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Racial Attitudes and Criminal Justice Policy

ABSTRACT

Empirical research on public policy preferences must attend to Whites' animus toward Blacks. For a quarter-century, studies have consistently found that Kinder and Sanders's four-item measure of "racial resentment" is a robust predictor of almost every social and criminal justice policy opinion. Racial animus increases Whites' opposition to social welfare policies that benefit Blacks and their support for punitive policies that disadvantage this "out-group." Any public opinion study that fails to include racial resentment risks omitted variable bias. Despite the continuing salience of out-group animus, recent scholarship, especially in political science, has highlighted other racial attitudes that can influence public policy preferences. Two developments are of particular importance. First, Chudy showed the progressive impact of racial sympathy, a positive out-group attitude in which Whites are distressed by incidents of Blacks' suffering (such as the killing of George Floyd). Second, Jardina and others documented that Whites' in-group racial attitudes, such as White identity/consciousness or white nationalism, have political consequences, reinforcing the effects of racial resentment. As the United States becomes a majority-minority nation, diverse in-group and out-group racial attitudes are likely to play a central role in policies—including within criminal justice—that the public endorses.

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For the past decade, the growing salience of racial issues in the United States has unfolded largely in tandem with the growth of criminal justice reform movements. The most prominent racial issues are tied to criminal justice (e.g., officer-involved shootings of unarmed civilians), and racial justice is a consistent refrain among those calling for criminal justice reform. From the acquittal of the White vigilante who murdered Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, to the decision of a grand jury not to indict the White police officer who shot Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, to the release of camera footage showing police officers shooting Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Philando Castile in Saint Paul, and countless others, the movement known by its rallying cry that “Black Lives Matter” has periodically dominated news coverage and public discourse since 2013 (BBC News 2021).

In May 2020, a series of killings of Black people, including Ahmaud Arbery in Glynn County, Georgia, and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, culminated in global outrage, protests, and riots in response to a viral cellphone video recorded by a bystander that showed a White Minneapolis police officer kneeling on the neck of an unarmed Black man for more than eight minutes, even after he became unresponsive (BBC News 2020). News outlets soon reported that the man, George Floyd, had been pronounced dead at a nearby hospital. Public demonstrations erupted around the world, with people of all races chanting and marching in the streets in protest of the American criminal justice system. Each time the killing of a Black person by a White police officer or vigilante reignites the public conversation about racism in the United States, a number of divergent responses resonate, and a meta-conversation—a response to the responses—materializes. Should we say “Black Lives Matter” or “All Lives Matter”? Is it acceptable or deplorable for Black athletes to kneel in silent protest during the national anthem at a sporting event? New questions about Whiteness became part of the broader discourse. What is white privilege? What is white supremacy? Ultimately, each of these questions is aimed at understanding racial identity and the implications of in-group and out-group attitudes. No analysis of crime and social policy can ignore these racial dynamics.

Notably, social scientists have been working for decades to understand the public policy consequences of racial attitudes.¹ In a democracy with

¹ In the political science literature, scholars use the term “racial attitudes” to refer to in-group and out-group views or beliefs about race. They also refer to public opinion about policies as the “political consequences” of such racial attitudes (see, e.g., Jardina 2019b;

competing parties, political partisanship and ideology would be expected to shape public policy preferences. Research shows, however, that the “will of the people” is influenced, often more strongly, by an illegitimate sentiment—White racial bias against Blacks (Unnever, Cullen, and Jonson 2008). Tonry (2011) documents that these sentiments have profound consequences in criminal justice. “A half dozen intertwined literatures on the psychology of race relations,” he observes, “show that insensitivity to the interests of black people became a theme of crime and drug control policy” (2011, p. 80). Of particular concern is that studies reveal that “whites have much harsher attitudes towards offenders and that racial animus and resentment are the strongest predictors of those attitudes” (Tonry 2011, p. 80; see also Unnever, Cullen, and Jonson 2008).

The concept of racial resentment originated in the social sciences—especially in political science and social psychology—and was imported into criminology by scholars studying public policy preferences about crime control. Somewhat remarkably, a single conceptualization and measurement of racial resentment proposed by Donald Kinder and Lynn Sanders (1996) have guided research on the impact of this animus for 25 years. Within political science, their measure is included on major national surveys (e.g., American National Election Survey [ANES], Cooperative Congressional Election Survey [CCES]) and is a standard variable in almost all studies assessing the policy consequences of racial attitudes. Within criminology, their measure of racial resentment is similarly incorporated into studies of Whites’ support for a range of criminal justice policies. If not included in a multivariate model, reviewers would criticize the analysis for omitted variable bias.

A key reason for the status of Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) measure is that, with only intermittent exceptions, it is associated in empirical analyses significantly and robustly with almost all social and crime-related policy outcomes. Practical reasons for its use also exist. The racial resentment scale is parsimonious (four items), has high reliability and factor loadings,

Chudy 2021). We employ this terminology. Note that the connection between public opinion and public policy is complicated (Beckett 1997; Tonry 2004; Pickett 2019). For example, public opinion about crime policies can be manipulated by elites, so that the “will of the people” is socially constructed and not independently decided. Still, as Burton, Cullen, et al. (2021, p. 127) note, evidence suggests that politicians are “dynamically responsive” to public opinion—being guided by it under certain circumstances and in certain ways. More generally, research shows that public opinion is associated with punitive policies (Enns 2016; Duxbury 2021).

and is available in data sets. The use of this measure shows no signs of lessening in criminal justice or social science research. It thus will remain at the core of the study of racial attitudes for the foreseeable future.

Given its continued use, it is important for scholars to understand the origins, criticisms, and effects of the concept and its measurement. As we discuss below, scholars in the 1970s recognized that racial prejudice was no longer commonly expressed as a belief in the immutable inferiority of Black people to White people (see, e.g., Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and McConahay 1973). Instead, racial prejudice had become more subtle and intertwined with core American values of individualism and self-sufficiency (Sears and Kinder 1971). In the last decades of the twentieth century, researchers developed numerous names for and definitions of the new forms of racism: symbolic racism (Henry and Sears 2002), laissez-faire racism (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997), modern racism (McConahay 1983), subtle racism (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995), and color-blind racism (Neville et al. 1997).

In their now-classic book *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*, Kinder and Sanders (1996, p. 110) opted for the term “racial resentment,” which at its core involves Whites’ “resentment over blacks getting ahead unfairly.” Such individuals believe that Blacks receive advantages that they either do not need or that are unfair because others do not receive them and feel resentful toward Blacks for taking advantage of such unfair or unnecessary benefits. Kinder and Sanders (1996, p. 106) linked this “meaning” of racial resentment to its “measurement.” In doing so, they provided scholars with an invaluable methodological tool—a scale with strong statistical properties and strong predictive value. Their approach came to dominate research on racial attitudes in large part because of the utility of their scale.²

Although Kinder and Sanders’s scale promises to endure as a standard measure, important developments are underway in research on racial attitudes and public policy preferences. The study of racial resentment or “symbolic racism” emerged in the context of the critique of social

² Criminologists have studied the role of different racial attitudes in increasing support for punitive policies, such as Whites’ perceived social threat from Blacks and stereotypes of Blacks as dangerous (see, e.g., Unnever, Cullen, and Jonson 2008; Feldmeyer and Cochran 2019; Chiricos, Pickett, and Lehmann 2020). These racial attitudes, however, tend to be the specific focus on a study. By contrast, racial resentment is a standard measure included in most studies.

welfare problems as a means of addressing racial inequality. In today's public discourse and political rhetoric, "welfare queen" is no longer a "dog-whistle" term; it has well-known racial connotations and would likely be quickly denounced as "racist" if used by a member of the political elite (see, e.g., Levin 2019; Sreenivasan, Weber, and Kargbo 2019). More generally, it is questionable whether out-group racial attitudes today are expressed primarily as resentment based on the belief that Blacks take advantage of undeserved government benefits. The racial justice protests and counterprotests from 2013 to 2021 were not about affirmative action and the social welfare net. We return in the conclusion to the issue of the meaning of racial resentment two decades into the twenty-first century. This discussion has conceptual and measurement implications for future research on this racial attitude.

More significant is the emergence of two novel lines of research on racial attitudes. First, studies of White out-group attitudes invariably assess the influence of animus, perceived threat, or some other negative sentiment toward Blacks (or other out-groups). Racial resentment is the exemplar of this research. Recently, however, Chudy (2017, 2021) argued that out-group attitudes may also be positive. Her research shows that racial sympathy—which she defines as Whites' "distress over black suffering"—influences public opinion on social and criminal justice policy (Chudy 2021, p. 123; see also Hannan et al., forthcoming). The outpouring of Whites' concern over the killing of George Floyd, including participating in marches in the midst of a lethal pandemic, is one example of racial sympathy (Chudy and Jefferson 2021).

Second and more expansive, a growing body of research examines the political consequences of Whites' in-group racial attitudes—that is, not what Whites think about Blacks but what they think about themselves. Disquieting public displays of White in-group protest were seen in the "Unite the Right Rally" in Charlottesville, Virginia, where videos captured men marching with tiki torches and chanting "You will not replace us" and "Jews will not replace us" (Wildman 2017), and in the notorious January 6, 2021, insurrection and attack on the US Capitol inspired by then-President Trump's admonition that "you'll never take our country back with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong" (Naylor 2021). Scholars have documented a quieter but still consequential development, examining the extent to which Whites possess White identity, consciousness, and nationalist beliefs—that is, seeing Whites as having a racial identity, group interests, and a desire to keep

the United States culturally and demographically White. These in-group sentiments are likely to become more salient as the United States becomes a majority-minority nation in which people of color outnumber Whites (Jones 2016; Jardina 2019*b*; Kaufmann 2019*d*). Research shows that these White self-attitudes shape public preferences with regard to social and criminal justice policy (Jardina 2019*b*; Kaufmann 2019*d*; Butler 2020; Whitehead and Perry 2020*b*; Kulig et al. 2021).

Our aim in this essay is to take stock of the research on racial attitudes and criminal justice public policy opinions. Kinder and Sanders's work is of central importance, but it should not be viewed as sacrosanct. Changes in the nation's evolving social context inspire novel ways of thinking about racial attitudes and create sociopolitical conditions in which newer concepts and measures might resonate and prove important. Still, racial resentment imposes an empirical challenge to all attitudinal newcomers. In the existing research, multivariate models control for a range of political and socio-demographic variables—and then introduce Kinder and Sanders's measure of racial resentment. For a new racial attitude to prove its worth (e.g., racial sympathy, White identity or nationalism), it must be shown that its addition to the analysis can explain added variation in the outcome variable (e.g., support for restrictive immigration policy, punitiveness) above and beyond racial resentment (see, e.g., Jardina 2019*b*; Butler 2020; Fording and Schram 2020; Chudy 2021; Hannan et al., forthcoming). It can be a daunting task to do so.

Our review of work on racial attitudes and criminal justice policy comes in four parts. Section I notes how the decline of traditional racism was superseded by the emergence of a more modern, symbolic form of prejudice. This line of inquiry prompted Kinder and Sanders (1996) to develop the concept of racial resentment. The analysis focuses on their classic measure of racial resentment—its origins, the criticism it has received, and its use in research showing its robust association with a variety of public policy preferences. Section II describes Chudy's (2021) insight that Whites' racial attitudes can be positive, as represented by her concept of racial sympathy. "By concentrating on racial prejudice," Chudy (2021, p. 133) notes, "social scientists have developed only a partial understanding of how racial attitudes affect outcomes." Although new, research has established racial sympathy as empirically distinct from racial resentment and as an attitude that influences policy opinions. Section III examines how the changing social context has stimulated interest in White in-group racial attitudes and their political consequences. Recent research revealing the impact of

White identity/consciousness and nationalism on public policy opinion is presented. Section IV initially summarizes what is known empirically about relations between racial attitudes and criminal justice policy views. This analysis provides a context for assessing the future of research involving both racial resentment and Whites' in-group attitudes. Our central conclusion is that, given the racialized nature of crime and justice in America, racial attitudes will remain of enduring importance (Alexander 2010; Tonry 2011; Unnever and Gabbidon 2011). Research will need to build on but move beyond the focus on racial resentment to consider the diverse ways in which Whites think about Blacks and think about themselves.

I. Racial Resentment: Origins, Measurement, and Consequences

We begin by chronicling the development of the concept of racial resentment, focusing on the social and intellectual context in which it emerged. A central chapter in this story is Kinder and Sanders's creation of a measure of racial resentment. We describe this measure, assess its criticisms, and review its impact on public policy preferences.

A. Beyond Traditional Racism

Kinder and Sanders's (1996) contribution starts with the understanding that racism is integral to American society and, depending on the social context, emerges in different forms. Traditional racism—also known as biological racism, Jim Crow racism, or blatant racism—is the belief that Blacks are inherently different from and “genetically and socially inferior” to Whites (Unnever, Cullen, and Jonson 2008, p. 64). According to Kinder and Sanders (1996, p. 95), this doctrine “began as a rationale for slavery itself and later for post-emancipation forms of racial oppression” (e.g., Black codes, Jim Crow laws).

By the middle of the twentieth century, counternarratives emerged. Increasingly entrenched in universities and embraced by elites, “liberal environmentalism” attributed Blacks' disadvantage “to differences in environmental conditions, not genetic predispositions” (Kinder and Sanders 1996, p. 95). The changing social construction of racial differences is reflected in public opinion research of the time. In 1942, a national poll found that just 47 percent of Whites “agreed that blacks were the intellectual equal of whites,” but “by 1956, 80% did so” (Kinder and Sanders

1996, p. 97). The civil rights movement embodied this sensibility and resulted in sweeping legislation extending social benefits and political rights to Blacks.

A key insight by Kinder and Sanders (1996, p. 97) is that the “decline of biological racism must not be equated with the decline of racism generally.” They proposed that Whites’ out-group animus was expressed as a deep-seated resentment toward Blacks. Rather than a new era of racial equality and cooperation, Blacks’ discontentment with persistent unfair circumstances led to protest and violent insurgency. Civil unrest broke out in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, California, in the summer of 1965, in other cities throughout 1966 and 1967, and across the country in 1968 following the assassination of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Myers 1997). In response, politicians such as George Wallace, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan interpreted “inner-city violence and poverty as glaring manifestations of the failure of blacks to live up to American values,” thus helping “to create and legitimize a new form of prejudice” (Kinder and Sanders 1996, p. 105). Blacks were seen as repudiating “individualism” and the attendant “sacred American commitments to hard work, discipline, and self-sacrifice” (p. 105). According to Kinder and Sanders (1996, p. 105):

Their message was subtle, rather than blatant: it was that blacks should behave themselves. They should take quiet advantage of the ample opportunities now provided them. Government had been too generous, had given blacks too much, and blacks, for their part, had accepted these gifts all too readily. Discrimination was illegal, opportunities were plentiful. Blacks should work their way up without handouts or special favors in a society that was now color-blind.

Beginning in the early 1970s and through the early 2000s, political scientists and psychologists developed several concepts of the new racial attitudes that had begun to prevail over traditional racism. Each of these concepts captured some form of racial prejudice that is symbolic and subtle rather than blatant and biological. The most similar of these ideas are “symbolic racism” and “racial resentment,” which are generally viewed as representing approximately the same construct despite some minor differences in their conceptualization and measures; their names are often used interchangeably (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears and Henry

2005). Our primary concern is thus with the development of this novel conception of racism.

1. *Discovery of Symbolic Racism.* In a lengthy review of the 30 years of research on symbolic racism from around 1970 to 2003, Sears and Henry (2005) identify David Sears, Donald Kinder, and John McConahay as responsible for the original formulations of the theory of symbolic racism (Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and McConahay 1973; McConahay and Hough 1976; Kinder and Sears 1981). Sears and Henry (2005, p. 98) explain the choice of the term “symbolic racism”:

The origins of symbolic racism lay in a blend of early-socialized negative feelings about Blacks with traditional conservative values. Symbolic racism was labeled “symbolic” to highlight its roots in abstract moral values, rather than in concrete self-interest or personal experience, because it targets Blacks as an abstract collectivity rather than specific Black individuals. The labeling “racism” was chosen because the construct was thought in part to reflect racial antipathy.

David Sears has been a professor of social psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) since 1962. His time at UCLA overlapped in the 1960s and early 1970s with that of John McConahay and Donald Kinder, who received their doctorates in psychology from UCLA under his direction in 1968 and 1975, respectively. Given his interest in public opinion, Kinder has spent most of his career in the Department of Political Science at the University of Michigan, where he is the Philip E. Converse Distinguished University Professor. He has played an important role in helping to train scholars now defining new directions in the study of racial attitudes and public policy (see Sections II and III). At the time their paths converged, two elements of the context of Los Angeles inspired Sears, Kinder, and McConahay to investigate new forms of anti-Black racism: the growing political salience of Black leaders and racial inequality issues and Whites’ role in and response to the social unrest borne out of racial injustice.

First, in the 1960s, initiatives appeared on ballots that were aimed at addressing racial inequality, and Black leaders in Los Angeles emerged as contenders for important political positions. White Angelenos voted down such initiatives (e.g., Proposition 14 in 1964 aimed at fair housing) and candidates, results that did not comport with the general understanding that Whites in Los Angeles were liberals with egalitarian views who

endorsed “formal and legal racial equality” (Sears and McConahay 1973, p. 139). One such example was the 1969 Los Angeles mayoral election, in which Sam Yorty, the incumbent candidate and a White conservative, was challenged by a liberal Black candidate, Thomas Bradley (a former police lieutenant and a city councilman at the time; Sears and Kinder 1971). Yorty defeated Bradley in the 1969 election, due in part to his campaign’s portrayal of Bradley as “a black militant and ultra-leftist” (Merl and Boyarsky 1998).

Sears and Kinder (1971) considered how this depiction of a Black candidate might have activated a form of racial animus in White voters that was distinct from traditional racism. They investigated this potential new form of racism in a survey of White voters in the San Fernando Valley during the 1969 election. Table 1 presents some of the items used to capture symbolic racism—or what was also called modern racism or, now more often, racial resentment. The first measure of symbolic racism, to our knowledge, was the scale used by Sears and Kinder (1971), which consisted of items 5–8 in table 1. We discuss the evolution of the measurement of symbolic racial attitudes in the following section, but a cursory review of these items reveals that they typically capture one of four themes expressive of prejudice toward Blacks: “that Blacks no longer face much prejudice or discrimination, that their failure to progress results from their unwillingness to work hard enough, that they are demanding too much too fast, and that they have gotten more than they deserve” (Sears and Henry 2005, p. 100). Of note here is Sears and Kinder’s (1971) finding that their measures of traditional American conservatism and symbolic racism “made separate and independent contributions” to predicting whether Whites preferred Yorty or Bradley (Sears and McConahay 1973, p. 140). This finding was early evidence that the new form of racism was not merely conservatism but a blend of conservative ideology and racial animus. Likewise, their results showed that preferring Yorty over Bradley was not associated with their measure of traditional racism (Sears and McConahay 1971; for a summary of results, see also McConahay and Hough 1976). When Bradley challenged Yorty again in 1973 (and won), Kinder and Sears (1981) again found that Whites’ preferences for one candidate over the other was significantly influenced by symbolic racism.

The second key contextual element of Los Angeles during the time the careers of Sears, Kinder, and McConahay intersected was the periodic social unrest in the city, with several riots related to race issues taking

TABLE 1
Items Used to Measure Symbolic Racism, Modern Racism, and Racial Resentment

| Items | Sears and Kinder (1971) Symbolic Racism Scale | McConahay and Hough (1976); McConahay (1983) | Kinder and Sanders (1996) Racial Resentment Scale | All Symbolic Racism Items (Henry and Sears 2002) | Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale (Henry and Sears 2002) |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class. (R) | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2. It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be as well off as whites. | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 3. Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors. | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve. (R) | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 5. Most blacks who receive money from welfare programs could get along without it if they need. | Yes | No | Yes ^b | No | No |
| 6. Government officials usually pay less attention to a request or complaint from a black person than from a white person. | Yes | No | Yes ^c | No | No |
| 7. Negroes shouldn't push themselves where they're not wanted. | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| 8. Streets aren't safe these days without a policeman around. | Yes | No | No | No | No |

TABLE 1 (Continued)

| Items | Sears and Kinder (1971) Symbolic Racism Scale | McConahay and Hough (1976); McConahay (1983) | Kinder and Sanders (1996) Racial Resentment Scale | All Symbolic Racism Items (Henry and Sears 2002) | Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale (Henry and Sears 2002) |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| 9. How much discrimination against blacks do you feel there is in the United States today, limiting their chances to get ahead? Would you say a lot, some, just a little, or none at all? | N/A | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| 10. Some say that black leaders have been trying to push too fast. Others feel they haven't pushed fast enough. What do you think? | N/A | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| 11. Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights. | N/A | Yes ^a | No | Yes | No |
| 12. Whites should support Negroes in their struggle against discrimination and segregation. (R) | N/A | Yes | No | No | No |
| 13. It is easy to understand the anger of black people in America. (R) | N/A | Yes | No | No | No |
| 14. Negroes have it better than they ever had it before. | N/A | Yes | No | No | No |
| 15. Blacks work just as hard to get ahead as most other Americans. (R) | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes | No |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 16. How responsible, in general, do you hold blacks in this country for their outcomes in life? | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes | No |
| 17. Blacks are demanding too much from the rest of society. | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes | No |
| 18. How much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today do you think blacks are responsible for creating? | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes |
| 19. Blacks generally do not complain as much as they should about their situation in society. (R) | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes | No |
| 20. Discrimination against blacks is no longer a problem in the United States. | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes | No |
| 21. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve. | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes |

NOTE.—N/A = not applicable, item not yet created at time of survey; R = reverse coded.

^a The McConahay and Hough (1976) version of this item was “Negroes are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.”

^b The Sears and Kinder (1971) version of this item was “Do you think that most Negroes who receive welfare could get along without it if they tried, or do they really need this help?”

^c The Sears and Kinder (1971) version of this item was “Do Los Angeles city officials pay more, less, or the same attention to a request from a Negro person as from a white person?”

place between 1965 and 1970 (Sears and McConahay 1973). Most notably, over the course of six days in August 1965, Los Angeles was embroiled in widespread outbursts of violence and property destruction known as the Watts riot. In their book *The Politics of Violence: The New Urban Blacks and the Watts Riot*, Sears and McConahay (1973) set out to explore the political and psychological roots of the riots. Any explanation, they observed, needed to recognize the Watts riot as “a profoundly important historical watershed, both because it grew so directly out of . . . historical changes and because it represented a rallying cry and a sign for the future” (1973, p. x).

They theorized that the riot erupted in part due to the role Whites played in local politics, economics, and social structure. Regarding the characteristics of the White population of Los Angeles and of White-Black relations at the time, Sears and McConahay (1973) argued that Whites’ symbolic racism was one of the key factors that contributed to the riots. Building from Sears and Kinder’s (1971) prior work, they defined symbolic racism as the “abstract moral assertions about blacks’ behavior as a group, concerning what blacks deserve, how they ought to act, whether or not they are treated equitably, and so on” (1973, p. 139). Further, they explained that symbolic racism entailed the “relentless application of the individualistic values of the Protestant ethic” (p. 144), which resulted in the “moralistic rejection” of Blacks that was used to justify “the callousness of the police, the selfishness of shop owners and the impersonal and unresponsive bureaucracy of the school system and welfare agencies”—the very problems found to have motivated the rioters. In addition, Sears and McConahay (1973) observed that Black people and their lived experiences were largely “invisible” to Whites due to segregation, and thus Whites were unaware of the realities of Blacks’ grievances and, in turn, unreceptive to allowing Blacks access to formal mechanisms of grievance redress. Thus, Whites’ opposition to racial equality initiatives and Black candidates and their role in creating the conditions that led to racial unrest in the latter half of the 1960s were key observations that led Sears, Kinder, and McConahay to conceptualize a new, symbolic, subtle racism.

2. *Refining the Concept.* Reflecting on these early studies some years later, Sears and Henry (2005) noted that “the measurement of symbolic racism at that time was somewhat happenstance rather than operationalizing a refined conceptual definition.” Thus, two decades after symbolic racism was first proposed, Kinder and Sanders (1996) sought to refine the concept and its measurement. They argued that although numerous studies

had been published on the effects of symbolic racism and resentment toward Blacks (Sears and Kinder 1971; McConahay and Hough 1976; McConahay 1983; Kinder and Sanders 1990), political scientists had continued to reduce the explanations of political preferences solely to self- and group-interest, failing to consider the roles of principle and prejudice. The result, they claimed, was a field “replete with misspecified models, biased estimates, and questionable conclusions”—in sum, “an epistemological mess” (Kinder and Sanders 1996, p. 40).

To provide “a pluralistic and empirically grounded approach to understanding public opinion” (p. 43), Kinder and Sanders analyzed data on reliable and valid multi-item measures of the three “primary ingredients of opinion” (p. 47): self- and group-interest, prejudice, and principle (i.e., equality, economic individualism, and limited government). Building on earlier works (Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and McConahay 1973; McConahay and Hough 1976), Kinder and Sanders recognized that out-group racial attitudes were now expressed as a blend of the second and third ingredients—prejudice and principle.

Their perspective can be understood in this way. Traditional racism emphasizing Black inferiority could be dismissed outright as illegitimate bigotry. Still, Whites harbored racial animus, especially in a context in which political disputes were occurring over affirmative action, racial desegregation, and school busing for integration. For Kinder and Sanders, conservative moralistic values provided a conduit for expressing these resentments. Criticisms of Blacks could be encased in the rhetoric of core conservative American principles of individualism, hard work, and so on. This does not mean that Whites did not embrace these values—only that they were the prism through which Blacks were now judged and animus was socially constructed. Blacks were portrayed as unwilling to play by the rules or principles governing achievement of the American Dream. They were cheaters, and Whites had a right to be angry. “Racial resentment,” Kinder and Sanders explain (1996, p. 293), “features indignation as a central emotional theme, one provoked by the sense that black Americans are getting and taking more than their fair share.” Henry and Sears (2002, p. 255) note that racial resentment was substituted for symbolic racism to capture this sense of grievance:

“Symbolic racism” did not convey the central role of values in the theory, leaving the theory open to the misinterpretation that symbolic racism was just racism and that its value component merely provided a

justification for racial animosity. The term “racial resentment” was used to bring focus to the idea that whites harbored genuine resentment about the perceived moral transgressions and value violations of blacks, that both values and prejudice were essential elements.

Kinder and Sanders’s (1996, p. 292, emphasis in original) methodological challenge was how to measure this “*conjunction* of prejudice and values.” Statistically, they would have to demonstrate that the effects of their racial resentment measure would persist even when traditional racism and traditional moral values (especially of individualism) were controlled—that they were, in fact, assessing a distinctive form of racial animus. As we discuss in Section IV, a contemporary issue is whether the nature of Whites’ racial resentment has shifted from a concern over Blacks’ lack of individual responsibility to dislike of claims that “Black lives matter” and of “systemic racism.” Regardless of questions of face validity, Kinder and Sander’s racial resentment scale remains a strong predictor of public policy preferences today.

B. Measuring Racial Resentment

To measure racial resentment, Kinder and Sanders drew upon the symbolic racism scales developed in earlier works (Sears and Kinder 1971; McConahay and Hough 1976; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988) and items that had been included in recent administrations of the National Elections Study (NES).³ In table 1, we list these various items and indicate in which surveys each item was included. The first measure of symbolic racism consisted of items 5–8 (see Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and McConahay 1973, p. 139n12). A few years later, McConahay and Hough (1976) developed a similar scale to measure modern racism, which included items 11–14. The modern racism scale was only moderately reliable (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .511$), though both the modern racism scale and the symbolic racism scale were empirically distinct from nonprejudiced individualism and from traditional racism (by virtue of exerting significant independent effects on policy opinions; McConahay and Hough 1976). Note that these scale items ask statements in both directions (Blacks’ unfair advantage vs. disadvantage) and reflect themes Kinder and Sanders would build upon—Blacks do not try hard enough, receive undeserved assistance, and have every opportunity to succeed.

³ The National Election Study (NES) was first conducted in 1977. It was renamed the American National Election Study (ANES) in 2005 (Burns 2006).

Finally, table 1 also lists in the fourth and fifth columns items used by Henry and Sears (2002, p. 258) to create their “Symbolic Racism 2000 (SR2K) scale.” The fourth column, labeled “All Symbolic Racism Items,” lists all the items that Henry and Sears compiled from previous versions of the Los Angeles County Social Surveys and surveys administered to UCLA students. Their purpose was to design an updated symbolic racism scale and to assess its validity and reliability. The fifth column, labeled “Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale,” reports the eight items Henry and Sears distilled from this initial list to comprise their final measure (see Henry and Sears 2002, p. 279, appendix). Items 1–4 are from the racial resentment scale eventually developed by Kinder and Sanders (1996). As a result, the two scales overlap and can be seen as roughly equivalent.

In *Divided by Color*, Kinder and Sanders (1996) analyzed multiple years of cross-sectional data collected by the NES between 1970 and 1992, as well as data collected by the NES panel study from 1990–92. The NES sample is a probability-based sample of all Americans over the age of 18. Data were collected through face-to-face or phone interviews (depending on the study year) with trained interviewers, using rigorously pretested surveys. The 1986 NES study was particularly focused on Americans’ racial attitudes, and Donald Kinder was involved in the development of the survey (Kinder and Sanders 1996).

The racial resentment scale Kinder and Sanders (1996) developed from the NES items originally consisted of six items (items 1–6 in table 1). Although some studies continue to administer the six-item scale, two items were eliminated over the course of Kinder and Sanders’s research. The resulting four-item scale has been used in most criminal justice research. Items 5 and 6 in table 1 were excluded because they were not consistently included on the 1986, 1988, and 1992 NES surveys and therefore could not be used in a longitudinal examination of racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996). These items have another complication. As noted by Kinder and Sanders (1996, p. 118), “the two items explicitly invoke government, referring to ‘welfare’ in one case and ‘government officials’ in the other.” The problem for political science research is that this wording “incorporates elements that are uncomfortably close to what we are trying to explain, namely public policy” (pp. 118–19).⁴ In light of these

⁴ Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) decision to remove items 5 and 6 (in table 1) was likely due in part to Sniderman and Tetlock’s (1986a, p. 129) criticism that one of the “most serious” problems with symbolic racism was “the confounding of ‘independent’ and ‘dependent’ variables in the construction of symbolic racism scales.”

considerations, Kinder and Sander's four-item scale (items 1–4 in table 1) is now the standard racial resentment measure in social science research (see, e.g., Bobo and Johnson 2004; Feldman and Huddy 2005; Unnever and Cullen 2007*a*; Johnson 2008; Burton, Logan, et al. 2021; Hannan et al., forthcoming).⁵

The content of the items is significant. First, references are made to “Blacks” as a racial group or collective, not to individuals. Second, the four items probe core principles. To use the “substantive themes” developed by Henry and Sears (2002, pp. 259–60), these include “denial of continuing discrimination” (item 1 in table 1), “work ethic and responsibility for outcomes” (items 2 and 3), and “undeserved advantage” (item 4).

Kinder and Sanders also offered a statistical defense of their measure. If racial prejudice were not captured in their items, then the “sentiments expressed . . . would not really belong together. They would be a hodgepodge of complaints, each reflecting a different belief or value” (1996, p. 110). Instead, they found that the items are moderately correlated with one another, with the average Pearson correlation⁶ between the four items being $r = .42$ and therefore argued that they represent “an empirically coherent outlook” (Kinder and Sanders 1996, p. 110). They also asserted that racial resentment is stable over time, finding that in a panel of White Americans who participated in the 1990–92 NES panel, the Pearson correlation between the 1990 scale and the 1992 scale was .68, a higher correlation than other constructs including “views on equality” ($r = .49$), “ideological identification” ($r = .49$), and “positions on various matters of public policy (Pearson r 's hover around .4)” (p. 111). As a final piece of evidence that the racial resentment scale represents a stable and coherent belief, Kinder and Sanders conducted a confirmatory factor analysis

⁵ Alternative measures of racial resentment are at times used, though they typically include all or some of the items from Kinder and Sanders's scale (see, e.g., Schutten, Pickett, Burton, Jonson, et al., forthcoming). As noted, in their analysis of items previously used to measure symbolic racism (items 1–4, 9–11, and 15–21, table 1), Henry and Sears (2002) narrowed their Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale to eight items—items 1–4 from Kinder and Sanders and items 9, 10, 18, and 21. To our knowledge, most studies that claim to use the Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale include Kinder and Sanders's items, even when using a shortened version of the scale (see, e.g., Pickett and Baker 2014). This may be in part because Kinder and Sanders's items have been consistently included on the ANES through to the most recent wave in 2020, whereas the other items on the Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale were discontinued in the 1990s (see <https://electionstudies.org/resources/anes-question-search/>).

⁶ The average Pearson correlation across the four Kinder and Sanders (1996) items was calculated from the Pearson correlations between the items provided on page 110, in table 5.2 of *Divided by Color*. These values come from the 1986 NES study.

and found that the factor loadings for the four items ranged from .53 to .82 in the 1990 data and from .57 to .80 in the 1992 data. Recent studies have found higher factor loadings across multiple data sets (see, e.g., Chudy 2021; Hannan et al., forthcoming; Schutten, Pickett, Burton, Jonson, et al., forthcoming).⁷

C. Key Critique of Racial Resentment

The special contribution of scholars advancing the concept of racial resentment (or symbolic racism) is the insight that racial prejudice involves the blending or fusion of anti-Black affect with traditional, conservative values. The most frequent and important criticism is what Schutten, Pickett, Burton, Jonson, et al. (forthcoming, p. 8) have called the “principled conservatism thesis, which argues that racial resentment is confounded with a more general conservative ideology, particularly attitudes toward individualism and size of government” (Sniderman and Tetlock 1986*a*; Carmines and Merriman 1993; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Other scholars in the 1980s expressed similar criticism (see, e.g., Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Sniderman and Hagen 1985; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986*b*).⁸ Critics assert that the theory of symbolic racism wrongfully implies that traditional values are inherently racist when they are instead principled ways of viewing public policy. Today, scholars address this issue by introducing controls for political conservatism and individualism (e.g., libertarianism, egalitarianism) into multivariate models examining the effects of racial resentment on policy outcomes. Notably, racial resentment remains statistically significant in these models, suggesting that its impact is not conflated with traditional American values (see, e.g., Unnever and Cullen 2007*a*; Banks and Valentino 2012; Filindra and Kaplan 2016; Butler 2020; Burton, Logan, et al. 2021; Hannan et al., forthcoming).

Scholars have employed other strategies to show that racial resentment has a racial content that is not reducible to conservatism. For example,

⁷ In table 3, the factor analysis of items measuring racial attitudes revealed factor loadings for racial resentment ranging from .687 to .993.

⁸ Sears and Henry (2005) have considered and rebutted 12 challenges to the construct and measurement of racial resentment or symbolic racism. We consider here the most fundamental criticism that the scale’s items assess political ideology rather than racial animus expressed through traditional values. Consider, for example, this item: “It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be as well off as whites.” Critics argue that this item measures a principled conservative belief in individual hard work that would apply to all citizens, not a standard reflecting prejudice toward Blacks. As we detail, scholars have used various strategies to show the racial content of these items.

Sears and Henry (2003) reported a factor analysis in which items measuring racial prejudice and conservatism loaded on separate factors. However, in support of a blended thesis, their symbolic racism scale loaded about equally on both factors—indicating that “symbolic racism is the glue that links political conservatism to racial prejudice among Whites in the contemporary era” (2003, p. 264). They also created a measure of Black individualism and compared it with measures of general and gender individualism.⁹ They showed that only Black individualism predicted a scale of symbolic racism and exerted influence on racial policy opinions directly and indirectly through symbolic racism. The effects of general and gender individualism were nonsignificant, a finding attributed to their lack of racialized content (see also Sears and Henry 2005). Another strategy is to examine whether, as the blended thesis would claim, racial resentment predicts “race policies”—policies explicitly or implicitly benefiting Blacks more strongly—rather than nonracial policies. Research shows that racial resentment is associated with racial policy opinions (e.g., government help, preferential hiring, and fair employment for Blacks) and race-coded opinions (e.g., spending on welfare) but not always with nonracialized policy opinions (e.g., federal spending for child care, protecting the environment; see Kam and Burge 2019).

Two more studies reach similar conclusions. First, in a 2009 survey that included the Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) racial resentment scale (RRS), Simmons and Bobo (2018, p. 328) asked White subjects to explain their response: “Would you please tell us why you feel that way?” The qualitative data revealed that “RRS responses are deeply rooted in racial beliefs,” with those high in racial resentment claiming that “race is irrelevant” to barriers Blacks face (2018, p. 342). High-resentment subjects framed their responses in terms of individualism, but Simmons and Bobo (2018, p. 342, emphasis in original) argue that “rather than the abstract value of individualism,” these “respondents have a narrower concern: racial beliefs about *Blacks*’ adherence to the tenets of individualism.” Explaining answers in terms of “political ideology or the appropriate role of government was rare,” providing “little evidence for critics’ assertion that the RRS primarily measures political dispositions” (2018, p. 342). “Racial hostility,” conclude Simmons and Bobo

⁹ In their analysis, Sears and Henry (2003, p. 275) used a six-item “individualism” scale that, in past surveys, referred to the subject in the item as “people.” To make a Black individualism scale, they substituted the word “blacks” for people; their gender individualism scale substituted the word “women.” Here is an example of a scale item: “Even if people (blacks, women) try hard they often cannot reach their goals.”

(2018, p. 342), “continues to have profound implications for Blacks’ life chances in the political arena.”

Second, DeSante (2013) designed an experiment in which respondents were instructed to allocate funds to candidates applying for welfare in North Carolina. The applicants were either Black or White, and the application form rated the quality of their past work history as “poor” or “excellent.” If principled conservatism governed the decision, then funds would be allocated to hard rather than lazy workers; race and racial resentment would have null effects. Deservingness mattered, but differently for Black and White workers. As DeSante (2013, p. 352) concludes, “Whites are rewarded more for the same level of work ethic, and blacks are punished more for the same perceived level of ‘laziness.’” Importantly, racial resentment conditioned allocation of welfare funds, leading respondents to “reward whites” and “punish blacks.” The racial nature of resentment is thus confirmed. Black welfare applicants, notes DeSante (2013, p. 354), “are not given credit even when they are labeled as excellent workers. The only explanation left is racial prejudice.”¹⁰

D. Consequences for Social Policy

Kinder and Sanders’s *Divided by Color* might have been relegated to relative obscurity except for their empirical demonstration that racial resentment had political consequences. Analyzing the 1986, 1988, and 1992 NES samples, they showed that Whites high in racial resentment were less supportive of “policies that deal explicitly and unambiguously with race” (Kinder and Sanders 1996, p. 116)—including government ensuring fair treatment in employment, school desegregation, federal spending on programs to assist Blacks, and affirmative action involving preferential hiring and college admission quotas (pp. 17, 117). These effects persisted when Kinder and Sanders introduced controls for individualism and for equality—what might be seen as measures of principled conservatism and liberalism. Policy opinions thus were motivated “by resentment directly against blacks in particular” (p. 118).

Importantly, Kinder and Sanders (1996, p. 121) also showed that racial resentment affected opinions “beyond the racial domain.” As might be expected, it decreased support for “implicit” policies that “make no mention of blacks and whites but that may be widely understood to have a racial

¹⁰ For another experiment showing the racial content of racial resentment, see Rabinowitz et al. (2009).

implication (e.g., government support for Food Stamps)” (p. 121). Although not affecting every outcome (e.g., support for Medicare and Social Security), racial resentment exerted wide general effects, making respondents less supportive of programs beneficial to women (e.g., family leave, child care, sexual harassment) and gay rights and more supportive of defense spending, restricting immigration, and capital punishment. As will be seen, this latter finding on support for the death penalty was an early sign that racial resentment was implicated in criminal justice policy preferences.

Divided by Color inspired a multidisciplinary body of research testing the effects of racial resentment on public policy preferences. As Simmons and Bobo (2018, p. 325) note, “the RRS has been widely-used for over two decades, and its use shows no signs of abating.” They call racial resentment a “powerful predictor” of public opinion on a wide range of social policies (2018, p. 343; for an earlier summary, see Hutchings and Valentino 2004). A few examples should suffice.

Political scientists have found that racial resentment predicts both voting preferences and views toward social policy initiatives. As might be expected, this animus lessened electoral support for Barack Obama and increased support for Donald Trump (Segura and Valenzuela 2010; Abramowitz and McCoy 2019; Fording and Schram 2020). In a study of ANES data, Abramowitz and McCoy (2019, p. 143) found that “over the past four elections, there has been a dramatic increase in support for Republican presidential candidates among the most racially resentful white working-class voters.” Research shows as well that racial resentment increases support for laws that require voters to show government-issued identification at the polls (Wilson and Brewer 2013; Wilson, Brewer, and Rosenbluth 2014). According to Henderson and Hillygus (2011, p. 956), high racial resentment also prompted respondents to become opposed to universal health care after the 2008 election of Barack Obama (see also Maxwell and Shields 2014). Such animus is also negatively related to support for affirmative action and preferential hiring and promotion (Rabinowitz et al. 2009; Mangum and Block, forthcoming). Two final examples: racial resentment increases opposition to welfare, including among Blacks (Kam and Bunge 2019), and to redistributive government action to reduce economic inequality among Whites with higher incomes (Bloeser and Williams 2020; see also Rabinowitz et al. 2009).

These findings have two important implications. First, public support for most public policies is not simply a matter of perceived self-interest

or political partisanship but also of whether Whites harbor resentments toward Blacks. Race seems baked into Americans' thinking. In the next section, we show that criminal justice policies are no exception to this pattern. Second, given its robust and consistent effects, empirical research on public policy preferences—whether with regard to political, social, or criminal justice policies—must include racial resentment as an independent variable. If the variable is omitted, then the resulting statistical model risks being misspecified. Whites' out-group attitudes toward Blacks nearly always matter.

E. Implications for Criminal Justice Policy

In *Divided by Color*, Kinder and Sanders (1996) found that the scale was associated with greater likelihood to favor capital punishment for those convicted of murder—a finding that demonstrated the potential usefulness of importing the construct and measure into criminology. Criminologists have consistently identified large gaps between Blacks and Whites in their levels of support for punitive policies—including sentencing severity (see, e.g., Blumstein and Cohen 1980; Miller, Rossi, and Simpson 1986), death penalty support (see, e.g., Cochran and Chamlin 2006; Unnever and Cullen 2007*b*; Butler et al. 2018), and the opinion that courts are not harsh enough (see, e.g., Secret and Johnson 1989; Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman 1991)—indicative of a powerful implicit association between race and criminal justice (Enns 2016). Research on the effects of racial resentment on criminal justice policy opinions reveals that racial resentment is associated with punitive correctional attitudes. However, studies also show that racial resentment has broad effects, shaping public opinion about gun control, the police, and progressive policies. In general, resentful Americans are more supportive of increasing social control over offenders and lessening control over their personal right to be armed.

1. *Correctional Punitiveness.* Three measures of public punitiveness have been frequently used across most criminological public opinion studies: support for capital punishment, support for harsher courts, and support for punishment as the primary goal of prisons (Enns 2016). As expected, Whites who score high on the racial resentment scale tend to score higher on these three measures of punitiveness than less racially resentful Whites (see, e.g., Bobo and Johnson 2004; Unnever and Cullen 2007*a*; Johnson 2008; Hannan et al., forthcoming).¹¹

¹¹ Similar scales for measures of symbolic forms of racism have also been found to be associated with punitiveness, including *laissez-faire* racism (Johnson 2001).

Racial resentment is an especially strong and robust predictor of Whites' embrace of capital punishment. Using data from the 2000 NES, Unnever and Cullen (2007a) explored how two measures of racism increased support for capital punishment. First, the data included a measure of symbolic racism comprised of Kinder and Sanders's (1996) four racial resentment items. The analysis revealed that, controlling for measures of Jim Crow racism, political ideology, egalitarianism, and demographic characteristics, "symbolic racism was the most robust predictor of the strength of support for the death penalty" (2007a, p. 1290). Second, Unnever and Cullen also created an innovative measure of "White racism": they calculated how much a respondent's score on the symbolic racism scale exceeded the mean score for African Americans. This White racism measure also was a strong predictor of favoring the execution of convicted murderers. This measure reduced the gap between Blacks and Whites in support for capital punishment by 39 percent, suggesting that "more than a third" of this racial divide "can be attributed to the undue influence of white racist attitudes" (p. 1290).

Unnever and Cullen (2010) later analyzed the 2000 NES pre- and post-election data to test the racial resentment explanation of support for a harsher approach to reducing crime and the death penalty against two competing explanations: the "escalating crime-distrust model" hypothesis that "greater punitiveness occurs among those individuals who *both* distrust the courts and perceive that crime is rising" (p. 114) and the "moral decline model," which posits that punitiveness is driven by a perception that "society is in a state of moral decline" (p. 115). Although each model achieved partial support, racial resentment "exerted the most consistent effect on public sentiments," suggesting that animus toward Blacks is "inextricably entwined in public punitiveness" (p. 99). Notably, Brown and Socia (2017) substantially replicated these results with 2000 and 2014 General Social Survey data, revealing that racial resentment remains a "powerful" source of "punitive American views in the twenty-first century."

Similar results were reported by Bobo and Johnson (2004) in their well-known article, "A Taste for Punishment." Based on the 2001 Race, Crime and Public Opinion Study, they analyzed the relationship of Kinder and Sanders's (1996) six-item racial resentment scale (see table 1, items 1–6) and three punitive outcomes: support for the death penalty for persons convicted of murder, voting for a governor who opposed the death penalty because of the risk of executing an innocent person, and approval of harsher punishment for possession and distribution of crack versus powder cocaine despite the sentence for crack being 100 times

more severe for the same quantities. Questions regarding these policies were asked as part of three experiments that included a manipulation or prime (i.e., someone murdering a White as opposed to a Black victim is more likely to be sentenced to death; 79 people sentenced to death found to be innocent and released; Blacks more likely to be convicted for crack cocaine, Whites for powder cocaine). Beyond inconsistent treatment effects, racial resentment was significantly associated with support for the death penalty, voting against a governor who opposed the death penalty out of concern for the innocent, and support for harsher sentences for crack cocaine. Racial resentment had significant effects for both White and Black respondents.

Green, Staerklé, and Sears (2006) assessed a data set of 849 respondents drawn from three waves (1997–99) of the Los Angeles County Survey that included items from the Henry and Sears (2002) Symbolic Racism 2000 scale (again, which overlapped with Kinder and Sanders's standard racial resentment scale). They developed two measures of "crime remedies," each consisting of two items. First, the punishment measure included support for "enforcement of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder and for 'three strikes and you're out'" legislation. Second, the preventative measure included reducing poverty and "providing inmates with education and job training" (Green, Staerklé, and Sears 2006, p. 441). Consistent with almost all other research, racial resentment was found to increase support for punitiveness and decrease support for prevention as a remedy for crime.

Enns and Ramirez used a secondary analysis of the 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) to assess the impact of racial attitudes on public support for private prisons and immigration detention centers. Adapted from Kinder and Sanders's (1996) scale, their four-item racial resentment measure included two standard items referring to Blacks and two items worded to reflect animus toward Latinos. Enns and Ramirez (2018, pp. 564–65) note that their "findings point to a theme common in the study of punitive politics. People that harbor greater resentments toward racial minorities are more likely to support private carceral institutions."

In a recent assessment of the effects of racial resentment on punitive attitudes, Butler (2020) analyzed data from 769 White respondents to her 2019 YouGov survey. Her results showed that racial resentment significantly increased support for the death penalty and harsher courts. These effects were robust even when the multivariate models included measures of competing constructs (e.g., conservatism, egalitarianism, fear of crime, belief that the world is a dangerous place, religiosity). Racial resentment's effects on more progressive outcomes were variable.

Finally, in a 2018 nationwide survey ($n = 1,100$), Schutten, Pickett, Burton, Cullen, et al. (forthcoming) explored respondents' views on sanctioning school shooters. Using an experimental design, they "randomized the shooters' age (juvenile or adult), offense type (planned, attempted, committed with injuries, committed with killings), and mental health status (diagnosed mental illness or not)" (p. 7). Severity of the offense was the main determinant of sentencing preferences and the perceived rehabilitation potential of shooters. Beyond this experimental manipulation effect, however, racial resentment still mattered, being negatively related to the belief that shooters could be rehabilitated and positively related to support for harsher punishment.

2. *Support for Gun Control.* Debates over implementing policies to control access to guns juxtapose claims of liberty (Second Amendment rights) against security (protection against lethal violence). This controversy has become ever more salient in the aftermath of repeated shootings with mass casualties at schools (e.g., Columbine, Newtown, Parkland), public venues (e.g., Las Vegas, Orlando, Thousand Oaks), and religious houses of worship (Charleston, Pittsburgh, Sutherland Springs) (Haner et al. 2019).¹² Research reveals that racial resentment is negatively related to support for gun control measures.

O'Brien and colleagues (2013) contributed an important initial study using ANES data. To deflect possible effects for principled conservatism, they controlled for ideology and antigovernment sentiments. Racial resentment was negatively related to support for permits for concealed handguns and for banning handguns in the home, though this latter effect was mediated by gun ownership. In 2016 and 2017, Filindra and Kaplan published two seminal articles on this topic, establishing the racial basis of gun policy preferences. The 2016 article first reported an experiment in which respondents were racially primed by being shown photos of Black and White faces and asked to rate the people's attractiveness and likability. They were then instructed to express their support for gun control policies

¹² The specific information on these mass shootings is as follows: Columbine High School, Columbine, Colorado; Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Connecticut; Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, Florida; Route 91 Harvest Festival, Las Vegas, Nevada; Pulse, Orlando, Florida; Borderline Bar and Grill, Thousand Oaks, California; Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina; Tree of Life Synagogue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas.

(seven items, such as banning assault weapons, waiting period for firearm purchases) and gun beliefs (eight items, such as guns protect against crime, guns lead to accidents). The experimental condition—being racially primed by Black images—was associated with less support for gun control and for antigun beliefs. Their measure of symbolic racism (the Kinder and Sanders RRS) had a similar negative relationship with the outcome variables. Notably, the interaction of racial resentment \times racial priming treatment also was significant and negative. These results suggest that racial bias is integrally involved in Whites' gun policy preferences.

Filindra and Kaplan's 2016 and 2017 studies also presented multivariate analyses of public opinion surveys. Assessment of data from the 2004 and 2008 NES surveys revealed that their symbolic racism scale was negatively related to support for increased gun regulation by the federal government. Their analysis ruled out that these views were due to principled conservatism by controlling not only for conservative ideology and Republicanism but also for libertarianism and egalitarianism (Filindra and Kaplan 2016). In their article published a year later, they reported on data from a 2015 YouGov survey that contained their gun control policy and gun beliefs scales. They also examined a one-item measure of support for stricter gun laws from a recent Gallup poll. The results again revealed that racial resentment was negatively related to gun control preferences with controls included not only for principled conservatism but also for stereotypes of Blacks as being more violent than Whites. Latinos' attitudes were found to approximate those of Whites (Filindra and Kaplan 2017).

Similar findings are reported in articles analyzing data from a YouGov survey that researchers commissioned on May 30–June 6, 2018, not long after the Valentine's Day (February 14) shooting earlier that year at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in which 17 students and faculty were killed (see also Schutten, Pickett, Burton, Cullen, et al., forthcoming). First, Burton, Pickett, et al. (2021) examined public support for policies to reduce school shootings, including an 11-item gun control policies scale (e.g., ban the sale of weapons to the mentally ill, expand background checks), a 4-item school safety programs scale (e.g., antibullying programs, active shooter drills), and an 11-item school target hardening scale (e.g., access control measures at entrances, bullet-proof windows in the school). Controlling for a range of political and gun-related variables, racial resentment was shown to be a "strong predictor of opposition to gun control, even when it might increase the safety of students at school" (Burton, Pickett, et al., 2021, p. 293). Such resentment,

however, was not related to support for school programs and target hardening, “likely because school shootings are not themselves racialized, even if guns are” (Burton, Pickett, et al., 2021, p. 293). In a follow-up study, Burton, Logan, et al. (2021) found that racial resentment was negatively associated with support for firearm control among gun owners, even controlling for the robust effects of rightward political values. Finally, using the same data set and range of controls, Jonson and colleagues (2021) reported that racial resentment increases support for arming school teachers and nonteaching staff.

3. *Policing Policies.* Research also shows that there is a large Black/White gap in opinions about law enforcement, with Blacks less likely than Whites to view police behaviors as procedurally just (Johnson et al. 2017), more likely to believe that police discriminate against and are racist toward Blacks (Weitzer and Tuch 1999), and more likely to believe that police misconduct is common (Weitzer and Tuch 2004; Weitzer and Tuch 2006). Given these findings, it is unsurprising that racial resentment shapes views of policing.

With several colleagues, Drakulich has examined the intersection of policing, racism, and politics. In 2009, Matsueda and Drakulich used ANES data to examine the political consequences of a measure of police injustice, which measured whether respondents perceived that Blacks were treated more unfairly by the police than Whites. They found that this measure was associated with opposition to efforts to enhance equal opportunity, government ensuring fairness in hiring, and affirmative action. However, using Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) racial resentment scale, they found that “symbolic racism” mediated all of the effect of police injustice on these political outcomes. More recently, comparable findings were shown by Drakulich et al. (2019; see also Drakulich et al. 2017) in a study of voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential elections. Again using ANES data, they showed that support for the police was related to a Trump vote choice only among those high in racial resentment. They concluded that Trump’s expression of support for the police served as a “dog whistle intended to appeal to people who felt threatened by challenges to the racial status quo” (Drakulich et al. 2019, p. 392).

Other studies have shown that racial resentment has a direct effect on support for the police. For example, analyzing survey data from three samples (the ANES, the General Social Survey, and the CCES), Morris and LeCount (2020) discovered that racial resentment increased support for law enforcement spending, even when controlling for other relevant

factors such as conservatism, punitiveness, fear of crime, and the crime rate in the respondent's county. Similarly, Carter and colleagues (2016) reported that among White respondents to multiple waves of the General Social Survey (between 1972 and 2012), racial resentment significantly increased approval of police use of force (see also Carter and Corra 2016).

Using both survey and experimental data, Strickler and Lawson (forthcoming, p. 14) conclude that "white racial resentment helps drive pro-police attitudes." First, based on the 2016 ANES, they report that on a "feeling thermometer," racial resentment increased "warm" feelings for the police. Second, they conducted an experiment in a scenario involving a lethal police shooting, varying the race of the officer and victim. Notably, "whites scoring in the top quartile of the racial resentment index are over *seven times* more likely to state that the police shooting was justified than whites in the bottom quartile" (Strickler and Lawson, forthcoming, p. 14, emphasis in original). Their analysis also revealed that Whites higher on racial resentment were less likely to judge the shooting incident as justified if, in the treatment condition, the officer was depicted as Black and the victim as White.

Recent experimental studies regarding contemporary policing challenges reveal similar results. Nix, Ivanov, and Pickett (forthcoming) embedded an experimental treatment within a national-level Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) survey that manipulated two types of policing during the pandemic: policing that enforced social distance regulations and "precautionary policing" in which officers, to protect their health, reduce enforcement of minor offenses and focus mainly on violent offenses. Their analysis revealed that racial resentment was negatively associated with both forms of "pandemic policing." "In other words," they concluded, "racists want police to stick with enforcing street crimes—the kinds of crimes stereotypically associated with Black people" (forthcoming, p. 17).

Metcalf and Pickett (forthcoming) used a 2020 YouGov survey conducted in the aftermath of the George Floyd killing to examine public support for police using repressive tactics to control protests (e.g., officers monitoring protests wearing riot gear, using nonlethal force to disperse protesters). The experiment varied, among other factors, the goals of the protest—whether it was against police violence and in support of Black Lives Matter, against COVID-19 social distancing rules, against the removal of Confederate monuments, or against immigrant detention centers and arrests of undocumented immigrants. Consistent with past studies, racial resentment increased support for police repression of protesters. It also

had a moderating effect when the protest goal was aimed toward Black Lives Matter and immigrants. “When protesters advocated for the rights of racial and ethnic minorities,” note Metcalfe and Pickett (forthcoming, p. 20), “support for repression increased among those high in resentment but declined among those with low resentment.”

4. *Progressive Criminal Justice Reforms.* Although most research has linked racial resentment to punitiveness, a few studies consider public support for progressive reforms. Ivanov, Novisky, and Vogel (2021) conducted a national YouGov survey on opinions toward decarceration for seven different subgroups of incarcerated people, including a mixture of those awaiting trial and serving sentences, in jail or prison, having violent or nonviolent charges, and being elderly or having a medical condition. The survey implemented an experimental design, in which respondents were randomly assigned to be primed with a photo of a *New York Times* article with the heading “Jails Are Petri Dishes,” followed by a summary of the article emphasizing that “Practices to slow the spread of the virus . . . are nearly impossible inside prisons and jails” (2021, p. 5). Ivanov and colleagues found that informing respondents of these risks had no effect on their support for decarceration. Racial resentment, however, significantly decreased support for releasing any subgroup. Notably, empathetic identification with people who have committed crimes was shown to mediate the effect of racial resentment across all subgroup models except for one—jail inmates with violent charges. The role that concern for out-groups may play in shaping racial attitudes is discussed in the next section.

Butler (2020) assessed the effects of racial resentment not only on punitiveness but also on progressive and race-specific criminal justice policies. She found that racial resentment is negatively related to support for rehabilitation as the primary goal of incarceration and to the beliefs that expungement is a good policy, that the criminal justice system treats Blacks unfairly, and that Blacks are more likely to receive the death penalty than Whites. Importantly, she did not find that racial resentment was significant in models predicting several progressive and race-specific policy opinions: belief in the redeemability of offenders in general and of Black offenders specifically, support for rehabilitation ceremonies and rehabilitation certificates, and the view that Black offenders were “condemned” to a life in crime. The analysis revealed, however, that two other racial attitudes—racial sympathy and white nationalism—influenced a variety of these policy opinions. We address novel research on these constructs in the next two sections.

II. New Direction in Out-Group Racial Attitudes: Racial Sympathy

After a quarter century of conceptual and empirical developments, the research shows that racial resentment has salient political consequences, shaping opposition to social welfare policies and support for punitive policies. Empirical research seeking to explain public policy preferences must attend to Whites' animus toward Blacks. Recently, however, attempts have been made to move beyond an exclusive focus on racial resentment. Two scholars at the forefront of these inquiries are Jennifer Chudy and Ashley Jardina. They overlapped in their doctoral studies in the Department of Political Science at the University of Michigan and were affiliated with Donald Kinder. He served on their dissertation committees, co-chairing Chudy's project. Although their specific focus differed, both developed important initiatives that built on Kinder's research on racial attitudes (Jardina 2014, 2019*b*; Chudy 2017, 2021). Merton (1995, p. 5) refers to such "interaction among students, teachers, and colleagues" as a "cognitive micro-environment" in which "new ideas emerge and develop." When such ideas diffuse and are subject to "manifold elucidation"—as is our purpose in this essay—the result can be the establishment of a "cognitive macro-environment."

At the core of this cognitive micro-environment is the study of Whites' in-group and out-group racial attitudes. Racial resentment is a negative attitude toward Whites' out-group, Blacks. Kinder's students, however, recognized that other group sentiments existed. Jardina's work, discussed in Section III, focuses on Whites' in-group attitudes, exploring the political consequences of White identity and consciousness. Chudy's work attempts to document a positive out-group attitude—racial sympathy. In her dissertation, she defined racial sympathy as "white distress over black suffering" (Chudy 2017, p. 123). She has since reported a more parsimonious version of her perspective in the *Journal of Politics* (2021). As Stephens-Dougan (2021, p. 314) has noted recently in the *Annual Review of Political Science*, Chudy's work is important because "far less is known about the effects of white Americans' attitudes that are not negative, including the racial attitudes that motivate some whites to challenge the racial status quo."

This section unfolds in four parts. First, although the history of race relations in the United States is disquieting, there are nonetheless examples of Whites being concerned for Blacks' welfare. This discussion places the possibility of racial sympathy in its broader context. The next two parts tell the story of how Chudy developed the concept and measure of racial

sympathy. The fourth reviews the emerging research on the impact of racial sympathy on public policy preferences.

A. Social Context

Just as the expression of racial animus can be identified throughout US history, evidence of Whites' sympathy for Blacks can also be documented. As Chudy (2021, p. 123) notes, "White Americans have long engaged in efforts to both obstruct and promote the political advancement of African Americans." Five historical examples highlight instances of Whites' sympathy for Blacks.

First, many Whites advocated for the abolition of slavery and assisted slaves in escaping the South to freedom in the North. In the 1688 petition, *A Minute Against Slavery*, Quaker leaders urged others among them to cease the use of slaves (Lederer 2018, p. 2). Other White religious leaders began to oppose slavery throughout the 1700s and 1800s, and a broader secular abolitionist movement among Whites eventually took hold (Lederer 2018). One White abolitionist, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was praised by Frederick Douglas (an escaped slave, writer, and abolitionist leader), who wrote that "The touching, but too truthful tale" in Stowe's book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "baptized with holy fire myriads who before cared nothing for the bleeding slave" (History.com Editors 2019). In other words, Stowe's book sparked a wave of sympathy among Whites.

Second, in the years after the Civil War, the Farmer's Alliance sought to protect and advance the economic interests of farmers in the South. Although the movement originally excluded formerly enslaved people, it later evolved into the People's Party, also known as the Populist Party, which urged poor Blacks and Whites to work together toward their shared economic and political interests (Chudy 2021). Not all Populists endorsed unity between Blacks and Whites, and one of the Party's most prominent leaders, Thomas Watson, eventually turned away from racial unity and toward white supremacy (Fingerhut 1976). However, the party brought attention to the economic oppression poor Blacks and Whites faced, an issue that would be revisited by civil rights leaders over a half century later (Fingerhut 1976; Dellinger 2018).

Third, Whites supported the civil rights movement, participating in acts of civil disobedience and in marches alongside Black activists throughout the 1960s. An estimated 60,000 Whites participated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963 (National Parks Service

2017). A year later, White college students “traveled from their Northern college campuses to areas of rural Mississippi, putting their lives at risk, to register black voters during Freedom Summer of 1964” (Chudy 2021, p. 123). White allies who participated in civil rights demonstrations alongside Blacks often faced arrest, beatings, and threats, and some, including Viola Liuzzo, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, James Reeb, and Jonathan Daniels, were killed (Freeling 2015). Whites’ support for Black causes has not been merely symbolic; it has at times entailed great risk and sacrifice.

Fourth, after the civil rights movement, in the 1970s, Whites promoted Blacks’ advancement through political action and campaigning (Sonenshein 1993; cited in Chudy 2021), and support for Black politicians among some Whites has continued into the twenty-first century. In the 2008 presidential election, 43 percent of White voters cast their ballots for Barack Obama over John McCain, the White Republican candidate (Cillizza and Cohen 2012). In the 2012 election, 39 percent of White voters supported Obama over another White Republican candidate, Mitt Romney (Cillizza and Cohen 2012). The intergroup threat hypothesis would predict that Whites would vote for a White candidate over a Black candidate in order to protect their in-group’s political power (Blalock 1967). However, Whites’ support for Barack Obama demonstrates that voting across racial lines can occur in large numbers (though such behavior may be affected by in-group racial identity; see Böhm, Funke, and Harth 2010).

Fifth, Whites have joined Blacks in protesting police brutality and racial injustice throughout the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement beginning around 2013, and not only recently in response to the killing of George Floyd. White support for racial justice has also involved forming new organizations, such as White People 4 Black Lives (n.d.), that are specifically aimed toward White political action and gathering White allies. Whites have also actively opposed the white nationalist movement. Recall, for example, the tragic death of Heather Heyer, a White woman, who was killed by a white nationalist while attending the counterprotest to the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville (Lavoie 2019).

Public opinion polls such as Civiqs, which tracks support for the BLM movement, suggest that White support for racial injustice may be responsive to specific incidents—which would support Chudy’s idea that racial sympathy is evoked by salient examples of discrimination. For example, Civiqs (2021) shows that among White registered voters, support for BLM increased from 37 percent on May 25, 2020 (the day Floyd was killed) to

a peak at 44 percent on June 2, 2020. However, support steadily decreased after June 2 and has hovered around 38–40 percent since mid-July 2020. Although support for BLM is not a direct measure of racial sympathy, these trends suggest that White sympathy for the explicitly racialized and pro-Black cause may ebb and flow depending on the salience of Black suffering. It also suggests that White support for Black causes may be lessened when Blacks engage in behaviors that they disagree with in the name of racial justice, such as the protesting and rioting that began in the days after Floyd’s killing. Thus, even when racial sympathy is evoked, support for Black causes may be tempered when events also elicit racial resentment.¹³ The case for the distinction between the two constructs and for Chudy’s claim that racial sympathy is evoked in response to specific instances of discrimination rather than abstract notions of Black experiences will be discussed further below.

Again, these historical moments suggest that Whites’ attitudes toward Blacks cannot be solely characterized by the degree to which they are resentful of them. Assisting Black slaves in escaping the South to freedom; facing lasting, even fatal, consequences while marching for Blacks’ civil rights; leveraging political power to advance Black politicians and the shared interests of Blacks and Whites; taking to the streets to protest police brutality against Black citizens; standing face-to-face with a group of torch-carrying White nationalists—all these actions suggest more than the absence of prejudice. These actions imply concern about the suffering of Blacks—or what might be termed “racial sympathy.”

B. Chudy’s Conceptualization of Racial Sympathy

“Political science research,” notes Chudy (2021, p. 123), “has narrowed its focus to studying those whites who dislike blacks, and it has done so with a gusto” (for an exception, see Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2003). But this lens filters out another sentiment a person can hold—“an in-group member’s distress over out-group misfortune” (p. 124). Racial sympathy

¹³ In a special section of commentary on the one-year anniversary of George Floyd’s death in *The New York Times*, Chudy and Jefferson (2021) discuss the rise and then decline of White support for Black Lives Matter. Concern after most highly publicized tragedies, including those with mass casualties, wanes quickly (Slovic et al. 2017). In the case of George Floyd, however, Chudy and Jefferson document that the decline in support was precipitous among Whites and Republicans. The implication is that racial sympathy varies with social conditions and is shaped by in-group membership.

exists on a spectrum. Whites' reaction to Black suffering varies from "extreme distress" to "indifference," with most people falling between these extreme poles (p. 124).

Most important, racial sympathy is distinct from racial prejudice. In *Divided by Color*, Kinder and Sanders (1996) refer to racial resentment as feeling "unsympathetic" toward Blacks. Regarding their racial resentment scale, they state, "The questions distinguish between those whites who are generally sympathetic toward blacks and those who are unsympathetic" (p. 106). Chudy (2021, p. 125) is clear in arguing, however, that "sympathy is not merely the absence of prejudice" but "the presence of distress." As a result, "it is not sufficient to invert racial prejudice measures" to capture sympathy.¹⁴ In fact, "since racial sympathy is independent from racial prejudice it is possible that a white individual could possess both attitudes simultaneously. . . . Low prejudice does not guarantee sympathy." This contention carries a methodological prediction: measures of racial sympathy and racial resentment should load on different factors. As we report below, research shows that they do (Chudy 2017, 2021; Hannan et al., forthcoming).

Chudy also is careful to distinguish racial sympathy from the concept of empathy. The constructs are close in content and likely have similar effects of increasing support for social welfare policies and decreasing support for punitive policies (cf. Hannan et al. [forthcoming] with Unnever, Cullen, and Fisher [2005]; Unnever and Cullen [2009]; Godcharles et al. [2019]; Foglia and Connell [2019]). The key feature of empathy is "empathetic identification," or the ability to imagine, cognitively and emotionally, what another person is experiencing (Batson 2009; Unnever and Cullen 2009; Cuff et al. 2016). By contrast, sympathy involves feeling badly for another person, but no claim is made to know what it is like to be in someone's shoes. White students at the University of Michigan interviewed by Chudy in preparation for her research expressed "remorse" or "regret" about the

¹⁴ Although the literature is small, scholars' have explored the meaning of the low end of the racial resentment scale. Kam and Burge (2017) argue that the scale assesses attributions for Black Americans' economic and social status, with high scores measuring attributions of individual failings and low scores measuring attributions of structural inequalities. Recently, Agadjanian et al. (2021, p. 27) suggest that the racial resentment scale is "two-sided," with low scores assessing Whites' favoring Blacks and high scores assessing Whites' disfavoring Blacks. These works cannot claim that low scores measure the specific attitude of racial sympathy. However, they are important in showing scholars' interest in Whites' positive sentiments toward Blacks.

difficulties Blacks faced. But they were equally insistent that they “*could not* imagine what it was like to be black” (2017, p. 37, emphasis in original). Because Whites seemed to deny the vicarious experience integral to empathy, Chudy selected the term “racial sympathy” to capture Whites’ expression of distress over Black misfortune.

Finally, Chudy (2021, p. 124) contends that racial sympathy has political consequences, prompting Whites to “support policies perceived to benefit blacks.” She notes that most Whites have little daily contact with Blacks, which makes politics “one of the few venues in which white Americans can exercise their sympathy.” She would expect racial sympathy to be most consequential when political outcomes are racial (“feature blacks prominently”) or are race coded (“associated with African Americans implicitly”).

C. *Measuring Racial Sympathy*

Chudy’s next step was to develop a measure of racial sympathy that could be administered on public opinion surveys, that showed how sympathy could be, and that was distinguishable from racial resentment. A key insight from her preparatory qualitative research was that Whites’ sympathy was a “reaction to tangible, personal suffering experienced by black Americans,” rather than an expression of “abstract and principled notions of equality” (Chudy 2021, p. 126). Thus, unlike the racial resentment scale, she chose not to develop a list of statements measuring sympathy (e.g., “Innocent Black citizens who get upset when they have done nothing wrong but are stopped by the police and treated like criminal suspects”).¹⁵ Instead, drawing on the method used by Schuman and Harding (1963) in “Sympathetic Identification with the Underdog,” she created four vignettes with each describing an incident in which a Black individual or group was mistreated.

¹⁵ This item is taken from Butler (2020), who developed an alternative five-item measure of racial sympathy. The scale had a high reliability ($\alpha = .81$) and factor loadings ranging from .68 to .79. As with Chudy’s (2021) vignette measure, these items loaded on a separate factor from racial resentment. The other four items in the scale are: Black families in inner-city areas who won’t let their kids go outside because they are afraid they might get killed by a stray bullet in a drive-by shooting; Black kids in a really poor neighborhood who often are hungry or get sick because their parents do not have much money; A young Black male who grows up in a high-crime inner-city neighborhood, joins a gang, and is shot to death at age 18; A Black female who attends an Ivy League university (e.g., Harvard, Yale) but feels alone and excluded because there are not many other African Americans around. The response options were identical to Chudy’s, with the respondents asked: “How much sympathy do you have for the person described in each of the scenarios below?” The correlation with the vignette measure is .70. Data analyses revealed similar results regardless of which measure was used.

These are listed in table 2. According to Chudy (2017, pp. 39–40), the vignettes “enabled subjects to react directly to specific stimuli rather than to abstract notions of discrimination and inequality.” The respondents were asked how much sympathy they felt for the person/group using a five-point scale ranging from “I do not feel any sympathy” to “A great deal of sympathy.” This measure was included on a module of the 2013 CCES¹⁶ fielded by YouGov/Polimetrix. Among the 1,000 respondents were 751 White subjects.

Given the prominence and robust effects of Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) scale, Chudy (2017, 2021) had to demonstrate that her racial sympathy index had robust statistical properties. Four findings were relevant. First, the racial sympathy measure had high internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .74. Second and most important, her factor analysis revealed that the items in the sympathy and resentment measures loaded on separate factors (racial sympathy loadings = .58, .63, .86, and .88; racial resentment loadings = .79, .84, .88, and .93) (Chudy 2021, p. 128, table 2B). This analysis showed that these were statistically distinct constructs. Third, racial sympathy and racial resentment were negatively but only moderately correlated ($r = -.45$). Fourth, Chudy (2021) displayed the joint distribution of racial sympathy and racial resentment, which supported the idea that an individual could feel sympathy for Blacks’ suffering while simultaneously resenting Blacks as a group. Although a few respondents scored low on both scales, the racial sympathy scores among those who scored high on racial resentment were dispersed across the range of the racial sympathy scale. In other words, many racially resentful Whites are sympathetic toward Blacks.

Chudy’s finding that racial sympathy and racial resentment are empirically distinct has since been replicated by Hannan et al. (forthcoming) with 2019 data also collected by YouGov. The statistics in the two studies were nearly identical, with racial sympathy and resentment again loading on separate factors and displaying very similar coefficients as reported by Chudy (2021). The correlation between the racial resentment and sympathy scales was also comparable (Chudy, $r = -.45$; Hannan et al., $r = -.50$), as were the alphas for the racial sympathy measure (Chudy, $\alpha = .74$; Hannan et al., $\alpha = .796$). Finally, Hannan et al. (forthcoming, p. 13, tables 2 and 3) further replicated these results with two 2019 MTurk

¹⁶ The Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) was recently renamed the Cooperative Election Study (CES).

TABLE 2
Chudy's (2021) Racial Sympathy Scale

-
1. Mrs. Lewis, a White woman with young children, posts advertisements for a nanny on community bulletin boards. She receives many inquiries and decides to interview all applicants over the phone. Mrs. Lewis is most impressed with a woman named Laurette, who has relevant experience, is an excellent cook, and comes enthusiastically recommended. Mrs. Lewis invites Laurette over for what she expects will be the final step of the hiring process. When Laurette arrives, Mrs. Lewis is surprised to see that Laurette is Black. After Laurette's visit, which goes very well, Mrs. Lewis thanks her for her time but says that she will not be offered the job. When Laurette asks why, Mrs. Lewis says that she doesn't think that her children would feel comfortable around her. Laurette is upset about Mrs. Lewis's actions.
 2. Tim is a White man who owns a hair salon. His business is growing rapidly and so he decides to place an advertisement to hire new stylists. In the advertisement, he writes that interested applicants should come for an interview first thing next Monday. When he arrives at the salon on Monday, he sees a line of seven or eight people waiting outside the door, all of whom appear to be Black. He approaches the line and tells the applicants that he's sorry, but the positions have been filled. The applicants are upset; they feel they have been turned away because of their race.
 3. Milford is a mid-sized city in the Northeast. The main bus depot for the city is located in the Whittier section of Milford, a primarily Black neighborhood. Whittier community leaders argue that the concentration of buses produces serious health risks for residents; they point to the high asthma rates in Whittier as evidence of the bus depot's harmful effects. The Milford Department of Transportation officials, who are mostly White, state that Whittier is the best location for the depot because it is centrally located and many Whittier residents take the bus. Furthermore, it would be expensive to relocate the bus depot to a new location. Whittier community leaders are very upset by the Department's inaction.
 4. Michael is a young Black man who lives in a Midwestern city. One day Michael is crossing the street and jaywalks in front of cars. Some local police officers see Michael jaywalk and stop and question him. Michael argues that he was just jaywalking and is otherwise a law-abiding citizen. The police officers feel that Michael is being uncooperative and so they give him a pat down to see if he is carrying any concealed weapons. Michael is very upset by this treatment.
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NOTE.—After each vignette, respondents were asked, "How much sympathy do you feel for [insert Black character/group described]," and chose from (1) "I do not feel any sympathy," (2) "A little sympathy," (3) "Some sympathy," (4) "A lot of sympathy," (5) "A great deal of sympathy."

studies. Again, the results across all studies were similar. Taken together, these findings support Chudy's contention that racial sympathy is a distinct racial attitude that can be measured.

D. Consequences of Racial Sympathy

Political scientists study racial attitudes because race remains a contentious issue in the United States and because it has consequences, affecting

public support for policies that are explicitly and implicitly racial. Given the robust and general effects of racial resentment, any new entrants into this field of study must show that their novel proposed racial attitude is both distinct from racial resentment and has empirical effects in multivariate models above and beyond Kinder and Sanders's (1996) standard measure. Chudy overcame the first hurdle of demonstrating the strong statistical properties of her racial sympathy measure. She also addressed the second challenge, showing empirically that racial sympathy has political consequences. Both her research and other recent studies suggest that racial sympathy affects support for criminal justice policies.

1. *Consequences for Social Policy.* To assess the effects of racial sympathy, Chudy followed the standard protocol used in racial attitude studies. First, she included her racial sympathy index on a module of the 2013 CCES, thus having national-level data on 751 White respondents. Second, she incorporated measures of "racialized public policies," including support for government aid to Blacks, welfare, subsidies for Black businesses, scholarships for qualified Black students, funding for schools in Black neighborhoods, and affirmative action (Chudy 2017, 2021). Third, to avoid the possibility that racial sympathy is conflated with principled liberalism, she controlled, in various sensitivity checks, for support of limited government and egalitarianism. Fourth and most important, along with standard political and socio-demographic controls, the multivariate model included the Kinder and Sanders (1996) racial resentment scale. Fifth, to determine if the effects of racial sympathy are specific to race-related policies, she examined its relationship with three policies that benefit women—abortion rights, unpaid parental leave for six months, and women's affirmative action. These latter analyses also were conducted with a measure of gender sympathy, rather than racial sympathy, in the model.

As in previous studies (discussed in Section I), racial resentment was a strong predictor in reducing support for all racialized policy outcomes and for all but abortion in the women's policy outcomes. Still, even with racial resentment in the multivariate models, racial sympathy proved to have meaningful effects. With the exception of affirmative action, Chudy's construct was positively and significantly related to all other policies beneficial to Blacks. The effects of racial sympathy, however, were "group-specific," with this measure not associated with support for any of the "gendered public policies" (Chudy 2021, p. 130). By contrast, the measure of gender sympathy was related to support for women's leave and affirmative action, though not for abortion. These results led Chudy (2021, p. 130) to conclude that

“racial sympathy is primarily a racial attitude” that is not “broadly transferable” to other groups also enduring social inequality. The broader takeaway is that Chudy succeeded in establishing racial sympathy as a concept and measure to be included in future investigations of public policy preferences.

2. *Consequences for Criminal Justice Policy.* In a 2016 YouGov study, Chudy explored further the race-specific effects of racial sympathy. Notably, her experiment focused on “a timely domain of racialized public policy—criminal justice” (Chudy 2021, p. 132). The respondents were given a “crime blotter” that indicated that a person had confessed to painting graffiti on a historic church in a Black neighborhood. The experimental manipulation involved a racial prime—an accompanying photo that randomly varied the perpetrator’s race as White or Black. The respondents were asked how many hours of community service the offender should serve. Chudy set forth an “activation” thesis, anticipating that the racial prime should affect the responses of racially sympathetic White respondents. Her prognostication was correct. Racial sympathy reduced the assigned sentence, “but only when the culprit is black” (p. 132). This finding was sustained when controls were introduced for racial resentment.

Recently, Hannan et al. (forthcoming, p. 2) have attempted to “show the benefits of transferring Chudy’s concept of racial sympathy from political science into” criminology. Part of this project involved demonstrating that racial sympathy was a statistically viable construct distinctive from racial resentment. The other part was to explore the consequences of sympathy on punishment opinions. Using a 2019 YouGov survey, Hannan et al. found that, with racial resentment in the multivariate model, racial sympathy was not significantly related to support for the death penalty and for harsher courts. Two effects, however, were detected. First, recall Chudy’s “activation thesis” that racial sympathy becomes salient when the policy is race-specific. Consistent with this premise, the analysis revealed that racial sympathy was positively associated with the belief that the death penalty is racially discriminatory. Furthermore, racial sympathy also was significantly related to support for the view that rehabilitation should be the main emphasis of prison.

This latter finding suggests that racial sympathy might have general effects in increasing support for social welfare approaches to justice-involved individuals. Based on the data from the 2019 YouGov survey, Butler (2020) reported that racial sympathy was related to racialized correctional outcomes, increasing belief in the redeemability of Black offenders and reducing belief that Black offenders are “condemned” to a life in crime. However,

her analysis also revealed that racial sympathy was positively related to belief in the redeemability of offenders in general (regardless of race) and to support for rehabilitation ceremonies and rehabilitation certificates that help to nullify the negative effects of criminal records (Butler 2020). These results persisted with measures in the model not only for racial resentment but also for white nationalism—a subject addressed in the next section.

Although Chudy's work is recent, the empirical findings to date suggest that racial sympathy is a racial attitude that social scientists, including criminologists, should investigate. Animus toward Blacks and other people of color will remain the core predictor of public policy opinions (Unnever, Cullen, and Jonson 2008; Ramirez and Peterson 2020). But as American society becomes more diverse, the complexity of racial attitudes will merit exploration. Section III discusses another novel line of inquiry that is likely to prove influential.

III. Beyond Racial Resentment: Whites' Views of Themselves

The prevailing paradigm for studying racial attitudes and their consequences has long been to examine the role of Whites' animus toward Blacks in shaping policy preferences. In the past few years, however, a decided shift in this paradigm has occurred. Rather than focus on Whites' out-group attitudes, scholars are examining the salience of in-group attitudes—that is, not just how Whites view Blacks but how they view themselves, including their racial identity and perceived status (Kolchin 2002; Doane 2003). Nowhere is this intellectual shift more noticeable than in political science, where three major books have recently appeared: Ashley Jardina's (2019b) *White Identity Politics*, Eric Kaufmann's (2019d) *Whiteshift*, and Richard Fording and Sanford Schram's (2020) *Hard White*. These works followed Arlie Russell Hochschild's (2016) acclaimed ethnography about the challenges facing segments of White America, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, and J. D. Vance's (2016) memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy*, of one White family with roots in Appalachia.

In this section, we first set the social and political context that nourished this interest in Whites' in-group racial attitudes. Current lines of inquiry are then discussed, with special attention given to research on White identity and consciousness and white nationalism. Importantly, studies now show that these in-group views are distinct from out-group views and that they affect social policy preferences. The section ends with a review of

recent studies showing the impact of White racial attitudes on criminal justice policy views, suggesting that a broader paradigm incorporating Whites' diverse racial attitudes merits further investigation.

A. Social Context

Whites have a long history of being the nation's predominant ethnic group, with British descendants accounting for 80 percent of the population at the time the United States gained its independence (Kaufmann 2019*d*). Roughly 250 years later, Whites are facing inevitable loss of their majority status. The US Census and the Pew Research Center estimate that by about 2045, the United States will become a "majority-minority" country—that is, racial and ethnic minorities will compose the majority of the population within a quarter century (Colby and Ortman 2015; Pew Research Center 2015; Vespa, Medina, and Armstrong 2020).¹⁷ Along with the District of Columbia, California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas are already considered majority-minority states (Mizrahi 2020). Several other states will soon join this list, including Arizona, New Jersey, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, and Nevada (Mizrahi 2020). Minorities also are the majority in the large metropolitan areas of New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, Dallas, Atlanta, and Orlando (Frey 2020).

What has prompted this change? Kaufmann and Haklai (2008) contend that immigration and low "native fertility" are the central contributing factors. The Pew Research Center (Budiman 2020) maintains that 44.8 million people in the United States in 2018 were foreign-born, which is estimated to increase to 78.2 million by 2065. Likewise, the total fertility rate (i.e., the number of anticipated children birthed in their lifetime) for White (non-Hispanic) women was 1.61 in 2019, with the rate for Hispanic women being 1.94 and for Black women being 1.76 (Martin et al. 2021). Although their impact occurs gradually, these demographic changes have reached the point at which a majority-minority population in the United States is inevitable. Losing this racial/ethnic majority status potentially

¹⁷ Notably, a careful reading of these census data and reports finds that these projections were based on non-Hispanic, exclusive, Whites (i.e., omitting Hispanics and biracial Americans from "White").

is disconcerting to those who believe that the United States should remain a White-majority country. As poignantly captured by Hochschild (2016), they risk feeling that they are “strangers in their own land.”

But it is not just the purely demographic change that places this group on edge and at risk of feeling alienated in their home country. A swiftly changing culture that promotes values antithetical to their own has served as a canary in a coal mine of sorts, signaling a tidal wave of transformation in American life and culture. Politically, the racial and ethnic diversity of national-level politicians has been steadily increasing, reaching its highest level yet (23 percent non-White) in the 117th Congress (Schaeffer 2021). Still, it was the election of Barack Obama in 2008 that may have served as the first sign that the White-majority’s stronghold was at risk (Jardina 2014).

Under eight years of Obama’s presidency, the United States experienced massive changes that increased the threat to the White-majority and its hegemonic values. The Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) was framed by conservative media as “socialized medicine” that would lead America one step closer to becoming a socialist country (e.g., Atlas 2015). The 2011 repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in the military jeopardized the traditional masculine, heterosexual-male-dominated image of the US military (Britton and Williams 1995; Beals 2020). Additionally, Obama’s policies to address global climate change threatened to reduce the US reliance on fossil fuels—a resource seen as central to their jobs and lifestyle—to less than 20 percent by 2035 (Obama 2011). His announcement of the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy stoked concerns that over 1.7 million “illegal” immigrants were here to stay (Passel and Lopez 2012). The 2014 rise in media reporting of police shooting and killing unarmed Black men (e.g., Michael Brown, Eric Garner) and the overarching concern of systemic injustices in American society threatened to degrade the traditional institutions of formal control, which have helped to keep power in the hands of the majority (Quah and Davis 2015). The following year, the Census Bureau provided the statement, which the media publicized widely, “by 2044, more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group (any group other than non-Hispanic White alone)” (Colby and Ortman 2015, p. 1).

These social and economic changes were not universally viewed as positive, especially by a portion of White Americans who felt their way of life was “under siege” (see, e.g., Trump 2016*b*; 2018*a*). Arguably, Donald Trump understood and capitalized on this discord in his ascendancy to the presidency. In his 2015 announcement of his presidential bid, Trump fed on

the insecurities of Whites, specifically honing in on the alleged out-group threat that Whites were facing (e.g., immigrants as “bad hombrés,” “murderers,” “rapists”) in order to foster out-group animus (Blake 2016; Davis and Shear 2019). Trump also primed his supporters with “in-group love” (i.e., solidarity) with his proclamation that he would “take back our country” and would “Make America Great Again” (Sanger-Katz 2016; Trump 2016*a*)—a phrase, note Fording and Schram (2020, p. 40), easily “decoded to mean we need to ‘Make America White Again.’”

In deconstructing how Trump ascended to the highest office in the land, researchers note that views of race played major roles (Jardina 2019*b*; Graham et al. 2021). Above and beyond political party affiliation and political viewpoint, Trump supporters were those harboring greater levels of racial resentment and greater support for white nationalism—“a desire to keep the United States White demographically and culturally” (Graham et al. 2021, p. 1). As Jardina (2019*a*) puts it, Trump exploited polarized racial attitudes “by appealing to the attitudes held by two distinct groups of white Americans—those who possess a sense of animosity toward members of immigrant groups like Muslims and Latinos, and separately, whites who may demonstrate little out-group hostility, but instead have a strong sense of solidarity with their racial group” (p. 447).

As president, Trump further stoked out-group animus not only in his statements and tweets (e.g., Trump 2018*b*, 2020*a*) but also in his official policies, such as his restriction of immigration from Muslim-majority countries (i.e., the “Muslim ban”), his funding of a wall along the nation’s southern border, withdrawing the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, the enactment of his child separation policy at the US–Mexico crossing, and more (Miller Center 2021). Similarly, Trump affirmed his support for in-group members, including white nationalists, in a number of celebrated moments. He asserted that there were “very fine people on both sides” of the racially volatile Unite the Right Rally and counterprotest in Charlottesville, Virginia (Holan 2019), told the Proud Boys to “stand back and stand by”—viewed by this group as a call to action (Ronayne and Kunzelman 2020)—and urged his supporters to help “stop the steal” of the 2020 election and their America (Trump 2020*b*; 2020*c*), inspiring the insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021. Clearly, Trump captured something that only a small group of political and social scientists had noticed—the importance of how Whites feel about their racial identity. In this context, the potential impact of Whites’ in-group attitudes on public policy preferences merits investigation.

B. White Identity and Consciousness

Recall that Ashley Jardina earned her doctorate in political science at the University of Michigan, where she studied with Donald Kinder. “My project,” she notes, “builds off his brilliant and far-reaching groundwork in race and public opinion” (Jardina 2019*b*, pp. xiv–xv). Consistent with Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) position, Jardina understood the salient consequences of racial resentment on policy preferences. Her unique contribution, however, was in proposing that “it is now time to reconsider the scope of racial attitudes associated with Whites’ political evaluations” (p. 7). In her view, Whites’ “racial attitudes are not merely defined by prejudice,” for “whiteness is a salient and central component of American politics” (p. 7). These insights are captured most fully in her *White Identity Politics* (2019*b*).

Jardina (2019*b*) argues that racial attitudes need to be understood through two key dimensions: in-group and out-group attitudes. Until recently, scholars have focused on the racial identity of minority groups—so much so that the “claim that whites possess a racial identity” would strike them as surprising (p. 6). As a result, research focused exclusively on Whites’ out-group attitudes, in particular racial resentment. Her special contribution is in illuminating the unseen nature of Whites’ racial attitudes—of “making the invisible visible” (2019*b*, p. 21). The challenge is to probe what Whites think of themselves. For Jardina, the key in-group attitudes are White identity and consciousness. We discuss them in turn.

As the dominant group, it has been assumed that Whites “do not, by and large, think about their whiteness” (Jardina 2019*b*, p. 6). Due to their numerical and subordinate status, scholars viewed minorities as having a racial identity (e.g., as an African American). Jardina argues that many Whites now have a similar racial identity, which has three components: centrality, positive group evaluation, and a sense of commonality. First, by centrality, Jardina means that group membership holds special significance to a person; it is part of their self-concept. This can be assessed by asking: “How important is being white to your identity?” (Jardina 2019*b*, p. 57). Second, those with a White identity evaluate their group membership positively. Jardina proposes to test this component by asking: “To what extent do you feel that white people in this country have a lot to be proud of?” (p. 58). Third, a White identity involves “commonality” or having strong in-group ties. Jardina (2019*b*, p. 58) offers this measure: “How much would you say that whites in this country have a lot in common with one another?” Based on survey data, Jardina (2019*b*) estimates that 30–40 percent of Whites have a White identity.

Jardina proposes that Whites can also have racial consciousness, one component of which is White identity. In the political science literature, however, group consciousness involves not only “identification with a group” but also two other factors—“a political awareness or ideology regarding the group’s relative position in society” and “a commitment to collective action aimed at realizing the group’s interests” (Miller et al. 1981, p. 495). Applying this definition to White Americans’ consciousness, Jardina (2019b, p. 60) first includes her work on White identity and then highlights two other components. The first is Whites’ perception of their relative deprivation—of their belief that other racial groups are “receiving some benefit at the expense of whites.” The second is the sense of racial “collective orientation” or efficacy—an inclination of Whites “to work together with other group members to eliminate challenges to the group’s dominance.” Put simply, White consciousness is high among those who have a White identity, believe that Whites are being taken advantage of because of their race, and see a need for Whites to act collectively to protect their status in society (see also Fording and Schram 2020).

Jardina suggests that embracing a social identity as White may be particularly appealing to those who feel “dispossessed, persecuted, and threatened by America’s changing racial dynamics” (2019b, p. 9). Ethnographic accounts support this notion. In *Strangers in Their Own Land*, Hochschild (2016) reports on her five years of fieldwork in the Lake Charles, Louisiana, area studying Tea Party adherents and other rightward-leaning Republicans. As one of her interviewees stated, “liberals think that Bible-believing Southerners are ignorant, backward, rednecks, losers. They think we’re racist, sexist, homophobic, and maybe fat” (p. 23). Another described himself as “pro-life, pro-gun, pro-freedom to live our own lives as we see fit so long as we don’t hurt others. And I’m anti-big government. . . . Our government is way too big, too greedy, too incompetent, too bought, and it’s not ours anymore. We need to get back to our local communities, like we had at Armelise [a historically slave-owning plantation in Louisiana]. Honestly, we’d be better off” (Hochschild 2016, p. 6). Hochschild cements this perceived threat documenting one man’s views of the Syrian refugees being brought to the United States in 2015: “If you let them into the US they will have all our rights to things” (p. 219). As Hochschild (2016, p. 139, emphasis in original) famously summarized their concern: “Blacks, women, immigrants, refugees, brown pelicans—all have cut ahead of you in line. But it’s people like *you* who have made this country great. You feel uneasy. It has to be said: the line cutters irritate you. They are violating rules of fairness.”

These White Louisianans now feel like “strangers in their own land,” and they want “their homeland back” (2016, p. 219).

Empirical analyses of those high in White identity and consciousness find that they are individuals who are “lower in education, higher in authoritarianism, and with greater levels of SDO [social dominance orientation]” (Jardina 2019*b*, p. 115). Notably, the relationship between White identity and consciousness to living in the South or in a rural area is statistically significant but modest at best. Those with White group consciousness can be found across the United States. Because of population density, a majority of Trump voters in the 2020 presidential election (38 million of 74 million) resided in states won by Biden (Bump 2020).

A key issue is whether Whites’ in-group and out-group attitudes are distinct or merely two ends of the same spectrum. If they are part of the same worldview, then measures of Whiteness and racial resentment would be highly correlated and, in factor analysis, would load on the same factor (see table 3). Importantly, this is not the case. For example, across six different analyses, Jardina (2019*b*, p. 77) finds only a low correlation (ranging from .13 to .23) between White identity/consciousness and racial resentment. She concludes that in-group “attitudes are not synonymous with prejudice” (2019*b*, p. 5). Although there is a relationship, many of those with a White identity do not harbor racial resentment. Equally telling, she observes (2019*b*, p. 5), “many more” of those lacking a White identity nonetheless “possess some degree of negative affect toward racial and ethnic minorities.”

Finally, White identity/consciousness is not the same as white supremacy, which presumes White racial superiority and promotes segregation and out-group animus (Crawford et al. 1994; Chin 2013). Jardina (2019*b*) estimates that only 3 percent of the 2012 ANES respondents fell into a group that she categorizes as extremists—those holding both the highest level of racial resentment and the highest level of White identity. “Like most whites,” she observes, “the vast majority of those who identify with their racial group reject assertions of white supremacy and racism.”

C. White Nationalism

The looming reality of the United States becoming a majority-minority nation has led a segment of the White population to advocate that America remain White culturally and demographically. They wish to preserve the tradition of the United States as a “White nation”—a status that has prevailed for two and one-half centuries (Jones 2016). This focus leads to characterization of these racial attitudes as “white nationalism” (Taub

TABLE 3
 Factor Analysis of Items Measuring White Identity/Consciousness,
 White Nationalism, and Racial Resentment
 (N = 464 White Respondents)

| Respective Theoretical Construct (Items) | F1 | F2 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| <i>White Identity/Consciousness</i> (Jardina 2019b) | | |
| 1. How important is being white to your identity? | .896 | -.127 |
| 2. How much would you say that whites in this country have a lot in common with one another? | .906 | -.333 |
| 3. How important is it that whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites? | .705 | .073 |
| <i>White Nationalism</i> (Kulig et al. 2021) | | |
| 4. The immigrants now invading our country and their liberal supporters want to turn America into a third-world country where White people are a tiny minority. | .609 | .353 |
| 5. Although people won't admit it, White people and their culture are what made America great in the first place. | .648 | .319 |
| 6. Although everyone is welcome in the country, America must remain mostly a White nation to remain #1 in the world. | .863 | .044 |
| 7. We need to reduce immigration to keep the US a mostly White nation, which is what God meant it to be. | .848 | .013 |
| <i>Racial Resentment</i> (Kinder and Sanders 1996) | | |
| 8. It is 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. | .281 | .687 |
| 9. Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors. | .229 | .727 |
| 10. Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve. | -.258 | .993 |
| 11. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class. | -.180 | .970 |
| Factor Cronbach alpha based on standardized items | .915 | .888 |

NOTE.—Promax rotation; 72.13% of variance explained in two-factor solution. Boldface represents factor loadings greater than .600.

2016; Srikantiah and Sinnar 2018; Graham et al. 2021).¹⁸ Kaufmann (2019d) prefers the term “ethno-traditional nationalism,” in part because

¹⁸ The phrase “white nationalism” is associated with and used interchangeably with “white supremacy” (e.g., Swain 2002). White supremacist groups who downplay the biological and genetic component of their ideology have adopted this term to “show that they are not ‘anti’ any race but are rather safeguarding the ‘civil rights’ of whites” (Hughes 2009, p. 925). In this manner, they use the phrase “white nationalism” to increase societal acceptance and palatability of their beliefs to appeal to a broader audience (Berbrier 1999; Jacobs 2017; DiAngelo 2018; Hartzell 2018).

it would pertain to any racial or ethnic group seeking to maintain its dominance regardless of nation. Whether in the United States, Australia, or Europe, Kaufmann (2019*d*, p. 2) maintains that a “whiteshift” in population is “replacing the self-confidence of white majorities with an existential insecurity” (see also Jones 2016). By contrast, many other Whites—especially those who Kaufmann (2019*d*) terms “cosmopolitans”—embrace diversity and the social changes it reflects and sponsors.

White nationalism is rooted in the historical fusion of White racial identity with American national identity. “White majorities in the West are every bit as ethnic as minorities are,” observes Kaufmann (2019*d*, p. 8), “but for many, their sense of ethnicity and nationhood is blurred. . . . This arises because being white in a predominantly white society . . . does not confer much distinctiveness.” Demographic and cultural changes have challenged these taken-for-granted assumptions. To give but one more example, many national symbols—such as Thanksgiving and Columbus Day holidays, or the narrative of the westward expansion of the United States—“double as white” symbols (Kaufmann 2019*d*, p. 9). The same could be said of the Confederate flag, statues commemorating Confederate soldiers, and public buildings named after White historic figures with racist pasts. Criticism of these “exclusive ethnic symbols,” notes Kaufmann (2019*d*, p. 9), “raises the visibility of white identity, drawing it out from beneath the shadow of the nation.”

White nationalism is predicated on embrace of this emergent White identity, but its distinctive quality lies in the content of the racial beliefs that attach to this identity. Four interrelated orientations are relevant (Kaufmann 2019*d*; Graham et al. 2021). First, white nationalists value traditional—that is, White-centric—culture, rooted primarily in their European heritage. It is these values rooted in Western civilization, they contend, that allowed the United States to become a world power and the greatest nation on earth. Slogans such as “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) resonate because recent social transformations are seen as jeopardizing what has worked to ensure the nation’s preeminence. Second, they believe Whites are denigrated for their traditional views, often portrayed as biased. They are made to feel like “strangers in their own land” despite, in their view, having created the very country now benefitting outsiders. They feel they are the victims—under attack by intolerant, politically correct leftists, multiculturalists, and foreigners who want to steal “their country” from them. Third, unrestrained immigration is of particular concern because it rapidly erodes Whites’ demographic majority

and cultural hegemony. They favor instead “slower immigration in order to permit enough immigrants to voluntarily assimilate into the ethnic majority, maintaining the white ethno-tradition” (Kaufmann 2019*d*, p. 11). Fourth, their ultimate goal is to “secure their multi-generational group attachments and identity reference points for posterity” (Kaufmann 2019*d*, p. 69). White nationalism is needed to keep the United States a White nation—open to all but always reflecting its heritage.

Finally, white Christian nationalism has been developed as a separate, but undoubtedly overlapping, line of inquiry, most notably by scholars such as Andrew Whitehead, Samuel Perry, and Joshua Davis (Whitehead and Perry 2020*b*). In 2016, Robert Jones captured how the ongoing demographic transformation would result in, as his book’s title stated, *The End of White Christian America*. In this context, this brand of nationalism has gained salience as an effort to ensure that the United States remains a Christian nation. The project involves “idealizing America’s mythic past” and pining “for America’s ‘return’ to her Christian foundations” (Davis and Perry 2021, p. 515). It also insists on the inclusion of Christianity in expressions of the “national identity, public policies, and sacred symbols” (Whitehead and Perry 2020*a*, p. 2). Tellingly, Christian nationalism seeks to “draw boundaries around who is truly American, defining who ‘we’ are as a nation and defending ‘our’ status privilege over the identified ‘they’” (Whitehead and Perry 2020*a*, pp. 2–3). Put simply, such Whites see “being a Christian as essential to being ‘truly American’” (Davis and Perry 2021, p. 519).

The literature on ethno-traditional white nationalism suggests that racial or out-group resentment is not integral to this worldview (Taub 2016); being depicted and thus stigmatized as a “white supremacist” is resented (Hochschild 2016; Kaufmann 2019*d*). By contrast, the salience of boundary maintenance to white Christian nationalism—of distinguishing who merits affiliation—encourages not only in-group amity but also out-group animus. Disquietingly, endorsing this “Christian” cultural framework is associated empirically with views supporting the inferiority of non-Whites, a societal hierarchy that continues to benefit “White, straight, native-born, Protestant men” (Baker, Perry, and Whitehead 2020, p. 275), xenophobia that expresses itself in anti-immigration views (Edgell and Tranby 2010; Straughn and Feld 2010; McDaniel, Nooruddin, and Shortle 2011; Davis 2018; Sherkat and Lehman 2018), prejudice toward Blacks and other non-White Americans (Perry and Whitehead 2015; Perry, Whitehead, and Davis 2019; Davis and Perry 2021), Islamophobia

(Edgell and Tranby 2010; Merino 2010; Shortle and Gaddie 2015; Sherkat and Lehman 2018; Baker, Perry, and Whitehead 2020), and prejudice toward non-Judeo-Christian religions (Stewart, Edgell, and Delehanty 2018). White Christian nationalism and its “othering” of out-group members are not related simply to being a devout religious conservative (i.e., holding religious commitment, frequency of prayer, church attendance; Davis and Perry 2021). “The cultural framework of Christian nationalism,” cautions Whitehead and Perry (2020a, p. 3), “is also influential among Americans who rarely attend religious services, do not affiliate with religious organization, or worship in non-Christian religions.”

D. Measuring White In-Group Racial Attitudes

Because the study of White racial attitudes is in its beginning stages, measures of key constructs are limited. Scales assessing these attitudes tend to use only a few items, in part because they rely on secondary analysis of data sets collected for other purposes (e.g., ANES, CCES). Primary data are infrequently collected, and, even then, the measures are not developed according to psychometric principles (Graham 2019). No measure exists comparable to Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) racial resentment scale. Still, there is good news: most measures of Whites’ in-group attitudes have face validity, high reliabilities, and high item factor loadings. They are capturing an important attitudinal reality. They also tend to have statistically significant effects on public policy preferences.

In studying in-group attitudes, scholars most often use a measure of White identity, which asks about the importance or centrality of being White to a person’s self-conception. A measure of White consciousness adds items assessing a sense of group deprivation or grievance and the need for collective action in defense of group interests. These measures are less than ideal because they seek to capture the overall construct with as few as one to three items. Equally problematic, core components of a construct such as White consciousness are each measured with single items rather than with multiple items (Diamantopoulos et al. 2012). It would be preferable to assess each component with multiple items (e.g., using four items to measure Whites’ perceived deprivation relative to other groups, and four more to measure willingness to engage in collective action).

Although measures of white nationalism are typically underdeveloped, there are two promising developments. In one effort, our team of researchers—Graham, Cullen, Butler, and colleagues—developed a four-item

scale based explicitly on the writings of Hochschild (2016) and Kaufmann (2019*d*). These are presented in table 3 as items 4–7 (see Butler 2020; Graham et al. 2021; Kulig et al. 2021). In two surveys reported across three different studies, scale properties were robust. For example, Graham et al. (2021) commissioned YouGov to conduct a 2019 national-level survey that yielded an analytic sample of 734 White respondents. Items 4–7 were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The analysis revealed an alpha of .872 and factor loadings of the items ranging from .813 to .883. Most significant, the items were developed to capture perceptions of nationalism—of White respondents wishing to keep the United States a majority-White nation and the role of White culture in sustaining America’s greatness.

An important issue is the empirical relationship of White identity/consciousness to white nationalism and of these White constructs to racial resentment. Table 3 reports analyses based on our research with Teresa Kulig in which we undertook a 2019 MTurk national-level survey that included 465 White respondents (Kulig et al. 2021). Items 1–3 are drawn from Jardina’s (2019*b*) work. Items 4–7 are from our previous studies cited above. Two key findings stand out.

The first is that the items in the White identity/consciousness measure load on the same factor as the items in the white nationalism measure (table 3, factor 1, loadings .609–.906). This suggests that these two aspects of Whiteness are inextricably mixed in the United States and likely part of the same underlying construct. As White identity becomes more salient, it is likely that white nationalism will grow commensurately. The second key finding is that racial resentment, assessed with the Kinder and Sanders (1996) scale, loads on a separate factor (table 3, factor 2, loadings .687–.970). White in-group racial attitudes thus are distinct from out-group resentments and could exert independent effects. Potentially, what Whites think about themselves and what they think about Blacks both matter in the public’s policy preferences. This is the central premise of this essay.

In a second effort, scholars have employed multiple-item measures of Christian nationalism. The research group that includes Whitehead and Perry (2020*a*, p. 4) has relied on various studies on a six-item scale drawn from the Baylor Religion Survey: The federal government should declare the United States a Christian Nation; The federal government should advocate Christian values; The federal government should allow the display of religious symbols in public spaces; The federal government should allow prayer in public schools; The success of the United States is

part of God's plan; and The federal government should enforce a strict separation of church and state (reverse coded). The Cronbach alpha for the scale is .86, and the factor loadings range from .66 to .85 (see also Whitehead and Perry 2020*b*, pp. 5–10, appendix A). Shortle and Gaddie (2015, p. 444) offer another example—a four-item scale included in a 2011 statewide Oklahoma survey: America holds a special place in God's plan; God has chosen this nation to lead the world; the United States was founded as a Christian nation; it is important to preserve the nation's religious heritage (rated with 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree; alpha = .75; factor loadings .730–.780).

Two considerations complicate the quality of these measures. First, scholars do not start by clearly demarcating the components of white Christian nationalism and then develop items to assess them. Grasmick et al.'s (1993) classic measure of low self-control exemplifies that approach. They first discerned from Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) conceptual discussion of six elements of self-control and proceeded thereafter to measure each component with four items.¹⁹ Conceptual analysis preceded measurement construction, and primary data were then used to examine the scale's properties and effects. Scholars studying Christian nationalism use secondary data sets to extract multiple-item overall measures, but this approach all but precludes the use of items designed specifically to capture the components of the construct. Their approach is, however, common in the social sciences and in studies of racial attitudes. Still, future studies would benefit from primary data collection in which scales could be constructed with more conceptual precision (Graham 2019).

Second, this literature uses the terms "white Christian nationalism" and "Christian nationalism" (see, e.g., Baker, Perry, and Whitehead 2020; Whitehead and Perry 2020*a*, 2020*b*; Davis and Perry, 2021). Our discussion

¹⁹ The six components identified and measured by Grasmick et al. (1993, p. 13) were "impulsivity, preference for simple rather than complex tasks, risk seeking, preference for physical rather than cerebral activities, self-centered orientation, and a volatile temper linked to a low tolerance for frustration." See pp. 8–9 where Grasmick et al. identify the components of low self-control. On pp. 13–18, they discuss how the "Low Self-Control Scale" was constructed to measure these six components. For more on the use of a psychometric approach to developing measures, see American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education (2014) and Graham (2019).

treats these concepts as interchangeable, with Christian nationalists viewing their heritage as extending to America's founding forefathers and thus to a White heritage. African Americans also can see the United States as a Christian nation, but it is not clear that their conceptions of a "Christian nation" align with that of Whites. Given the racial and ethnic boundary maintenance associated with Christian nationalism, it is likely that Whites do not include minorities in their vision of a Christian America (Jones 2016). As Whitehead and Perry (2020*b*, p. 16, emphasis in original) note, Christian nationalism "appears to reinforce boundaries around national group membership, encouraging antipathy and mistrust toward those who do not meet the membership requirements of *native-born, Christian, and white*." This issue merits further research.

E. Consequences for Social Policy

There is mounting evidence, as we show in Section II, that racial resentment is a robust predictor of a range of public policy preferences. The importance of studying Whites' in-group racial attitudes is contingent on demonstrating that these beliefs, independent of racial resentment, influence policy preferences. The very title of Jardina's *White Identity Politics* suggests that they do—that what Whites think about their own racial status in the United States has political consequences. In this section, we discuss evidence concerning this premise as a prelude to showing that these in-group attitudes also affect criminal justice policy preferences.

Given their contemporary salience of White in-group attitudes, researchers have studied extensively their impact on two interrelated political issues: support for Donald Trump and opposition to immigration (Kaufmann 2019*b*, 2019*c*, 2019*d*). Research findings clearly show that Trump supporters were high not only on out-group resentments but also on in-group solidarity (Jardina 2019*b*). This allegiance, however, extends beyond partisan voting to an intense attachment to Trump, accounting for his sustained influence on the thinking and behavior of his followers (Graham et al. 2020; Cullen et al., forthcoming). To explore "affective evaluations of Trump," Jardina (2019*b*, p. 235) examined responses to a "101-point feeling thermometer measure," which rates how warm or cold respondents felt about political figures. Using the 2016 ANES Pilot Study and controlling for a host of variables, including racial resentment, she found that White identity and consciousness were strongly associated with warmth toward Trump. Among 2016 presidential candidates, observed

Jardina (2019*b*, p. 239), “Trump was unique in his appeal to racially conscious whites.”²⁰

Similar results were reported in a 2019 YouGov study by Graham et al. (2021). They examined the relationship between white nationalism (items 4–7 in table 2) and “faith in Trump,” as measured with a five-item scale (e.g., “I believe that President Trump will make America great again”; “I love President Trump’s style because he is strong and tells it like it is”). Controlling for racial attitudes (resentment and sympathy), perceptions of crime salience, political ideology and party, being an Evangelical Christian, and a range of other controls, they reported that white nationalism was strongly associated with faith in Trump. With 15 other variables in the model, the Beta was .402 (racial resentment was also significant with a Beta of .165). These results were replicated using a 2020 MTurk sample. Further, white nationalism, but not racial resentment, was strongly related (Beta = .324) to willingness to wear a MAGA hat.

Second, Jardina (2019*b*) shows persuasively that White in-group attitudes are strongly linked to opinions about immigration. Using multiple data sets, she demonstrates, across 10 outcomes, that those high on White identity and consciousness consistently favored policies to limit the number of immigrants, to tighten immigration laws and their enforcement, to deport children brought to the United States illegally, and to build a wall across America’s southern border with Mexico. She then shows that White identity and consciousness foster the belief that immigrants “take jobs away from American citizens,” harm America’s culture, and threaten the “ethnic makeup” of the United States (2019*b*, p. 171, table 6.1). Research on white Christian nationalism reveals similar findings. Such nationalists were more likely to have voted for Trump in the 2016 election and to embrace his views on immigration. For example, Christian nationalism is related to seeing refugees from the Middle East as a threat, believing that

²⁰ Given Trump’s harsh out-group rhetoric, it is unsurprising that animus toward Blacks, Muslims, and Latinx immigrants predicts support for him (Lajevardi and Abrajano 2019; Fording and Schram 2020). Fording and Schram argue (2020) that the influence of a combined measure of out-group hostility capturing these racial and ethnic resentments is so robust that it eliminates the direct effect of White identity on voting for and having warmth toward Trump. Their analysis shows that White identity’s effect on Trump support is indirect, operating by increasing out-group hostility. Whether this effect is unique to Trump remains to be determined. For example, research on multiple political races by Petrow, Transue, and Vercellotti (2018) reports that White racial identity was a significant predictor of voting for White candidates when their opponents were Black.

immigrants undermine American culture, favoring lower immigration levels and higher spending on border security, and linking being “truly American” to being native-born, speaking English, and having American ancestry (Whitehead and Perry 2020*b*, appendix B).

The impact of White in-group attitudes on other policies is more varied. Using multiple data sets, Jardina (2019*b*, p. 187) explores systematically “the ways in which whites’ thinking about their own group informed their opinions on a range of policies.” Like other scholars, she argues that White identity and consciousness should affect social policy preferences because those who “identify with the group”—have a heightened sense of racial solidarity—“are motivated to protect its collective interests” (2019*b*, p. 188). Her analysis reveals three findings consistent with this thesis.

First, White identity and consciousness are positively related to support for increasing social security and expanding Medicare (both universal policies benefiting Whites) but are unrelated to support for welfare and Medicaid (policies often portrayed as benefiting minorities) and support for the belief “that government should help blacks” (Jardina 2019*b*, p. 198). Racial resentment encourages opposition to these policies and to government aid to Blacks. Second, White in-group attitudes are unrelated to support for affirmative action in universities and the workplace (of advantage to Blacks) but positively associated with legacy admissions to universities (of advantage to Whites). Third, in-group attachment prompts Whites to be concerned about policies that might jeopardize their employment and the nation’s global standing. White identity thus is associated with opposition to companies’ outsourcing of jobs, increasing trade with other nations, and free trade and with support for isolationism, preferring the United States “to stay out of the affairs of other nations” (Jardina 2019*b*, p. 214). “Whites with higher levels of racial solidarity,” she concludes, “favor policies that help to maintain their group’s power and privilege, both domestically and abroad.”

Whitehead and Perry (2020*b*, appendix B) show in their analyses of national-level surveys that white Christian nationalism also has policy consequences. Adherents favor a stronger national defense, believing that the “government is spending ‘too little’ on the military, armaments, and defense” (2020*b*, p. 188, table B.7). Strong in-group racial attitudes also are related to opposition to abortion, legalized same-sex marriage, allowing transgender people to use a restroom of their choice, and divorce. The statistically significant association of Christian nationalism to these policy preferences holds even with controls in the analytic models for

political ideology and party and for religious affiliation, including being an Evangelical Protestant (Whitehead and Perry 2020b, appendix B). As Whitehead and Perry conclude, “Christian nationalism matters.” In the call to “take America back for God,” the focus is not on fostering “*religious* ends” but on gaining “power in the public sphere” by advancing policies that “defend against shifts in culture toward equality for groups that have historically lacked access to the levers of power—women, sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities” (Whitehead and Perry 2020b, pp. 152–53, emphasis in original).

F. Consequences for Criminal Justice Policy

Not all Whites hold the same racial attitudes. Some are resentful toward Blacks, some are sympathetic, and some are both. A majority of Whites do not have a White identity—Christian or otherwise—and do not embrace nationalist in-group sentiments, but a substantial minority does. Research has consistently demonstrated that this variation in racial attitudes is politically consequential in shaping public policy preferences. The remaining issue is whether White in-group racial attitudes affect not only electoral politics and social policy support but also the advocacy of criminal justice policies. If so—and it appears they do—then a novel line of inquiry will merit further investigation.

Based on the social science of intergroup conflict, scholars such as Jardina (2019b) argue for the political importance of the rise of White racial solidarity. As people develop a social identity as White, in-group consciousness, and a nationalist goal to keep America demographically and culturally White, they come to share group interests. Public policy proposals come to be seen through the prism of these racial attitudes. The key consideration is whether such initiatives threaten group interests, which may be real or perceived and cognitive or emotional.

Given the racialized nature of the American justice system (Alexander 2010; Tonry 2011; Feld 2017), racial groups are likely to have divergent views on crime-related policies. For those with a Black racial identity, for example, group interests might entail favoring criminal justice reform that lessens the disparate, punitive treatment of African Americans. By contrast, those with a White identity might see the current system as administered (mostly) by Whites and used (mostly) to control people of color from out-groups. Charges of systemic racism, the Black Lives Matter movement, and calls to defund the police are likely to be resisted in favor of erecting

yard signs reading “Blue Lives Matter,” “Back the Blue,” and “We Support and Pray for Our Police.” Beyond racial animus toward Blacks, Whites thus may see policies that expand the power and punitiveness of the justice system as benefiting their group’s racial interests. Research on this issue is in the beginning stages, but the available studies support the thesis that White in-group racial attitudes are associated with a tendency to see out-groups as dangerous and with a preference for enhanced crime control. Three types of research merit attention.

1. *Immigrants as Dangerous Criminals.* Various surveys reveal that White in-group attitudes are associated with the perception of immigrant criminality.²¹ Using data from the 2016 ANES survey controlling for a range of variables including the Hispanic feeling thermometer (warmth), Jardina (2019*b*, p. 172, table 6.2) reports that both White identity and consciousness are related to the view that “immigrants increase crime rates.” Whitehead and Perry’s (2020*b*, p. 193, table B.10) multivariate analysis of Baylor Religion Survey data similarly shows that Christian nationalism is positively associated with the belief that “illegal immigrants from Mexico are mostly dangerous criminals.”

Kulig and colleagues (2021) present the most systematic study of Whites’ perceived dangerousness of “bad hombrés”—to use Donald Trump’s words—crossing the southern US border. Based on a 2019 MTurk sample of 465 White adults, they examined the impact of a five-item measure of white nationalism (items 4–8 in table 2; $\alpha = .92$; factor loadings .82–.91) to three measures of immigrant criminality: immigrants’ likelihood, compared with that of Americans, of participation in eight specific crimes; immigrants’ general criminality compared to that of the “average American”; and immigrants’ criminality today compared to that of the “descendants [of immigrants] who came to the United States (e.g., Irish, Italian, Polish).” The multivariate analysis introduced a range of controls, including religious fundamentalism, political ideology and party, and a new Hispanic resentment scale ($\alpha = .89$; factor loadings .89–.92) modeled after Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) racial resentment measure. White nationalism was strongly related to all three outcome variables. The coefficients were remarkably high for specific criminality

²¹ The research is clear in showing that immigrants do not have higher rates of criminal involvement than native-born residents. (For comprehensive summaries, see Ousey and Kubrin 2018; Chouhy and Madero-Hernandez 2019.)

(Beta = .48) and general criminality (Beta = .40); the odds ratio for “more criminal today than past immigrants” was 2.01 (Kulig et al. 2021, table 5).

2. *White Christian Nationalism.* Three studies show the impact of Christian nationalism on crime-related policy opinions. The studies all use a version (2007 or 2017) of the national Baylor Religion Survey and the six-item measure of Christian nationalism on federal involvement in religion described in Section III.D.

First, Davis (2018, p. 300) examined whether Christian nationalism fostered “authoritarian views toward controlling crime.” His multivariate analysis of 20 variables included controls for a range of sociodemographic, religious, and political factors. He found that the nationalism measure was significantly associated with support for capital punishment, the federal government punishing criminals more harshly, and a “crack-down on troublemakers to save our moral standards and keep law and order” (2018, p. 305). Second, in a similar analysis, Perry, Whitehead, and Davis (2019, p. 138, table 3) reported that Christian nationalism increased the belief that police officers in the United States “treat Blacks the same as Whites” and “shoot Blacks more often because they are more violent than Whites.” Third, Whitehead, Schnabel, and Perry (2018, p. 1) showed, again with a variety of controls in the analytic model, that Christian nationalism was “an exceptionally strong predictor of opposition to the federal government’s enacting stricter gun laws” (see also Whitehead and Perry 2020*b*).

3. *White Nationalism.* Butler (2020) has presented the most systematic analysis of the impact of racial attitudes on public opinion about offenders and correctional policies. As discussed in Sections I and II, she conducted a 2019 national-level YouGov survey of 769 White respondents, which included measures for racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996) and racial sympathy (Chudy 2021). The multivariate models also included a measure of white nationalism (see items 4–7 in table 2; Kulig et al. 2021). Importantly, a factor analysis revealed that each racial attitude—resentment, sympathy, and nationalism—loaded on separate factors and thus should be treated as a distinct construct.

Butler (2020) reported that Whites’ in-group attitudes had diverse and expected consequences, even after taking into account racial resentment and sympathy. Her analysis revealed that white nationalism consistently increased support for capital punishment and for punishment as the main goal of prisons and decreased support for offender rehabilitation. Building on Maruna’s (2001) concepts of redeemability and condemnation

scripts, Butler probed how racial attitudes affected respondents' beliefs in the redeemability of Black offenders. White nationalism was negatively associated with belief in Blacks' redeemability and positively associated with belief in Blacks' being condemned to a life in crime. These results show that white nationalism is integral to explaining policy preferences, especially as they pertain to Black justice-involved individuals.

4. *A Note on Criminological Consequences.* Recent events, although beyond the scope of this essay, warrant a brief comment on the potential behavioral consequences of the spread of white nationalism, which in extreme forms can blend into white supremacy. The most serious concern is that these beliefs can motivate violence toward others (Jardina 2019a). For example, the mass shooter in El Paso, Texas, who killed 22 people in a Walmart, cited his disdain for immigrants, specifically Hispanics, who were "invading" the United States (Beckett and Wilson 2019). The driver in Charlottesville, North Carolina, who rammed his car through a crowd, killing one and injuring dozens, was an avowed white supremacist (Associated Press in Charlottesville 2019). The shooter who entered a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, killing 11, had a history of anti-Semitic language online (Pengelly, Beckett, and Elk 2018). The Southern Poverty Law Center in 2020 noted an increase in events such as these, with ominous anticipation of escalation in the future (Kunzelman 2020). However, they could not have foreseen the events at the US Capitol on January 6th, 2021, which involved not only members of white nationalist groups but also citizens espousing these White in-group values—all inflamed by a president who espoused their hegemonic values (Associated Press 2021; Fernando and Nasir 2021; Ray 2021). Yale University professor Philip Gorski (2021) fears that the Capitol events in January 2021 may not be the last such violence among those with such firmly held White in-group attitudes.

Political figures (e.g., Marjorie Taylor Greene) and commentators (e.g., Tucker Carlson) continue to espouse anti-immigrant sentiments, nativism, and explicitly endorse the conspiratorial rhetoric of white supremacist groups (e.g., replacement theory) (America First Caucus 2021; Bump 2021; Wang and Itkowitz 2021). Still, this is not a uniquely "American" issue. Similar White in-group attitudes have been linked to support for the "Brexit" withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (Kaufmann 2019a), the formation of extremist groups set on violence in Australia (Mann and Nguyen 2021), threats of violence in Canada (Laferté 2021), and mass murders in Christchurch, New Zealand (Diaz 2020) and Oslo, Norway (Associated Press 2020).

IV. Conclusion

A half-century ago, scholars recognized that public acceptance of traditional forms of racism, which portrayed Blacks as inferior, was waning. They were perceptive in seeing, however, that racism had not vanished but was assuming a different shape, more subtle and symbolic in nature. At the time, this racism was called “modern” because it superseded overt racism that now seemed “traditional.” The prevailing social context, replete with political rhetoric, and their own experiences led them to identify the conduit through which racial prejudice could be expressed in moralistic terms. They showed how racial resentments became embedded in conservative, individualistic principles.

It was not, the argument went, that White people did not like Blacks. It was just that Blacks in the civil rights era came to expect a free ride, feeling entitled to government handouts funded by hard-working White taxpayers. Slavery was a thing of the past, so this expectation was unfair. To enjoy the American Dream, all Blacks had to do was to act like the Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants who had come before them—to quit complaining and take advantage of the unlimited opportunities that awaited all Americans. Building on the work of colleagues, Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) genius was in defining this attitude as “racial resentment” and devising a parsimonious scale to measure it. This scale has since proven to be a robust predictor of public policy opinions, including about criminal justice.

The significance of racial resentment (also called symbolic racism) within the social sciences, including criminology, shows no sign of diminishing. Kinder and Sanders’s scale is now a standard measure in public opinion studies, included in major data sets available for secondary analysis. Scholars know that the effects of racism on public policy preferences must be taken into account, so what better way than to use the Kinder-Sanders scale. Still, no concept or measure should be viewed as sacrosanct. Scholars should revisit racial resentment to explore why it exerts strong effects, whether its form will change in the current social context, and how current politics might affect its manifestation.

Racial attitudes cannot be reduced solely to out-group animus. Chudy’s (2021) research on racial sympathy shows the importance of exploring positive out-group sentiments. More disquieting is the research documenting how White in-group racial attitudes reinforce and rival those of racial resentment. These lines of inquiry are new, but they are the venues that will capture increasing attention in the immediate future.

This emerging research paradigm will probe not only what Whites think about Blacks but also what Whites think about Whites.

A. Racial Resentment and Beyond

The finding that racial resentment predicts public policy opinions is a remarkable scientific finding, but why this is so remains a mystery meriting investigation. Critics have claimed that this statistical association occurred because the items in the Kinder-Sanders scale tapped into principled conservatism. But this hypothesis is shaky because multivariate analyses that include measures for conservative ideology and political values (e.g., individualism, egalitarianism) fail to eliminate racial resentment's strong effects on policy outcomes. Another possibility is that racial resentment, as a form of animus, prompts Whites simply to dislike Blacks and thus to support policies that remove benefits and inflict pain on African Americans. Unnever and Cullen (2009) offer a variant of this thinking, arguing that racial resentment is a source of callousness, leading its holders to lack "empathetic identification" with offenders, many of whom are people of color and portrayed as "super-predators" (see also Ivanov, Novisky, and Vogel 2021). Yet another possibility is that racial resentment, as an in-group attitude, leads Whites to favor policies perceived to sustain their in-group advantages over Blacks (Simmons and Bobo 2018). Phrased differently, racial resentment makes racial threat more salient. For example, Whites with animus might favor expanding police funding and use of force because they see officers as protecting the status quo against Blacks, whether offenders or BLM protesters.

All these possibilities warrant study, but so does the finding that racial resentment is related to support not only for racial (e.g., affirmative action) and race-coded (e.g., welfare, police funding) policies but also at times for race-neutral policies (e.g., Social Security benefits, correctional rehabilitation). Filindra and Kaplan (2021, p. 17) shed light on this issue, using a series of ANES surveys to explore sources of support for "non-racialized economic policies," such as "small government, free trade agreements, deficit reduction, spending on government services, and the provision of a public health insurance option." Their analysis reveals that beyond direct effects, racial resentment influences policy preferences indirectly through attitudes toward government, such as trust (e.g., the government will do what is right, is run by big interests, wastes money, run by corrupt people). These findings suggest a "spillover effect" in which the government itself—the "producer of policy"—is seen as a racialized body that is

suspected of representing the interests of Blacks, “a group that in the eyes of racial conservatives rejects traditional American values” (Filindra and Kaplan 2021, p. 18).

Another possibility is partisanship or being part of a political team. Kinder and Kalmoe (2017, p. 133) argue that self-identified political ideology as conservative or liberal has weak and inconsistent effects on most policy preferences, in part because most Americans “know remarkably little about public affairs.” Instead, “partisanship” or political party membership governs policy opinions. Since the 1960s and its decision to evoke its “Southern Strategy” to draw White voters away from the Democratic Party, the Republican Party has offered a home to racially prejudiced voters (Maxwell and Shields 2019). One consequence was that racially resentful Whites pledged allegiance not only to explicitly racial policies (e.g., opposition to affirmative action) but also to other nonracial planks in the Republican platform (e.g., pro-life on abortion, anti-LBTQ+ rights, hawkish foreign affairs). Harsh correctional policies and support for law enforcement, whether racially inspired or not, were part of this agenda.

Evidence exists that Donald Trump has had an influence on public opinion—including among African Americans who believed his election would result in more hate toward them and more police shootings of Black men (McManus et al. 2019). Joining the “MAGA” team has had political consequences. Research during the pandemic, for example, reported that belief in Trump and his pronouncements regarding COVID-19 led respondents to express intentions to defy social distancing norms and to adopt techniques of neutralization permitting them to ignore the risks of the coronavirus (Graham et al. 2021; Cullen et al., forthcoming). Barber and Pope (2019) used an experimental design in which they chose 10 policies on which Trump had taken both a liberal and a conservative stance. Randomly assigned respondents were given a “cue” that Trump supported one side of the policy. Partisanship “trumped” principles, as “strong Republicans” were more likely to embrace policies in accordance with what they were told the president favored—even if in a liberal direction. “Group loyalty,” Barber and Pope (2019, p. 38) concluded, “is the stronger motivator of opinion than ideological principles.” Racial resentment was a factor in voting and expressing support for Trump (Jardina 2019*b*; Fording and Schram 2020; Graham et al. 2021). But this is only half the story. Enns and Jardina (2021, pp. 539, 566) show that although Trump attracted “racially hostile white voters,” his effect over time was to amplify

their antagonism toward Blacks and immigrants, pushing “many whites to become more hostile toward these groups.”

An important point can be drawn from this literature. It appears that racial resentment affects policy preferences, including criminal justice, in diverse ways—directly, indirectly through other political attitudes, and by group partisanship (including party membership) that can promote policy opinions and intensify racial animus. Although the influence of former President Trump is likely to prove to be a historical outlier, racial resentment exists in a political context that can either nourish or diminish its intensity and impact. Research on racial resentment would benefit from appreciating this complexity and resisting the standard practice of plugging this measure into a multivariate model and assuming that the effects of such animus are then fully taken into account.

Two more issues merit study. First, Whites’ resentment is not limited to Blacks but extends to other out-groups. Ramirez and Peterson (2020) make this case in *Ignored Racism: White Animus toward Latinos*. Like Kulig et al. (2021), they developed a four-item scale that mirrored Kinder and Sanders’s (1996) racial resentment scale. Termed the “Latina/o racism-ethnicism (LRE) scale,” their measure has robust statistical properties, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .78 and factor loadings ranging from .71 to .74. The items were worded to reflect racialized narratives about Latina/o and are as follows: The Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other ethnic groups immigrated to the United States legally. Latinos and Hispanics should do the same without any special favors; Anti-immigrant sentiments and racism have created conditions that make it difficult for Latinos and Hispanics to succeed in America (R); Latinos and Hispanics would be more welcome in the United States if they would try harder to learn English and adopt US customs like past immigrant groups have done; Critics of immigration and the media have overblown the number of crimes committed by Latinos and Hispanics within the United States (R) (Ramirez and Peterson 2020, p. 37).

Following the roadmap used by prior researchers (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Jardina 2019*b*), Ramirez and Peterson then examine, controlling for a range of factors including “principled partisanship,” how the LRE scale is related to a range of public policy opinions. They demonstrate that this form of Latina/o/Hispanic resentment is related to restrictive and punitive immigration policies but also to restrictive voting measures (e.g., voter identification laws). Most important, the data reveal that, like findings on racial resentment, analyses indicate that animus toward

Latinos increases support of punitive criminal justice policies. Kulig et al.'s (2021) Hispanic resentment scale was associated with Whites' belief that immigrants who enter at the US/Mexican border are more criminal than the "average American."

These findings raise the issue of what constitutes "resentment." Are there different types of racial/ethnic animus that need to be analyzed separately, or do these types of animus cohere into a single hostility toward diverse out-groups? Fording and Schram (2020) address this issue in *Hard White*. Using ANES data, they create an "outgroup hostility scale" by merging Kinder and Sanders's (1996) anti-Black racial resentment scale, a three-item anti-immigration scale, and a feeling thermometer of items assessing coldness versus warmth toward Muslims (2020, pp. 24–29). These three measures, which they call "affect items" (p. 27, table 2.1), load on the same factor (.83, .80, and .73, respectively) and are associated with candidate preference in the 2020 election. Fording and Schram (2020, p. 182) argue that Donald Trump "often blatantly smeared African Americans and the Latinx and Muslim populations as threats to white America." "Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election," they observe, "was a monument to the mainstreaming of racism" (p. 181).

Fording and Schram (2020) contend that these three forms of resentment targeting Blacks, immigrants, and Muslims have merged into a single form of out-group hostility. Research should explore this possibility. Fording and Schram merged three different types of measures, due to their availability in ANES, to create a single out-group hostility scale. Future studies should employ psychometric approaches to develop an overall scale and then see if a single animus measure explains public policy support better than analyzing specific types of out-group hostility. Furthermore, it remains to be seen if these animosities coalesced in response to Trump's purposeful campaign to impugn the integrity of Blacks, immigrants, and Muslims. Are these hostilities now immutably intertwined, or will they loosen their connections in the post-Trump era?

Second, when Kinder and his associates developed the idea of racial resentment and symbolic racism, they were identifying a new or "modern" form of racism. Their work extends back a half-century (Sears and Kinder 1971) and reached a pinnacle in Kinder and Sanders's development of their racial resentment scale in 1996. This line of inquiry was in response to a changing social context in which blatant racist statements were increasingly condemned. Instead, racism was expressed through dog whistles (e.g., "welfare queen") and by evoking principles trumpeting

individual hard work and responsibility while denying the persistence of systemic racism. Studies repeatedly show that racial resentment continues to have strong effects on public policy preferences; it is not a worn-out concept and measure that should be relegated to the criminological dustbin. Still, the time has arrived for scholars to examine the current social context to see if more “modern” forms of racial resentment are surfacing and to determine their potential effects on Whites’ racialized policy views.

Toward this end, table 4 presents two four-item measures of potential new forms of White racial resentment.²² The first measure seeks to assess Whites’ resentment about Blacks achieving success while continuing to complain about systemic racism as Whites struggle in their own lives. The second measure probes Whites’ resentment about racial political correctness and the so-called cancel culture. In this perceptual domain, Blacks are resented for exerting control over the public culture—for imposing norms of language choice and racial sensitivity on Whites. Let us hasten to say that these scales are shared strictly for purposes of illustration. Serious research would have to map the extant cultural landscape to assess the nature of racial resentments and then use standard psychometric principles to develop defensible measures. Still, the enterprise identified here is worth pursuing. Racism is dynamic, and, while old versions persist and continue to have significant effects, newer forms of racial animus arise that reflect changing social contexts.

B. New Directions

In his famous 2005 commencement address at Kenyon College, the late author David Foster Wallace (2021) started his remarks with this humorous but meaningful story: “There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says ‘Morning boys. How’s the water?’ And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes ‘What the hell is water?’” Wallace implored the

²² Note that in each scale, two items are stated in the opposite direction and are reverse coded. This strategy mirrors that used by Kinder and Sanders (1996) and Ramirez and Peterson (2020). When all items are phrased in the same direction—measuring the proposed concept—the potential exists for “acquiescence bias,” where respondents answer repeatedly in the affirmative, perhaps because it takes less effort to do so. When items are worded in the opposite direction, respondents must exert effort to read each statement and potentially express their opinion in a more optimal way. (For a discussion of these issues, see Pickett and Baker 2014.)

TABLE 4
Measures of New Forms of White Racial Resentment

| Resenting Black Success |
|---|
| 1. I am tired of famous and wealthy Blacks who go on television and complain about how Whites are still discriminating against them and about so-called “systemic racism.” |
| 2. Black people who are rich do not care about White people who are poor. |
| 3. Blacks who are successful in life deserve everything they achieve. (R) |
| 4. When Blacks have high-paying jobs these days, it is because they have worked just as hard as Whites who have high-paying jobs. (R) |
| Resenting Black Cultural Control |
| 1. It is unfair when a White person gets fired from a job because they say something that offends a Black person or two. |
| 2. These days, Whites cannot even talk about race because anything they say will lead Blacks to call them a racist. |
| 3. Racial sensitivity training that teaches about discriminations is something that all White workers should be required to undergo. (R) |
| 4. High school history courses should teach less about White Presidents like Washington and Lincoln and more about how White people have oppressed Black Americans from slavery to the present. (R) |

NOTE.—R = item should be reverse coded.

graduates to see their education as giving them the ability to be aware “of what is so real and essential, so hidden in plain sight all around us,” to be like a fish aware of the water in which it swims.

Political and other social scientists have long assumed that Whiteness is to White Americans as water is to a fish, something so omnipresent that they can live without noticing its existence (Jardina 2019*b*). Research findings show, however, that a substantial minority of Whites hold a racial identity. This increasing awareness of Whiteness has been brought about by social and demographic changes through which Whites were suddenly confronted with the question “How’s the water?” about the racial makeup of the country and their position in it. Beyond simply recognizing White as their racial in-group, some Whites have responded to the decline of White hegemony by embracing a political orientation seeking to preserve the Whiteness of the United States in terms of both racial demographics and cultural norms and values—an orientation known as white nationalism (Kaufmann 2019*d*; Swain 2002; Whitehead and Perry 2020*b*).

As with animus toward Blacks, these racial attitudes have political consequences. Research consistently shows that White in-group attitudes have

independent but parallel effects to racial resentment, encouraging conservative political views and policies favored by the Republican Party. Most relevant, they are a source of punitive criminal justice policies, including toward vulnerable populations such as immigrants. As demographic changes unfold that transform the United States into a majority-minority nation, it is unclear whether White in-group attitudes will spread and become more intense. Former President Trump clearly incited out-group hostilities, and the Republican Party has yet to repudiate his nasty appeal to his base of White voters (Jardina 2019*b*; Kaufmann 2019*d*; Fording and Schram 2020). Another possibility is that these social changes will ultimately lead to a more diverse and just society (Pinker 2018). Generational analysis shows that millennials voted disproportionately for Joe Biden in the 2020 election and, in criminal justice, endorse progressive correctional policies (Lee et al., forthcoming; see also Pinker 2018). Numbering nearly 80 million, millennials are an emerging political force. If Republican candidates face a more diverse electorate and lose at the polls, their celebration of Whiteness and demonization of Black protest seeking racial justice may diminish. Trumpism is now inciting White identity and racial animus (Fording and Schram 2020; Enns and Jardina 2021), but its long-term political viability remains in question.

Perhaps of equal importance, Chudy (2021) reminds us that many Whites are concerned about Blacks' suffering—some to the point of feeling guilty about their racial advantage (see, e.g., Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2003; Chudy, Piston, and Shipper 2019). Taken together with the emerging scholarship on White identity/consciousness and nationalism, her work suggests that a new generation in the study of racial attitudes has arrived. Whites have diverse views—toward out-groups and toward themselves as an in-group—and these attitudes will influence public policy preferences in the time ahead. Importantly, these developments in the social sciences—and in political science in particular—offer criminologists novel lines of inquiry in their study of how public opinion affects criminal justice policy.

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