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The role of old-fashioned racism: disaggregating symbolic racism in the United States

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THE ROLE OF OLD-FASHIONED RACISM:
DISAGGREGATING SYMBOLIC RACISM
IN THE UNITED STATES

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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Master of Arts

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by
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ABSTRACT

Old-fashioned, biological, or “Jim Crow” racism is viewed by many in the political science and psychology literature to be largely a relic of the past. In the post-segregation era it has been replaced as a political force by symbolic racism, although its residual effect still operates within symbolic racism as negative racial affect. Symbolic racism is thought of as a coherent belief system that describes whites’ attitudes not only in the United States, but in some European democracies as well. This conceptualization of symbolic racism ignores the differences in the historical legacy of racism across different regional and demographic contexts. Different contexts have produced different legacies of racism. This is especially true in the United States, where different regions have varying histories in terms of the intensity of the laws enforcing segregation. In states that had slaves and anti-miscegenation laws until forced to repeal them, old-fashioned racism is more likely operate under a cover of symbolic racism rather than reflect the way symbolic racism operates in the rest of the United States. To test this theory, the factor loadings of different old-fashioned racism and symbolic racism items will be analyzed across regions, gender, and gender within regions using data from the General Social Survey from 1994-2008. Generally in the symbolic racism literature, the South and gender are added as dummy variables in regression analyses of whites’ racial attitudes. In addition to this typical strategy for analyzing the aggregate sample, separate regressions will be performed on the regions and sexes to see if there is any substantial difference. The separate effects of old-fashioned and symbolic racism on whites’ attitudes regarding racial policy issues will also be analyzed across the enumerated dimensions. Symbolic racism does appear to be associated with old-fashion racism for many in the U.S., especially in the South. It may also have slightly different origins and influences on men and women. Possible strategies for determining these differences include focus groups, in-depth interviews, and the use of racial codes and cues signaling a higher threshold of the social acceptability of racist beliefs.

INTRODUCTION

“I’m not a racist, but...”

A man named Don Lewis has a dream. He plans on launching an all-white basketball league, the All-American Basketball Alliance, featuring only Caucasian, American-born players (Byler 2010). Lewis’s justification for the league involves rhetoric about how blacks are inherently better at basketball and that they have also ruined the “fundamental,” “traditional” aspects of the game. This whites-only league seems to be a clear reflection of a belief that blacks and whites should not mix because of fundamental racial differences, the ideological core of old-fashioned racism. When confronted about the racism inherent to the concept of a whites-only league in an interview with comedian Jason Jones of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, Lewis claimed, “People can make anything seem racist” (3/29/10). This was played for huge laughs on the show, but it hints at a phenomenon that has serious implications for the study of racial attitudes using survey data. When being labeled as racist is considered socially undesirable, even blatant displays of racism are framed by individuals as reflecting some other value which is more fundamentally important to them than race. In the case of the whites-only basketball league, Lewis describes the effort as part of a return to “fundamentals” and “traditional, white basketball” rather than reflecting any personal racist feelings.

In a similar seemingly obvious display of old-fashioned racism, a justice of the peace in Hammond, Louisiana, caused a controversy when he refused to marry an interracial couple in 2009. He admitted that in the two and one half years preceding the media attention, he had asked everyone who called to request a marriage license if they were part of a mixed-race couple. If the individual answered in the affirmative, he told the individual to find someone else to legalize the marriage. Despite what seemed to be a transparent display of unqualified racism, he claimed steadfastly that he was not a racist and that his actions did not reflect any underlying racial animus. Instead, he framed his opposition to interracial marriage in terms of sensitivity to the difficulties that hypothetical children conceived in such a union might face. He is not a racist; rather he is concerned about the quality of life of the children of interracial couples (Foster 2009).

Two individuals behaving foolishly and ignorantly do not provide sufficient evidence to draw conclusions about an endemic program of beliefs concerning racial minorities among the white majority. Other recent examples from the South, though, can provide examples of the legacy of formal segregation and old-fashioned racist beliefs in the region. As recently as 2009, high schools in some Southern states were still organizing segregated, “whites only” proms (Corbett 2009). In response to this tradition, actor Morgan Freeman financed an integrated prom for a school in Mississippi; despite Freeman’s encouragement and star power, some white students and parents insisted upon holding their own segregated dance. Two individuals such as the justice of the peace and Don Lewis may only be isolated examples of clinging on to their antiquated ways, but when entire schools—including the schools’ administrations, the county school boards providing district oversight, and the communities in which the schools are located—are complicit in such activities concerned with the maintenance of the vestiges of formal segregation it shows a more active role of old-fashioned racism than the symbolic racism theory would anticipate. After the Congress passed healthcare reform, scores of protestors yelled

racial slurs at Democratic lawmakers (Herszenhorn and Pear 2010). Many commentators have noted the racial tinge of some of the “Tea Party” activists’ rhetoric.¹ Why are traditional practices of racism such as these anecdotal examples thought to be of little concern to the modern political context despite the fact that although there has been progress in terms of the liberalization of whites’ racial attitudes, there is strong theoretical support for the notion that this progress has almost certainly been overstated? To stretch an old metaphor, we have given the foxes the run of the henhouse in terms of the reliance on self-reported attitudes about race in discussions of racism.

Although whites may support the principles of equality, they do not seem to be willing to implement many substantive policies aimed at making those principles reality. Symbolic racism may be the concept that explains most of this opposition. But is there enough evidence to support symbolic racism as the monolithic explanation for whites’ opinions on racial issues? The dynamics of symbolic racism have rarely been described in terms of what, if any, variation exists among whites in their conformity to the measure. Has symbolic racism replaced old-fashioned racism everywhere, including in the regions with a strong legacy of racist practices and ideology? Does it work in the same way for men and for women? It seems abundantly clear to me as someone who has grown up in what may be America’s last bastion of blatant racist attitudes and practices—the Deep South—that symbolic racism is only telling part of the story. Like any worthwhile literature, the literature on symbolic racism offers as many further questions and puzzles as it does answers. These questions will be further specified and discussed below.

First, an explanation for the use of race as a concept is in order. In order to provide such an explanation, analysis will be employed from a comparative perspective to highlight the social and cultural foundations of race as a useful concept, not just in the political and social sciences, but more generally. Second, the theories of ‘modern racism,’ which I will lump for the most part under the title of symbolic racism, will be further elaborated and discussed; the discussion will include the theoretical and empirical evidence supporting the practice of distinguishing between “racial stereotypes,” “racial affect,” and “old-fashioned racism.” Third, I will describe several hypotheses that arise from this discussion of symbolic racism and provide an explanation for how to test the hypotheses using data available on the General Social Survey from 1994-2008. Fourth, the results of the specified tests will be analyzed and interpreted. Next, whites’ votes for Obama in Southern states, rates of interracial marriage, and levels of symbolic and old-fashioned racism will be compared to provide context for the conclusion. Finally, the conclusion will provide a final discussion of the implications of different conceptions of how racism influences politics, as well as suggestions for future research.

¹ For an illustrative example, *The Huffington Post* has compiled photographs of anti-Obama protest signs at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/04/16/10-most-offensive-tea-par_n_187554.html (4/1/10).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In light of the social undesirability of being labeled as racist, even for a man such as Don Lewis, who believes there is still a market in 2010 to support an all-white basketball league, it is amazing that researchers have been satisfied with survey measures of what is often called “old-fashioned” or “traditional” racism. The expression of old-fashioned racism is difficult to measure because those who hold these racist feelings or beliefs are also likely to realize the stigma associated with being labeled as racist and thus avoid answering in ways that could be perceived as such. Voiced opinions on racial issues that can be cloaked under the blanket of principled ideological opposition become entangled with the more amorphous, impersonally directed attitudes and opinions based on a mainstream conception of symbolic racism. Discerning those who are using symbolic racism as a vessel to disguise traditional racist feelings from those for whom symbolic racism is operating as it does in theory is problematic for several reasons.

Measures of “new” or “modern” racism are well developed and tested (Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and McConahay 1973; McConahay 1986; Henry and Sears 2002; Tarman and Sears 2005), but responses to survey questions concerning “old-fashioned” racism have not received as much attention. This lack of attention to old-fashioned racism persists in spite of the fact that symbolic racism is theorized to be a blend of traditional racism, negative affect, and individualistic conservative political ideology (Sears and Henry, 2003). The connection between old-fashioned racism and symbolic racism has largely been downplayed through a strategy of differentiating “racial affect” and “stereotypes” as separate from old-fashioned racism, when it could just as easily be argued that racial affect and stereotypes are precisely what justified and enforced the system of traditional racism from which symbolic racism is supposed to be distinct. Furthermore, the idea that symbolic racism reflects a uniformity of racist feelings throughout the United States or other Western democracies is difficult to accept based on solely on evidence from surveys, given the propensity of respondents to make survey responses conform to their understanding of the socially desirable answer.

Despite progress in the destruction of formal barriers to racial equality across Western democracies, there remain great disparities in the successes of minority racial and ethnic groups compared to other groups within their countries. These disparities are generally attributed to the group’s status as a minority, but the lack of white support for many racially egalitarian policies is attributed to diverse causes from the historical, sociopsychological, social structural, and to conceptions of disparity based on “race-neutral” ideology and “normal politics.” Much of the disagreement pertains to why minority groups (in the discussion of the United States, minority will primarily refer to Americans of African or Caribbean descent and who heretofore will be referred to as blacks or black people for concision) are in a disadvantaged position compared to the white members of a particular society. By starting from a comparative perspective on how race is conceptualized and discussing the political effects of the various conceptualizations, a greater understanding of race politics in the United States can be attained. Examples from Brazil and South Africa will provide an interesting relief from this minority-majority opposition. In these countries, white populations are nearly equal or outnumbered by the black and colored

populations, yet the black or colored groups are still disadvantaged compared to their white countrymen.

Comparative Scientific Perspectives on Uses of Race

Different countries have variously constructed the determinants of what makes a person of a certain race. In the United States, Britain, and Israel, the construction of race in scientific and medical research has reflected the socio-cultural construction of the concept inherited in those countries but has also continuously evolved over that time. In the years following World War II, scientists generally recognized that race was more of a cultural and social construction than a definite biological category that could be systematically applied to delineate one group from another (Gissis 2008, 438).

However, the scientific community in the United States in particular was unable to escape the category of race; further, Gissis asserts that “adopting the category of ‘race’ implied adopting the value systems and epistemological commitments within whose frameworks it had functioned as meaningful” (2008, 448). In his survey of scientific research in major journals of genetics, medicine, and epidemiology published between 1947 and 2003, Gissis found that scientists in the United States have used race as an explanatory variable since the 1960s, whereas in Britain and in Israel² this trend has been avoided in favor of more discussion of environmental factors, country of origin, class, and, in Israel, religion (2008, 445). So, although race is not a real, scientifically discernable genetic or medical phenomenon, and despite the fact that since the early 1970s scientists have agreed that “there is greater diversity within groups than among groups,” race has been used by geneticists, doctors, and epidemiologists in the United States as a causal, substantive variable rather than an analytic one (Gissis 2008, 447). Since the early 1980s, the use of race in these ‘essentialised’ ways has expanded, rather than declined, in these fields.

Constructions of Race

In the United States, an all-or-nothing approach to race has generally followed a strict rule: either you are all white or not white at all. This is a standard that few people, in practice, are able to meet. Additionally, whiteness is associated with “Americanness” (Harris-Lacewell 2003, 230). This “one-drop” construction of blackness differs from the approach of other countries such as Brazil³ and South Africa, where there is a stratification of classifications between black, colored or mulatto, and white, with darker skin corresponding to a lower placement in the social, political, and economic order (Marx 1996, 187-188). Yet another approach is found in France, where talk of racial differences and racial classification in general is frowned upon as inherently

² “I would suggest that the avoidance of the term ‘race’ for more than sixty years does not mean that the units of classification called ‘ethnic communities’ or ‘ethnic groups’ (in Hebrew *edot*) and so on were not conceptualised and used in an analogous manner to that of ‘race’ as it functioned in numerous American-authored articles. Rather, it indicates the existence of a powerful, cultural-emotional barrier concerning the use of ‘race’ in post-war Israeli society” (Gissis 2008, 446).

³ Despite these informally recognized stratifications in Brazil, even the study of discrimination was made off limits in an attempt to reflect a racially unified society. “The concept of race was effectively banned as an enemy of nation security” (Marx 1998, 172).

racist. There, the term “ethnicity” is used; “Frenchness” is associated with acceptance of French social and cultural norms and is not constructed with regard to differences of physical appearance (Hargreaves 2007, 33). This does not mean that French discrimination against ethnic minorities and immigrant populations is not as ‘racist’ in effect, but rather that discrimination has a different origin in France than in the United States.⁴

Markus attempts to provide a definition of race and ethnicity in the context of the social sciences. She defines race as:

a dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that (1) sorts people into ethnic groups according to perceived physical and behavioral human characteristics; (2) associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics and establishes a social status ranking among the different groups; and (3) emerges (a) when groups are perceived to pose a threat (political, economic, or cultural) to each other’s world view or way of life; and/or (b) to justify the denigration and exploitation (past, current, or future) of, and prejudice toward, other groups (2008, 654).

This definition is generally compatible with the way race is used in the various studies of the ramifications of race politics in the countries that will be surveyed here. Markus further distinguishes ethnicity from race in a way that is relevant to the discussion of Western European race politics, which are more ‘ethnicised’ than ‘racialized’ (Hargreaves 2007, Gissis 2008). Ethnicity, then, is defined as:

a dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that (1) allows people to identify or to be identified with groupings of people on the basis of presumed (and usually claimed) commonalities including language, history, nation or region of origin, customs, ways of being, religion, names, physical appearance, and/or genealogy or ancestry; (2) can be a source of meaning, action, and identity; and (3) confers a sense of belonging, pride, and motivation (Markus 2008, 654).

For Markus, the term “race” has a negative connotation, whereas “ethnicity” is generally positive. Race is about exclusion, whereas ethnicity is about meaning and identity. Despite its more positive connotation, ethnicity has still been used as a justification for exclusionary practices in Europe. Gissis points to the stronger influence of the events of World War II in Europe and the history of institutionalized racism in the United States as some of the possible reasons for this differentiation in the use of terminology and conceptualization between the two regions.

⁴ Hargreaves also contends that there is a more “ethnocultural” definition of “Germanness” in Germany, which while perhaps racist in application, originates from a similar construction of national identity to France (2007, 34).

Anthony Marx has argued that the nation state is the prime mover in “race-making.” In both the United States and South Africa, the state sought to unify whites around the oppression of blacks in order to solve some of the intra-white tensions in the countries that were the main lines of cleavage following the Civil War and Boer War, respectively. The development of the economy depended on domestic peace, so while states made race, race also made the state. In South Africa a strong, central state was formed to protect and unify whites against the black majority. In the United States, a weak and decentralized central state preserved the polity by diffusing white concerns throughout the federalized states (Marx 1998, 268). Southern states were free to follow their discriminatory practices, which preserved the union in the midst of intra-white tensions created during the Civil War and Reconstruction. (1998, 198). These nation states’ efforts for white unity also had the unintended effect of black unity (1998, 206).

Racial Gaps in Conditions:

United States

In the United States, Brazil, and France, there are ‘racial gaps’ between the conditions of whites and blacks that remain despite progress on many fronts. Between 1940 and 1994, the life expectancy discrepancy between black and white men in the United States barely changed, dropping from ten to nine years. For women, there was a moderate change from thirteen to six years (Farley 1996, 225). In 2005, black-white marriages accounted for only 5.5% of marriages in the United States (Rosenfeld 2007). Blacks remain the most residentially segregated group in the United States. Although blacks make up eleven percent of the population, less than two percent of America’s elected officials are black (Sears et al. 2000). The trends in these gaps are sources of controversy; some are optimistic about continued narrowing of the gaps (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997), while others perceive a stagnation of progress in recent years and are more pessimistic about the prospects for progress (Hacker 1992; Bell 1992).

France

In France, non-European immigrants generally face higher levels of unemployment and were out of work longer than both French nationals and European immigrants (Hargreaves 2007, 54). Non-European and especially African immigrants were less likely to be homeowners and more likely to live in public housing (2007, 63-64). In the late 1980s, African immigrant households earned less than one-third per capita income than the average French national (2007, 71). Still, compared to the high level of segregation in the United States, France is a relatively integrated nation. According to Hargreaves, the “spatial distribution of minorities in France is such that ‘mono-ethnic’ neighborhoods are very rare and never extensive” (2007, 138).

Brazil

Brazil differs from both France and the United States in that it has been categorized as a ‘developing’ rather than ‘developed’ (read: Western) democracy. It does have some key similarities to the United States, including a large population of blacks with African heritage who were deposited in the country through the extensive slave trade, which lasted until the 19th century. In Brazil in 1960, the average income of blacks was Cr \$5,440; for “mulattoes” it was

Cr \$6,492; and for whites Cr \$11,601. In 1976, white and non-white income ratios remained roughly the same, with whites still out-earning non-whites by almost double (Marx 1996, 191). There is general agreement in the literature that in many countries with various historical backgrounds, constitutions, and conceptions of race, blacks remain in a lower economic and social position than whites. So, although race and ethnicity may vary in their constructions, the consequences of belonging to certain races or ethnicities can be felt across different cultural, social, historical, and institutional contexts.

The Space between Principle and Action

The gap in conditions in the United States is all the more puzzling considering that for more than the past half century, white Americans have expressed increasingly ‘liberal’ responses supporting egalitarian principles, but this has not been followed by an increase in support for ‘liberal’ racial policies with equality as their goal (Schuman et al. 1997). France, in contrast, has experienced the ‘ethnicisation’ of politics since the mid-1980s with the rise of the far right Front National party and their anti-immigrant platform (Hargreaves 2007, 172). In the past in Brazil, race as an issue has traditionally been eschewed and a doctrine of “racial democracy” has been preached. This is, in brief, the idea that racial unity has already been achieved in Brazil, so no further discussion of race is necessary or helpful. The Brazilian government has historically set up no formal racial distinctions or barriers but also, as a result of the doctrine of racial democracy, provided no programs targeted to help disadvantaged Afro-Brazilians. In practice this doctrine led to the disparities discussed above. The lack of formal racial barriers and distinctions, coupled with the idea of racial democracy, allowed informal racist practices to occur by producing a façade of equality that could not be formally challenged by Afro-Brazilians (Marx 1998, 168).

Kevin Durrheim, writing in the context of a discussion of support for affirmative action in South Africa, nicely describes this common situation where many “whites attempt to bolster their self-presentation as tolerant non-racist people while at the same time opposing programmes that are designed to help blacks.” In effect, “they articulate support for change whilst concurrently struggling against it” (Durrheim 2007, 114). The theoretical reasons for this lack of white support for policy when there is no lack of support for the principle are the source of most of the contention in the literature on racial attitudes. Where does this opposition among whites come from? Despite the varying constructions of ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’ framing the conversations in the countries discussed above, discrimination against blacks persists in each. The task then becomes is to explore the theoretical linkages between racial attitudes and policy preferences.

Linking Racial Attitudes to Policy Preferences

The main controversy in the literature on racial attitudes and policy concerns the source of white ambivalence to policies promoting racial equality. Is it simply old-fashioned biological racism that assumes white racial superiority or some new kind of modern racism based on subconsciously socialized aversion or negative affect? Is opposition to programs promoting racial equality simply a reflection of a conservative ideology of individualism and a preference for low levels of government intervention? Is it based on an unarticulated white desire to

maintain group dominance? All of these questions represent different schools of thought on racial attitudes and policy preferences. A helpful way of categorizing these theories has been as the sociopsychological, social structure, and political approaches (Sears et al. 2000; Harris-Lacewell 2003).

Sociopsychological Theories and Symbolic Racism

Sociopsychological theories begin with an assumption that prejudice and other social values are socialized during early life. Many of the theories also start with the assumption that the issue of formal racial equality is settled and yet racism remains. Perhaps the most influential of these sociopsychological theories is the “symbolic racism” approach pioneered by Sears and Kinder (1971). Symbolic racism is usually described as a coherent belief system combining four distinct but closely related “themes”: that racial discrimination is no longer a serious obstacle to blacks' prospects for a good life; that blacks' continuing disadvantages are due to their own unwillingness to take responsibility for their lives; that blacks, rather than being disadvantaged, actually receive undeserved benefits; and that, as a result, blacks' continuing anger about their treatment, their demands for better treatment, and the various kinds of special government attention given to them are not justified and are therefore considered excessive (Henry and Sears 2002, 254).

Symbolic racism theory also holds that old-fashioned, traditional racism no longer predicts with accuracy racial policy attitudes or voting behavior. Despite the lack of this traditional racism, there is still a socialization of “negative affect” and stereotypes about blacks, “leaving a reservoir of racial antipathy decoupled from racist beliefs” (Sears et al. 2000, 17). Blacks are also believed by whites to violate traditional American values such as the Protestant work ethic and self-reliance, held especially dear by those with a conservative ideology. Additionally, symbolic racism is tied to a belief that discrimination is no longer a barrier to blacks. Related to this belief is a resentment that develops from continuing programs targeted at equality between blacks and whites which are seen by symbolic racists as giving blacks an undeserved advantage over whites (Sears et al. 2000, 77). The measurement of symbolic racism has been well developed (McConahay 1986; Henry and Sears 2002). The Symbolic Racism 2000 (SR2K) scale developed by Sears and his colleagues has transposed the themes of symbolic racism onto consistently asked survey items (see Appendix A).

The symbolic racism theory has been criticized from many fronts: that symbolic racism simply measures conservatism, that some of the frequently used measures can be interpreted as indexing racial threat, and that symbolic racism is in fact indistinguishable from old-fashioned racism. Another important criticism is that the theoretical link between individualistic values is often not found, or when it is found, it is often weaker than expected (for example, Sears et al. 1997). If individualistic values are not coupled with the negative affect about blacks, then the theory is not much more than a gussied-up version of traditional racism. In trying to address this problem, Sears and his colleagues find that individualistic values only register significantly when they are presented with a racial tinge, and that inegalitarian values generally are better predictors of illiberal racial policy preferences (2000, 107). It seems suspicious that outside of the context of race, individual values become less important.

Pettigrew and Meertens developed another variation on this type of theory in order to address concerns that symbolic racism was too specific to the United States. They instead suggest that there is “subtle” and “blatant” racism at work in both Europe and the United States (1995). Subtle racism is conceptually very similar to symbolic racism and is tied to the defense of traditional values, the exaggeration of cultural differences, and the lack of positive feelings and empathy for the out-group. As Hargreaves has pointed out, “race relations” are generally not talked about in Continental Europe. Instead, discussions of “immigration” and “integration” take place in the same political space as “race relations” do in the United Kingdom and United States, despite the fact that the discourse is different (Hargreaves 2007, 36). Pettigrew and Meertens find evidence that in Europe there are three kinds of racial attitudes: subtle prejudice, blatant prejudice, and equalitarianism (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995). For example, they find that bigots or blatant racists are the most likely group to support restricted rights for immigrants and the least likely to support extended rights. Subtle racists are found to be most likely to support the status quo.

Social Structural Theories

Social structural theories tend to emphasize social structure and group interests. In general, the theories postulate that individuals identify most closely with their own ethnic or racial group. These groups have competing interests—real or perceived—which generate conflict. Additionally, dominant groups develop ideologies to “justify and legitimize their hegemony” (Sears et al. 2000, 22). One such social structural theory was pioneered by Donald Campbell and has taken the name “realistic group conflict” (Levine and Campbell, 1971). According to this theory, opposition to policies promoting equality result from the threat posed by the disadvantaged group to the dominant group’s privileges. Vanneman and Pettigrew have found that only a slight perception of this antagonism is enough to make the dominant group feel threatened of deprivation (1972).

The sense of group position—that is, a group’s “beliefs about the proper relation between groups”—attributes a great deal of weight to social status, in contrast to realistic group conflict’s emphasis on political or economic interests (Bobo et al. 1997, 38). Group position also elaborates on the assumptions of group conflict theory: in-group members view their group as superior, view out-group members as different and alien, and feel that their membership in the group legitimates special access to the privileges of status and power. The racism that develops from this view of intergroup relations is called “laissez-faire racism” by Bobo and involves continued stereotyping of blacks while placing the responsibility for the racial gap in conditions on blacks themselves (Sears et al. 2000, 25). This form of racism is not a new, modern racism like the symbolic form but rather has grown naturally out of the same defense of group interests in which dominant groups historically have engaged.

Political Theories

“Political” theories are based on an understanding that white attitudes towards racial policies focus on the effect of the ideological tension that exists, in the United States especially, between the “race neutral” values of egalitarianism, individualism, and limited government.

Many whites' opposition to racially liberal policies is based on their perception of the policies as violating one of these principles in some way, or that they simply value individualism and limited government more strongly than egalitarianism. Additionally, political debates are presented to the public by elites who make use of this ideological language. This argument is generally attributed to Sniderman and Carmines (1989). These differences in principles or ideology have no room for race, and the role of racism is relegated to a very small place in most of these political theories (Sears et al. 2000, 29). Often whites' opposition to racially liberal policies is formulated as based somewhat counterintuitively on a *commitment to egalitarianism* and the perception that special treatment violates this norm.

Of course, underlying this argument is the concept that these ideological values are race-neutral. However, there are instances, especially in black scholarship on ideology, where scholars reject the idea that conservative values such as individualism and the Protestant work ethic are race-neutral. Rogers Smith argues that individualism, meritocracy, and the concept of the work ethic are fundamentally elements of the maintenance of white domination (1997). Indeed, Sears et al. note that some research in the political theories school finds a strong correlation between ideological conservatism and racist attitudes (2000, 31). Smith adds that conservatism and racism have become inextricably intertwined since the civil rights movement. Further, the idea that opposition to special treatment for disadvantaged groups is based on commitment to egalitarian principles finds little evidence: those who support egalitarianism are the ones most likely to support liberal racial policies (Sears et al. 2000, 112; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995).

Additionally, both political theories and those resembling symbolic racism face a further criticism: in all of these discussions, the phrase "American values" could easily be replaced with "white values." The values of white Americans only are labeled American and the values of other groups of Americans are often ignored or ridiculed. On top of this, as noted above, these race-laden values are consistently called "race neutral" (Harris-Lacewell 2003, 232).

Lumping "Modern" Racisms Together

Of these differing approaches to explaining whites' racial attitudes, the symbolic racism approach is perhaps the most representative of the new or modern racisms. It incorporates elements of other explanations such as negative affect, conservatism, and defense of traditional position and values into what has been touted as a coherent and consistent concept that underpins white racial attitudes, not just across regions and groups within the United States, but across the different contexts of race and ethnicity in other countries.

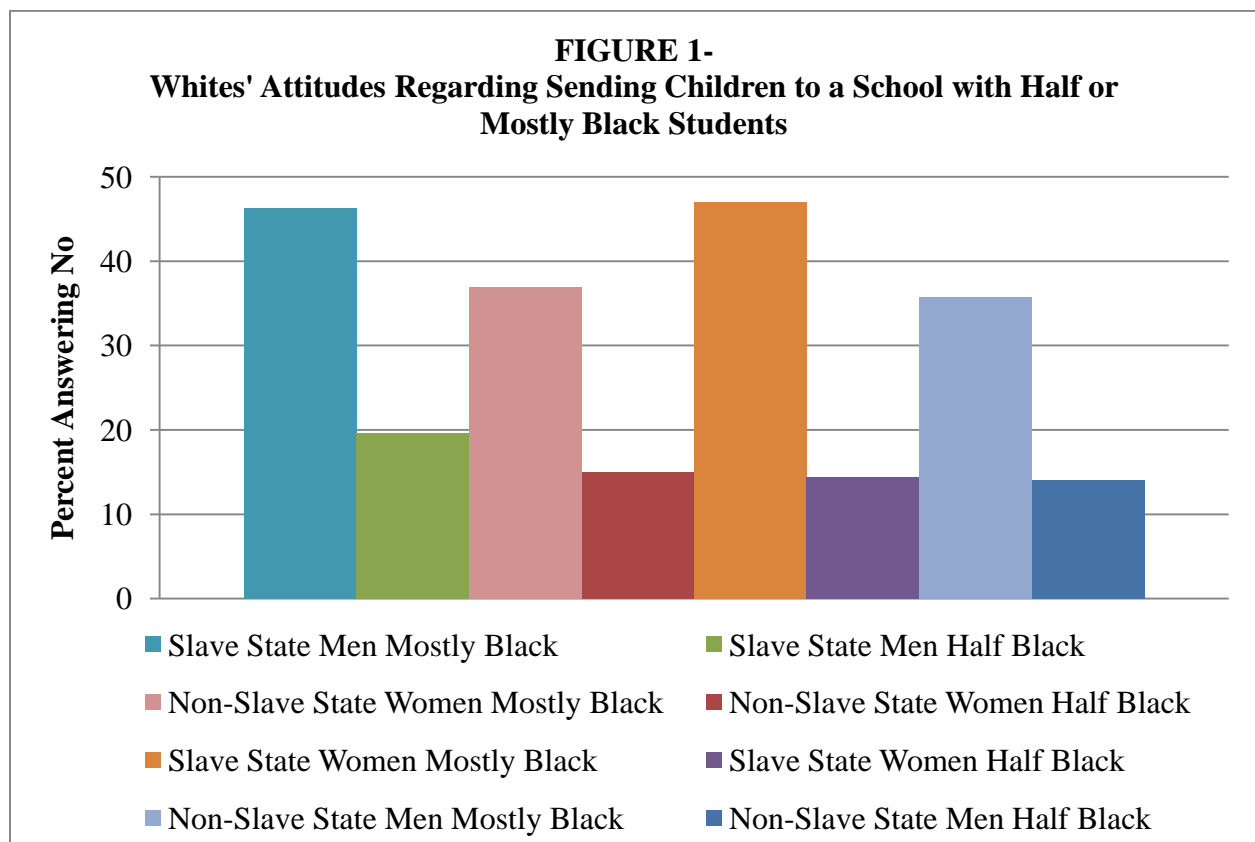
Jennifer Hochschild has pointed out that many of the disagreements in this argument about what motivates white opinion are based on differences of style rather than substance.⁵ I believe that she is largely correct about this. In fact, symbolic racism has been reworked and developed over time to reflect the criticisms and concerns of other theories, and in the process, it has taken on some of the tenets of the once-opposing critical theories. In this sense, symbolic racism is a sort of monolithic system. But it has failed to address some of the basic concerns of

⁵ She argues that some scholars are "splitters" who tend to portray concepts as opposed and some are "lumpers" who look for areas of common ground between the schools (Hochschild 2000, 325).

its critics, especially in its handling of the distinction between symbolic and old-fashioned racism (Sniderman and Tetlock 1986; Virtanen and Huddy 1998). Additionally, symbolic racism has remained somewhat ambivalent about the theoretical role of conservatism within the system. “Pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps” may be thought of as an American value or, more generally, a tenet of many ideologically rightwing parties across the globe, but this perspective completely ignores the historical context of just *whose value* it has been and the practical results that are demonstrated by its application in the area of racial politics. That the empirical affects of individualism and conservatism can only be determined when they are “racially tinged” means that there is serious work to be done on the theory of symbolic racism and its assumptions.

THEORY

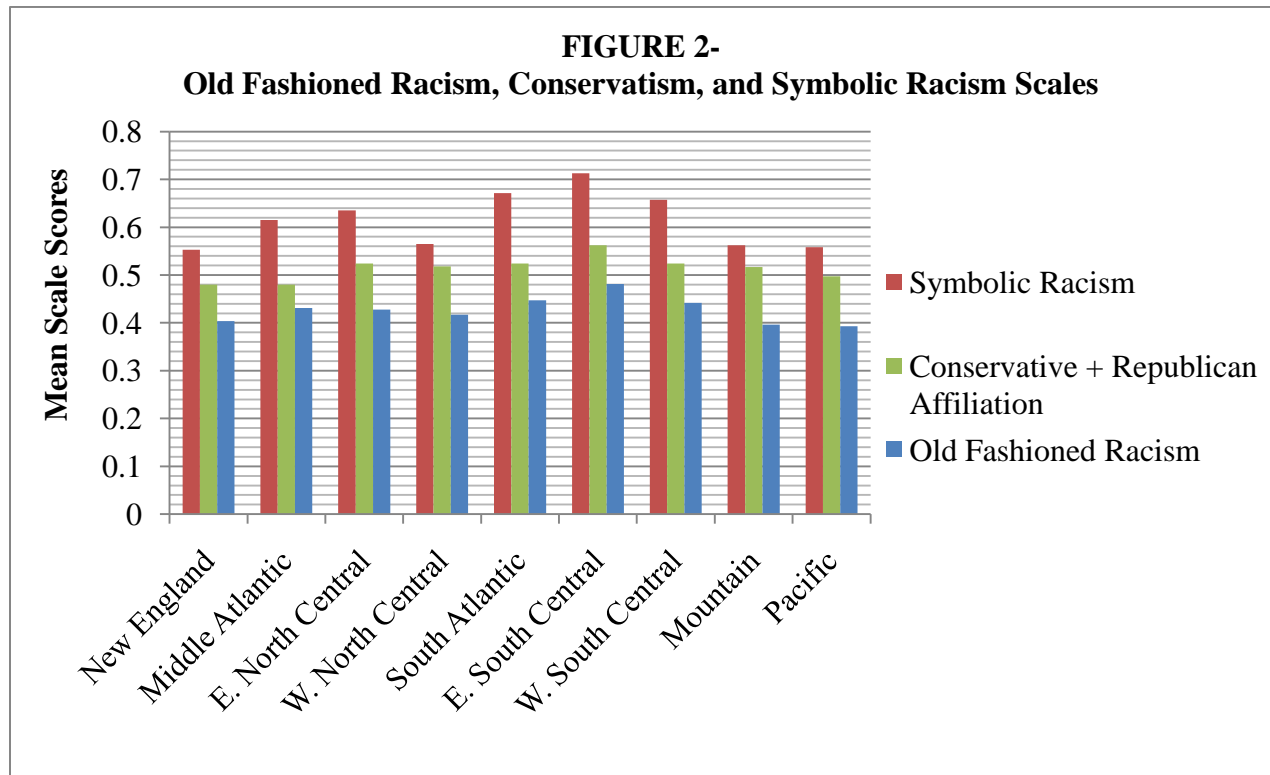
There is no doubt that symbolic racism is the preeminent force guiding most Americans' opinions on racial issues. It is not clear, however, that its effect is the same in all places or among all groups. The review of comparative conceptions of race provides evidence that locales with different racial histories and social contexts will use different ideologies to justify racist attitudes. The United States itself contains various racial contexts and histories across its relatively massive geographic area. Some research in the United States has looked into how likely blacks, Asians, and Latinos are to register on the symbolic racism scale compared to whites (Henry and Sears 2002). Differences among whites themselves have been less explored. There is reason to believe that the substance of symbolic racism differs within the United States from region to region and perhaps between males and females.



Data: General Social Survey from 1994-1996.

Consider Figures 1 and 2, which show differences in opinions across regions and gender as expressed in response to survey questions reflecting traditional racism and racial attitudes; the responses also reflect the divisions within the United States. Some regions, particularly those comprised of states that had slaves and anti-miscegenation laws (Appendix C), are likely to show a stronger old-fashioned racism component to their symbolic racism while others are more likely to reflect the conception of symbolic racism as a blend of racial affect with conservative individualistic principles. An important aspect of measuring symbolic racism then must be

determining how and for whom it functions (or does not function) as is generally conceptualized and where any significant differences take place.



Data: General Social Survey 1994-2008.

Notes: The slave states and anti-miscegenation states fall within the South Atlantic, E. South Central, and W. South Central regions.

Hypotheses

(A) Old-fashioned racism is still a fairly active political force, but the limited measures and the conventional differentiation between racial stereotypes, racial affect, and old-fashioned racism made by the symbolic racism literature reduces or confuses the appearance of old-fashioned racism, especially in states that historically had slaves or anti-miscegenation laws. Including measures of support for interracial marriage that are not dichotomous will increase the effects of old-fashioned racism. Figure 2 above has already shown some evidence of this. (B) Old-fashioned and symbolic racism measures will load consistently on their own factors, evidencing their separability, but when the symbolic racism scale is used rather than its individual components, it will load across both conservatism and old-fashioned racism items. (C) In slave and anti-miscegenation states, however, the symbolic racism scale will load only on measures of old-fashioned racism and (D) the conventional conceptualization of symbolic racism will obtain more for men than for women. (E) It is true that old-fashioned racism is not as powerful a force as symbolic racism in the origins of whites' responses regarding affirmative action and federal aid to blacks, but in slave and anti-miscegenation states, symbolic racism is more closely related to old-fashioned racism and will also show more of an independent effect.

(F) Finally, slave states and states with anti-miscegenation laws will have higher rates of symbolic racism and old-fashioned racism as well as lower rates of interracial marriages.

A further addition to the hypothesis could be extended as follows: It is likely that the undesirability of being labeled “racist” suppresses old-fashioned racist-type responses. Unfortunately, this cannot be tested directly with these methods, although the results will offer some implications for the design of future research on symbolic and old-fashioned racism. Suggestions for future research on racism—including the use of focus groups, in-person interviews, and experiments using racial ‘codes’ to signal complicity with and receptivity to racist responses are offered. In the next section, the measurement and testing of these hypotheses will be described.

MEASUREMENT AND TESTING

In order to measure levels of old-fashioned racism, symbolic racism, and racial attitudes among whites, I will use pooled General Social Survey (GSS) data from 1994-2008. This data set is preferable to others that are available because the GSS has employed the same questions about interracial marriage for all of the years from 1994-2008, with the exception of 1994; in that year, the survey only includes one (rather than two) interracial marriage questions, and questions regarding interracial marriage and racism permit a range of responses rather than the dichotomous “Yes” or “No” response often used to measure old-fashioned racism.

The time range has been chosen because it represents a period during which there were few major racially divisive issues, compared to the late 1960s and early 1990s. Controls for any effects caused by small trends in the data set over time are alleviated by creating dummy variables for the years 1996-2006, making 2008 the reference. The years 1994 through 2008 are also a period during which traditional racism is not considered to have much effect. Besides these theoretical advantages, there are practical advantages. Using all of these years offers a much larger number of observations than other, similar studies have employed. Also, unlike the often-employed National Election Studies, the GSS asks about interracial marriage in two different ways (see Appendix B).

In order to measure old-fashioned racism, six variables, all recoded and standardized as 0-1 so that 1 equals more racism, will be used to create an old-fashioned racism scale. These include questions about the laziness and intelligence of blacks minus their corresponding answers for whites; laws against interracial marriage; disapproval of a close relative marrying a black person; the relative closeness felt to blacks minus corresponding answers for whites; and whether or not differences between the races are in-born.

Measures of symbolic racism follow Henry and Sears (2002) “Symbolic Racism 2000” scale, and I have attempted to follow their advice concerning scale construction. This includes covering all of the four themes of symbolic racism as well as using both Likert- and non-Likert-type questions offering different ranges of response. This standard has also been implemented on the old-fashioned racism items selected for that scale. All of the questions from the original Symbolic Racism 2000 scale and both scales created here, as well as their original response options, are available in Appendices A and B.

Another scale was created indicating an increasing level of conservative ideology. It is composed of a combination of ideological self placement on the traditional seven-point scale and Republic party identification (leaning and strong Republicans). An additional scale was created for religiosity, composed of a combination of strength of religious affiliation and rate of church attendance. The reliabilities of these scales are displayed in Table 1. The Cronbach’s α for the scales are not as strong as those reported by Henry and Sears (2002). Here they are hovering around the level called “questionable” by the rules of thumb for reliability offered George and Mallory (2003). However, when exploratory factor analysis is performed, the variables load strongly on each individual scale, providing an added level of confidence in the scales’ reliability.

TABLE 1- Scale Reliabilities

Scale	Cronbach's α
Old-fashioned Racism	0.58
Old-fashioned Racism (No Favor Relative Marrying Black Question)	0.50
Old-fashioned Racism (No Intermarriage Questions)	0.45
Symbolic Racism	0.54
Symbolic Racism (No Blacks Should Not Push Question)	0.46
Conservative ID	0.59
Religiosity	0.71

Data: GSS 1994-2008

Next, factor analysis is performed on the different variables, confirming that they reflect an underlying effect. Separate analyses are performed for the slave states and non-slave states, as well as well as for gender. Then, a factor analysis on regions and gender is performed using the symbolic racism scale and the individual old-fashioned racism and conservatism items in order to measure the extent to which symbolic racism is a blend of old-fashioned racism and conservatism in different contexts.

Separate regression analyses are performed for different regions and gender on various white racial attitudes, including those concerning affirmative action, government aid to blacks, desired level money spent on assistance to blacks compared to the status quo, and federal involvement in improving the conditions of blacks

Finally, actual interracial marriage rates by region will be discussed in reference to levels of support for interracial marriage, symbolic racism, and traditional racism in each region by using Census data. The possible relationship of these factors to the levels of white support for Obama in different regions in terms of votes in the 2008 election will be also be discussed and compared to the different levels of symbolic and traditional racism in those areas using the levels of white vote by state reported by the *New York Times*.

RESULTS

Factor Analyses

As hypothesized, old-fashioned racism does appear to be distinct from symbolic racism, but that distinction breaks down in slave states, where the two are much more highly correlated and the dominance of symbolic racism is less clear. Tables 2 through 4 present the breakdowns of the factor analyses. The distribution of the factor loadings on the aggregate sample is what

TABLE 2- Factor Loadings for Full Sample, Non-Slave States, and Slave States

	Full Sample			Non-Slave States			Slave States			
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	
Old-fashioned Racism:										
Intelligence Blacks-Intelligence Whites	0.68					0.59				0.81
Laziness Blacks-Laziness Whites	0.61					0.60				0.60
Racial Differences Inborn	0.65					0.65				0.56
Favor Law Against Intermarriage	0.54					0.64		0.41	0.36	
Favor Close Relative Marrying Black	0.41	0.41				0.52			0.54	
Closeness to Blacks-Closeness to Whites	0.56					0.52				0.57
Symbolic Racism:										
Affirmative Action Hurts Whites		0.63				0.67			0.59	
Racial Differences Not Due to Discrimination		0.69				0.69			0.70	
Blacks Should Work Way Up Without Favors		0.62				0.61			0.61	
Blacks Should Not Push Where Not Wanted	0.35	0.51				0.50	0.33		0.69	
Conservatism:										
Republican Party Identification			0.84					0.84		0.84
Conservative Ideological Self-Placement			0.77					0.80		0.73
Interfactor Correlations										
1	1			1	1			1	1	
2	0.31	1		2	0.25	1		2	0.38	1
3	0.03	0.18	1	3	0.07	0.24	1	3	0.13	0.03

Data: General Social Survey 1994-2008

Notes: Principal component factoring using oblique rotation. Only factors over 0.3 are shown; factors loading above 0.5 are in bold.

would be expected from the previous work on symbolic racism. The measures comprising symbolic racism and old-fashioned racism are distinct, and symbolic racism correlates with both old-fashioned racism and conservatism. But this only tells part of the story. When the factor analysis is conducted separately on slave and non-slave states, a slightly different pattern occurs. Two of the old-fashioned racism measures load on the symbolic racism scale in the slave states.

The symbolic and traditional racism factors are also much more strongly correlated. The correlation coefficient for conservatism and symbolic racism in the slave states is almost half of what it is in the non-slave states. The “blacks should not push” question, representing the “excessive demands” theme of symbolic racism, appears to be more closely related to the old-fashioned racist laden content of symbolic racism in slave states, whereas it is associated with both old-fashioned and symbolic racism in other states.

TABLE 3- Factor Loadings for Men and Women

	Women			Men			
	1	2	3	1	2	3	
Old-fashioned Racism:							
Intelligence Blacks-Intelligence Whites		0.68		0.74			
Laziness Blacks-Laziness Whites		0.55		0.65			
Racial Differences Inborn		0.56		0.63			
Favor Law Against Intermarriage	0.50			0.61			
Favor Close Relative Marrying Black	0.61			0.47			
Closeness to Blacks-Closeness to Whites		0.62		0.48			
Symbolic Racism:							
Affirmative Action Hurts Whites	0.59				0.67		
Racial Differences Not Due to Discrimination	0.56				0.69		
Blacks Should Work Way Up Without Favors	0.57				0.65		
Blacks Should Not Push Where Not Wanted	0.68			0.41	0.42		
Conservative Values:							
Republican Party Identification			0.86			0.81	
Conservative Ideological Self-Placement			0.72			0.82	
Interfactor Correlation							
1	1			1	1		
2	0.27	1		2	0.30	1	
3	0.18	0.08	1	3	0.09	0.22	1

Data: GSS 1994-2008

Notes: Principal component factoring using oblique rotation. Only factors over 0.3 are shown, factors loading above 0.5 are in bold.

Table 3 shows that there are also some differences between men and women. Particularly, males are a much better approximation of what symbolic racism would be expected to look like. Women, on the other hand, have some old-fashioned racism measures loading

TABLE 4- Factor Loadings for Men and Women by Region

	Men in Slave States			Men in Non-Slave States			Women in Slave States			Women in Non-Slave States					
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3			
	Old-fashioned Racism:														
Intelligence Blacks-Intelligence Whites	0.84			0.72				0.76			0.48				
Laziness Blacks-Laziness Whites	0.60			0.61				0.57			0.62				
Racial Differences Inborn	0.44			0.64				0.61			0.62				
Favor Law Against Intermarriage	0.56			0.61			0.55		-0.32		0.67				
Favor Close Relative Marrying Black	0.39	0.37		0.52			0.61				0.57		0.30		
Closeness to Blacks-Closeness to Whites	0.69			0.41				0.51			0.50				
Symbolic Racism:															
Affirmative Action Hurts Whites		0.50			0.68		0.63					0.40			
Racial Differences Not Due to Discrimination		0.72			0.69		0.65	-0.38					0.82		
Blacks Should Work Way Up Without Favors		0.69			0.65		0.56				0.39				
Blacks Should Not Push Where Not Wanted		0.65		0.50	0.33		0.72				0.63				
Conservative Values:															
Republican Party Identification			0.81			0.81			0.86			0.75			
Conservative Ideological Self-Placement			0.75			0.82			0.70			0.79			
Interfactor Correlation															
1	1			1	1		1	1		1	1				
2	0.43	1		2	0.23	1	2	0.31	1	2	0.16	1			
3	-0.03	0.09	1	3	0.07	0.21	1	3	0.18	-0.01	1	3	0.14	0.16	1

Data: GSS 1994-2008

Notes: Principal component factoring using oblique rotation. Only factors over 0.3 are shown, factors loading above 0.5 are in bold.

alongside the symbolic measures. Women and men are fairly similar on aggregate, but women and men from different regions are actually somewhat different. Consider Table 4, which shows that there is some substantial variation across men and women in slave and non slave states. Men in both regions show more conformity to the traditional conception of symbolic racism, but men in slave states show nearly twice the correlation ($r=0.43$) between old fashioned and symbolic racism compared to other men ($r=0.23$). Women present a much more confusing picture, with several variables loading fairly strongly on the ‘wrong’ factors. This indicates that there is not as strong of evidence that symbolic racism is being measured by these items in women, if it operates the same way as men at all.

Next, factor analysis is performed with the symbolic racism scale and the measures of old-fashioned racism and conservatism. According to the traditional conception of symbolic racism, the symbolic racism scale should load fairly evenly across both the old-fashioned racism and conservatism measures. Table 3 presents the findings.

TABLE 5- Symbolic Racism Scale Factor Loadings by Region

	Full Sample		Slave States		Non-Slave States		Non-Slave State Women	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
	Old-fashioned Racism:							
Intelligence Blacks-Intelligence Whites	0.59		0.59		0.59		0.45	
Laziness Blacks-Laziness Whites	0.69		0.70		0.67		0.68	
Racial Differences Inborn	0.59		0.58		0.60		0.62	
Favor Law Against Intermarriage	0.62		0.66		0.58		0.59	
Favor Close Relative Marrying Black	0.62		0.64		0.61		0.64	
Closeness to Blacks-Closeness to Whites	0.51		0.51		0.52		0.58	
Symbolic Racism Scale:	0.51	0.37	0.56		0.48	0.40	0.53	0.38
Conservative Values:								
Republican Party Identification		0.83		0.84		0.82		0.80
Conservative Ideological Self-Placement		0.77		0.76		0.78		0.80
Interfactor Correlation								
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	2	0.13	2	0.15	2	0.11	2	0.07
		1		1		1		1

Data: GSS 1994-2008

Notes: Principal component factoring using oblique rotation. Only factors over 0.3 are shown; factors loading above 0.5 are in bold.

Again, we see symbolic racism loading on different factors in the different regions. The full sample portrays symbolic racism as being explained nearly equally by conservatism and old-fashioned racism, but symbolic racism is more composed of old-fashioned racism in both men from slave states and women from non-slave states. Also, the correlation between the two factors is somewhat smaller in non-slave state women. It is not at all surprising that respondents in slave states express symbolic racism more as a function of old-fashioned racist attitudes than conservatism, as it fits with hypothesis (C), but the findings are surprising for non-slave state women, as women are generally assumed to be less racist than men. Although women do have lower overall scores on the symbolic racism and old-fashioned racism scales, when non-slave state women express symbolic racism it is defined more by old-fashioned racism than it is among their male non-slave state counterparts.

TABLE 6- Whites' Attitudes on Affirmative Action by Region

Independent Variables	Full Sample		Slave States		Non-Slave States	
	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β
Symbolic Racism	0.31	0.31***	0.30	0.30***	0.32	0.32***
Old-fashioned Racism	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.00
Conservative + PID	0.15	0.13***	0.13	0.12***	0.15	0.13***
Highest Degree	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.05**	-0.01	-0.01
Religiosity	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Age	-0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.02
Slave State Dummy	0.00	0.00				
dummy94	0.06	0.04***	0.06	0.05*	0.05	0.04**
dummy96	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.01
dummy98	0.03	0.04**	0.04	0.06*	0.02	0.03
dummy00	0.00	-0.01	0.02	0.03	-0.02	-0.02
dummy02	0.02	0.02	0.06	0.06**	0.00	0.00
dummy04	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	-0.01	-0.01
dummy06	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.00
_cons	0.52***		0.51***		0.54***	
Adjusted R^2		0.13		0.12		0.14
	<i>N</i> =6888		<i>N</i> =2366		<i>N</i> =4527	

Notes: For the P weights, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Items are keyed such that higher scores reflect more racial animosity, conservatism, religiosity, and age. Highest Degree is scored such that higher scores reflect lower levels of educational attainment.

Symbolic and Old-fashioned Racism and Whites' Attitudes

Tables 6 through 8 test the hypothesis (D) that the symbolic and old-fashioned racism scales exert different influences on different regions and genders. The first dependent variable

analyzed is the whites' attitudes on racism item. Here symbolic racism is clearly the dominant factor, but it should be remembered that in the previous factor analyses, symbolic racism mostly reflected old-fashioned racism. Conservatism also exerts an influence, though its beta coefficient ($\beta=0.13$) is less than half of symbolic racism's ($\beta=0.31$). Only in the South does the education variable exert a significant effect. Age, religiosity, and old-fashioned racism all fail to show statistical significance at conventional levels. Table 7 shows the effects of the scales on whites' attitudes about government spending to "improve conditions" of blacks. Here, old-fashioned racism becomes significant. Although its beta coefficient ($\beta=0.11$ in the full sample) is not as large as symbolic racism ($\beta=0.29$ in the full sample), this should not be interpreted as old-fashioned racism exerting a radically smaller effect than symbolic racism. Considering that symbolic racism, especially in the slave states, reflects higher levels of old-fashioned racism as well, the effect exerted by old-fashioned racism independently is much more impressive. As the factor analysis suggested, conservatism also exerts less of an effect on this particular racial attitude in slave states than in non-slave states. The conservatism scale's beta coefficient ($\beta=0.11$) in slave states is just more than half of the non-slave states' beta ($\beta=0.20$). Also, compared to opposition to affirmative action, betas of symbolic racism across the items are similar, but old-fashioned racism and conservatism show different effects.

TABLE 7- Whites' Attitudes on Improving Conditions of Blacks by Region

Independent Variables	Full Sample		Slave States		Non-Slave States	
	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β
Symbolic Racism	0.35	0.29***	0.41	0.31***	0.32	0.28***
Old-fashioned Racism	0.26	.11***	0.30	0.13***	0.23	0.09***
Conservative + PID	0.24	.17***	0.16	0.11***	0.28	0.20***
Highest Degree	0.02	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	0.03
Religiosity	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	-0.04	-0.04
Age	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	0.04	0.03
Slavestate Dummy	0.02	0.01				
dummy94	0.09	0.06**	0.07	0.04	0.10	0.06**
dummy96	0.07	.06**	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.06*
dummy98	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.04
dummy00	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.02	0.02
dummy02	0.05	0.04	0.09	0.08*	0.02	0.02
dummy04	0.03	0.03	-0.01	-0.01	0.06	0.05*
dummy06	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03
_cons	-0.05		-0.04		-0.04	
Adjusted R^2		0.17		0.17		0.17
	<i>N</i> =3367		<i>N</i> =1140		<i>N</i> =2227	

Notes: For the P weights, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Items are keyed such that higher scores reflect more racial animosity, conservatism, religiosity, and age. Highest Degree is scored such that higher scores reflect lower levels of educational attainment.

Table 8 shows the largest effect of old-fashioned racism exhibited. It is not only significant in the slave states but in the non-slave states as well. Once again, symbolic racism exerts the same magnitude of its effects across items, but old-fashioned racism has changed in its effects. Old-fashioned racism has gone from being relatively small in proportion to the symbolic racism scale on the affirmative action question, to a more moderate proportion on the “improve conditions” question, and on the assistance question it is more than half the coefficient of symbolic racism in slave states. In Table 8, the beta coefficient for slave states increases to $\beta=0.18$ and is highly significant, while the symbolic racism remains the same at $\beta=0.31$.

TABLE 8- Whites’ Attitudes on Spending to “Assist” Blacks

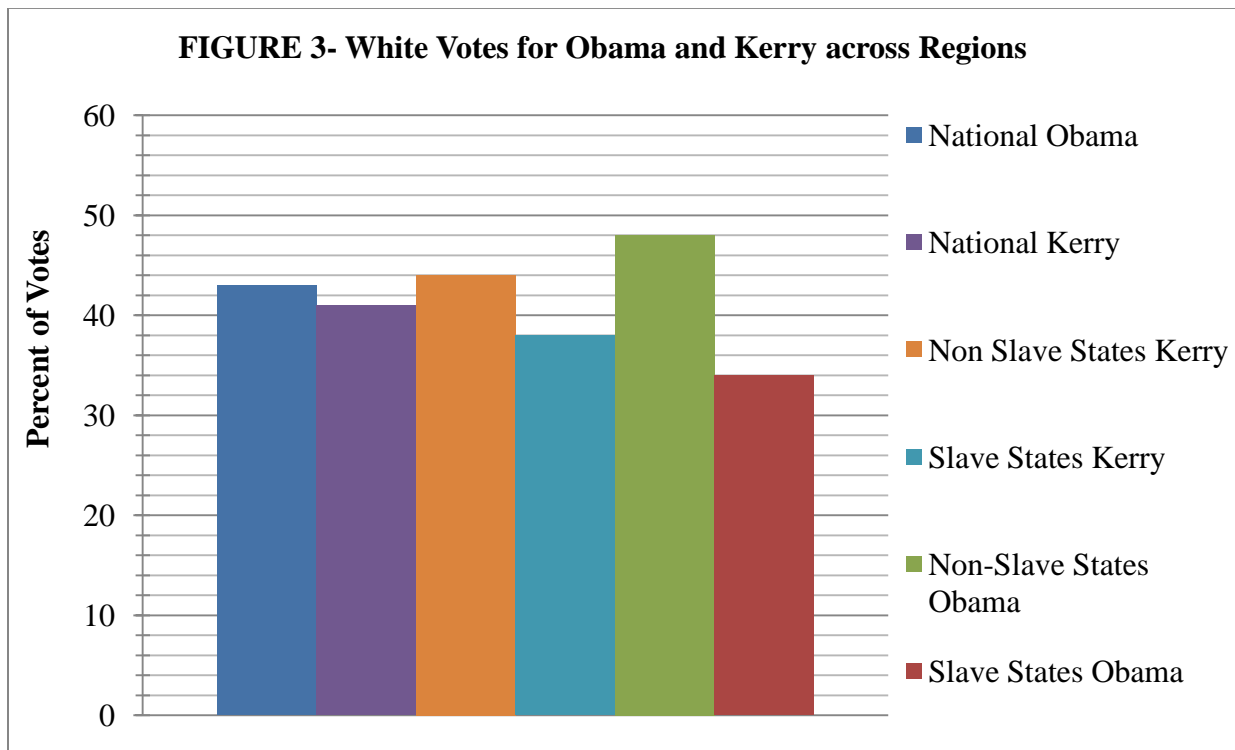
Independent Variables	Full Sample		Slave States		Non-Slave States	
	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β	<i>r</i>	β
Symbolic Racism	0.38	0.31***	0.40	0.31***	0.36	0.30***
Old-fashioned Racism	0.35	0.14***	0.42	0.18***	0.30	0.12***
Conservative + PID	0.21	0.14***	0.22	0.15***	0.21	0.14***
Highest Degree	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.03	-0.02	-0.02
Religiosity	0.04	0.05**	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02
Age	-0.02	-0.02	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.02
Slave State Dummy	0.02	0.01				
dummy94	0.10	0.06***	0.10	0.06*	0.11	0.07**
dummy96	0.02	0.01	-0.07	-0.05	0.07	0.06*
dummy98	0.03	0.03	-0.03	-0.04	0.07	0.08**
dummy00	0.00	0.00	-0.04	-0.05	0.04	0.04
dummy02	0.06	0.05*	0.04	0.03	0.08	0.07**
dummy04	-0.02	-0.02	-0.14	-0.11***	0.05	0.04
dummy06	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	0.03
_cons	0.01		0.03		0.01	
Adjusted R^2		0.19		0.21		0.17
	<i>N</i> =3259		<i>N</i> =1179		<i>N</i> =2080	

Notes: For the P weights, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Items are keyed such that higher scores reflect more racial animosity, conservatism, religiosity, and age. Highest Degree is scored such that higher scores reflect lower levels of educational attainment.

The 2008 Presidential Election, Racism, and Miscegenation

In 2008 the United States elected its first black president, an event viewed by some as major progress in the country’s race politics. However, in the slave states grouped together and analyzed here, the election seems to have elicited some reactionary racial responses. For example, 92% of whites in slave states indicated on the 2008 sample of the GSS survey that they would vote for a black president. Yet the actual rate of the white vote for the Democrat Obama

in the slave states was 34%, an 11% decrease from the rate of the white vote for the Democrat John Kerry in the 2004 election (see figure 3). Even this statistic downplays the effect of race in



Data: *New York Times*' "Electoral Explorer"

<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/explorer.html> (3/31/10)

the South, because the measure for slave states includes some more moderate states like Maryland and Delaware. In particular, the levels of white votes for Obama in the Deep South were low. Considering the history of racism in these states, it is not surprising that they had the lowest levels of whites voting for Obama. Additionally, the Deep South states (besides Georgia) show a much greater relative difference between the 2008 Obama vote and the 2004 Kerry vote than the other states. This data is presented in Table 9.

Miscegenation rates also tell an interesting tale. Interracial marriage rates in the slave states, which all happen to be states which were forced to repeal their anti-miscegenation laws after *Loving v. Virginia* declared laws barring interracial marriage unconstitutional (Fryer 2007). The only exception to this rule is Maryland. Maryland only repealed its miscegenation laws on its own in 1967, the same year the *Loving* case was decided. Further, where old-fashioned racism exerts its greatest influence and intermarriage rates are the lowest—the Deep South—votes for Obama were also the lowest among whites. The rate of intermarriage in the slave states is shockingly low considering that there is nearly three times the proportion of the region's population who are black, compared to the non-slave states. This is illustrated below in Table 10. Table 10 further demonstrates the theoretical support for including questions about interracial marriage in any survey measure that attempts to make claims about white racism.

TABLE 9- White Vote for Obama in the Deep South and the Slave States

	Kerry	Obama	2008-2004 Absolute Local Difference	2008-2004 Relative Local Difference	Local vs. National Vote
Deep South					
Arkansas	36	30	-6	-17%	-12
Georgia	23	23	0	0%	-19
Louisiana	24	14	-10	-42%	-28
Mississippi	14	11	-3	-21%	-31
Other Slave States					
D.C.	80	86	6	8%	44
Delaware	45	53	8	18%	11
Florida	42	42	0	0%	0
Maryland	44	49	5	11%	7
North Carolina	27	35	8	30%	-7
Oklahoma	29	29	0	0%	-13
South Carolina	22	26	4	18%	-16
Tennessee	34	34	0	0%	-8
Texas	25	26	1	4%	-16
Virginia	32	39	7	22%	-3
West Virginia	42	41	-1	-2%	-1

Data: *New York Times*' "Electoral Explorer"

<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/explorer.html> (3/31/10)

TABLE 10- Interracial Marriage Rates and Black Population by Region

	Slave States	Non-Slave States
Intermarriage Rates	3.1	6.6
Proportion of Population Black	0.21	0.08

Data: 2000 Census (Fryer 2007)

Notes: Intermarriage rates are higher here than actual black-white intermarriage rates because they reflect intermarriage between any two minority groups.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The symbolic racism scale is very useful for predicting whites' attitudes about racial policy items, especially among the non-slave states and in particular the men in those states. Despite its usefulness, the symbolic racism has several potential limitations that warrant careful consideration. First, symbolic racism does not appear to have the same foundations in the slave states that it does in the non-slave states. To the extent that symbolic racism is structuring attitudes about racial policy in the South, there is reason to believe that it is functioning at least in part a vessel to disguise old-fashioned racism. Second, its foundations also appear to be different among women than men. The women's factor loadings, especially broken down by state, are difficult to interpret under the theoretical framework provided by symbolic racism, but it is possible that symbolic and old-fashioned racism activate different concerns in men and women. This area warrants further and more rigorous investigation. Third, symbolic racism is much more highly correlated with old-fashioned racism in the slave states than the non-slave states and reflects less of the influence of conservatism. White men in the non-slave states are perfect models of symbolic racism, with racism loading almost identically across measures of conservatism and old-fashioned racism, while symbolic racism among men in slave states does not have the same moderate-to-high levels of correlation that their non-slave state counterparts exhibit.

The review of the comparative literature has shown that the ideological construction of race is a product of a nation's historical, socio-cultural, and political history and thus varies across nations. In Brazil the concept of "racial democracy" has historically been employed to halt discussions of programs that would promote racial equality (Marx 1998). Similar to racial democracy in Brazil, the concept of "*égalité*" in France has been used by some to prevent discussions of inequality that centered on race. In the United States, the differing contextual backdrops for race and differing ideological constructions of race have produced different expressions of racism. This insight has been largely overlooked by the literature on symbolic racism in the United States, where symbolic racism is supposed to explain nearly all of whites' opposition to racial policy items. In the non-slave states, a system of symbolic racism seems to apply. But in the states with a history of slavery and anti-miscegenation laws, that history seems to make itself felt through the expression of old-fashioned racism under the cover of symbolic racism and its companion, individualistic conservatism. Individualism, like *égalité* and racial democracy in France and Brazil, provides a socially acceptable cover for someone who feels uneasy expressing more blatant, old-fashioned racist attitudes and beliefs. Unfortunately, the extent to which this is true of the Southern brand of racism is likely impossible to prove when relying upon survey data.

If surveys are inadequate for unpacking the origins of white Southerners' and possibly white women's racism, what methodological options offer more hope? First, it is helpful to note that surveys may not be completely useless for research on Southern white racism. A surprising amount of people are willing to offer old-fashioned racist responses to some of the items, especially questions that ask about interracial marriage without being dichotomized into "Yes" or "No" response options. When old-fashioned racism is measured this way, it begins to show effects on Southern white's racial policy attitudes that are not apparent when looking at the full

sample. Consistently including interracial marriage questions such as the MARBLK variable on the GSS (see Appendix B) would be a major step towards improving the measurement of racism. But even with these interracial marriage questions, the social desirability of not seeming racist is likely to suppress the effects of old-fashioned racism among all whites.

One study has shown some inflationary effects related to the provision of privacy during survey completion for more educated respondents, who would be more aware and thus more sensitive of the social desirability of their answers to questions about racial attitudes (Krysan 1998); though the effects were only slight to moderate, more experimental research designs such as this one are warranted. If interviewers could find a way of subtly indicating to respondents that the expression of racist viewpoints was permitted in the interview setting, it might be possible to get responses that could be freed from serious doubts about their reliability. Allowing respondents privacy while they complete a survey may not increase the likelihood of a racist response; after all, they are likely aware of the people to whom they are responding and probably have some assumptions about whether or not the ‘academic types’ implementing the survey would consider a racist response socially desirable. However, indicating sympathy with racist viewpoints through coded language or symbols, such as the confederate flag designs popular throughout the South, might provide the permissive atmosphere required to allow racists to let down their guard. It is hard to imagine that Don Lewis of the all-white basketball league and the Louisiana justice of the peace who refused to marry interracial couples offered the same justifications for their actions to their friends and confidants that they provided to national media outlets.

Given the history of race relations and racism in the United States and especially in the South, it takes a less heroic effort theoretically to assume that whites’ responses on old-fashioned racism are biased in the direction of social acceptability rather than honestly reported. It is theoretically possible that many people may be unconsciously racist, but any political theory positing that an unconscious force structures people’s attitudes, opinions, and behavior is difficult to accept without an overwhelmingly persuasive theory and impressive, robust empirical evidence. Furthermore, to use the language of economics, the revealed preferences of whites, particularly in terms of their patterns of self-segregation, mate selection, and voting behavior, indicate that old-fashioned racism is still a pervasive force in approximately one third of the country. Different methods than survey research could prove very useful to the literature on symbolic and old-fashioned forms of racism; these methods could include focus groups, in-depth interviews, and in-person surveys of whites by whites where an environment of racial antipathy is strategically hinted at or cultivated to indicate a complicity in any old-fashioned racism the respondent may harbor. It is certainly possible that these in-depth interviews would provide resounding support for the theory of symbolic racism. However, the evidence presented here suggests otherwise. What seems more likely is that, if whites could be coaxed into feeling that the interviewer may sympathize with their old-fashioned racism, they will be more likely to express it openly.

Sadly, racism is still a political entity in United States politics today; it operates in several pernicious ways to undermine democratic values. In fact, there is some evidence that certain democratic values, such as individualism, may be providing ideological shelter to racists who

wish to keep their racist beliefs hidden from those who would judge their character. For example, a person conducting an interview for a research organization (e.g., universities, polling research firms, and other groups which, not without cause, must appear as essentially ‘academic’ to the layperson) is unlikely to be perceived as amenable to the expression of racist beliefs by most respondents. The effect could be that the respondent is more likely to keep the views they know may offend others to themselves. Despite the breakdown of systematic formal racial segregation, old-fashioned racism—the ideological basis for maintaining Jim Crow dominance—is likely to have survived in some regions, despite the apparent failure of the system it was constructed to maintain.

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APPENDIX A: THE SYMBOLIC RACISM 2000 SCALE

1. It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites. (1, strongly agree; 2, somewhat agree; 3, somewhat disagree; 4, strongly disagree)
2. Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same. (1, strongly agree; 2, some-what agree; 3, somewhat disagree; 4, strongly disagree)
3. Some say that black leaders have been trying to push too fast. Others feel that they haven't pushed fast enough. What do you think? (1, trying to push too fast; 2, going too slowly; 3, moving at about the right speed)
4. How much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today do you think blacks are responsible for creating? (1, all of it; 2, most; 3, some; 4, not much at all)
5. How much discrimination against blacks do you feel there is in the United States today, limiting their chances to get ahead? (1, a lot; 2, some; 3, just a little; 4, none at all)
6. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class. (1, strongly agree; 2, somewhat agree; 3, somewhat disagree; 4, strongly disagree)
7. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve. (1, strongly agree; 2, somewhat agree; 3, somewhat disagree; 4, strongly disagree)
8. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve. (1, strongly agree; 2, somewhat agree; 3, somewhat disagree; 4, strongly disagree)

Source: Henry and Sears (2002)

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS USED FROM 1994-2008 GSS

TABLE 11- Questions on GSS

Symbolic Racism Questions on the GSS
<p>Theme 1: Work ethic and responsibility for outcomes</p> <p>Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without special favors.</p> <p>1- Agree Strongly 2- Agree Somewhat 3- Neither Agree nor Disagree 4-Disagree Somewhat 5-Disagree Strongly (Reversed) (SR2K)</p>
<p>Theme 2: Excessive demands</p> <p>(Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) shouldn't push themselves where they're not wanted.</p> <p>1- Agree Strongly 2- Agree Slightly 3-Disagree Slightly 4-Disagree Strongly (Reversed)</p>
<p>Theme 3: Denial of continuing discrimination</p> <p>On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination?</p> <p>1- Yes 2- No</p>
<p>Theme 4: Undeserved advantage</p> <p>What do you think the chances are these days that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead? Is this very likely, somewhat likely, or not very likely to happen these days?</p> <p>1- Very Likely 2- Somewhat Likely 3- Not Very Likely (Reversed)</p>
<p><i>Note:(Reversed)= Recoded to indicate increasing levels of "symbolic racism." (SR2K)= Exact question from Symbolic Racism 2000 scale.</i></p>

TABLE 12- Questions on GSS

Old-fashioned Racism Questions on the GSS
<p>RACDIF2 PreQuestion Text: On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are . . . Literal Question: Because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have less in-born ability to learn? 1- Yes 2- No (Reversed)</p>
<p>INTLBLKS PreQuestion Text: D. Do people in these groups tend to be unintelligent or tend to be intelligent? Literal Question: Blacks? 1- Unintelligent 2 3 4 5 6 7- Intelligent (Reversed)</p>
<p>WORKBLKS PreQuestion Text: The second set of characteristics asks if people in the group tend to be hard-working or if they tend to be lazy. Literal Question: Blacks? 1- Hardworking 2 3 4 5 6 7-Lazy</p>
<p>MARBLK PreQuestion Text: What about having a close relative marry a black person? Would you be very in favor of it happening, somewhat in favor, neither in favor nor opposed to it happening, somewhat opposed, or very opposed to it happening? Literal Question: How about having a close relative or family member marry a black person? 1- Strongly Favor 2- Favor 3- Neither Favor nor Oppose 4- Oppose 5- Strongly Oppose</p>
<p>RACMAR Literal Question: Do you think there should be laws against marriages between (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) and whites? 1- Yes 2- No (Reversed)</p>
<p>CLOSEBLK Literal Question: In general, how close do you feel to Blacks? 1- Not Close at All 2 3 4 5- Neither One or the Other 6 7 8 9-Very Close (Reversed)</p>
<p><i>Note: (Reverse)= Recoded to indicate increasing levels of "old-fashioned racism."</i></p>

APPENDIX C: VARIABLES BY YEAR

TABLE 13- Variables by Year

Variable	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
Intelligence blacks - Intelligence whites		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Laziness blacks - Laziness whites	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Racial differences due to inborn disability	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oppose law against interracial marriage	X	X	X	X	X			
Oppose close relative marrying black		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feel close to blacks - feel close to whites		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Affirmative action hurts whites	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Racial differences due to discrimination	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blacks should work their way up without favors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blacks should not push where they are not wanted	X	X	X	X	X			

Data: GSS

APPENDIX D: ANTI-MISCEGENATION LAWS BY STATE

TABLE 14- States and Anti-Miscegenation Laws

Federally Imposed Repeal	Voluntary Repeal after 1900	Voluntary Repeal before 1990	Never Had Such Laws
Alabama	Arizona	Illinois	Alaska
Arkansas	California	Iowa	Connecticut
Delaware	Colorado	Maine	Hawaii
Florida	Idaho	Massachusetts	Kansas
Georgia	Indiana	Michigan	Minnesota
Kentucky	Maryland	Ohio	New Mexico
Louisiana	Montana	Pennsylvania	New Jersey
Mississippi	Nebraska	Rhode Island	New York
Missouri	Nevada		Vermont
North Carolina	North Dakota		Washington
Oklahoma	Oregon		Wisconsin
South Carolina	South Dakota		
Texas	Utah		
Tennessee	Wyoming		
Virginia			
West Virginia			

Data: Fryer 2007

VITA

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