (e.g., Delehanty, Edgell, and Stewart 2018; Stewart et al. 2018); it has been used in numerous studies gauging Americans' beliefs about Christianity's connection with American identity (e.g., Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Byrne 2011; Perry and Whitehead 2019; Shelton 2010; Sherkat and Lehman 2018; Straughn and Feld 2010; Whitehead and Scheitle 2017); and it provides the only instance of such a measure being used over this long a duration.[7]

Because we are interested in white Americans who most strongly view being a Christian as essential to being "truly American," whom we here consider white Christian nationalists, we dichotomize respondents into those who believe being a Christian is "very important" to being truly American (coded 1; representing 28.5 percent of the sample) compared to everyone else (= 0).[8] A comparison

4 While scholars and laypersons alike progressed in their understanding and definition of racism in the time between 1996 and 2014 and since (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2017; Haney López 2014; Ray 2019) which might lead to a "moving target" phenomenon in our analyses, the specificity of the GSS question regarding blacks being "genetically inferior" holds two important implications for our results. First, in providing a clear definition for respondents there is little ambiguity in respondent conceptualization of racism. Second, in measuring political tolerance for those who espouse old-fashioned racist ideology we are presenting political tolerance of an extremely conservative form of racism.

5 Readers may notice values range from 0 to 3 for each original composite measure of political tolerance. A value of 1 was added to both the mean tolerance and racist tolerance measures to construct a measure of relative support for racism in order to avoid problems introduced by having a value of 0 in the denominator.

6 Additional analyses (see Appendix Table A1) were conducted using the continuous measure of relative racism with ordinary least squares regression. Results for these analyses did not substantively change.

7 In Stewart et al.'s (2018) multi-item measure of "public religious expression" the authors include a question asking respondents' agreement with the statement "being Christian is important for being a good American," which is quite similar to the GSS measure.

8 To ensure that our findings were not dependent on our binary coding decision, as an additional sensitivity check, we ran all of our models described below using the full 4-value measure (reverse-coded) ranging from 1 = Not at all important to 4 = Very important, and find that the results are robust even when utilizing alternate coding strategies (see Appendix Tables A2 and A3).

of descriptive statistics for our Christian nationalist group and the rest of the sample (see Table 1) supports the validity of this coding decision. Entirely consistent with previous studies of Christian nationalist beliefs using multi-item indexes (e.g., Delehanty et al. 2018; Edgell and Tranby 2010; Whitehead and Perry 2020), we see white Americans in our Christian nationalist group are more likely to be evangelical Protestants, biblical literalists, frequent churchgoers, politically conservative, less educated, lower income, older, Southern, and female.[9]

Control variables. We include a variety of ideological and sociodemographic controls following previous research on the "political tolerance" construct (e.g., Ellison and Musick 1993; Froese et al. 2008; Gay and Ellison 1993; Karpov 2002; Reimer and Park 2001; Schwadel and Garneau 2014; 2017, 2018; Schafer and Shaw 2009; Tuntiya 2005). We first use a number of religious control variables. We account for religious tradition using the classification scheme of Steensland et al. (2000) using evangelical Protestants (excluding black Protestants) as the contrast category. Because biblical literalism is consistently associated with political intolerance toward out-groups (Froese et al. 2008; Schwadel and Garneau 2018), we included a binary measure of whether Americans believe that the Bible is the literal word of God (= 1) and those who hold some other view of the Bible (= 0). Finally, as an indicator of personal religiosity, we control for how frequently respondents attend religious services with values ranging from 0 = "never" to 8 = "more than once a week."

We also include two control variables related directly to politics. The first measure asks respondents to describe their political beliefs with responses ranging from (1) "extremely liberal" to (7) "extremely conservative." We also control for political partisanship using a series of dummy variables. Adults who said that they were either a "strong democrat," or "not a strong democrat" were coded as "democrat" (= 1), and those respondents who indicated that they were "independent near democrat," "independent," "independent near republican," or "other party" were coded as "independent" (= 1) in contrast to respondents claiming to be "not a strong republican," or a "strong republican" coded as republican (= reference).[10]

Last, we control for a number of key sociodemographic characteristics. Age is measured in years from 18–89+. Number of children ranged from 0 = "no children" to 8 = "eight or more children." Dummy variables are included for education (1 = bachelor's degree or more, 0 = other), household income (1 = less than $25,000 annually, 0 = more than $25,000[11]), region (Southern residence = 1, other = 0), gender (male = 1, female = 0), and survey year (1 = 2014, 0 = 1996). We also include series of dummy variables for marital status with those who are currently married (= reference) compared to those who are either separated, divorced, or widowed (= 1) and those have never been married (= 1).

In fact, when we analyze the full measure of Christian nationalism found in the GSS, fully standardized results indicate stronger associations with our outcome variable of interest. Thus, we are presenting the more conservative findings.

9 As an additional point of comparison, in Supplemental Table S1, we compare our white Christian nationalist group from the GSS with those who score in the upper quartile (1 standard deviation above the mean) on the multi-item Christian nationalism scale used by Perry et al. (2019). The two groups compare quite favorably on religious attendance, political ideology, educational attainment, marital status, age, and southern residence. The sample for Perry et al. (2019), however, appears slightly more conservative theologically (higher percentage of biblical literalists and evangelicals), more likely to be Republican, and have a higher percentage of males (50/50 gender split).

10 Adjusting the specific coding of these political categories does not change our findings either in substance or statistical significance.

11 While previous investigations of Americans' political tolerance have utilized a logged form of family income as a control variable (Schwadel and Garneau 2014, 2017, 2018), we contend that there are important differences between whites with lower levels of income (in our case the bottom third of the sample), and those with higher levels of income that are overlooked as a function of substantive changes in response categories for this variable over time. While we acknowledge that there are differences between families who earn less than $1,000 and those who earn $24,999 annually, we argue that all respondents who fall below $25,000 annually would experience the economic insecurity associated with racial prejudice (Hogan, Chiricos and Gertz 2005; Wilson 2001). We conducted supplemental analyses using both the GSS's unaltered ordinal measure of income as well as a logged measure of respondents' family income. These results did not substantively alter the relationship between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance for racism and are available upon request.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by Christian Nationalism

Variable	Range or Description	White Christian Nationalist[a]		Other White Americans	
		Mean or %	(SD)	Mean or %	(SD)
Relative Tolerance toward Racists	1= Greater Relative Tolerance toward Racists	30.90***		15.79	
Evangelical	*Contrast*	45.14***		18.84	
Mainline Protestant	1= Mainline Protestant	20.14		17.59	
Catholic	1= Catholic	26.04		26.18	
Jewish	1= Jewish	0.00*		2.08	
Other Faith	1= Other Faith	2.78*		6.09	
Religiously Unaffiliated	1= Religiously Unaffiliated	2.78***		24.24	
Biblical Literalist	1= Biblical Literalist	35.76***		10.80	
Religious Service Attendance	0 (Never)-8 (More than once per week)	4.77***	(2.63)	2.63	(2.53)
Political Views	1 (Extremely Liberal)-8 (Extremely Conservative)	4.59***	(1.32)	3.94	(1.43)
Republican	*Contrast*	38.89***		26.18	
Independent	1= Independent or Other Party	34.03**		45.01	
Democrat	1= Democrat	26.74		28.39	
Married	*Contrast*	56.60*		49.03	
No Longer Married	1= Separated, Widowed, or Divorced	31.94**		23.96	
Never Married	1= Never Married	11.46***		26.87	
Children	0-8 (or more)	2.27***	(1.58)	1.46	(1.47)
Bachelor's Degree or More	1= At least 16 years Education	19.10***		42.11	
Low Income	1= Less than $25,000 annual Family Income	33.68***		22.44	
Southern	1= Southern	45.14***		25.07	
Age	*18-89 (or older)*	54.60***	(16.75)	43.86	(15.69)
Male	1=Male	39.93***		53.32	
Year	0 (1996)-1(2014)	44.79**		54.16	
N		288		722	

Source: GSS 1996 & 2014, n=1,010

Evangelical, Republican, less than bachelor's degree, $25,000 or more family income, non-southern, and female as contrast categories.

[a]White respondents who affirm that being a Christian is "very important" to being truly American.

Asterisks indicate that White Christian Nationalists are significantly different from Other White Americans at the following levels: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

Plan of Analysis

In order to examine the association between Christian nationalism and white Americans' political tolerance of each stigmatized group individually (H1), Table 2 presents ordered logistic regression models predicting respondents' levels of political tolerance for racists (Model 1), militarists (Model 2), anti-religionists (Model 3), communists (Model 4), and homosexuals (Model 5) which include the

Table 2. Ordered Logistic Regression Predicting Whites' Political Tolerance toward Stigmatized Groups

	Racist Speech		*Militarist Speech*		*Atheist Speech*		*Communist Speech*		*Homosexual Speech*	
	β	*SE*	*β*	*SE*	*β*	*SE*	*β*	*SE*	*β*	*SE*
Christian Nationalism	−0.173***	(.16)	−0.245***	(.16)	−0.213***	(.16)	−0.239***	(.16)	−0.214***	(.19)
Mainline	0.030	(.18)	0.015	(.19)	0.046	(.20)	0.045	(.20)	0.078†	(.24)
Catholic	0.033	(.16)	0.003	(.18)	−0.021	(.18)	−0.040	(.18)	0.017	(.21)
Jewish	−0.020	(.50)	−0.019	(.55)	0.018	(.68)	−0.024	(.58)	−0.057	(.66)
Other Faith	0.044	(.30)	0.013	(.32)	0.085*	(.38)	0.044	(.32)	0.071	(.46)
Religiously Unaffiliated	0.064	(.21)	0.109*	(.24)	0.112*	(.26)	0.119**	(.24)	0.073	(.31)
Biblical Literalist	−0.085*	(.17)	−0.046	(.18)	−0.092**	(.18)	−0.099**	(.18)	−0.116**	(.20)
Service Attendance	−0.042	(.03)	0.015	(.03)	−0.051	(.03)	0.005	(.03)	−0.046	(.03)
Political Views	−0.019	(.05)	−0.063†	(.05)	−0.056	(.06)	−0.056	(.06)	−0.065	(.07)
Independent	0.005	(.15)	0.014	(.17)	−0.020	(.17)	0.030	(.16)	−0.047	(.20)
Democrat	−0.091*	(.18)	−0.083*	(.19)	−0.086*	(.20)	−0.012	(.19)	0.027	(.24)
No Longer Married	−0.006	(.15)	0.006	(.16)	0.048	(.17)	−0.003	(.17)	0.005	(.20)
Never Married	−0.048	(.18)	−0.001	(.20)	0.010	(.21)	0.030	(.21)	0.074	(.27)
Children	−0.064†	(.05)	−0.018	(.05)	−0.038	(.05)	−0.004	(.05)	−0.034	(.06)
Bachelor's Degree or More	0.098**	(.14)	0.168***	(.15)	0.206***	(.17)	0.238***	(.16)	0.232***	(.22)
Low Income	−0.034	(.15)	−0.076*	(.16)	−0.076*	(.17)	−0.088**	(.16)	−0.130***	(.20)
Southern	−0.002	(.13)	0.012	(.14)	−0.039	(.15)	−0.003	(.15)	−0.059†	(.17)
Age	0.042	(.00)	−0.143***	(.00)	−0.118**	(.00)	−0.071†	(.00)	−0.074†	(.01)
Male	0.025	(.12)	−0.051	(.13)	−0.007	(.14)	0.014	(.14)	−0.120**	(.17)
Year	−0.033	(.13)	0.145***	(.14)	0.120***	(.15)	0.066†	(.15)	0.226***	(.18)
Cragg & Uhler's R^2	0.11		0.25		0.28		0.28		0.31	

Source: GSS 1996 & 2014, n=1,010
Evangelical, Republican, less than bachelor's degree, 25,000 or more family income, non-southern, and female as contrast categories.
†p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

full battery of control variables described above. Table 3 then presents binary logistic regression models predicting respondents' relative tolerance toward racists (H2). Model 1 focuses on Christian nationalism's bivariate association with relative tolerance. Models 2 and 3 introduce religious and sociodemographic controls respectively to see whether Christian nationalism's association with relative tolerance toward racists is potentially mediated or rendered spurious. Models 4 and 5 introduce interaction terms for Christian nationalism with respondents' gender (H3) and survey year (H4) respectively. Finally, in Table 4 we split our sample by gender to investigate whether the relationship between Christian nationalism and respondents' relative political tolerance toward racists has significantly changed across survey waves for both men and women.

In order to ensure that cross-model changes occurring within dependent variables are substantive and not due to loss of cases, we restrict samples for all analyses to only those respondents who are present in the strictest model specification. Thus, each analytical model including both men and women uses a final sample of 1,010 respondents, of which 510 are women and 500 are men.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Results of Whites' Relative Tolerance toward Racists

	Model 1		*Model 2*		*Model 3*		*Model 4*		*Model 5*	
	β	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*
Christian Nationalism	0.212	2.385***	0.207	2.391***	0.175	2.110***	0.084	1.434	0.065	1.326
Mainline			−0.074	0.694	−0.067	0.718	−0.063	0.730	−0.070	0.703
Catholic			0.003	1.012	0.027	1.124	0.028	1.130	0.021	1.100
Jewish			−0.019	0.741	0.000	1.003	0.003	1.051	0.005	1.083
Other Faith			0.010	1.093	0.024	1.234	0.018	1.170	0.023	1.223
Religiously Unaffiliated			−0.119	0.558*	−0.098	0.614	−0.087	0.648	−0.086	0.647
Biblical Literalist			0.030	1.159	0.007	1.036	0.004	1.021	−0.013	0.937
Service Attendance			−0.124	0.918**	−0.108	0.927*	−0.108	0.927*	−0.098	0.932*
Political Views					0.030	1.041	0.030	1.041	0.039	1.055
Independent					−0.007	0.974	−0.009	0.965	−0.002	0.991
Democrat					−0.038	0.850	−0.047	0.816	−0.030	0.878
No Longer Married					−0.024	0.901	−0.022	0.908	−0.026	0.891
Never Married					−0.074	0.711	−0.071	0.720	−0.073	0.711
Parent					−0.009	0.989	−0.009	0.989	−0.007	0.991
Bachelor's Degree or More					−0.081	0.722	−0.082	0.720	−0.081	0.718†
Low Income					0.098	1.540*	0.096	1.527*	0.095	1.532*
Southern					0.009	1.038	0.007	1.030	0.007	1.029
Age					0.016	1.002	0.016	1.002	0.018	1.002
Male					0.050	1.213	−0.036	0.871	0.050	1.217
Year			−0.156	0.553***	−0.130	0.607**	−0.129	0.608**	−0.240	0.391***
Male*Christian Nationalism							0.139	2.324*		
Year*Christian Nationalism									0.193	3.106**
Constant		0.188***		0.370***		0.279*		0.332*		0.305*
Cragg & Uhler's R^2		0.04		0.08		0.10		0.11		0.11

Source: GSS 1996 & 2014, n=1,010
Evangelical, Republican, less than bachelor's degree, 25,000 or more family income, non-southern, and female as contrast categories.
†p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Numerous sensitivity models were also analyzed to ensure results presented in this paper are robust beyond our coding decisions (see Appendixes).

RESULTS

Table 2 presents fully-standardized ordered logistic regression coefficients predicting each of the five political tolerance measures using the full battery of religious and sociodemographic controls. In the first model, we see that an increase of one standard deviation in Christian nationalism is associated with a decrease of 0.173 standard deviation in tolerance toward racists. Notably, we find that our Christian nationalism measure is the strongest individual predictor of political intolerance for each

Table 4. Logistic Regression of Whites' Relative Tolerance toward Racists by Gender

	Female				*Male*			
	Model 1		*Model 2*		*Model 3*		*Model 4*	
	β	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*
Christian Nationalism	0.129	1.704†	−0.060	0.774	0.201	2.614**	0.157	2.130*
Mainline	−0.050	0.781	−0.067	0.711	−0.097	0.596	−0.094	0.603
Catholic	0.008	1.038	−0.007	0.969	0.015	1.068	0.016	1.076
Jewish	0.018	1.395	0.013	1.270	−0.001	0.983	0.004	1.054
Other Faith	−0.021	0.845	−0.027	0.799	0.031	1.389	0.030	1.377
Religiously Unaffiliated	−0.129	0.482	−0.121	0.492	−0.059	0.754	−0.050	0.787
Biblical Literalist	−0.061	0.741	−0.089	0.636	0.072	1.479	0.059	1.384
Service Attendance	−0.206	0.865**	−0.198	0.867**	−0.007	0.995	−0.002	0.998
Political Views	−0.005	0.992	0.017	1.025	0.066	1.092	0.068	1.095
Independent	−0.041	0.851	−0.029	0.890	0.032	1.136	0.032	1.141
Democrat	−0.159	0.510†	−0.142	0.536†	0.072	1.397	0.072	1.395
No Longer Married	−0.131	0.573†	−0.138	0.547†	0.055	1.304	0.052	1.287
Never Married	−0.187	0.397*	−0.197	0.366*	0.049	1.252	0.051	1.265
Parent	−0.034	0.958	−0.046	0.942	0.018	1.023	0.025	1.033
Bachelor's Degree or More	−0.072	0.746	−0.070	0.746	−0.065	0.762	−0.065	0.758
Low Income	0.173	2.077*	0.171	2.108*	0.056	1.323	0.055	1.317
Southern	−0.076	0.726	−0.089	0.680	0.068	1.344	0.067	1.345
Age	0.043	1.005	0.075	1.009	0.003	1.000	−0.005	0.999
Year	−0.041	0.853	−0.219	0.413**	−0.224	0.406**	−0.268	0.337**
Year*Christian Nationalist			0.314	5.846***			0.084	1.745
Constant		0.628		0.681		0.142		0.153
N	510		510		500		500	
Cragg & Uhler's R2		0.11		0.14		0.17		0.17

Source: GSS 1996 & 2014
Evangelical, Republican, less than bachelor's degree, 25,000 or more family income, non-southern, and female as contrast categories.
†p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

group except homosexuals for which it is third behind having at least a bachelor's degree and survey year. This supports our first hypothesis (H1).

In line with prior research on Americans' political tolerance, Table 2 also reveals that believing that the Bible is the literal word of God is negatively associated with political tolerance of atheists, communists, and homosexuals. We also find that those respondents with at least a bachelor's degree are significantly more tolerant of all stigmatized groups than are those with lower levels of education. Table 2 also reveals that respondents who more closely identify with the Democratic Party are significantly less tolerant of racists, militarists, and anti-religionists than are respondents who identify with the Republican Party. Finally, Table 2 demonstrates that white respondents with lower income levels are significantly less tolerant of all stigmatized groups except racists. In separate analyses (not shown), we find that when Christian nationalism is excluded from the models, respondents' income, age, and survey year are also statistically significant predictors of intolerance towards racists, and biblical literalism predicts intolerance toward militarists.

While Christian nationalism seems highly predictive of whites' intolerance toward all stigmatized groups, including old-fashioned racists, to investigate our remaining hypotheses we now examine white Americans' political tolerance toward racists *relative* to their tolerance of other stigmatized

groups. Table 3 presents fully standardized regression coefficients and odds ratios from binary logistic regression analyses. Model 1 introduces the focal relationship between white Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists and demonstrates a positive association ($\beta = 0.212$, $p < .001$).

In Model 2 we introduce controls for respondents' religious affiliation, theological belief, and practice, as well as survey year. After parsing out the influence of these measures, we find that the association between Christian nationalism and relative political tolerance toward racists is reduced only slightly ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < .001$). Interestingly, while there are few other variables that are significantly associated with the outcome in Model 2, we see that religious service attendance is *negatively* associated with whites' relative political tolerance toward racists ($\beta = -0.124$, $p < .01$). This relationship stays the same throughout the remaining models, and suggests that it is not personal religious commitment (at least in terms of worship attendance) that inclines white Americans to be more politically tolerant of racists relative to other stigmatized groups, nor is it their view of the Bible or religious affiliation, each of which are non-significant in full models. Rather, it is quite explicitly those whites who view being a Christian as essential to being an American who show greater relative tolerance toward racists.

Model 3 introduces the entire battery of political and sociodemographic control measures described above. After including these controls, we find that the association between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists wanes slightly ($\beta = 0.175$, $p < .001$), but remains the strongest single predictor in the model, and retains its high statistical significance. Indeed, this model reveals that the log odds for being relatively more tolerant toward racists for white Christian nationalists were over twice that of other white Americans. Thus, we find strong support for our second hypothesis (H2) that white Americans who more closely connect Christian identity with American civic belonging will be relatively more tolerant of racists than other stigmatized groups in society.

In Models 4 and 5 of Table 3 we interact our Christian nationalism measure with gender and year respectively to formally test our final two hypotheses. The interaction term in Model 4 is positive and statistically significant indicating that Christian nationalism is more strongly associated with men's relative tolerance toward racists than it is for women, supporting our third hypothesis (H3).

Similarly, the interaction term in Model 5 is also statistically significant and positive, indicating that the association between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists was more salient for respondents in 2014 than it was for respondents in 1996. This should not be taken to mean that relative tolerance toward racists increased among white Christian nationalists between 1996 and 2014. On the contrary, the negative coefficient for year throughout Models 2–5 indicates that relative tolerance toward racists has generally declined across white Americans over time. However, the positive interaction term reveals that this decline has been slower among white Christian nationalists. Thus, not only are white Christian nationalists more likely to show relative tolerance toward racists compared to others, but their tolerance has been more resistant to broader cultural trends of becoming relatively less favorable toward racists. These findings support our fourth hypothesis (H4).

To further unpack the association between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance of racism, Table 4 presents results from split sample logistic regression analyses testing the interaction of Christian nationalism and survey year by gender. The first model presents base results for white women and reveals that while religious service attendance, having never married, and income are all associated with their relative tolerance toward racists at a $p < .05$ level, Christian nationalist identity is only a marginally significant predictor ($\beta = 0.129$, $p < .10$). However, the interaction term for Christian nationalism and survey year introduced in model 2 is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.314$, $p < .001$) indicating a similar pattern to what we observed in Table 3. The third model presented in Table 4 replicates the first but for white men. Christian nationalism is not only the strongest social predictor of relative tolerance for racists among white men ($\beta = 0.201$, $p < .01$), but apart from survey year ($\beta = -0.224$, $p < .01$) it is the only significant predictor. The fourth and final model in Table 4 reveals that, unlike for white women, the relationship between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance for racists does not significantly change between white men surveyed in 1996 and

2014. This indicates that, while white Christian nationalist women became more divergent from other white women over time in their relative tolerance toward racists, white Christian nationalist men generally followed the decline in relative tolerance toward racists seen among other white men.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Numerous studies have shown that white Americans who closely connect Christianity with American civic life tend to hold exclusionary, authoritarian, and overtly prejudicial attitudes, particularly toward ethno-religious and racial minority groups such as Muslims, blacks, and immigrants (Merino 2010; Perry and Whitehead 2015a; Perry et al. 2019; Sherkat and Lehman 2018; Stewart et al. 2018; Straughn and Feld 2010). Our analysis shifted the focus from prejudicial attitudes toward a target minority group to consider how Christian nationalist views might incline whites to view "racists" themselves. Consistent with work connecting Christian nationalism with an authoritarian tendency to restrict civil liberties for culturally stigmatized groups (Davis 2018; Gorski 2017b; Stewart et al. 2018), whites who viewed being a Christian as "very important" to being "truly American" showed less political tolerance toward all stigmatized groups asked about in the GSS, racists included. Indeed, this ideological commitment was among the strongest predictors of political intolerance for every group. However, when we examined relative tolerance toward racists compared to anti-religionists, militarists, communists, and homosexuals, white Christian nationalists showed greater relative tolerance than other white Americans. Importantly, this effect was distinct from personal religiosity (measured by church attendance) which seemed to incline whites toward *lower* relative tolerance toward racists. Considering potential moderators, we found that while relative tolerance toward racists declined between 1996 and 2014 across the board, the decline was less pronounced among white Christian nationalists. Looking at gender differences, the association between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists was higher among men, but Christian nationalist women declined less noticeably in their relative tolerance toward racists over time.

These findings contribute to our understanding of the intersection of American religion, politics, and race relations in four important ways. While not the primary theoretical argument of our study, our findings underscore the centrality of Christian nationalism for understanding the political intolerance of whites for *all* stigmatized groups. Previous studies of political intolerance using the GSS have highlighted the importance of education, age, region, and religious factors like affiliations or biblical literalism in predicting Americans' willingness to extend civil liberties to certain groups (Ellison and Musick 1993; Gay and Ellison 1993; Karpov 2002; Reimer and Park 2001; Schwadel and Garneau 2014, 2017, 2018). We have shown that, for white Americans, equating American cultural membership with being a Christian was *the strongest* predictor of intolerance toward anti-religionists, militarists, communists, and racists. Importantly, connecting Christian identity with American civic belonging was a stronger predictor of political intolerance than factors that were previously stressed such as age, lower-educational attainment, and biblical literalism. In addition, our analysis was able to specify the groups to which this intolerance extended. Stewart et al. (2018) recently showed that Americans who favored greater "public religious expression"-using measures quite similar to those found in Christian nationalism indexes elsewhere (e.g., McDaniel et al. 2011; Merino 2010; Perry et al. 2019; Shortle and Gaddie 2015; Whitehead et al. 2018)-evidenced higher "generalized intolerance" toward unspecified out-groups. Because the GSS allows us to specify which groups in particular are the out-group in question (homosexuals, racists, communists, etc.), we are able to discern which groups respondents had in mind specifically.

Second, and what we contend represents the central contribution of the study, while Christian nationalism seemed to incline whites to be intolerant toward all stigmatized groups, including old-fashioned racists, viewing being a Christian as "very important" to being truly American predicted greater *relative* tolerance toward racists over other stigmatized groups. How do we explain this association? Previous studies of political tolerance have stressed that persons tend to be less tolerant toward

those they perceive as threats to their power or way of life. For white Americans, espousing Christian nationalist views is powerfully associated with feeling one's nation or way of life is threatened by religious, racial, or cultural outsiders (see Jones 2016; PRRI 2017), and thus, is often the leading predictor of holding negative views toward ethno-religious and racial minority groups including Muslim and black Americans (McDaniel et al. 2011; Perry and Whitehead 2015a, 2015b; Perry et al. 2019;) as well as homosexuals (Whitehead and Perry 2015). Consequently, white Christian nationalists likely view old-fashioned racists as the least threatening category of stigmatized groups, even as they are uncomfortable extending civil liberties to such racists as individuals. These findings essentially bridge old-fashioned racist ideology and more covert, colorblind ideologies by showing how persons who espouse the genetic inferiority of black Americans can be granted political preference by those who would normally be more comfortable with "symbolic" or "strategic" forms of racism. Here the latter can support the former indirectly for political gain (Haney López 2014; Rosino and Hughey 2016). Furthermore, these findings suggest that, in as much as Christian nationalism remains a salient political force within the United States, divisive racial discourse will remain politically advantageous (see Whitehead and Perry 2020).

Relatedly, our finding that the association between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists seemed to persist over time is also important in light of the current cultural-political landscape. Relative tolerance toward racists compared to other stigmatized groups has been declining for all Americans as racism becomes a widely demonized characteristic. Yet between 1996 and 2014 white Americans who closely connect Christianity and American identity were more likely to maintain their relative tolerance toward racists compared to others, indicating that the link between Christian nationalism and willingness to countenance racists in American civic life persists, and are diverging from other white Americans in this regard.

Third, our finding that personal religious commitment (measured in church attendance) inclines whites to be relatively *less* tolerant toward racists, and thus seemed to work in the opposite direction of Christian nationalism, confirms the findings of recent research connecting Christian nationalism with racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. For example, McDaniel et al. (2011; see also Sherkat and Lehman 2018) found that once Christian nationalism was accounted for, church attendance was negatively associated with animus toward immigrants. Similarly, Perry and colleagues (Perry and Whitehead 2015a, 2015b; Perry et al. 2019) have reported that, in models controlling for Christian nationalism, religiosity (measured with attendance, prayer frequency, and scripture reading) is negatively associated with anti-black racism and opposition to interracial families. And most recently, Stewart et al. (2018) found that while greater preference for "public religious expression" was positively associated with intolerance toward religious others and generalized intolerance, "private religiosity" (measured with attendance along with religious salience and orthodox beliefs) predicted lower levels of intolerance. Thus, our findings support the distinction that Stewart et al. (2018) identify between contending that (Christian) religion should be instituted in the public square, which seems to incline Americans toward authoritarianism, prejudice, and relative support for racists, and private religious commitment, which may actually have a liberalizing effect, once forms of "public religious expression" are taken into account.

Fourth, while the moderating influence of gender on the link between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists was partly as expected, it turned up a surprise. As hypothesized (H3), the association between Christian nationalism and relative tolerance toward racists was stronger for men compared to women. This was unsurprising since previous research shows that men are already more prone to authoritarianism, prejudice, and greater tolerance toward racists and racists hate-groups (Golebiowska 1995, 1999; Tuntiya 2005). It is also expected because media portrayals of white Christian nationalists, especially as they relate to racism, have centered on men primarily (Perry et al. 2019). Yet when we split the sample by gender, we were surprised that white Christian nationalist men seem to be declining in their relative tolerance toward racists similarly to other white men. Rather it was white Christian nationalist women whose relative tolerance toward racists showed

less decline over time. While we did not expect to identify this trend among a nationally representative sample of Americans found within the GSS, these findings support previous analyses by researchers such as Kathleen Blee (2002, 2005) who document growth in white women's participation within hate groups in the United States. Though our analyses do not control for involvement in organized racist movements, our results may suggest that efforts by organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, Blood and Honor, and other white supremacy groups to package their message in a way that is more appealing to women is bearing some fruit. Furthermore, this finding underscores the need for greater attention of the intersection of racism, gender, and Christian nationalism among social researchers.

Several data limitations are worth addressing. While the direction of the associations assumed here (i.e., connecting Christian identity with American civic belonging influences whites' relative tolerance for racists) is more plausible than the reverse, obviously the data are cross-sectional and thus causal direction cannot be definitively determined. Moreover, we are unable to unpack the precise mechanisms connecting these two factors. Qualitative interviews would help to flesh out precisely why white Americans who closely connect American and Christian identities are more willing to extend civil liberties to racists compared to other groups. Another limitation is the single-item measure of Christian nationalism. As previously acknowledged, a multi-item index of Christian nationalism (e.g., Davis 2018, 2019; McDaniel et al. 2011; Whitehead et al. 2018) would be idea to measure this construct more comprehensively. Even so, our sample of "white Christian nationalists" compares favorably in demographic terms to those using multi-item measures (see Supplemental Table S1), and our measure has been fruitfully employed in numerous studies of how Americans connect their Christian and American identities (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Byrne 2011; Shelton 2010; Straughn and Feld 2010; Whitehead and Scheitle 2017). Thus it serves as a useful indicator of Christian nationalism here.

Finally, our analysis of relative political tolerance is limited to what we would argue is an antiquated and pervasively unpalatable form of biologistic racism. Over the past three decades race scholars have argued that racial stratification in the US cannot be explained solely by individual prejudices, but rather must be discussed in terms of the structures of society which operate under a shroud of colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2017; DiTomaso 2013), and more recently organizational practices of exclusion (Ray 2019). Though we are unable to directly observe the embedded structural or systemic consequence of Christian nationalism for the civil liberties of racists, given the overt prejudices that have been observed among (white) Christian nationalists toward ethno-racial minorities (McDaniel et al. 2011; Perry and Whitehead 2015a; Perry et al. 2019; Sherkat and Lehman 2018), it is likely that our findings *under*estimate rather than overestimate the connection between white Christian nationalism and tolerance for those who hold overtly racist ideologies.

Our study's findings help shed crucial light on Trump's paradoxically authoritarian stance on freedom of speech and suppressing dissenting views and his lukewarm response to white racists-a paradox duly reflected in his outspokenly Christian-nationalist supporters. A centerpiece of Trump's campaign and presidency have been calls to "restore" America's Christian heritage and was among the chief reasons why white Americans voted for him (Whitehead et al. 2018; see also PRRI 2017; Sides 2017). This ideological commitment is shown to be among the strongest predictors of whites' racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic attitudes. We have shown that, while white Christian nationalists are eager to restrict the civil liberties of all stigmatized groups, they likely view racists as less of a cultural and political threat than anti-religionists, communists, militarists, or homosexuals, and thus grant them relatively greater tolerance. In other words, white Christian nationalists (Trump and many of his supporters included) are keen to restrict the civil liberties of all out-groups—but it helps if you are a racist.

APPENDIX

Table A1. OLS Regression of Whites' Relative Tolerance toward Racists

	Model 1			*Model 2*			*Model 3*		
	β	*b*	*SE*	*β*	*b*	*SE*	*β*	*b*	*SE*
Christian Nationalism	0.092	0.029*	(.01)	0.001	0.000	(.02)	0.062	0.019	(.02)
Mainline	−0.015	−0.015	(.04)	−0.013	−0.012	(.04)	−0.016	−0.015	(.04)
Catholic	0.020	0.018	(.03)	0.022	0.019	(.03)	0.019	0.016	(.03)
Jewish	−0.014	−0.044	(.10)	−0.012	−0.038	(.10)	−0.014	−0.043	(.10)
Other Faith	−0.004	−0.007	(.06)	−0.009	−0.015	(.06)	−0.004	−0.007	(.06)
Religiously Unaffiliated	−0.001	−0.001	(.04)	0.008	0.008	(.04)	0.000	0.000	(.04)
Biblical Literalist	−0.013	−0.013	(.03)	−0.013	−0.013	(.03)	−0.018	−0.018	(.03)
Service Attendance	−0.029	−0.004	(.01)	−0.027	−0.004	(.01)	−0.028	−0.004	(.01)
Political Views	0.003	0.001	(.01)	−0.001	0.000	(.01)	0.004	0.001	(.01)
Independent	−0.028	−0.022	(.03)	−0.029	−0.022	(.03)	−0.028	−0.021	(.03)
Democrat	−0.069	−0.059†	(.04)	−0.077	−0.065†	(.04)	−0.068	−0.058	(.04)
No Longer Married	0.030	0.026	(.03)	0.032	0.028	(.03)	0.029	0.025	(.03)
Never Married	−0.053	−0.049	(.04)	−0.051	−0.047	(.04)	−0.053	−0.048	(.04)
Children	−0.031	−0.008	(.01)	−0.031	−0.008	(.01)	−0.031	−0.008	(.01)
Bachelor's Degree or More	−0.034	−0.027	(.03)	−0.035	−0.028	(.03)	−0.034	−0.027	(.03)
Low Income	0.076	0.066*	(.03)	0.078	0.068*	(.03)	0.076	0.066*	(.03)
Southern	0.000	0.000	(.03)	0.000	0.000	(.03)	−0.001	−0.001	(.03)
Age	0.136	0.003***	(.00)	0.134	0.003***	(.00)	0.136	0.003***	(.00)
Male	0.091	0.069**	(.02)	−0.104	−0.079	(.05)	0.091	0.070**	(.02)
Year	−0.117	−0.089**	(.03)	−0.113	−0.086**	(.03)	−0.178	−0.136*	(.05)
Male*Christian Nationalist				0.228	0.063**	(.02)			
Year*Christian Nationalist							0.070	0.020	(.02)
Constant		0.746***	(.08)		0.821***	(.08)		0.768***	(.08)
R^2		0.08			0.09			0.08	

Source: GSS 1996 & 2014, n=1,010
Evangelical, Republican, less than bachelor's degree, 25,000 or more family income, non-southern, and female as contrast categories.
†p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table A2. Logistic Regression of Whites' Relative Tolerance toward Racists with Four-Value Measure of Christian Nationalism

	Model 1		*Model 2*		*Model 3*	
	β	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*
Christian Nationalism	0.250	1.490***	0.153	1.277*	0.132	1.240*
Mainline	−0.065	0.723	−0.062	0.731	−0.066	0.713
Catholic	0.031	1.146	0.032	1.153	0.024	1.114
Jewish	0.013	1.227	0.015	1.275	0.016	1.300
Other Faith	0.043	1.458	0.036	1.369	0.041	1.440
Religiously Unaffiliated	−0.060	0.738	−0.050	0.776	−0.053	0.761
Biblical Literalist	−0.006	0.972	−0.005	0.973	−0.025	0.878
Service Attendance	−0.117	0.921*	−0.116	0.921*	−0.109	0.924*
Political Views	0.021	1.028	0.019	1.026	0.029	1.041
Independent	0.000	0.999	−0.003	0.988	0.001	1.003
Democrat	−0.034	0.864	−0.043	0.829	−0.027	0.886
No Longer Married	−0.025	0.897	−0.022	0.906	−0.026	0.890
Never Married	−0.072	0.715	−0.068	0.727	−0.070	0.717
Children	−0.014	0.983	−0.014	0.983	−0.012	0.984
Bachelor's Degree or More	−0.060	0.783	−0.061	0.779	−0.059	0.782
Low Income	0.092	1.503*	0.092	1.505*	0.087	1.489*
Southern	−0.001	0.995	−0.002	0.993	−0.003	0.986
Age	0.010	1.001	0.009	1.001	0.008	1.001
Male	0.054	1.231	−0.174	0.507	0.055	1.242
Year	−0.121	0.625**	−0.120	0.627*	−0.430	0.181***
Male*Christian Nationalist			0.231	1.383*		
Year*Christian Nationalist					0.325	1.581**
Constant		0.135***		0.212**		0.213**
Cragg & Uhler's R^2		0.11		0.11		0.12

Source: GSS 1996 & 2014, n=1,010
Evangelical, Republican, less than bachelor's degree, 25,000 or more family income, non-southern, and female as contrast categories.
†p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table A3. Logistic Regression Results of Whites' Relative Tolerance toward Racists by Gender with Four-Value Measure of Christian Nationalism

	Female				*Male*			
	Model 1		*Model 2*		*Model 3*		*Model 4*	
	β	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*	*β*	*OR*
Christian Nationalism	0.202	1.377*	0.033	1.639	0.281	1.625***	0.212	1.451*
Mainline	−0.046	0.796	−0.052	0.494	−0.095	0.600	−0.092	0.601
Catholic	0.010	1.048	−0.001	0.924	0.023	1.113	0.021	1.101
Jewish	0.029	1.692	0.025	1.023	0.012	1.205	0.015	1.261
Other Faith	−0.003	0.976	−0.008	1.611	0.052	1.737	0.050	1.721
Religiously Unaffiliated	−0.097	0.574	−0.094	0.789	−0.015	0.931	−0.009	0.957
Biblical Literalist	−0.077	0.682	−0.103	1.420	0.062	1.404	0.045	1.288
Service Attendance	−0.215	0.859**	−0.210	0.761**	−0.020	0.985	−0.016	0.988
Political Views	−0.010	0.986	0.001	0.988	0.046	1.065	0.050	1.072
Independent	−0.029	0.892	−0.027	1.066	0.028	1.123	0.028	1.124
Democrat	−0.148	0.532†	−0.142	1.092†	0.064	1.349	0.066	1.368
No Longer Married	−0.134	0.565†	−0.132	1.321†	0.056	1.314	0.050	1.284
Never Married	−0.189	0.390*	−0.197	1.346*	0.049	1.255	0.053	1.286
Parent	−0.036	0.955	−0.044	1.261	0.012	1.015	0.019	1.026
Bachelor's Degree or More	−0.055	0.799	−0.057	1.010	−0.041	0.839	−0.039	0.843
Low Income	0.162	1.992*	0.161	0.833*	0.056	1.324	0.051	1.296
Southern	−0.088	0.690	−0.093	1.328	0.061	1.308	0.057	1.290
Age	0.036	1.004	0.048	1.330	−0.006	0.999	−0.013	0.998
Year	−0.032	0.881	−0.445	0.999**	−0.213	0.420**	−0.403	0.188**
Year*Christian Nationalist			0.451	0.418**			0.198	1.360
Constant		0.344		0.077		0.065***		0.088**
N	510		510		500		500	
Cragg & Uhler's R^2	0.12		0.14		0.18		0.19	

Source: GSS 1996 & 2014

Evangelical, Republican, less than bachelor's degree, 25,000 or more family income, non-southern, and female as contrast categories.

†p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

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