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White Identity and Support for Racially Inclusive Political Projects

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Abstract

What explains white support for racially inclusive political projects, such as welfare, affirmative action, police reform, and movements like Black Lives Matter? I argue that white identity is an important determinant of support in both opinion and behavior. Specifically, I advance a theory of white identity that varies along two key dimensions. The first, consciousness, reflects the cognitive centrality of racial group membership for individuals. The second, valence, indicates how an individual interprets this group membership in the broader social, political, and economic context, and ranges from disadvantage to advantage. Valence, a previously overlooked component of white identity, is an especially powerful predictor of white support for advancing racial inclusion—those with an advantaged valence are more supportive of these political projects while those with a disadvantaged valence remain opposed. To do this, I draw upon a national survey of white Americans from 2022 and an interview evidence from the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area in Minnesota both before and after the 2020 uprising. I find that valence is indeed a powerful determinant of white support for the Black Lives Matter movement, and to a lesser extent police reform and financial reparations for Black Americans.

1 Introduction

What explains white support for policies and political projects that are focused on racial inclusion? Recent years have seen waves of scholarship focused on white racial attitudes finding that it can be a strong predictor of vote choice and social policy opinions (Jardina, 2019), a mobilizing force for political extremism (Bai, 2020; Knowles and Tropp, 2018; Long, 2022), and even sometimes associated with more racially inclusive outcomes like support for policies specifically designed to support Black Americans (Chudy, Piston and Shipper, 2019; Chudy, 2021).

I argue that white support for racially inclusive political projects hinges in part on white identity, or how much individuals identify with the white racial group and to what ends. In particular, I offer a novel conceptualization and survey measurement of white identification that varies along two key dimensions: consciousness, which indicates the cognitive centrality of group membership to an individual; and valence, which is in an indication of how individuals interpret their whiteness within a broader political, social, and economic context. Whites who interpret their racial group membership as advantaged are supportive of racial inclusion, at least at a surface level, while those who interpret whites as disadvantaged oppose racially inclusive political projects. This theory is generated from in-depth semi-structured interviews from a case study of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area in Minnesota and rooted in scholarship on identity and group consciousness. I use this theory to develop a survey measurement of both consciousness and valence and to examine the implications of the theory in a broader context using a national survey of white Americans. I demonstrate that while consciousness is important for white political behavior, valence is a substantively and statistically stronger correlate of white support for inclusive racial political projects like the Black Lives Matter movement.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, in section 2 I introduce a theory of white identity that varies along the dimensions of valence and consciousness. I argue that white identity is important for understanding support for these projects and that current conceptualizations of white identity, specifically white consciousness, fall short. I also introduce the dimension of valence and argue that where an individual falls on the on this dimension, from disadvantage to advantage, should determine how supportive they are of racial inclusion. In section 3, I

provide an overview of literature on support for three key racially inclusive political projects: the Black Lives Matter movement, police reform, and financial reparations to Black Americans, and explain how I expect consciousness and valence to matter for white support. In section 4, I discuss the data used in this paper, which uses sequential mixed methods to produce a measurement that is theoretically based and grounded in a qualitative case study. In section 5, I present both quantitative and qualitative evidence that variations along the two key dimensions of white identity are important determinants of support for racial inclusion, which I discuss in more depth in section 6. Finally, I conclude with implications of this theory for building cross-racial solidarity and directions for future research.

2 White Identity and Support for Racial Inclusion

Why should an individuals sense of white identity, an attitude that is about the racial in-group, be associated with their support for racially inclusive political projects which are fundamentally about racial out groups? While traditional conceptions of white identity focus on the single dimension of consciousness, I argue that there is a second dimension to white identity, called valence, that should be an important determinant of white support for racial inclusion.

While the study of white identity in the social sciences is traditionally conceptualized as unidimensional, scholars have noted that social identity has multiple components. One model suggests that there are three elements: first, cognitive centrality, or the amount of time devoted to thinking of oneself as a member of a group; second, in-group affect or the degree of positive feelings associated with membership in the group; and finally, in-group ties, or the perceptions of closeness to and similarities with other group members (Cameron, 2004). Other models argue that identities have multiple properties which naturally extend beyond a single dimension. These properties include that identities are defined relationally in terms of others, that they are reflexive, and that identities operate indirectly and can motivate social behavior (Burke, 1980).

To better understand white support for racially inclusive political projects, I propose an updated theory of white identification that incorporates insights about the multidimensionality of social identities. This theory is not comprehensive of all elements or properties of identity but is simplified in order to be broadly applicable. I argue that white identification varies along two dimensions called consciousness, which has been well-documented in scholarship,

and valence, which is a novel contribution. I argue that both high and low white identifiers vary in the valence that they attach to their understanding of whiteness and these variations can be analyzed to better understand how whiteness affects support for racially inclusive political projects in the United States.

2.1   Consciousness

The first dimension of white identity is consciousness which can be understood as a "politicized awareness, or ideology, regarding the group's relative positions in society, and a commitment to collective action aimed at realizing the group's interests," in this case referring to the white racial group (Miller, Gurin, Gurin and Malanchuk, 1981, p.18). Put more simply, consciousness indicates the cognitive centrality of group identity for members of the white racial group. Dominant group identity is not always a salient and accessible identification for group members. It is possible for it to ebb and flow based on political and social context, and it is possible for individuals to identify more or less strongly with different groups throughout their lives. Whites, as a result of being at the dominant racial group, may have other identities like partisanship at the top of their identity salience hierarchy (McCall and Simmons, 1966). But the hierarchy of salient identities can change over time in response to interactions with others because identity is reflexive and defined relationally (Burke, 1980).

Whites who have low consciousness, or are objective members of the white racial group, have little to no awareness of and psychological attachment to that group, and these whites constitute one pole of the consciousness spectrum. While these whites will recognize that they are white, they will deny that it affects their life in meaningful ways. When presented with racial narratives that address whiteness, these individuals do not place themselves in the narrative as an individual, instead ascribing to the narrative an amorphous group of whites that allows them distance from the discomfort of addressing whiteness. Because of their low consciousness, these whites rely more on heuristics like partisan identification to shape political attitudes. However, some whites have high group consciousness, meaning that they are aware of their racial categorization and that this group identity is cognitively accessible for them. For high consciousness white identifiers, racial group membership can become an important political consideration. That is, this group will sometimes take thier undertstanding of whiteness and

group position into account when making political decisions and interpreting policies that invoke race.

Previous studies that examine white identification focus almost wholly on this spectrum as a way for understanding white group-based political attitudes and behavior. Specifically, work using the group closeness item from the American National Elections Study, which asks "how important is being X to your identity" to estimate consciousness, found that about half of whites claim this identity (Wong and Cho, 2005). More recently, there is evidence that white identity can be politicized into consciousness, especially after Obama's election, and is consequential for white political attitudes (Jardina, 2019) and can increase white political engagement and participation (Berry, Ebner and Cornelius, 2019).

Despite growing emphasis on white identity in the study of American politics, criticisms remain about the nature of dominant group identification. This literature grows from work demonstrating that racial minorities, especially Black Americans, have strong in-group consciousness called linked fate. Linked fate is the belief that individual life chances are tied to the successes and failures of the racial group as a whole, and this politicized group consciousness animates Black political behavior (Dawson, 1994). Linked fate is an important heuristic for minority groups precisely because they experience racial discrimination—even when it is not experienced personally (Lu and Jones, 2019). This work has been replicated in different racial and class contexts and find similar levels of linked fate across groups and low relationships with political behavior (Gay, Hochschild and White, 2016). There is mixed evidence that whites have liked fate: while self-reported white linked fate is associated with a desire for descriptive representation (Schildkraut, 2017), it has a weaker connection with political participation than linked fate among Blacks and may be driven by anxiety about loss of status (Marsh and Ramírez, 2019) or may be a proxy for economic self-interest (Melcher, 2021). Nevertheless, the concept of linked fate is conditional on historical context and social structures, inherently tied to elite activity and group behaviors, and thus requires more than the perception of group cohesion (Rogers and Kim, 2021).

Recent empirical developments and theoretical criticisms about white group consciousness are mixed. While there is evidence of the growing salience of white racial group consciousness, criticisms remain about the theoretical utility of the concept. To address these criticisms, I

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argue that there is another, and perhaps more important, dimension of white identification that tracks the valence that individuals attach to whiteness, which is consequential for how they engage with racially inclusive political projects.

2.2   Valence

The second axis of white identification is called valence, indicating how positively or negatively individuals view whiteness, which I conceptualize as ranging from disadvantage to advantage. An individuals' valence determines what kinds of racial narratives they are likely to accept and thus also determines their support or opposition to racially inclusive political projects. Those with a disadvantaged valence accept racial narratives that paint whites as victims or as losers in conflicts and race relations. Those with an advantaged valence tend to accept racial narratives that portray whites as saviors or heroes in these same racial conflicts. On one end of the spectrum, whites have pride in their racial identity and the privileges inherent in this social position. At the same time, these whites have a sense of grievance about changing social dynamics, and in particular, losing the dominant social position at the top of the racial hierarchy. This valence is most closely associated with how white identity is currently understood in political science and is consistent with a type of white identification that aims to uphold and defend the privileges that come with being white.

Racial narratives of disadvantage depict whites as losing in conflict with other racial groups and is often imbued with a sense of nostalgia that calls back to a prior era when whites were unquestionably at the top of the racial hierarchy. Much of the racial narrative of white disadvantage is driven by the threat of increasing diversity and the consequences for white group status (Major, Blodorn and Major Blascovich, 2018). This narrative also invokes a shapeless group of minorities colluding against the white group as the basis for white collective action (Knowles, Tropp and Mogami, 2022).

In contrast, racial narratives of white advantage depict whiteness as inherently advantaged relative to other racial groups and acknowledge the structural and societal benefits that whites have. These include recognition of white advantage in settings like work and school and acknowledgement of racial disparities in social, economic, and political settings (McIntosh, 1990).

While the cognitive centrality of white racial group membership is an important correlate

of individuals' political attitudes, how they interpret their membership in this group within a broader social, political, and economic context should be a stronger predictor of support for racially inclusive political projects. I thus expect to find that individuals with a positive, or advantaged, valence will be more supportive of racial inclusion, while those who have a negative, or disadvantaged, valence will be less supportive of these political projects.

While valence may be similar to other well regarded ways of understanding white racial attitudes, such as symbolic racism or racial sympathy, I argue that it is a different dimension. In indicating how an individual interprets whiteness, valence captures the overarching racial narratives that individuals use to simplify and understand politics. For some that might look more like the anti-blackness embedded in symbolic racism, while for others it might look more like white guilt or racial sympathy. Instead of considering these as distinct white racial attitudes, I suggest that they are indicative of racial narratives with opposing valence-either that of white disadvantage or of white advantage.

2.3 Consciousness and Valence

In looking at white identity, it is important to not only measure the extent to which whites recognize group membership, but how they interpret it. This implies an interaction between consciousness and valence wherein valence will be more pronounced for those who have higher consciousness. Individuals with low white consciousness will still have a valence—that is, they will still interpret politics through some kind of racial narrative. However, this narrative will be more shaped by political actors and elites than by their own interpretation of the white group. Individuals who have high consciousness, and are thus very aware of being white will use this group membership as a heuristic for understanding politics. This can lead them either in a racially progressive direction, where they become more supportive of racially inclusive political projects, or a racially conservative direction, where they are opposed to these projects and the political needs of minority groups.

3 Racially Inclusive Political Projects

Racial inclusion is an ongoing political project in the United States that animates partisan conflicts and debates at all levels of government and private life. While almost all politics can be sorted based on racial inclusion or exclusion, I define "racially inclusive political projects" as policies and movements that are specifically oriented towards the advancement of racial equality in social, political, and economic realms. This includes social policies like welfare, as well as those that rule education, voting, and immigration. However, in this paper, I focus on a contemporary manifestation of the racially inclusive political project in Black Lives Matter. The Black Lives Matter movement began in 2013 after the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Since then, BLM has worked to "eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes."[1] This movement reached a boiling point in 2020 after a Minneapolis police officer was caught on tape murdering a Black man named George Floyd. In the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the streets erupted with crows protesting police brutality and racial inequality. The movement has been called the largest movement in U.S. history, with the 2020 uprising being whiter, wealthier, and more geographically widespread than previous protests (Buchanan, Bui and Patel, 2020).

Scholarship addressing BLM finds partisanship to be a particularly strong predictor of support, with higher Republican vote share associated with less support (Updegrove, Cooper, Orrick and Piquero, 2020) and higher Democratic vote share associated with more support (Williamson, Trump and Einstein, 2018). Those who hold symbolically racist views and those with conservative beliefs about police tend to be less supportive of BLM (Ilchi and Frank, 2021). There is evidence that the Black Lives Matter movement specifically reduced implicit racial bias at the individual level, and broadly shifted white public opinion to be more racially liberal (Mazumder, 2019; Sawyer and Gampa, 2018). However, while the uprising in 2020 was accompanied by a positive shift in support for Black Lives Matter initially, recent scholarship shows that this support attenuated, and even dropped to pre-2020 levels, especially among whites and Republicans a year after the uprising (Chudy and Jefferson, 2021).

Racially inclusive political projects also include policies that affect institutions that con-

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[1]https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/

tribute to racially inequality and subjugation, such as policing. Black and indigenous men and women, and Latino men face a much higher lifetime risk of being killed by police than whites along with much higher rates of incarceration (Edwards, Lee and Esposito, 2019). Police reform is inextricably linked to support for Black Lives Matter: not only is this a key policy proposal associated with the movement, but Williamson et al. (2018) find that Black Lives Matter protests are more likely to occur in places where police more frequently kill Black Americans. Moreover, the number of of BLM protests between 2014 and 2020 in a given state is a reliable predictor of the number of police reforms that were enacted at the state level (Peay and McNair, 2022). Other findings suggest that spatial proximity to these protests increases the efficacy of the protest messages and leads to policy support at the polls (Branton, Martinez-Ebers, Carey Jr and Matsubayashi, 2015; Enos, Kaufman and Sands, 2019; Reny and Newman, 2021). Thus support for police reform is a more specific and more costly component of the racially inclusive political project headed by the Black Lives Matter movement.

Another precise component of the broader racially inclusive political project that I examine in this paper is financial reparations to Black Americans for wrongs of the past and present. The racial wealth gap in the United States is substantial, with whites having, on average, six times as much wealth as Black Americans (Derenoncourt, Kim, Kuhn and Schularick, 2022). This stark reality has led many to call for financial reparations—a restructuring of wealth that would both make amends for past wrongs and help to close the racial wealth gap. Reparations can take a number of forms but in this paper I am specifically focused on victim compensation through financial payments. In the United States, financial reparations have been given to populations harmed by the state in the past, such as giving $20,000 to Japanese Americans for their internment during the second world war (Yamamoto, 1998). Cases of victim compensation also include millions of dollars spent annually in payouts to victims of police brutality and their families.[2] However, despite various forms of victim compensation to racial minorities in the past and present, support for financial reparations is low. Some think that reparations are unnecessary for wrongs of past generations, and others think that reparations should be enacted through social spending that benefits all racial groups or through policies such as affirmative action (Torpey and Burkett, 2010). In particular, white Americans are largely unsupportive

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[2]https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/police-misconduct-repeated-settlements/

of calls for financial reparations, even when symbolic, such as a formal government apology or establishing a memorial dedicated to victims of slavery (Reichelmann and Hunt, 2021).

There are many reasons to expect that whites have differential levels of support for these racially inclusive political projects across dimensions such as partisanship, ideology, and socioeconomic factors. However, I argue that white identity is also an important predictor of whether and how whites will support racial inclusion. I operationalize these projects with three dependent variables. The first is support for Black Lives Matter[3]. The second is support for police reform,[4] which is a policy demand associated with the movement for Black Lives. While it may be easy and socially desirable for respondents to express support for BLM, police reform is a more costly proposal to support. Finally, the third variable is support for providing financial reparations to Black Americans[5]. I expect that valence will a be a positive predictor of support for racially inclusive political projects, but have a stronger relationship with support for Black Lives Matter than the specific policy proposals of police reform and financial reparations for Black Americans. Additionally, I expect that those with higher consciousness will have a stronger valence and thus more crystallized opinions on racially inclusive political projects than those with lower consciousness.

4 Data

In order to measure both the valence and consciousness dimensions of white identity and their behavioral correlates and consequences, I conducted an online study of 1075 white Americans who completed the survey, passed the attention checks, and had high response integrity.[6] In this survey, I included the question items that comprise the white consciousness scale from the American National Election Study (Jardina, 2019), as well as items for new psychometric scales

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[3]From what you have read, heard, and experienced, what are your opinions about the Black Lives Matter movement? (Strongly support to strongly oppose).

[4]After the protests in 2020, there have been calls for a number of policies to address racial inequality in the United States. To what extent do you support each of the following? Reforming the police (A great deal to none at all).

[5]After the protests in 2020, there have been calls for a number of policies to address racial inequality in the United States. To what extent do you support each of the following? Financial reparations to Black Americans (A great deal to none at all).

[6]These individuals comprise a non-probability sample recruited by Lucid through emails, push notifications, and in-app pop-ups with financial compensation. Participation in this survey is voluntary and restricted to 18+ residents of the United States. Individuals can opt out of participation at any point during the survey. This protocol was approved by the University of Chicago Institutional Review Board (IRB19-1673-AM001).

that update white consciousness and introduce a measurement for the dimension of valence [7].

Previous literature and the American National Elections Study measure white consciousness with a psychometric scale that uses the five survey items in Table 1. This measurement will be referred to as white consciousness (ANES). I argue that the ANES measurement is compounding the dimensions of consciousness and valence discussed in Section 2. Estimating an individuals' level of white consciousness include some items that explicitly refer to out-groups, or are specifically value-laden, and thus muddle the estimation of white consciousness. Specifically, the questions "how likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead" asks white respondents to consider their level of perceived competition with racial minorities. While this is an important component of racial attitudes, when estimating the cognitive centrality of group membership, scholars should rethink using this item because it invokes out-groups.

Table 1: Consciousness Scale and Item Means

Survey	Item wording	Mean
ANES + New	How important is being white to your identity?	.3119
ANES	To what extent do you feel that white people in this country have a lot to be proud of?	.5721
ANES + New	How much would you say that whites in this country have a lot in common with one another?	.4251
ANES	How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?	.4598
ANES	How important is it that whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?	.4372
New	How often do you think of yourself as being white?	.3633
New	How much would you say that being white factors into your political decision making?	.173
New	How much do you think that what happens generally to the white people in this country will have something to do with your life?	.3307

Furthermore, some of the items used in analysis of white identity and white consciousness in the ANES can be considered value-laden statements that are effectively in opposition to racially

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[7]Between November 2020 and July 2022 I conducted four online studies to develop the question wording of the measures for the valence and consciousness constructs. Precise question wording and descriptive statistics are in Appendix A.1. The process of creating, measuring, and validating the valence and consciousness scales is discussed in greater detail in the third chapter of the dissertation and in Appendix A.2. These items were developed both from constant comparative analysis of the 40 first round interviews with white Minnesotans in the case study and grounded in political science literature. I developed items that reflect both the egocentric and sociotropic bases of valence and consciousness for individuals and find that valence has moderate, and consciousness has moderate to high, internal consistency levels.

inclusive political projects. That is, instead of simply estimating the cognitive centrality of whiteness for an individual, these questions go a step further and provide interpretation as to what group membership means. These questions include "to what extent do you feel that white people in this country have a lot to be proud of" and "how likely is it that whites in this country are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead." Instead of capturing an attitude about white racial group membership, this scale appears to be capturing racial antagonism. This is supported by the correlations in table 2. The original ANES measurement for consciousness is highly correlated with racial resentment at .524. Thus, the traditional way of measuring white consciousness has an embedded dimension of racial animus which leads to findings that high white group consciousness is equated with racially conservative views.

Table 2: Correlations with Relevant Attitudinal Measures

	Consc (ANES)	Consc (New)	Valence	RacRes	Auth	SDO	Party ID	Ideo
Consciousness (ANES)	1							
Consciousness (New)	0.696	1						
Valence	-0.254	0.100	1					
Racial Resentment	0.524	0.157	-0.478	1				
Authoritarianism	0.330	0.114	-0.217	0.387	1			
Social Dominance Orientation	0.411	0.337	-0.169	0.276	0.255	1		
Party ID	0.229	-0.040	-0.334	0.516	0.201	0.045	1	
Ideology	0.354	0.0257	-0.359	0.546	0.341	0.122	0.717	1

I propose a new measurement for consciousness that takes into account the theory in Section 2.1 and more accurately captures white group consciousness without attributing value to the meaning of group membership. For this new measure, I draw on existing survey questions, and some from the ANES measurement of white consciousness. The core item used in analysis for white identity in previous literature asks respondents "how important is being white to your identity" which is retained in the new measurement of white consciousness. I also retain the item "how much would you say that whites in this country have a lot in common with one another" because it invokes white racial group cohesion.

I include a few key additional items to the estimation of white consciousness, as seen in Table 1. These include "how often do you think of yourself as being white" which estimated cognitive centrality of whiteness more directly. Furthermore, I include an item that asks "how much would you say that being white factors into your political decisionmaking" which similarly asks respondents to determine the cognitive salience of their whiteness for their political behavior without invoking outgroups directly. Finally, I include a standard measure for estimating white linked fate, which asks "how much do you think that what happens generally to the white people

in thia country will have something to do with your life?"[8] The new proposed measurement for consciousness has strong psychometric properties, including high internal consistency (α = .629) [9]. For analysis in this paper, each respondent received a composite score which is standardized between 0 for low consciousness and 1 for high consciousness.

Table 3: Valence Scale and Item Means

Please indicate the extent to which you think being white has affected your life in the following areas, from making things much harder to making things much easier:		Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:	
Item Wording	**Mean**	**Item Wording**	**Mean**
Doing well in school	.5951	Whites in this country generally find their experiences and shared history to be positively reflected in school textbooks and classroom materials.	.6158
Getting a job	.6074	Through no fault of their own, whites in this country are economically losing ground now compared to in the past	.4884
Interactions with the government like police, politicians, etc.	.6212	Whites in this country have a great deal of political power and the government is responsive to the needs of white people	.6005
How you're treated by strangers	.6272	In recent years, whites in this country have been losing the respect and status that they are owed by society	.5951

Next, I draw upon a measurement that is designed to address valence—or how individuals understand their white group membership in a broader social, political, and economic context. To estimate this, I ask individuals the questions in Table 3 about their interpretations of whiteness in the settings of school, work, government, and social interactions. In the left column I designed questions to get at an *egocentric* evaluation of how whiteness shapes individual experiences, and in the right column I designed questions to get at a *sociotropic* evaluation of how individuals interpret whiteness to matter for the group across these contexts.[10] The valence scale has strong psychometric properties, including high internal consistency (α = .783) and

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[8]Concerns with using white linked fate given the historical and contemporaneous social dominance of the white racial group are addressed in section 2. Although I believe this criticisms are correct, I use white linked fate in tandem with other indicators of group membership here, and find that it contributes to the psychometric scale by estimating an awareness of membership in the white racial group.

[9]Exploratory factor analysis of these items can be found in Table 10 in Appendix A.2.

[10]These four areas were selected based on qualitative analysis of interviews conducted for the case study in Minneapolis-St. Paul in 2020. Additional information about the interview process can be found in Appendix B.1 and about the coding process in Appendix B.3. Note that the sociotropic items for economy and society are reverse coded.

test-retest reliability across multiple studies.[11] Importantly, valence does have a strong negative correlation with racial resentment as seen in Table 2 as well as weaker negative correlations with party identification and ideology. This suggests that valence is picking up an element of anti-black affect and Republican and conservative identity. This is to be expected because the measurement for valence is capturing opposing racial narratives which are also picked up and used by political actors who are translating their policy positions to the mass public. For analysis in this paper, each respondent receives a composite score which is standardized between 0 and 1, where a score closer to 0 indicates a negative or disadvantaged valence and a score closer to 1 indicates a positive or advantaged valence. Data used in this analysis are weighted.[12]

5 Analysis

I argue both that the traditional measurement of white group consciousness is confounded with racial resentment and that there is a second dimension of white identity called valence, and that this multidimensional understanding of white identity should help clarify the complex nature of white support for racially inclusive political projects. Thus, I evaluate support for Black Lives Matter and related policies with both consciousness and valence included as independent variables.[13] In Table 4, I look at the simple relationship between consciousness and valence and support for racially inclusive political projects in models 1 through 3. In each model, valence is a large and statistically significant predictor of support for Black Lives Matter, police reform, and reparations for Black Americans. However, it is worth noting that there is a substantive difference between the coefficients in each model, suggesting that support for racial inclusion attenuates somewhat when racially inclusive policies are fully articulated. These models also show that consciousness has a much smaller effect—the coefficient is not significant in models one and two, and substantively small although positive in model 3.

In Table 4 models 4 through 6, I show the fully specified models which include racial resentment and dummies for republican partisan identification and conservative ideology. I also

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[11]Exploratory factor analysis of these items can be found in Table 9 in Appendix A.2.

[12]Data are weighted using raking ratio estimation on age, gender, and region (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West).

[13]Additional model specifications are in Appendix A.3.

include demographic indicators for age, education, gender, and income.[14] With the inclusion of the covariates, the strength of valence is weakened, but is still has a significant positive relationship with support for Black Lives Matter and police reform. Consciousness, while still substantively small, has a positive and statistically significant relationship with support for racially inclusive political projects.

Given the theory presented in section 2, I expect that the interaction of consciousness and valence is important for individuals' support for racially inclusive political projects. That is, I expect that valence will be more important for indiviudals who have higher group consciousness. I evaluate this in Table 5. As in table 4, I begin with the simple relationship, in this case the individual variables and the interaction term, in models 1 through 3. I again find that valence has a strong positive relationship with support for racial inclusion, and no evidence for the effect of consciousness or the interaction between the two. However, in models 4 through 6 I include covariates. These models demonstrate mixed support for the hypothesis that the interaction between consciousness and valence is an important determinant of support for racially inclusive political projects.[15]

To better interpret these results, I plot the interaction effects from Table 5 model 4 in Figure 1. Although both consciousness and valence are continuous variables, I graph the predicted level of support for low consciousness (0) mid-level consciousness (.5) and high consciousness (1). This graph shows that valence matters the most for people who have higher white consciousness. That is, for those who have awareness of their white group membership, the way that they interpret that group membership within a broader context is a reliable indicator of their support for racial inclusion. For those with lower group consciousness, valence does not matter much for determining their support or opposition.

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[14]Age is the real age of respondents; education is a dummy variable indicating that the respondent has a bachelor's degree or higher; gender is a dummy variable taking the value of 1 for female; income is a dummy indicating an annual income higher than the minimum wage (estimated to be $15,000).

[15]Particularly in model 4, the interaction of valence and consciousness on support for Black Lives Matter is weakly significant at p = .07.

Table 4: Valence + Consciousness and Support for Black Lives Matter

	Dependent variable:					
	Black Lives Matter	Police Reform	Reparations	BLM	Police	Reparations
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Valence	1.012*** (0.077)	0.947*** (0.070)	0.782*** (0.077)	0.171*** (0.065)	0.410*** (0.079)	0.118* (0.071)
Consciousness	−0.011 (0.055)	0.013 (0.051)	0.145*** (0.054)	0.200*** (0.044)	0.152*** (0.047)	0.327*** (0.045)
Republican				−0.126*** (0.026)	−0.137*** (0.029)	−0.081*** (0.023)
Conservative				−0.139*** (0.026)	−0.032 (0.028)	−0.021 (0.026)
Racial Resentment				−0.657*** (0.039)	−0.451*** (0.046)	−0.607*** (0.042)
Age				−0.002*** (0.001)	−0.001** (0.001)	−0.004*** (0.001)
Bachelor's Degree				−0.004 (0.018)	−0.018 (0.021)	−0.030 (0.019)
Female				0.042** (0.017)	0.014 (0.020)	0.004 (0.018)
Annual Income > Min Wage				0.004 (0.020)	−0.034 (0.026)	−0.039 (0.024)
Constant	0.005 (0.045)	0.029 (0.042)	−0.109*** (0.042)	0.875*** (0.052)	0.621*** (0.064)	0.742*** (0.058)
Observations	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,075
Log Likelihood	−445.001	−404.256	−413.716	−93.419	−265.099	−180.831
Akaike Inf. Crit.	896.002	814.512	833.431	206.838	550.198	381.661

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

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Table 5: Valence x Consciousness and Support for Black Lives Matter

	Dependent variable:					
	Black Lives Matter	Police Reform	Reparations	BLM	Police	Reparations
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Valence	1.028*** (0.130)	0.935*** (0.126)	0.712*** (0.128)	0.022 (0.105)	0.291** (0.127)	−0.088 (0.114)
Consciousness	0.012 (0.162)	−0.004 (0.155)	0.046 (0.142)	−0.005 (0.122)	−0.012 (0.139)	0.045 (0.120)
Republican				−0.124*** (0.026)	−0.135*** (0.029)	−0.078*** (0.023)
Conservative				−0.141*** (0.026)	−0.034 (0.028)	−0.024 (0.025)
Racial Resentment				−0.663*** (0.039)	−0.456*** (0.046)	−0.616*** (0.041)
Age				−0.002*** (0.001)	−0.001** (0.001)	−0.004*** (0.001)
Bachelor's Degree				−0.005 (0.018)	−0.019 (0.021)	−0.031* (0.019)
Female				0.041** (0.017)	0.013 (0.020)	0.003 (0.018)
Annual Income > Min Wage				0.003 (0.020)	−0.035 (0.026)	−0.040* (0.024)
Valence x Consciousness	−0.045 (0.291)	0.034 (0.279)	0.195 (0.272)	0.406* (0.226)	0.324 (0.255)	0.559** (0.238)
Constant	−0.003 (0.070)	0.035 (0.069)	−0.075 (0.064)	0.952*** (0.066)	0.683*** (0.082)	0.848*** (0.073)
Observations	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,075	1,075
Log Likelihood	−444.986	−404.247	−413.426	−91.165	−264.057	−177.203
Akaike Inf. Crit.	897.973	816.495	834.852	204.331	550.114	376.405

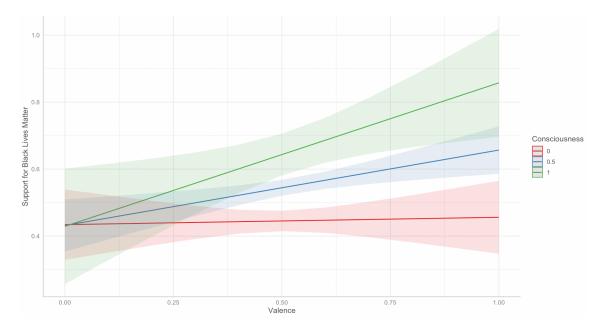*Note:* *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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Figure 1: Predicted Support for Black Lives Matter

5.1 Validating the Results

The results in section 5 present compelling evidence for both the existence of consciousness and valence as dimensions of white identity and the importance of the interaction for understanding support for racial inclusion. However, these results are based off of a single survey which presents only a snapshot of racial attitudes. To validate the results from the survey, I draw upon a set of 60 in-depth semi-structured interviews.[16] conducted over two rounds in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan are in Minnesota[17] between March and August of 2020. For the purposes of this paper, I focus specifically on respondents' views of Black Lives Matter from the first round of interviews, and their impressions of the movement and associated policies in the second round. These interviews help contextualize how consciousness and valence 2 interact and are associated with different interpretations of racially inclusive political projects,

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[16]To be eligible for this study, participants were required to be 18 or older and residents of the Twin Cities metro area. Participants were engaged through in-person recruitment, snowball sampling, and research flyers. None of the research solicitations explicitly mentioned race in order to avoid overly priming interlocutors about the goals of the research project. First round interviews (February and March 2020) lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and took place in local coffee shops, where participants were compensated with a drink and/or snack for their time. Second round interviews (July and August 2020) took place over Zoom. Information about participant demographics and participant pseudonyms can be found in Table 14 in Appendix B.2

[17]My positionality as a white Minnesotan also aided in the development of a rapport with respondents as a perceived "insider" to both whiteness and the culture of the Twin Cities. Additionally, some respondents were friends or acquaintances of my personal contacts which added another layer of familiarity and comfort in the interview process. The level of comfort afforded by my insider status, and in some cases shared connections, increased chances of having candid political conversations with respondents. This is especially important because whites are not often pressed to think about, let alone talk about, their race.

here represented by support Black Lives Matter, police reform, and reparations.

5.1.1 Negative Valence

In their own words, many of my interlocutors expressed opposition to not only the Black Lives Matter movement, but also the policies associated with it that would advance the goal of racial inclusion. In particular, these individuals expressed beliefs in line with a racial narrative of white disadvantage.

One such interlocutor, Juliet, in the first round of interviews claimed "I don't really think that skin color should be a part of our central identity...there's not a reason to have Black Lives Matter without actual oppression." In the second round of interviews she told me about a scholarship at her college named after George Floyd that she was ineligible for due to being white. She explained that "I may be a little better off than a lot of people of color financial-wise, but I'm still not in the position that I can easily pay for college." Juliet indicates an increased awareness of whiteness as she sees it impacting her life through ineligibility for the scholarship but frames this awareness through the missed opportunity on the basis of her whiteness. Juliet provides an example of increased consciousness leading to more crystallized opinions about racial politics and demonstrates how a negative valence is associated with opposition to racial inclusion and specifically a broader narrative of white disadvantage.

Other negatively-valenced respondents similarly expressed opposition to racially inclusive political projects. For example, Philip said "it sounds good in theory" but used a racial narrative of white disadvantage in his explanation for why it would not work: "I've never oppressed any Black person and I'm going to be having money taken from me and given to somebody who was never a slave... I was never a perpetrator, I don't understand why you'd be taking my money and giving it to somebody else that was never a victim." Similarly, Will said "those people are going to spend it and it's going to be gone and it will be right back to where things were...I think that needs to come in the form of bringing new opportunities." Will argues that any financial benefits should be race-neutral instead of directly targeted at Black Americans.

This was a sentiment echoed by many interviewees with negative valence. For example, Gary said "the problem to me is that there are poorer whites in Appalachia who've gotten a

lot of that, too...it doesn't make sense to give reparations, give cash to just [Black] people."

This interpretation is consistent with the negative valence, where whites are aggrieved by challenges to their status in the racial hierarchy. For Gary, the idea that Black Americans would get financial reparations while impoverished whites are left behind is a challenge to white status and plays directly into the racial narrative of white disadvantage.

5.1.2 Positive Valence

Some interlocutors also expressed support for the racially inclusive political projects examined in this paper. However, consistent with the quantitative results, these interlocutors tended to express diffuse support, such as for the idea of the Black Lives Matter movement, and be less comfortable with supporting, or acting upon, specific policies like police reform and reparations.

One such example is Lukas, who said "I think the overall goal [of the movement] is obviously to raise awareness," suggesting that BLM's purpose is to draw attention to racial inequality for those who do not already recognize it. Regarding the policy demands, Lukas further elaborated that reparations should "come in the form of bringing up all people out of poverty and doing a universal basic income where people can afford housing, transportation, education." His support for reparations is tied to helping all racial groups, not just the ones in lower positions on the racial hierarchy. So while Lukas has a positive valence and expresses support for racial inclusion, there is a limit to how far he is willing to go in supporting political action that is specifcally targeted at inclusion for racial minorities.

Others expressed their increased awareness of being white and desire to make amends for their white advantage in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder. For example, Kimberly expressed "trying to grapple a lot with what that means in society" and "doing a lot more reading, like with three other friends we're going through a book together that we chose to challenge ourselves about all of that." However, when asked about policies, she called the idea of police abolition "absurd." Kimberly's expressed support for the Black Lives Matter movement and skepticism about the policies that would advance the racially inclusive political project echo the quantitative results above, finding that positive valence is associated with support for racial inclusion but has limits when it comes to concrete policy proposals.

Very few of my interlocutors were driven to political action on account of thier positive

valence, but these individuals are extremely important for building a multiracial coalition and advancing racial inclusion. One such respondent, Jasmine, explained that after the 2020 uprising she not only attended protests but created a separate bank account "dedicated to making reparations" to activists in the community and an Instagram educator who she follows to learn more about racism and anti-racism. Jasmine's position is unique, however, because making reparations is perceived to be more personally costly than something like restructuring or abolishing the police.

6 Discussion

I find evidence that valence, or how whites interpret their white group membership in the broader social, political, and economic context, has a strong correlation with their support for racially inclusive political projects, and that this dimension is particularly important for those with higher consciousness. This constitutes an updated theory of white identity, with an updated measurement for consciousness and an introduced measurement for valence. The dimension of valence captures the racial narratives that people use to understand complicated political issues. Especially when it comes to abstractly supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, having a positive or advantaged valence is positively associated with higher support. This story largely holds for policies associated with the movement although support for specific policies has a lower baseline than abstract support for the movement. That is, white support for racially inclusive political projects decreases when whites are faced with proposals that are costly for their communities, as with police reform, or for themselves, as with reparations. Furthermore, while the results are mixed, there is some evidence that the interaction between consciousness and valence is an important predictor of political attitudes. This analysis points to valence being a particularly important dimension of white identification specifically among those with high consciousness. When an individual is aware of their whiteness, or their racial identity has a high cognitive centrality, the way that they interpret this group membership becomes much more important for structuring their political opinions.

The qualitative results add nuance to this interpretation: while almost all of the negatively valenced participants were opposed to Black Lives Matter and associated policies, those with a positive valence had more variance in their reactions to specific policies. While most were

supportive of the Black Lives Matter movement, there was variation in expressed support for specific racially inclusive policies.. This variation supports the quantitative finding of an interaction: those with higher awareness of being white and a positive valence expressed more support for even the specific policies. However, very few respondents, even with high consciousness, turned their expressed support into actual political behavior. This suggests that there is more work to be done to translate support for racially inclusive political projects into actions that further the goal of racial inclusion.

Timing of the survey is also important for interpreting the other main results in this paper, especially as data was collected more than two years after the high-profile murder of George Floyd that resulted in large scale protests and public calls for the policies analyzed here. While the qualitative interviews were conducted during the months before and immediately after the 2020 uprising, the survey was conducted online two years later. This means that the events of 2020, which had a temporary boost in public support for Black Lives Matter (Chudy and Jefferson, 2021), were likely not salient for the white respondents who took the survey. Further research should examine the conditions under which the salience of racial issues can be translated into a positively valenced white racial identity and if valence can be activated by messaging and ongoing political events. Two additional years down the line makes the salience of the Black Lives Matter movement and associated policies less obvious for respondents, and possibly less subject to social desirability bias.

7   Conclusion

This paper contributes a new theory of white identification and shows strong support for the importance of the novel dimension, valence. Across the board, even when consciousness does not seem to be a significant determining factor for support of racially inclusive political projects, and individual's valence is statistically significant and substantively important. Existing literature about white group identity is rooted in the importance of consciousness, and this paper shows that there are flaws in the measurement that conflate consciousness with negative valence. When measured devoid of valence, white racial consciousness is not a strong predictor of white support for Black Lives Matter or policies associated with the movement including police reform and providing financial reparations to Black Americans. Instead, this paper presents

evidence that the previously overlooked dimension of white identity—valence—is a powerful predictor of white Americans' opinion about racial politics.

While this paper brings new insights to the study of white identity, it leaves many unanswered questions that are ripe for future research. Taking a multidimensional approach to the study of white identity can yield further projects addressing the mechanisms of identity, contextual and temporal effects on identity, and both if and how identity can be changed or manipulated. Multidimensionality can also be investigated in the identity of other racial groups which is bound to be similarly variant but in different ways. Thus, this paper takes a first step in the approach of white identity along two dimensions but invites an ongoing and collaborative research agenda that uses this approach to the study of identity more broadly.

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Supplementary Information

A Primary Quantitative Appendix

A.1 Additional Descriptive Statistics

Table 6: Summary Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Consciousness (ANES)	1,075	0.441	0.215	0	1
Consciousness (New)	1,075	0.321	0.232	0	1
Valence	1,075	0.503	0.156	0	1
Party ID	1,075	0.515	0.346	0	1
Ideology	1,075	0.554	0.372	0	1
Racial Resentment	1,075	0.499	0.289	0	1
Female	1,075	0.529	0.499	0	1
Bachelor's degree	1,075	0.465	0.499	0	1
Age	1,075	47.915	17.115	18	95

Table 7: Summary Statistics for Consciousness Items

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
White jobs (ANES)	1,075	2.839	1.283	1	5
White laws (ANES)	1,075	2.749	1.410	1	5
White Proud (ANES)	1,075	3.288	1.228	1	5
White Common (ANES + New)	1,075	2.700	1.035	1	5
White importance (ANES + New)	1,075	2.247	1.399	1	5
White Frequency (New)	1,075	2.453	1.464	1	5
White political (New)	1,075	3.402	1.203	1	5
White linked fate (New)	1,075	2.323	1.452	1	5

White Consciousness Survey Items

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

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

- White proud: To what extent do you feel that white people in this country have a lot to be proud of?

- White common: How much would you say that whites in this country have a lot in common with one another?

- White importance: How important is being white to your identity?

- White frequency: How often do you think of yourself as being white?

- White political: How much would you say that being white factors into your political decision making?

- White linked fate: How much will what happens generally to the white people in this country have to do with your life?

Table 8: Summary Statistics for Valence

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Doing well in school	1,075	3.380	0.801	1	5
Getting a job	1,075	3.430	0.932	1	5
Interactions with govt	1,075	3.485	0.939	1	5
Treated by strangers	1,075	3.509	0.892	1	5
Whites losing econ	1,075	3.463	1.079	1	5
White political power	1,075	2.953	1.154	1	5
Whites losing respect	1,075	3.402	1.203	1	5
White schools	1,075	3.380	1.242	1	5

Valence Survey Items

- Sociotropic School: Whites in this country generally find their experiences and shared history to be positively reflected in school textbooks and classroom materials

- Sociotropic Politics: Whites in this country have a great deal of political power and the government is responsive to the needs of white people

- Sociotropic Economy: Through no fault of their own, whites in this country are economically losing ground now compared to in the past (reverse)

- Sociotropic Society: In recent years, whites in this country have been losing the respect and status that they are owed by society (reverse)

- Please indicate the extent to which you think being what has affected your life in the following areas, from making things much harder to making things much easier

    - Egocentric School: Doing well in school
    - Egocentric Politics: Interactions with the government like police, politicians, etc.
    - Egocentric Economy: Getting a job
    - Egocentric Society: How you're treated by strangers (Whiteness made harder to easier)

A.2 Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis for Valence Items

Factor analysis of the items used to create the measure of valence in Table 9 indicates that these items are more appropriate on two dimensions. This factor analysis has a chi-square test statistic of 256.97 on 13 degrees of freedom with a p-value of 2.28e-47. However, there are theoretical reasons to continue using the egocentric and soctiotropic evaluations of valence in the same measure. Additionally, evaluating the items on one factor finds that one is sufficient with a chi-squared statistic of 591.97 on 20 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 1.41e-112.

Table 9: Factor Analysis of Valence Items

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Egocentric School	.738	
Egocentric Economy	.793	
Egocentric Political	.763	
Egocentric Society	.780	
Sociotropic School	.385	
Sociotropic Economy		.793
Sociotropic Political	.436	
Sociotropic Social		.616
SS Loadings	2.731	1.191
Proportion Variance	.341	.149

Factor analysis of the items comprising the consciousness scale, in Table 1, similarly indicate that perhaps there are two dimensions captured by these items. However, as discussed in Section 2, there are theoretical reasons why these questions are important for estimating white group consciousness devoid of valence. This analysis finds that 2 factors are significant with a chi-square statistic of .88 on 1 degree of freedom and a p-value of .348. When using a single factor, which is also sufficient, the chi-square test statistic is 112.12 on 5 degrees of freedom with a p-value of 1.46e-22.

Table 10: Factor Analysis of Consciousness Items

	Factor 1	Factor 2
White Importance	.994	
White Frequency	.516	
White Political Decisions		.307
White Common		.615
White Linked Fate		.513
SS Loadings	1.408	.790
Proportion Variance	.282	.158

A.3 Additional Model specifications

Table 11: Consciousness (ANES) and Support for Black Lives Matter

	Dependent variable:		
	Black Lives Matter	Police Reform	Reparations
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Consciousness	0.187***	0.137***	0.319***
	(0.043)	(0.052)	(0.047)
Republican	−0.143***	−0.142***	−0.099***
	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.023)
Conservative	−0.144***	−0.053**	−0.043*
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.022)
Age	−0.172***	−0.082*	−0.315***
	(0.038)	(0.046)	(0.042)
Education	−0.045	−0.055	−0.112***
	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.032)
Female	0.047***	0.005	0.005
	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Annual Income > Min Wage	0.014	−0.008	−0.025
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.022)
Racial Resentment	−0.722***	−0.556***	−0.673***
	(0.036)	(0.043)	(0.039)
Constant	0.950***	0.855***	0.765***
	(0.030)	(0.036)	(0.032)
Observations	1,075	1,075	1,075
R^2	0.561	0.315	0.416
Adjusted R^2	0.558	0.310	0.412
Residual Std. Error (df = 1066)	0.254	0.305	0.276
F Statistic (df = 8; 1066)	170.149***	61.336***	95.058***

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

Table 12: Consciousness (New) and Support for Black Lives Matter

	Dependent variable:		
	Black Lives Matter	Police Reform	Reparations
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Consciousness	0.210***	0.181***	0.321***
	(0.034)	(0.041)	(0.037)
Republican	−0.143***	−0.142***	−0.099***
	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.022)
Conservative	−0.134***	−0.046*	−0.026
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.022)
Racial Resentment	−0.682***	−0.530***	−0.600***
	(0.032)	(0.039)	(0.035)
Age	−0.002***	−0.001*	−0.004***
	(0.0005)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Bachelor's Degree	−0.017	−0.027	−0.046**
	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.018)
Female	0.048***	0.006	0.006
	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Annual Income ¿ Min Wage	0.008	−0.013	−0.036*
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.022)
Constant	0.970***	0.849***	0.808***
	(0.031)	(0.038)	(0.034)
Observations	1,075	1,075	1,075
R^2	0.568	0.322	0.428
Adjusted R^2	0.565	0.317	0.424
Residual Std. Error (df = 1066)	0.252	0.304	0.274
F Statistic (df = 8; 1066)	175.202***	63.390***	99.852***

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

Table 13: Valence and Support for Black Lives Matter

	Dependent variable:		
	Black Lives Matter	Police Reform	Reparations
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Valence	0.228***	0.414***	0.194***
	(0.058)	(0.068)	(0.064)
Republican	−0.141***	−0.136***	−0.099***
	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.023)
Conservative	−0.130***	−0.039	−0.023
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.022)
Racial Resentment	−0.603***	−0.414***	−0.514***
	(0.035)	(0.041)	(0.039)
Age	−0.002***	−0.001	−0.004***
	(0.0005)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Bachelor's Degree	−0.009	−0.024	−0.029
	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Female	0.043***	0.004	−0.004
	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Annual Income ¿ Min Wage	0.0002	−0.028	−0.042*
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Constant	0.881***	0.637***	0.768***
	(0.047)	(0.056)	(0.052)
Observations	1,075	1,075	1,075
R^2	0.559	0.333	0.393
Adjusted R^2	0.556	0.328	0.388
Residual Std. Error (df = 1066)	0.255	0.301	0.282
F Statistic (df = 8; 1066)	168.954***	66.572***	86.264***

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

B Qualitative Appendix

B.1 Interview Protocols

First Round (N = 40)

- Establishing Political and Social Identities

    - I'm going to start by asking you some questions about your identity and how you view yourself. I'm specifically interested in identities that shape your political life—things like race, gender, religion, sexuality, occupation, class, community membership, hobbies, etc. Things that might have an impact on the way you approach politics or are just meaningful in your everyday life. Given this, how do you identify yourself? Why?

        * What components of your identity are most meaningful to you?
        * What do these identities mean to you? What is important about them, what do you value, how do you feel they affect your life?

    - Do you feel that others identify you in a certain way? Why? What does that mean for your lived experiences?

    - How would you characterize your political identity? Do you see yourself as having an ideological or partisan home?

        * Have you always supported that party or ideology? If not, what changed for you?

    - What about your social identities? Would you say that you have any social identities that are important to you when you're approaching politics? For example, as a woman, I care about policies that help women.

        * Are there specific reasons why these identities are most important to you?

    - What are some of the ways in which your life has been shaped by your race?

        * Would you consider your whiteness to be an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
        * Have you ever felt discriminated against based on race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation? How?
        * Do you think that racism can be directed at white people?
        * Do you think or talk about race very much in your everyday life? Why? With whom?

- National Identity

    - Where are you from? Where are your ancestors from? Is your ethnic heritage an important part of your identity? How?

        * How long has your family been in the United Stats? Is being an American an important part of your identity? How?
        * Do you celebrate American cultural traditions like the 4th of July? Is that important to you?
        * Do you feel that being a Minnesotan/living in Minnesota is an important component of this identity?

    - Are your lived experiences and traditions more shaped by [ethnic heritage] or American heritage?

- * Do you see your American/Minnesotan and ethnic/racial identities as complementary or competing? How?
- – Do you feel like America is changing? How? Is this a good or a bad thing?
  - * Do you think this has affected you personally? How?
  - * Do you think this is the case in Minnesota/the Twin Cities specifically?
- – Can you describe to me what you think of a typical American to be like?
- – What makes someone American? Can anyone be American?
- – In politics today, we hear a lot of people accusing each other of being "un-American." What do you think is implied by this accusation?
  - * Are there any people or behaviors that you would classify as un-American? Why?

- Attitudes about current politics

  - – Now I'm going to ask you some questions about current politics, both relating to politicians and different policies you might care about. What do you think about the Black Lives Matter movement?
    - * What about responses to this movement that include things like "all lives matter" or "blue lives matter"?
    - * What do you think about the MeToo movement?
    - * Do you think that either of these movements will have lasting effects on American politics?
  - – The 2016 presidential election elicited very strong reactions from both sides. What do you think of President Trump?
    - * Do you think that Donald Trump and his politics bring America together or push them apart?
    - * What about President Obama? Do you think that he brought Americans together or pushed them apart?
  - – Have you been following the impeachment investigation into President Trump? How do you feel about it?
    - * Do you think the process and results will unite Americans or push them apart?

- Political Participation

  - – We're going to wrap up with some questions about political engagement and political opinions. What are the kinds of political and social issues that matter the most to you? Why?
    - * What are the most important things to you when figuring out who to vote for in a political election? How to pick a side on a political issue?
  - – Would you consider yourself to be engaged in American politics by following the news and participating in elections?
    - * What sources do you regularly get your news from?
    - * Do you ever get news from social media? Would you consider your social network to be skewed in one way or another?
    - * Do you vote regularly?

* Have you ever donated to a political candidate or issue? Which candidates/issues and why?
* Have you ever participated in a political rally or protest? For what causes?

– In the aftermath of the 2016 election, did you feel more engaged in politics or less engaged? Why?

– Are you following the 2020 democratic primary?

* Are there any candidates that you particularly like or dislike? Why?
* Are you planning to vote in the primary? In the general election?
* Do you feel like your participation matters? What motivates you to participate?

Second Round (N = 20)

- Identity

  – When we last talked, I asked you to identify the attributes about yourself that are most meaningful to you—things like race, gender, ancestry, political party, or any other kinds of identities—what would you say now are the attributes that are most important to you? Why?

  * Have these always been important to you? In what ways?
  * Over the past few months, have certain parts of your identity become more or less important to you? How?

- COVID-19

  – The world looks a lot different now than when we last talked because of the pandemic. How has this affected you personally?

  * Do you feel like the government has been effective in responding to the pandemic?
  * Do you think that things will go back to "normal"?

- Racial Uprising

  – As I'm sure you know, George Floyd's death sparked nationwide protests. What was it like for you being in the Twin Cities during the unrest?

  * Did you ever feel like you or your community was in danger? Why? From whom?

  – Do you feel more supportive or less supportive of the Black Lives Matter movement based on recent events?

  * Did you attend any protests or rallies during the past few months? What were those like?

  – Do you remember the BLM protest after Philando Castile was shot in 2016? How do you think this political moment compares to that one?

  – In the aftermath of the uprising, there have been calls for things like abolishing or defunding the police. What do you think about that?

  – Some people have also called for reparations to Black Americans. What do you think about that?

- Whiteness

- With race now such a big part of the national conversation, do you feel like you are more aware of being white? How and why?
  * How does being white make you feel?
  * What do you think white privilege means? Can you give me any examples?
  * Do you think that structural racism exists? What does that look like?

- Reflections

  - Have the events of the past few months, both the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial uprising, changed the way that you think about politics? How?

  - Has this affected the way that you participate or plan to participate in politics in ways that can include and go beyond voting?

  - Do you plan to vote in the 2020 election?

B.2 Participant Demographics

Table 14: Interview Participant Information

Respondent Number	Pseudonym	Age	Party ID	Consciousness[18]	Valence[19]	Round 2
1	Brianna	18-24	Independent/Other	1	2	
2	*Hazel[20]*	*35-44*	*Independent/Other*			
3	Kyle	55-64	Strong Democrat	3	2	X
4	Chad	65-74	Democrat	1	1	X
5	Dan	55-64	Strong Democrat	1	2	X
6	John	55-64	Strong Democrat	2 (+)	2	X
7	Kimberly	55-64	Strong Democrat	2 (-)	2	X
8	Dominic	55-64	Strong Democrat	2 (+)	2	
9	Greta	25-34	Strong Democrat	2* (-)	2	
10	David	55-64	Strong Republican	1	1	
11	Patti	25-34	Republican	1	2	
12	Jessica	35-44	Strong Democrat	3	2	
13	Reid	18-24	Democrat	3	2	X
14	Dale	55-64	Strong Democrat	1	2	
15	Connor	25-34	Strong Democrat	2 (-)	2	
16	Will	25-34	Republican	1	1	X
17	Adam	18-24	Independent/Other	1	2	
18	Robert	55-64	Strong Democrat	3	2	X
19	Mary	35-44	Strong Democrat	1	1	X
20	Lukas	25-34	Strong Democrat	1	2	X
21	Katherine	75-84	Strong Democrat	1	2	X
22	Jasmine	45-54	Strong Democrat	3	2	X
23	Lisa	65-74	Strong Democrat	3	2	
24	Tim	25-34	Democrat	2 (+)	1	X
25	Philip	65-74	Strong Republican	1	2	X
26	Karen	85+	Strong Democrat	1	2	
27	Juliet	18-24	Republican	1	1	X
28	Sophia	65-74	Independent/Other	1	1	
29	Rachel	18-24	Strong Democrat	2 (+)	2	X
30	Marina	18-24	Strong Democrat	3*	2	X
31	Richard	65-74	Independent/Other	1	2	
32	Gary	55-64	Strong Democrat	3	1	X
33	James	75-84	Strong Democrat	1*	2	
34	Lizzie	55-64	Strong Democrat	1	1	X
35	Leif	45-54	Independent/Other	1	1	
36	Andrew	25-34	Republican	1	1	
37	Nathan	65-74	Independent/Other	1	2	
38	Sean	55-64	Strong Republican	1	1	
39	Thomas	25-34	Strong Democrat	2* (+)	2	X
40	Charlie	45-54	Independent/Other	2 (-)	2	
41	Lauren	25-34	Independent/Other	1	2	

B.3 Qualitative Coding

I conducted analysis in MAXQDA using the constant comparative method of coding. This method of combines a priori themes with inductive insights and is "designed to aid analysts in generating a theory which is integrated, consistent, plausible, close to the data, and in a form which is clear enough to be readily, if only partially, operationalized for testing in quantitative research" (Glaser, 1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis takes place in four distinct stages: the first stage entails comparing instances applicable to each category or a priori theme; the second step involves integrating categories and their themes; third is delimiting the theory; and the final step is writing the theory gleaned from the previous stages of analysis (Glaser, 1965, p. 439). From this method of coding and analysis, I found evidence for the two primary axes of white identification and inductively generated the typology.

I gave individuals a score of 1 through 3 based on their level of white consciousness. Participants received a 1 for having group membership, or objectively belonging to the category of white without having a strong psychological attachment to it. Sometimes this was expressed through colorblindness, like when Sophia said that her whiteness is not an important part of her identity because "it's never been something that — to me, I just look at people as people." Others, like Andrew, said "I guess it's who I am but I don't really look at it like that."

Participants received a 2 for having group identification, which indicates both awareness of group membership and psychological attachment to the group. For example, Rachel has a psychological attachment to whiteness because "it kind of has changed the way that the world interacts with me and the way I interact with the world. I also think that because it's seen as the default, I've kind of been unaware of it for a long time." She followed up by saying that "for something like race and whiteness that I think it's obviously had a big impact on me but I haven't really sat down ever and tried to think about how." This indicates that although she has a psychological attachment to her group, it is not politicized in a way that she can yet articulate.

Participants received a 3 for having group consciousness, which indicates an awareness of group membership and a politicized attachment to that group membership. For example, when I asked Gary if there were social identities important to him when thinking about politics, he said "yes. I mean, I'm a white male and it's more of a negative. . . it's an identity that you have

to feel bad about. I mean you can't—at least you can't publicly feel good about it. So yes, it's a part of my identity, but it's complicated." Gary clearly indicates that his whiteness is important for him when he approaches politics, although it is a complicated part of his identity.

To understand the second dimension of white identification, I gave respondents either a 1 or a 2 to represent the valence of either guilt or pride. Participants received a 1 when they talked about their racial position with pride, and challenges to that position with either implicit or explicit articulations of grievance. For example, Robert said that "I would probably not get another job as an aging white male. Now, that might be because I'm aging, it could be because I'm male, it could be because I'm white." He vocalized his grievance as related to economic power gained through the workforce, and has a hard time separating his whiteness, gender, and age in the way he talks about grievance.

Participants received a 2 when they talked about their racial position with guilt about their racial position and an understanding of privilege. Greta identifies as both Native American and white, which in some ways contributed to her heightened awareness of privilege. She explained "I have this outward appearance of I can walk in anywhere and I'm not going to be judged by how I look, but then also understanding where I come from, like what my family has gone through to kind of get me here and understanding what other people are still currently going through because of how they look." In this case, she expresses her privilege through understanding that not everyone has access to the same privileges that she feels she has, which contributes to her guilt about whiteness.

Based on this inductive coding process, I gave each interlocutor a position on a cartesian plane where the y-axis represents identification with whiteness from denial of racial consciousness to politicized group consciousness, and the x-axis represents the valence attached to that group membership from guilt to pride, as in the figure below. I chose to theorize this typology on a plane because it accurately captures the mutability of both racial consciousness and valence. Each of my interlocutors has a different way of understanding and articulating their own whiteness, but this typology helps to capture the broader patterns in white racial identification. These patterns are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive: respondents can have elements that make them fit into one or more categories. Additionally, I expect that respondents change type over the life course based on personal and political circumstances, especially due to the

impact of certain precipitating events. My respondents are categorized in this study based on their type from the time of our initial interviews in February and March 2020.