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White Identity and the Tolerance of Violence

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Abstract

White Identity and the Tolerance of Violence

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What structures white Americans' support for political violence? While the utility and consequences of white violence on American politics is well understood, this dissertation complements those accounts by taking a quantitative approach to find what motivates some whites to be more supportive of the use of violence, when, and why. Leveraging historical and contemporary survey data, I test the theory that those who are most attached to whiteness will be more supportive of modes of violence that are utilized to protect and secure the dominance of whites. I find that among whites that do tolerate violence, there is hardly anything that distinguishes them from other whites demographically. Rather, the best explanation for what makes some whites more tolerant of violence than others is their attachment to whiteness itself and other dimensions of dominance, like religiosity, gender, authoritarianism, and support for the status quo, which together comprise the reigning "way of life" they ardently, and violently, seek to defend. In so doing, this dissertation lays bare the through line of white racial violence, clarifying its regular recurrence, and most recent resurgence, in American politics.

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Love,

Carolyn

Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Introduction

In the past decade, think pieces and op-eds concerned with the rise of modern-day white extremism have increasingly populated major newspapers, becoming nearly as routine as the growing number of violent events to which they respond. Most recently, the boiler plate introduction to these articles fixates on the January 6th riots at the Capitol, hoping to understand the ostensible resurgence of white violence of the last decade that is at the top of mind for many. Startled, they dissect the multitudes of white nationalist groups and militias that convened that day on the National Mall to promote the conspiracy theory that the results of the 2020 presidential election were illegitimate. Adorned with white supremacist and neo-Nazi symbols, they erected gallows while chanting “Hang Mike Pence” and “Stop the Steal” as Confederate flags waved in the wind. To this crowd, President Trump issued the following instructive:

And we fight. We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore. Our exciting adventures and boldest endeavors have not yet begun. My fellow Americans, for our movement, for our children, and for our beloved country. And I say this despite all that's happened. The best is yet to come. So we're going to, we're going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. [...] And we're going to the Capitol, and we're going to try and give.

What followed that speech is now a matter of common knowledge and the subject of a Congressional investigation: if any hope remained that the dilemma Du Bois (1903) described over a century ago had resolved, Americans now watched in horror as that color line seemed to tear open beneath the Capitol building, widening into a deep chasm along the fault line of race in American politics.

Sending shockwaves of anger and outrage across the country, these events of radical white extremism pushed many to grapple with how to reconcile them with their conceptualization of the post-racial present. Following the January 6th attack on the Capitol, for instance, 37% of Americans (in a voluntary, open-response question) described their response as awestruck, anguished, and horrified while 14% expressed surprise and concern for the country, according to polling data from Pew Research Center (Hartig 2021). That shock mirrored that which many Americans felt in the aftermath of the riot in Charlottesville which occurred four years prior: an event marked by whites in polo shirts, on a nighttime march through (Robert E.) Lee park, carrying tiki torches and chanting “Jews will not replace us” the night before protests devolved into riots, culminating with the death of a counter protester, struck by a car driven by a Neo-Nazi extremist through the crowd. Following those riots, headlines read “Americans Are Confronting an Alarming Question: Are Many of Our Fellow Citizens ‘Nazis’?” (Chapin 2017) and “Making Sense of the Violence in Charlottesville” (Klein and Forman 2017). For many, the images of Charlottesville harkened back to a very different era, in which torches and burning crosses were ubiquitous, acts that many now believed to be confined to the distant past and whose renewed appearance produced a sort of cognitive dissonance to many, expressed as shock and disbelief.

Occurring against the backdrop of a rise in domestic terrorism, ballooning membership of white nationalist and far-Right groups, and the normalization of explicit racism throughout the Trump administration, in many ways that alarm is justified. Indeed, it is true that white extremism has gained momentum in the last fifteen years: the election of the first Black president was an event so cataclysmic, its seismic forces set into motion the wave of hate on which Donald Trump rode into the White House. It was a shift so preposterous, so dissonant in the white

American psyche it spawned the Birther movement, which ultimately compelled a sitting president to produce proof of his citizenship to quell rumors that he was not (could not) be a true American. It is also true that Americans are becoming increasingly ideologically polarized and far-Right extremism is growing. This development is easily gathered by taking inventory of a litany of violent events which have recently transpired: a surge in racially-motivated hate crimes; growing membership in far-Right and neo-Nazi organizations, no longer secretive, but brazen and barefaced; violent, old-fashioned racist rhetoric normalized from the top down by political elites; racial violence in the form of immigration policy that separates children from their families at the border and confines them in wired cages; a global pandemic exploited to unleash a season of extreme and horrific anti-Asian violence in communities across the country; and the ongoing specter of gun violence and mass shootings by “racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists,” which has recently been named America’s greatest domestic threat by Attorney General Merrick Garland (Sullivan and Benner 2021).

Yet while these forms of racial violence which have become more commonplace in recent years are indeed horrifying, their occurrence should not be surprising. Rather, this trend represents but one crest of an enduring cycle that is in fact a fundamental feature of American politics. “Our nation was conceived and born in violence” (Brown 1977, 5) and it has ever since served as both a marker and weapon of whiteness. Whites have long wielded violence to establish themselves as white and to protect the dominant social order—the white, Christian, patriarchal, American “way of life” they cherish—from the threat of change, real and imagined (Parker and Barreto 2014). Violence has been interwoven into the spirit of the nation through its energetic, routine use and has taken a wide range of forms, spanning the practice of chattel slavery, the genocidal removal of indigenous nations (Rana 2010), the development of slave

patrols and the birth of modern policing (Du Bois 1935), and the use of extralegal racial violence (Francis 2014), especially lynching, which was wielded as a primary mode of racial control, employed to erase Black advancement for decades following Emancipation. Even the laws which formalized white racial dominance were enforced via the exclusive authority of violence whites asserted, carried out by the police and agents of the law. Indeed, the free exercise of “legitimate” violence is both a cornerstone of whiteness and a central benefit conferred to those who claim to be white, but it is also a fundamental mechanism through which whites define the boundaries of whiteness.

It is this essential relationship whites have to violence, which has morphed and evolved throughout American history, which this dissertation seeks to explore. Descriptive accounts of white racial violence have produced rich analyses of the utility of violence for whites at critical historical moments and of the consequences of that racial violence on American politics and the racial hierarchy. However, these accounts ultimately provide an episodic depiction of white racial violence which perpetuates the impression that it is aberrational, rather than an intrinsic feature of white racial dominance. This dissertation complements these accounts by taking up questions that can only be accomplished through a quantitative examination of white racial violence, to find what motivates some whites to be more supportive of the use of violence, when, and why. By adopting a wide historical lens to explore whites’ relationship to violence and manipulating the conditions that generate its support, this strategy lays bare the through line of white racial violence, clarifying its regular recurrence in American politics, making its most recent reappearance appear more predictable than startling. To do so, I leverage historical and contemporary survey data to explore white attitudes about violence in critical time periods, while also considering different kinds of violence, carried out for different purposes, and by different

actors. In so doing, these chapters fill in the timeline of whiteness and violence, by providing a quantitative examination of white attitudes toward violence over time and when that support shifts.

This dissertation operates from the basic premise that whiteness is fundamentally linked to the exercise of violence. By “violence,” I refer to actions of harm carried out by individuals or groups, organized and unorganized, legal and extralegal, and symbolic, material, and physical, which whites rely upon to maintain white racial dominance. Specifically, this dissertation explores white tolerance of violent strategies employed to pursue political goals, like protest or resistance, and to protect group dominance, like violent policing. By “tolerance,” I refer to white support for these forms of political violence, their relative comfort with its use by groups or individuals, and the belief that its use is either reasonable or non-concerning. Given the crucial role of violence in the production and security of white racial dominance, I expect that those who are most attached to whiteness to be more supportive of modes of violence that are utilized to protect and secure the dominance of whites. To test this theory, I explore white tolerance of violence at different historical moments, related to different forms of violence, carried out by different actors, for varying purposes. I find that it is not the case that whites are universally supportive of violence, by all groups or for all purposes. Instead, I find that whites are selectively supportive of violence: when it is employed by whites, for the purpose of upholding white racial dominance.

In the sections that follow, I first situate this project within the broader literature of white racial identity and racial formation that I draw upon throughout this dissertation, which maintains that whiteness is borne of, advanced, and maintained through violence. I take account of the history of whiteness studies, revealing how the very nature of whiteness—a dominant racial

identity that commonly escapes consideration by its members, due to the privileging role it plays in their lives and as a consequence of whites' strategic positioning of the group as the societal norm—also contributed to its under interrogation in the social sciences. Then, I discuss how that lack of scholarly attention also produced a historical gap in measurement around white identity in survey data, which has prevented us from studying the consequences of white racial identity until the last five years. With those measures in place, however, scholars have begun to demonstrate the broad consequences white racial identity has on political behavior and attitudes, which I briefly detail. Last, I provide a summary of the chapters that follow, which advance our understanding of the role white racial identity plays in the tolerance of political violence.

II. Review of the Literature

What constitutes and has constituted whiteness throughout history? How does white racial identity express itself in the political behavior and beliefs of whites? What contributes to greater identification as white and what are the consequences of the strength of that identification? In this section, I provide a brief summary of the scholarship around whiteness, to identify what answers we have to these questions and what remains to be understood about the production and effects of whiteness. These questions about the origins and consequences of white racial identity are in fact relatively new to the study of political science—a historical gap in research that is itself an artifact of whiteness. For many decades, scholars, many of whom were white themselves, assumed that whites lack racial identity, because they had failed to deeply interrogate their personal racial identity, perceiving whiteness instead as an a-racial status, the norm against which “culture” and “ethnicity” are demarcated, which seems to have

always existed, in the same obvious, common-sense, static form.¹ In fact, the history of whiteness tells a story quite the opposite. In the same way that all racial groups are not natural categories, whiteness has evolved and changed over time—the product of political contestation and negotiation, as various ethnic groups pushed their way into membership of whiteness and all the rights it confers. Indeed, far from being a fixed racial category, whiteness exists as an exceptionally useful device for understanding the social and political construction of race itself.

The Violent Construction of Whiteness

In order to understand the consequences of white group attachment (like greater tolerance of racial violence), an antecedent question related to the formation of whiteness itself might first be important to consider: how exactly has “white” been defined over time? In order to make a compelling case for membership and inclusion in whiteness, what qualities and behaviors were considered to be distinctively white that candidate ethnic groups were required to possess in order to gain access to whiteness? Efforts to answer this question stretch back to whites’ first arrival on the continent, as they sought to establish the boundaries of whiteness, citizenship, and the vast benefits conferred to its members. From far away, the boundaries of whiteness first appear to be quite plain. As Judith Shklar writes, the simple approach of contrasted difference is the scaffolding upon which citizenship (and whiteness) was built, as “they defined their standing as citizens very negatively, by distinguishing themselves from their inferiors, especially from slaves and occasionally from women. [...] black chattel slavery stood at the opposite social pole from full citizenship and so defined it” (1991, 15). In this way, whiteness was given meaning

¹ This basic, latent orientation is one that is harbored by many whites—a phenomenon charmingly and succinctly illustrated by White American cookbook author Alison Roman who, in a description of her food writing, remarked: “I come from no culture. I have no culture. I’m like, vaguely European” (Reynolds 2019).

through contrast with what it was not, and that delineation posed as one which was clear, apparent, and obvious to all its beholders.

Upon closer examination, however, even the traits of whiteness that appear to be preexistent or relatively immutable, like phenotype, prove to be highly unreliable markers of difference, as physical appearance can vary widely across individuals and groups, making “natural” methods of racial sorting unreliable. Instead, the boundaries of whiteness have been made clear through ongoing social and political contestation by whites, prospective whites, and political institutions (Omi and Winant 1986). Access to whiteness has long been granted through the fulfilment of its sacraments—a set of behaviors, traits, and abilities of whiteness that individuals are obliged to perform to earn membership. From the start, whites have done so through *violent* demonstrations of difference: the core instrument whites have utilized to both distinguish themselves as white and to protect white racial dominance. Violence is the backbone that structures white citizenship, which whites wielded not only against those whom they enslaved, but also through other formative acts of violence, like the violent dispossession of indigenous peoples from their lands. In this way, James Baldwin argues that whites created whiteness through the exercise of violence:

America became white—the people who, as they claim, ‘settled’ the country became white—because of the necessity of denying the Black presence, and justifying the Black subjugation. No community can be based on such a principle—or, in other words, no community can be established on so genocidal a lie. White men—from Norway, for example, where they were *Norwegians*—became white: by slaughtering the cattle, poisoning the wells, torching the houses, massacring Native Americans, raping Black women (Baldwin 1984).

Thus, various ethnic groups competed for membership as whites by exercising the cardinal power of whiteness: legal and extralegal violence, using strategies that ranged from the violent acquisition of the West to integration within institutions of state sanctioned violence, like

the police and political office. The Irish have long served as the quintessential model of this progression into whiteness (Jacobson 1998; Roediger 1999; Du Bois 1935), who were initially cast as outsiders to the dominant Protestant, Anglo-Saxon order. To transform their status as undesirable Irish Catholics, they actively chose to leverage their race in order to distance themselves from Black Americans, with whom they were originally situated alongside at the bottom of the social hierarchy and shared some common experiences of displacement and exploitation. Yet, rather than joining forces with African Americans, the Irish chose to use racial difference as the springboard from which to ascend the socioeconomic ladder, a decision that caused Frederick Douglass to wonder “‘why a people who so nobly loved and cherished the thought of liberty at home in Ireland could become, willingly, the oppressors of another race here. [...who] so relentlessly persecuted and oppressed on account of race and religion' could take the lead among Americans in carrying 'prejudice against color to a point... extreme and dangerous’” (in Roediger 136-137). For the Irish, use of whiteness was an active choice, a tool they utilized to promote themselves upwards in the racial hierarchy. This was not only done socially, but also politically, as the Irish bid for membership by integrating themselves into violent institutions, like the police force, which also provided license to exercise state-sanctioned violence through the enforcement of the law.

The Irish serve as but one example of how prospective ethnic groups bid for inclusion as white by carrying out violent activities of whiteness to demonstrate their fitness as whites. They accomplished this by violently contrasting themselves with Black and indigenous peoples, aligning themselves with the project of white racial dominance by infiltrating and populating institutions of racial control, and becoming instrumental to the preservation of white supremacy. Although their campaigns for inclusion varied in kind, all whites employed violent strategies to

stretch and define the boundaries of whiteness. In this way, whiteness was borne of the violent subordination of other racial groups and continues to be a *primary* feature of whiteness, a legacy which all whites inherit as white and to which their identity is fundamentally tied.

Measuring White Identity

An additional consequence of the lack of scholarly attention paid to white identity, is the simple failure of political scientists to ask whites about their racial identity in survey research until this decade. Indeed, a central challenge to this dissertation and all research concerned with the effects of white racial identity before the 1990s is identifying appropriate measures of white identity, if and when they exist. For instance, perhaps the first survey to measure some dimensions of group attachment is Matthews and Prothro's Negro Political Participation Study (1961), which Chapter 2 of this dissertation leverages. Yet even this survey is limited in its measurement of white racial identity in a generalizable sense, asking white Southerners how "close" they feel to other Southern whites. While I argue that this measure does capture important dimensions of the strength of white racial identity, making it a valuable opportunity to explore this topic at this moment in time, in that region of the United States, it is nonetheless an extremely limited snapshot of white attitudes that offers just a narrow glimpse of white attitudes in one part of the country.

The rarity of that measure is brought into even sharper relief by the very fact that a measure of white racial identity would not appear on a survey again for thirty more years and that survey would likewise be very limited in scope: the Los Angeles County Social Survey, which was first conducted in 1992 in response to the Rodney King riots. These surveys, conducted every year until 1998, asked respondents questions like "How important is being white to your identity," "How strongly do you identify with being white?" and "How positively

do you feel about your racial or ethnic identity?” as well as questions that tapped in to group position like “Do you think that white people are more often held back by other people, sometimes held back, or are they generally treated as well as anybody else?” and “Do you think that white people should have more influence in government than they do, should have less influence, or is their influence just about right?” These questions, while radical by the very fact of their inclusion in the survey and useful in their detail and specificity, are again narrow in context: these surveys sampled only residents of Los Angeles County and in a unique period of racial politics, making the survey ungeneralizable to the white population across the United States.

The first time any measure of white group attachment was included in a nationally representative survey of white Americans was on the 2012 American National Election Studies. The measure that was included, *Linked Fate*, is one of the most important measures of group attachment in the study of Black voting behavior and measures the extent to which individuals believe that what happens to other members of their racial group will affect their life’s chances. Linked fate, however, was a concept that was carefully developed by Michael Dawson (1994) to study Black racial solidarity in light of the growing Black middle class in the 1980s in particular, and while it has been shown to meaningfully explain the effect of group attachment and political behavior among members of other marginalized racial groups (Sanchez 2006), its utility in the study of white racial identity and political preferences is less clear (Dawson 2009; Gay, Hochschild, and White 2016). Another alternative way of measuring group attitudes available to scholars has been the *Feeling Thermometer*, which asks respondents to state how “cold” or “warm” they feel about particular groups and individuals, on a scale from 0-100. While respondents on the ANES were first asked to rate whites in the 1991 Pilot Study, again the utility

of this measure is limited, as it does not sufficiently capture the contours of group attachment, specifically, capturing instead group affect alone.

This unsuitability of the feeling thermometer and linked fate for measuring white group attitudes reflects the complicated nature of group attachment itself. Scholars have developed a wide range of strategies to disentangle the many components of group attachment and that body of work has produced a set of useful concepts that capture the unique contours of identity. For instance, *Group Identification*, which simply measures whether individuals sort themselves into a group, is an essential building block of group attachment and the strength of that identification has been an important lens scholars have utilized to understand a broad range of political attitudes and behaviors. Yet, while identification is a useful determinant of political behavior, it only captures, descriptively, how individuals categorize themselves, without tapping into other aspects of group attachment that might better predict an individual's commitment to protecting the interests of the group. To measure the political orientation of group attachment, scholars utilize *Group Consciousness* which combines group identification with two additional components: *Relative Group Position* and *Collective Action Orientation*. Together, these three components capture how strongly an individual identifies as a member of a group, that individual's sense of the group's relative power or subordination when compared to other groups, and the extent to which they believe group members ought to work together to advance the position of the group. When used in combination, these three dimensions produce a sense of politicized identity that is often more impactful on political behavior and attitudes than the use of identification alone.

Yet, the latter two of these components are differently produced among members of marginalized groups, for whom their group's position is a matter of constant significance to their

daily lives and for whom collective action is more pressingly necessary in order to improve the group's status. As previously discussed, white identity is often generated and expressed differently, because it is an identity of dominance rather than oppression, resulting in its under-interrogation by whites. Thus, while whites' position at the top of the racial hierarchy is secure, their racial identity occupies less cognitive space at the individual level. This phenomenon is also intensified by a concurrent strategy of white racial dominance which figures whiteness as "normal," an invisibilized racial identity against which all other identities are compared and racialized, and thus a natural, ordinary state that escapes consideration and, often, critique (Blee 2003; Doane 1997; Flagg 1993; Frankenberg 1993; Perry 2001; Roediger 1999). Together, these two mechanisms make the articulation of white group consciousness more difficult to uncover and explore.

However, this does not preclude whites from possessing group consciousness whatsoever. Instead, it points to the shifting nature of white racial identity and the conditions that cause whites' group consciousness to increase. White identity, like other dominant identities, is *reactive*, meaning that when the status of the group is threatened, members who are high identifiers with the group are motivated to protect or advance the interests and status of the group (eg. Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Coser 1956; Grant and Brown 1995; Levine and Campbell 1972). Importantly, threats both symbolic and real work to activate white identity and trigger defensive strategies among high identifiers (Kinder and Sanders 1981; Haney-Lopez 2006; Sniderman et al 2004; Stephan and Stephan 2000; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Together, this suggests that we should expect whites to articulate racial identity, but we should expect that identity to be expressed differently according to the particular context and political configuration of each moment of analysis.

Indeed, once scholars began applying appropriate measures of white group attachment to their analyses, its broad consequences on white political attitudes and behavior have been clearly observable. White identity has been shown to motivate a wide range of other attitudes, particularly those whites see as closely related to the status of the group, like beliefs about American identity and citizenship, support for policies like Social Security and Medicare, the outsourcing of jobs due to globalization, and immigration policy (Jardina 2019). White identity is also instrumental to political behavior, particularly vote choice; for instance, “Trump, who ran on an anti-immigrant, pro-Social Security platform, in many ways uniquely appealed to whites who were anxious about their group’s waning status. It is, perhaps, entirely unsurprising that white identity and consciousness were two of the best indicators of support for Trump” (19). Importantly, white identity is not merely a proxy for other political attitudes or racial animus but is a distinct orientation that powerfully explains white political behavior which scholars must incorporate into their analyses of American politics going forward (Jardina 2020). Thus, while we have begun to appreciate the consequences of white racial identity in a number of policy domains, like immigration and social benefit programs, there are many questions that remain to be answered in this expanding field of research. This dissertation takes up this task, by exploring white attitudes in historically distant time periods, with a clear focus on the role of white racial identity, to fill one critical space of analysis that has not previously been explored: how does white identity motivate attitudes about violence, which has long existed as a companion to whiteness?

III. Descriptions of Chapters to Follow

In the chapters that follow, I advance our understanding of white racial identity by addressing a number of gaps in the Race and Ethnic Politics (REP) literature, both thematic and

methodological. First, REP scholars have been slow to explore white racial identity quantitatively, due in large part to the lack of measures of white group attachment in large surveys until the last decade. Instead, the majority of public opinion research on white attitudes has focused on the role of explicit racial animus, prejudice, and stereotype (Sniderman and Piazza 1993) or covert forms of new-racism (e.g., Kinder and Sanders 1996; Bobo et al. 1997; Sniderman et al. 1991) in the post-civil rights era (Huddy and Feldman 2009). This dissertation joins work by scholars like Ashley Jardina (2019) who has demonstrated that negative out-group attitudes alone do not sufficiently capture the contours of white political behavior, challenging the prevalent notion in the identity literature that has argued that whites not only lack racial identity but that it is political inconsequential (Sears and Henry 2005; Sears and Savalei 2006). Rather, Jardina (2020) finds that in-group solidarity and out-group animosity are distinct attitudinal dimensions, both of which must be included in analyses of white public opinion.

While the inclusion of these measures on major survey instruments has already produced important findings about the consequences of white racial identity, like voting behavior and policy attitudes, much more is left to be studied. I take up that task by exploring white racial identity in an entirely new context: attitudes about violence. Not only do I explore the effects of white racial identity in a new issue area, but I also expand that effort by exploring its relationship to different kinds of violence, carried out for different purposes, by different actors. This strategy complicates the study of political violence, exploring it from many perspectives and meanings, producing a more nuanced picture of white tolerance of political violence. I find that whites do not simply support all acts of political violence. Rather, whites *selectively* tolerate political violence when it is employed for the purpose of maintaining or advancing white racial dominance, either by whites or agents working in the interest of whites, like the police, and they

rescind that support when violence is wielded instead to challenge, not uphold, the racial hierarchy.

Second, because of the lack of white identity measures in survey data before the last decade, REP research on white racial identity is also quite constrained by time period. While we know that violence has long served as a primary tool of white racial dominance, our analyses thus far are methodologically limited to descriptive or qualitative accounts of white racial identity and violence. In this dissertation, I provide a quantitative exploration of white tolerance of violence by carefully and creatively leveraging historical survey data to find what generates support for violence among whites in time periods we have been previously unable to explore. This strategy widens the timeframe in which quantitative analyses of white racial identity are possible by fifty years, beginning in the early 1960s. While a large body of research *Race and Ethnic Politics* has sought to evaluate whether white racial attitudes have changed or improved in the post-civil rights era (e.g., Kinder and Sanders 1981; Mendelberg 2001), others have questioned whether the role of explicit racial attitudes have been prematurely dismissed or have disappeared (Huddy and Feldman 2006). Although there is evidence that some elements of old-fashioned racism have declined in the post-civil rights era (Schuman et al. 1997) and have been replaced by forms of symbolic racism, is not the case that all white attitudes have shifted improved or have been erased completely; indeed, explicit racism continues to structure electoral politics today (Tesler 2016).

By utilizing historical and contemporary survey data, this dissertation adds to this effort by allowing us to examine how white attitudes in one thematic area, political violence, have evolved throughout the modern political era. Given what we know about the reactive nature of white racial identity (Jardina 2019), I situate each chapter in a pivotal moment in race and

American politics, in which we should expect white identity to be activated and when violence occupied a place of prominence, in order to best observe its consequences quantitatively: at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, directly after the Long, Hot Summer, and before and after the Summer 2020 protests for Black Lives. I find that white racial identity, as well as other dimensions related to white group dominance like authoritarianism and support for the status quo, consistently explain white tolerance of violence from the past and into the present. These chapters lay bare the throughline of white support for violence, revealing that both the mechanisms that structure white attitudes about political violence—namely white racial identity and other dimensions of dominance—and the levels of that white support have been relatively constant, lending evidence to the notion that at least some dimensions of white attitudes have persisted through the post-civil rights era.

Together, these strategies complement REP research that has meticulously illustrated the role that violence has played in the formation of whiteness and preservation of white racial dominance throughout American history. By quantitatively exploring the determinants of white support over a longer historical period, the consistent patterns of white group attachment and support for violence are made plain. This strategy knits together episodes of white racial violence into an ongoing cycle of white violence, uncovering what attitudes and conditions consistently generate white support of violence, past and present. These findings also illuminate the dimensions of whiteness that are integral to white behavior, which includes but is not limited to support for violence, which are deeply consequential to all American politics and can inform future research about white political behavior and attitudes. Next, I provide a brief summary of each chapter, its methods, and findings.

In Chapter 2, my analysis is situated in 1961, in the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. In this era of American politics, white racial dominance was at the center of political activity as Black Americans fought for formal inclusion in American democracy and equal protection under the law. While this campaign had national implications, the primary arena of this struggle was located in the South—where this chapter is likewise situated. Here, whites resisted challenges to the racial hierarchy through legal and extralegal means, violent and nonviolent. Thus, in this chapter, I explore white support for violent *protest* in a narrow context: school segregation. To do so, I utilize data that surveyed voting-age whites in former Confederate states to understand how tolerant whites are of violent protest, specifically when that violent protest is carried out by whites, for the purpose of maintaining white racial dominance. I explore determinants that reflect that attachment to the status quo, like traditionalism and racial stereotype, finding that although these attitudes are broadly held by Southern whites, they do not adequately explain tolerance for violent protest. Rather, white racial identity—measured here by *closeness* to other Southern whites—does the best job explaining white support for violence. Importantly, this demonstrates that whites articulate support for violent protest when that violence is utilized to protect white racial dominance, by whites.

In Chapter 3, I again vary these dimensions by taking up this question in a new time period: 1968, in the aftermath of the long, hot summer—a period of time characterized by widespread racial uprisings, across the Northern and Midwestern United States, which attracted forceful suppression by the police. Thus, in this chapter, I explore a different kind of violence: the use of excessive force by the police. Mirroring the relocation of conflict outside the South, this chapter utilizes data that surveyed whites across the whole United States. Exploring the close relationship between whites and the police, which have long served an integral role in the

preservation of white racial dominance, I find that white tolerance of excessive force is nearly universal. This analysis shows that white support for violent policing is both high and uniform, not well-explained by demographic dimensions like gender or socioeconomic status, or attitudinal differences like racial conservatism or authoritarianism. Rather, white support for violent policing is best explained by the extent to which whites perceived the events of the previous few years to be violent and therefore deserving of violent suppression by the police. This chapter demonstrates how white tolerance of violence policing is tethered to the purpose of that policing: if employed for the purpose of quelling racial resistance, whites are more supportive of violent policing. This finding reflects the critical role policing has played in the maintenance of the racial hierarchy.

In Chapter 4, I again manipulate the dimensions of time, purpose, kind, and actor, this time exploring white support for political violence in 2020, using survey data collected directly before and after the Black Lives Matter protests catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd by the police. These protests, which were one of the most significant moments of protest at least since the 1960s but perhaps in all of American history, catalyzed a vast reckoning around race and American politics. Importantly, these protests were also nested within a season of growing concern about increasing political violence among whites, causing many to wonder how extensive white support for political violence had become. I find that before the George Floyd protests, dimensions supported by the literature do predict tolerance of political violence: white men, more religious whites, and younger whites are all more supportive of political violence. However, I find that, apart from age, the best explanatory variable is strength of white identity. Along the way, I also test two measures of white identity, group attachment and perceived group threat, and find that while both are strong predictors of tolerance of political violence, at these

moments of measurement perceived group threat is the best determinant—particularly after the 2020 Summer protests. This finding suggests that white tolerance of political violence is contextually determined: the most efficient way of predicting support for political violence is to evaluate the extent to which whites perceive the status of the group as threatened at that moment in time. Relatedly, a second crucial finding of this chapter is that following a season in which white racial dominance faced the most significant challenge in a lifetime, white tolerance for political violence shrunk dramatically. Further, I found that in addition to white racial identity, other dimensions of dominance also motivated the support of political violence—like gender and religiosity—and that these dimensions operate in unison: driving greater tolerance of political violence when utilized to protect the status quo, as well as its rescindment when utilized to challenge it. Collectively, this chapter illuminates the contingent nature of white tolerance of political violence which is tethered to who is carrying out the violence and to what end.

IV. Conclusion

Together, these chapters tell us much about the conditions that generate white support for violence. Considering the reactive nature of white racial identity, they examine its consequences during three moments in which white racial dominance was challenged: at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, in the aftermath of the Long, Hot Summer, and directly before and after the George Floyd Protests. By manipulating important dimensions of political violence, like who is carrying out that violence and the purpose of that violence, this dissertation illuminates the finer details of the relationship between white identity and violence. These chapters indicate that among those whites who are tolerant of violence, there is essentially nothing distinctive about them apart from their attachment to whiteness itself. That attachment is expressed through strength of white identity, as well as other attitudes that reflect commitment to the status quo,

like authoritarianism and traditionalism. Second, these chapters demonstrate that whites are selectively tolerant of political violence, extending their support when it is utilized to uphold white racial dominance and rescinding their support when violence is employed to challenge it. This finding reflects the place whites have long occupied, claiming sole proprietorship of the use of violence, both legal and extralegal, to advance the interests of whites.

Written against the backdrop of rising white violence and extremism, this dissertation takes up urgent questions that should inform our interpretation of the current state of American politics. Lending a quantitative analysis of what qualities among whites and what contextual conditions generate white support for different forms of violence, this project equips us with knowledge that might be instrumental to dismantling that relationship. By exploring white tolerance of violence in a longer historical timeframe, the persistent dimensions of whiteness that structure that tolerance and the cyclical nature of whites' reliance on violence are illuminated. This analysis thereby contextualizes newer episodes of white violence, by placing them within a broader pattern of American politics to which they conform, rather than defy. These findings also underscore the importance of integrating white racial identity into analyses of white political behavior, which, far from being nonexistent among whites, in fact shapes their behavior in deeply consequential ways. In this project, I take up that task by exploring how white racial identity influences white attitudes in a new topical space: violence—a critical instrument of whiteness, through which whites have both constructed the meaning of whiteness and protected white racial dominance throughout American history and into the present moment.

Chapter 2

White Identity and Tolerance for Violence in the American South

I. Introduction

Following the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*, white protests against the integration of schools erupted across the country and these often resulted in widespread violence. One such instance occurred in Mississippi, catalyzed by the enrollment of the first Black student, James Meredith, at the University of Mississippi in 1962. Two weeks before the city of Oxford would break out in widespread violence on September 30th, killing two and injuring nearly 400 others, Governor Ross Barnett delivered a declaration to the citizens of Mississippi broadcast on television and radio. In a call to action, he declared to white Mississippians that

The day of expediency is past. We must either submit to the unlawful dictates of the federal government or stand up like men and tell them “*never!*”. The day of reckoning has been delayed as long as possible. It is now upon us. *This is the day—and this is the hour.* Knowing you as I do, there is no doubt in my mind what the overwhelming majority of loyal Mississippians will do. They will never submit to the moral degradation, to the shame and the ruin which have faced all others who have lacked the courage to defend their beliefs. I have made my position in this matter crystal clear. I have said in every county in Mississippi that no school in our state will be integrated while I am your Governor. (Citizens’ Councils of America, 1962).

On the eve of the riots, Governor Barnett again addressed the state and delivered a short speech during halftime at the Ole Miss-Kentucky football game, against the backdrop of large Confederate flags. Enflaming the same white Mississippians who would erupt in violence the next day, he exclaimed: “I love Mississippi! I love her people! Our customs! I love and respect our heritage!” (Freedman 2014). The following day, mobs of almost 3,000 whites roamed throughout campus, setting cars ablaze, gathering around campus buildings, and inflicting

violence throughout the community, ultimately prompting President Kennedy to call in the Mississippi National Guard and U.S. Army military police to quell the violence (Sitton 1962).

While the Ole Miss Riot was an exceptional moment of violence in this time period, throughout the 1950s and 1960s violent resistance to the integration of schools and Black advancement was commonplace. Facing one of the most sustained challenges to white supremacy in history, whites responded with violent resistance across the country and this violence was particularly prevalent in the South. Whites practiced violence routinely and readily and its employment was seen by many as necessary, urgent, and righteous. It was this widespread violence throughout the South that launched the final phase of the Civil Rights Movement and brought violence into the forefront of American politics and public imagination. From images of brutal lynchings like that of Emmett Till, televised police brutality against nonviolent protestors, and violent demonstrations protesting the desegregation of schools, white violence was brought into sharp relief as whites across the South turned to violence to prevent the advances of African Americans and the Civil Rights Movement.

Yet, while the collective memory of whites in the South during this political moment casts them as uniformly celebratory of violence, was support for violence evenly distributed among all whites and what motivates that support? In this chapter, I explore what explains white tolerance for violence within a time period centered around white racial violence. Using survey data from 1960-1961 of voting age whites in former Confederate States, I explore the landscape of support for violence among Southern whites and the determinants of that tolerance. Given that this violence was motivated by the ardent desire of Southern whites to prevent Black advancement, I explore explanations like racial stereotype, support for the status quo, and strength of white identity.

I find that tolerance of violence is shared by whites across age, income, sex, and education—substantively, all whites are equally predisposed to tolerance of violence through these theoretical frames. I find that racial stereotype, although universally held by an overwhelming majority of white respondents, does not meaningfully explain the variation among respondents' toleration of violence. Rather, this study reveals that the best explanation of tolerance for violent protest in the context of school integration exists at the intersection of high white racial identity and support for the status quo, that props up white racial dominance. In the sections that follow, I explore the meaning of whiteness and violence in the context of the 1960s South, finding that both cultural and structural features in that time and place made space for widespread utilization of white violence throughout the region. Next, I explore theoretical explanations for white tolerance for violence, in addition to white racial identity, including support for the status quo, policy ideology, and racial stereotype. Last, I detail the data and methods utilized in this chapter and explore the results of that model, ultimately revealing that combined explanatory power of white racial identity and Southern traditionalism best explain tolerance of violent resistance to threats to white dominance, like the integration of schools.

II. Time Period: Violence, White Identity, and the 1960s

Although racial violence has long saturated the history of the United States, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s brought that violence to the center of American attention. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the racial violence that had dominated the South not only did not decrease, but in fact lynchings increased (O'Brien 1999). Encountering newly politically empowered Black veterans (Parker 2009) and excluded by more elite segregationist organizations like White Citizens Councils, many whites turned to racial violence to remedy challenges to white supremacy. Wade (1987) finds that according to a report from the Southern

Regional Council, an Atlanta-based civil rights agency formed in 1918, there were 530 cases of suspected Klan violence across the South between 1955 and 1959, and twenty-seven bombings in the year 1959 alone. Yet while “manicured Kluxism” (Wakefield 1964) like White Citizens Councils did supplant Klan violence to some extent in this time period, when that polished strategy failed to prevent school desegregation, Klan membership increased throughout the mid-1960s and violence against Black students and families who sought to enroll their students in white institutions continued. That violence took the form of vigilante violence as well as large scale protests and riots throughout the South. Indeed, that violence was an effective political strategy that succeeded in preventing desegregation for years after *Brown*: thirteen years later in 1967, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported that fear of violence by whites remained a powerful deterrent to Black families and the desegregation of schools in the South (31). While the South was the main arena of struggle during the Civil Rights Movement, as America entered the 1960s, that struggle was broadcast nationally, exposing citizens across the country to images and footage of racial violence and police brutality. The pervasive use of violence against Black and brown bodies in American politics was no longer obscured from white view nor contained to a problem of Southern politics alone. The role and extent of violence in American politics was the subject of broad consideration, making this chapter in American history an important one to study white attitudes about such violence.

This time period is also an ideal moment to examine white identity: to whites in the South, the Civil Rights Movement was not only a symbolic threat to white status, but a real, material threat. One privilege of dominant group position is the under-interrogation of the advantages of group status, the normalization of that identity while the group’s status is secure, and the hidden, invisible nature of the identity to the beholder (Blee 2003; Doane 1997; Flagg

1993; Frankenberg 1993; Perry 2001; Roediger 1999). However, threat to group position activates the saliency of dominant group identity (Jardina 2019) and motivates members to articulate attitudes that protect group interests and status (eg. Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Coser 1956; Grant and Brown 1995; Levine and Campbell 1972). In this way, a central characteristic of “dominant group ethnic assertion [it] is reactionary in nature; it is asserted as a political and ideological defense of group position within the system of ethnic stratification” (Doane 1997, 380). While threats to group status can be either symbolic or material to render an effect on attitudes and identity (Kinder and Sanders 1981; Haney-Lopez 2006; Sniderman et al 2004; Stephan and Stephan 2000; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979), in the 1960s, both kinds of threats abounded: Black advancement represented both a symbolic challenge to white American identity, society, and culture, but also a material challenge to white political hegemony.

The urgency these threats posed to whiteness is reflected in the response they produced: widespread protest and violence by whites, seeking to resist challenges to white racial dominance. Indeed, this moment represents the culmination of a long chapter of American history, in which public, barefaced white violence—what is now referred to as old fashioned racism—abounded. After this time period, norms of racial equality produced by the Civil Rights Movement compelled whites to censor these forms of white racism and violence, which were incrementally replaced by a new era of subtle, symbolic, covert racism (Mendelberg 2001; Kinder and Sanders 1996). For this reason, the early 1960s is one of the last opportunities to examine the effect of white identity on white attitudes, before the expression of those attitudes began to change. Thus, the intersecting characteristics of this time period—the central role of white racial violence of American politics at this time, the activation of white racial identity in response to the broad challenges to white racial dominance whites perceived, and the absence of

norms that later encouraged whites to censor their attitudes—make it an immensely valuable one in understanding the relationship between white identity and violence.

III. Theoretical Explanations

From the very beginnings of American history, white identity has been formed and shaped through the violent subordination of other racial groups (Baldwin 1984) and the boundaries of whiteness continue to be violently maintained by whites—through violent enforcement of the law, hate crimes, vigilante violence, and occasionally violent protests and riots. In this way, tolerance for various forms of violence is an essential component of whiteness for all whites, who all stand to benefit from the maintenance of white supremacy and are motivated by the desire to maintain their status as the dominant group in American society (Lipsitz 1995). I thus expect whites who are more committed to whiteness to be more tolerant of the violent maintenance of their group's status and position.

In the South, violence has maintained a consistently visible, pronounced, and unmistakable form. Indeed, many consider the South possessive of a distinct *culture* of violence, stemming back far before the Civil War (Franklin 1956) and later cemented by Southern defeat in the Civil War, bestowing the South with a low tolerance for Northern aggression, a pervasive culture of honor (Nisbett 1996), and widely salient, collective grievances among Southerners (Hackney 1969), passed down through generations (Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967). Resistance to Reconstruction and Black advancement was widespread among whites, who wielded violence as a device of terror, intended to return newly freedmen back to a state of servitude. In studies of Southern cultural distinctiveness, conservative attitudes toward women, religion, race, and politics, localism, heightened nationalism, and agrarianism are typically included in addition to tolerance of violence (Degler 1977, Hurlbert 1989, Reed 1972). Thus, while certainly

interpersonal violence occurred throughout the North and South alike, in the South there existed a number of cultural forces—even as simple as a higher interest in and possession of weaponry (Gastil 1971)—that led what typically ended as a small brawl in the North to result in a homicide in the South (Redfield 1880). Others have pointed to structural factors that made space for or explained wider use of violence, including structural poverty (Blau and Blau 1982; Loftin and Hill 1974), racial composition (Messener 1983), and the incredibly low likelihood of conviction for whites charged with a lethal crime (Francis 2014). These two explanations combined, cultural and structural, both provide the most comprehensive understanding of the South’s unique tradition of violence (Bankston and Allen 1980; Huff-Corzine et al 1986).

Another way of understanding Southern tolerance of violence, particularly in the context of protesting the integration of schools, is through the lens of preservation of the status quo—that of white dominance. Not only does the South possess a culture of violence, it also in possession of a culture of traditionalism, or support for the status quo, and a resistance to change (Franklin 1956). In his analysis of traditionalism among Black Southerners, Parker (2009) finds that the culture of traditionalism was instilled into generations of Southerners by the 1960s and was embedded into Southern culture, weakened only through deeply transformative experiences like military service. For white Southerners, support for the status quo was not only a matter of cultural heritage, but also of group dominance. Practices like school segregation, along with other modes of political, social, and economic control, were devices that long protected and maintained white supremacy and it follows that whites are motivated to engage in behaviors that preserve those practices and the “way things are” (Levin et al., 1998; Wohl et al., 2010). When systems that prop up group dominance are challenged, group identity is activated and members of the dominant group are motivated to resist those challenges (Doosje, Spears, and Ellemers

2002; Ellemers, van Kippenberg, and Wilke 1990; Jardina 2019). Thus, in addition to white group attachment, I expect support for the status quo, or traditionalism, to explain tolerance of violence as they each reflect a commitment to the maintenance of the current social order that positions whites at the top.

A final component of Southern culture must also be integrated into any exploration of Southern attitudes: ideological conservatism. Southern culture is not only defined, as previously mentioned, by conservative attitudes around race, gender, religion, and gun control, but individualism and limited government (Black and Black, 1987). In the aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction, Southern states resisted the intervention of the federal government and its efforts to install racially egalitarian political structure in the place of the system of slavery. The legacy of resistance to those efforts is reflected in Southerners' deep, ongoing commitment to states' rights, which became a cornerstone of Southern political culture and identity. In the moment this chapter is situated, federal intervention in Southern politics was again at the forefront of struggle there, across many policy domains. Thus, I expect conservatism to be positively related to tolerance of violence among white Southerners, particularly in the context of protesting against school desegregation, because that resistance might be motivated not only by their racial identity and commitment to the maintenance of the status quo, but also by their broader ideological commitment to resist the intervention of the federal government in a policy area they believe ought to be under the control of state governments alone.

Last, it might also be the case that violent resistance to school desegregation is motivated quite simply by racial stereotype and prejudice. While white racial identity and support for the status quo reflect a self-interested commitment to the preservation of the social hierarchy, given their attachment to the group and its status, it might be the case that these in-group attitudes do

not completely explain whites' tolerance of violent resistance to the integration of schools. Rather, it is possible that whites support the violent resistance to school desegregation because of negative out-group attitudes they possess, like the perceived intellectual or moral inferiority of other racial groups, which informs whites' desire to prevent members of those out-groups from joining their ranks and classrooms. Given the widespread nature of racial prejudice at this time and in the South, it follows that prejudice might be a key reason white Southerners might resist school desegregation. I thus expect higher attitudes of racial stereotype and prejudice to be positively related to tolerance of violence in the context of school desegregation.

IV. Data and Methods

This chapter utilizes data from Donald Matthews and James Prothro's Negro Political Participation Study (NPPS), fielded in 1961. This instrument measured political attitudes of Black and white adults residing in states of the former Confederacy through personal interview.² Although the study was conducted with the aim of measuring Black political attitudes and participation patterns, here only the white sample ($n = 694$) is used, which was collected as a control group for the study. Respondents were drawn by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan, using stratified, multi-stage probability techniques, yielding an 84% response rate and a representative cross-section of voting-age citizens in former Confederate states.

My primary outcome variable, *Violence Tolerance*, measures the extent to which respondents perceive violence as an acceptable component of protest against the integration of schools. To measure this, I utilize the question: "Now, I'd like to read some of the kinds of things people tell me when I interview them and ask whether you agree or disagree with them.

² These include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

[...] Demonstrations to protest integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt.” This variable taps into tolerance of violence in an explicitly racial context that challenges white status and group position (the integration of schools) and was a widespread concern shared among many Southerners at this time.

My explanatory variable in this study is the strength of *White Racial Identity*. The very fact of the inclusion of this measure in this survey is unique in itself—it did not become common to ask white respondents about their racial identity for another thirty years at least.³ The inclusion of this variable provides the unique opportunity to explore white racial identity in an era in which that was largely impossible. How to measure white identity is the subject of much scholarly attention and variation in approaches to its measurement has resulted in inconsistent findings about the importance of white racial identity and attitude formation (e.g., Hartmann et al 2009). In this analysis, I utilize a “closeness” measure, which measures how close respondents feels to others in their own racial group in the South: “Some people in the South feel they have a lot in common with other Southerners, but others we talk to don't feel this way so much. How about you? Would you say you feel pretty close to Southerners in general or that you don't feel much closer to them than you do to other people?”⁴ This item was designed by Matthews and Prothro specifically as a racial identity item and the equivalent item for the Black sample asked respondents how close they felt to other [Blacks] in the South.

Some argue that the closeness measure is a poor proxy for white identity, capturing instead feelings of social distance or sympathy, rather than group attachment (Jardina 2019).

³ See LA County Social Survey (1991-1996) or the American National Election Studies (beginning in 1992), for instance.

⁴ This item was only administered to the white sample, while Black respondents were asked “Some Negroes feel they have a lot in common with other Negroes, but others we talk to don’t feel this way too much. How about you? Would you say you feel pretty close to Negroes in general or that you don’t feel much closer to them than you do to other people?”

Indeed it was the closeness measure which was included in the American National Election Studies (ANES) from 1992-2000, utilization of which has contributed to the scholarly impression that many whites lack racial identity. Further, examinations of this measure revealed that even if whites do report racial identity, it has a weak relationship to policy attitudes, which are better explained by symbolic racism or racial resentment (Kinder and Winter 2001; Wong and Cho 2005). Other surveys, like the LA County Social Survey (1991-1996) and more recent versions of the ANES utilize a more straightforward measurement of white identity that asks respondents how important being white is to their identity. Yet even in work that utilized this kind of identity measure, scholars have found low levels of white racial identity and the relationship between white racial identity and racial policy has been found to be weak (Citrin and Sears 2014; Sears and Henry 2005; Sears and Savalei 2006).

I argue that the closeness measure utilized in this study is appropriate for a number of reasons. First, the historical context in which this data originates is fundamentally different from that of studies utilizing data from the 1990s and later. In the 1950s and 1960s, conscious, clear, and candid white racial identity was overwhelmingly more common and socially acceptable. This data was collected before the era of symbolic racism was ushered in following the Civil Rights Movement, meaning there was considerably less social sanctioning for those who articulated proud attachment to whiteness. We also know that white identities, latent in times of comfort or security, are activated in times of threat (Jardina 2019)—which for whites in the 1950s and 1960s, it certainly was. Second, there exists a meaningful and stark difference in the regional context of the South versus Los Angeles County or the entire United States. This means that research that does not demonstrate a connection between white racial identity and racial policy attitudes using the closeness measure in those regions is simply not generalizable to its

utility in the South. Last, there does exist a risk that white respondents do not see the connection between closeness to other Southerners and their own white racial identity—they might perhaps conceive of this question as measuring their closeness to Southerners of all racial identities, leading them to underreport their closeness. If this is the case, then my utilization of this measure risks *underestimating* the power of white racial identity’s relationship to tolerance of violence, not overestimating.

Thus, the first question might simply be: how many whites do report they feel “pretty close” to other Southerners? At the time this survey was administered, whites were undergoing widespread challenges to white supremacy in many dimensions of life. These challenges were broadcast on television, politicians’ war cries rang through their ears, and they gathered in the streets to resist the unsettling of white supremacy in the United States. At this climax of racial animosity, it would be reasonable to expect white identity to be activated and strong in Southern whites. However, the simplest examination of the distribution of responses to this survey item indicate that white respondents were mixed in their feelings of closeness to other whites at this time: only slightly more than half of white Southerners (57.5%) report feeling “pretty close” to other Southerners, while the rest report feeling no closer to Southerners than others. This finding is interesting for a few reasons: first, it seems that whites are indeed cognizant of their identity and entirely “invisible” to them—more than half report feeling close to other Southern whites. Yet, at a moment when white status was at its greatest moment of threat, to observe only half of white Southerners feeling pretty close to other white Southerners simultaneously feels surprising. This, I believe, aligns well with my expectation that while the closeness measure does capture some of white’s racial identity at this time and place, it might underestimate the extent of that

identity. Again, this might indicate that the estimated effect we might later observe in this analysis is in fact a conservative estimate of the effect of white identity.

V. Results and Discussion

Before turning to the analysis of the model, it might first be useful to understand the general landscape of tolerance for violence among whites. In other words, just how many whites do agree that demonstrations to protest the integration of schools is a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt? Given the depiction of white Southerners at this time, we might expect widespread tolerance for violent resistance to school integration. In Table 2.1, I compare responses to this question among those with high and low white identity, as well as the average white respondent.

Table 2.1
Comparison of High and Low Identifying White Southerners' Tolerance of Violence

<i>Item</i>	<i>Not Closer than Others</i>	<i>Pretty Close</i>	<i>All Whites</i>
<i>Demonstrations to protest integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt</i>			
Agree quite a bit	8.2	13.7	10.9
Agree a little	5.1	8.5	6.8
Disagree a little	8.6	13.7	11.4
Disagree quite a bit	78.0	64.1	70.9

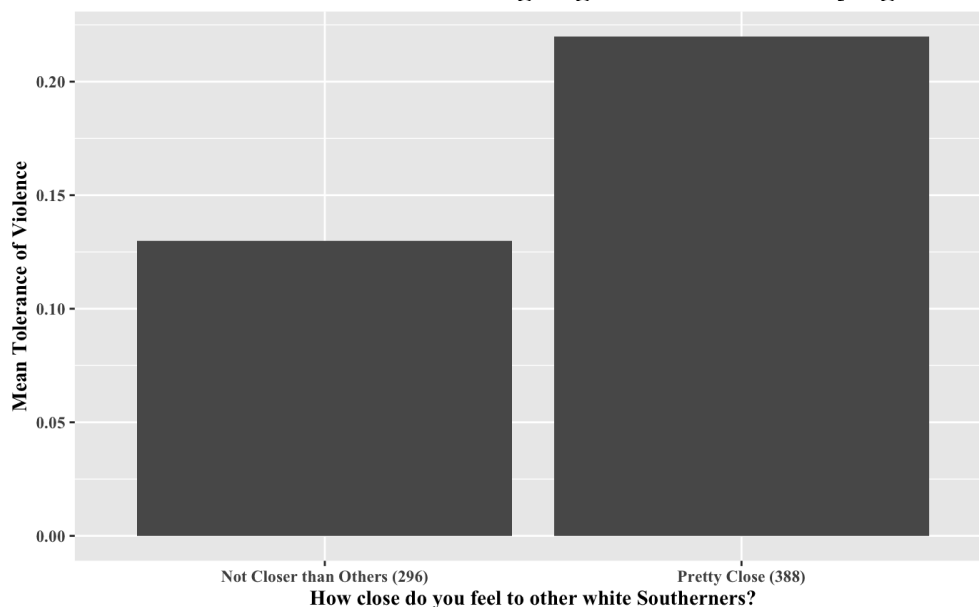
Source: Negro Political Participation Study, 1961-1962

An immediate observation is that most whites do not support the notion that it is acceptable for some people to get hurt in the process of protesting the integration of schools: 82.3% of all whites disagree a little or quite a bit. While this does challenge the notion that all whites in the South at this time supported violent resistance to school integration—here, it seems, only a small portion of whites articulate such support—this does nonetheless indicate that 17.7% of all whites do support the idea that some physical violence and injury are acceptable side effects of preventing school integration. While that support is not as universal, it is, I believe, somewhat

impressive to observe nearly one-fifth of whites are willing to tolerate this kind of violence and warrants further investigation into the motivations for that tolerance.

For instance, we do observe a difference in tolerance for violence between high and low identifying whites: 22.2% of whites with high racial identity agree a little or quite a bit that demonstration to protest the integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt, compared to 13.3% among low identifying whites. In other words, 67% more high identifying whites are tolerant of violent protests against the integration of schools than low identifying whites. In order to test whether that is whether the difference between high and low identifying whites is meaningful, I rescale violence tolerance into a binary outcome where “Agree quite a bit” and “Agree a little” are collapsed and represented with the value 1 and “Disagree a little” and “Disagree quite a bit” are collapsed and represented with the value 0. The results of this test are shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Mean Tolerance for Violence among High and Low Identifying Whites



Note: Tolerance of Violence is a four-category item, rescaled to a binary outcome where “0” represents those who “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” that “Demonstrations to protest integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt.”

Source: Negro Political Participation Study 1961-62.

I find that the mean tolerance of violence among high identifying whites is 8.79% higher than low identifying whites, is real ($t = -3.01$), and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

In order to fully understand how white identity drives tolerance for violence, however, I turn to ordered logistic regression to test how well identity explains tolerance for violence when compared to other explanations. To do so, I utilize the outcome variable *Violence Tolerance*, coded from 1-4 where “4” represents high tolerance for violence (“Agree quite a bit” that “Demonstrations to protest integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt”). The primary explanatory variable here is *White Identity*, coded as a binary variable where “1” represents high group attachment. In addition to white identity, I include four additional variables of interest: white racial identity, political ideology, racial stereotype, and support for the status quo.

To measure *Racial Stereotype*, I utilize an index constructed by Matthews and Prothro in the Negro Political Participation Study. This index includes responses to questions that compare intelligence, ambition, dependability, and behavior across racial groups, such as: “By and large, do you think white people are more dependable than colored people, colored people are more dependable than white people, or that they are about the same?” This index is scaled from 1 to 8, where 8 represents the highest possible pro-white stereotype score. I find that there exists a modest and statistically significant relationship between white group attachment and pro-white stereotype (Pearson $r = 0.21$). There also exists, however, a statistically significant relationship between pro-white stereotype and tolerance of violence, albeit a small one (Pearson $r = 0.10$). These initial findings thus suggest that part of what might be motivating tolerance for violence is animosity toward Blacks, generally, not only white group attachment.

A second index constructed by Matthews and Prothro is also included in the model: support for the status quo or what Christopher S. Parker (2009) terms *Traditionalism*. This index includes responses to five statements, like “If you start trying to change things very much, you usually make them worse” and “If something grows up over a long period of time, there will always be much wisdom in it.” There does exist a small but statistically significant relationship between support for the status quo and white group attachment (Pearson $r = 0.08$). Furthermore, there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between support for the status quo and tolerance of violence (Pearson $r = 0.31$). Like the role of racial stereotype, it thus remains to be seen what does the best job explaining tolerance for violence.

To measure ideology, I refrain from the use of party identification, which does not adequately capture differences in political attitudes, given the widespread white support for the Democratic Party at this time. Instead, I use an index of four questions constructed by Matthews and Prothro that measures support for liberal policy preferences. These include policy positions like “The government in Washington ought to see to it that everyone who wants to work can find a job” and “The government ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost.” I refer to this variable as *Policy Conservatism* and it is coded on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 represents the most conservative score. Last, I also include standard demographic controls in the model, including age, sex, income, and education. For complete details on variable coding, see Appendix 1. The results of this regression are found in Table 2.2.

A few findings emerge from these data. First, we find that there is a positive, highly significant relationship between tolerance for violence and high white identity: those with higher white racial identity are more likely to be tolerant of violence. This comports with our expectation that high white identifiers would be more tolerant of violence, all

else equal. We also observe from these results a significant, positive relationship between traditionalism and tolerance for violence, which likewise aligns with our theoretical expectation that whites who are more wedded to preserving the status quo would be more tolerant of violent resistance in this particular context of change: the integration of schools. Interestingly, we do not observe a significant relationship between tolerance of violence and racial stereotype, which although it is positively related to violence tolerance as theoretically expected, is statistically insignificant.

Table 2.2: Determinants for Tolerance of Violence

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Errors</i>
High White Identity	0.803***	0.238
Age	-0.017**	0.008
Male	0.175	0.221
Education	-0.174*	0.090
Income	-0.128**	0.051
Pro-white Stereotype	0.092	0.103
Traditionalism	0.230***	0.077
Policy Conservatism	-0.210**	0.100
1 2	0.103	1.04
2 3	0.830	1.041
3 4	1.423	1.046
Observations	458	

Note: Coefficients are derived from ordered logistic regression, where * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. For all variable coding, see Appendix 1.
Source: Negro Political Participation Study 1961-62.

This result is likely explained by the very fact that high levels of racial stereotype are universally held by most respondents, washing out the effect of this variable on tolerance for violence: 77% of respondents have racial stereotype scores of either 7 or 8, the two highest possible scores on the index. Had there been greater variation in racial stereotype, we might have been able to estimate its effect on tolerance for violence, but that variation is nonexistent in this sample. However, this does indicate that white attitudes about violence cannot be simply explained through racial animosity, but rather through the complex relationship between that and other competing forces like racial identity and traditionalism.

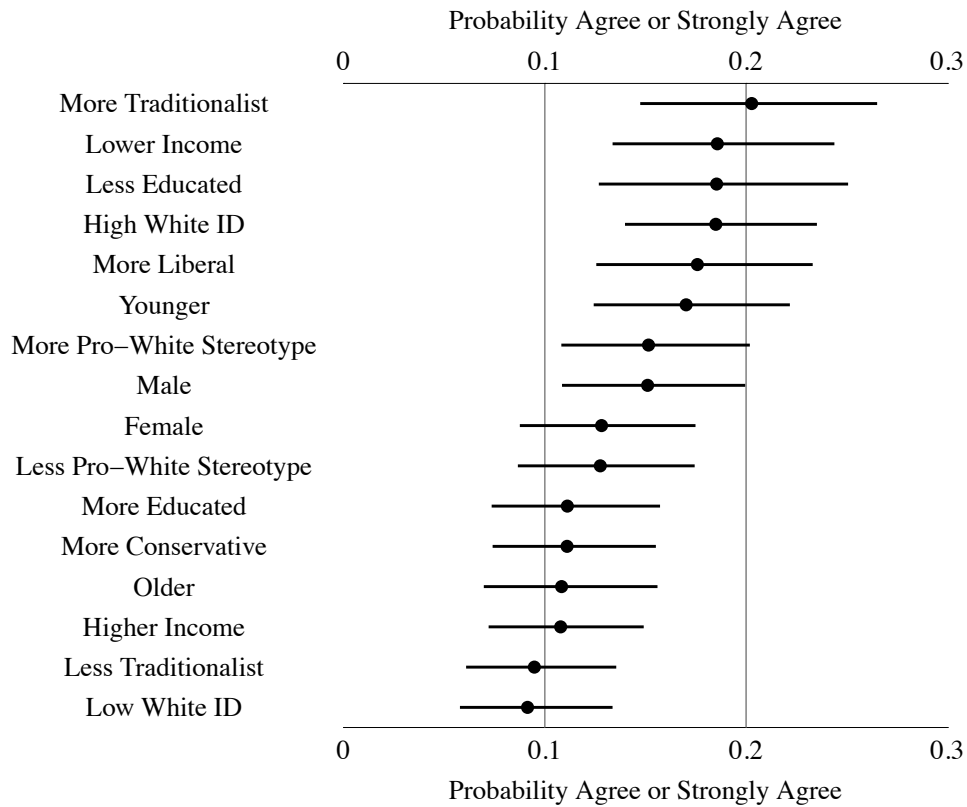
This analysis has also revealed a significant, negative relationship between tolerance of violence and age, education, and income. The finding that age is negatively related to tolerance of violence is an interesting one: this indicates that younger white Southerners are more tolerant of violent resistance to school integration. We know that age is directly related to the formation of political attitudes, including group attitudes (Campbell et al. 1960). In the context of the early 1960s, one might expect generational differences to be pronounced: I might expect younger whites, many of whom might have experiences in activism on college campuses or exposure to more progressive politics, to report less tolerance of violence than older white Southerners, among whom we might expect the Southern culture of violence to be the most salient. Yet from these findings, it appears that for those who are younger—either student age or who are middle-aged, in the midst of their working life, parenting life, and social life, the integration of schools might be more triggering and consequential than it is to their older counterparts. It is the lives of these whites that stand to change the greatest in the face of political inclusion of Black Americans and desegregation in public spaces, schools, and workplaces.

Education, like age, has been consistently proven to shape political attitudes and that effect is evident in these results: schools are a primary site of socialization, where values and histories are instilled in students from a very young age. As students advance in education, they are also exposed to new ideas, ways of thinking, and perspectives that shape how they see the world and political phenomena. It seems reasonable, then, that whites who have not progressed as far in their education are more likely to report tolerance of violence. This effect might also be explained by the related, significant, negative relationship between tolerance of violence and income: given that the boundaries of whiteness matter most to those on the margins, such as though who are less educated or less affluent, for those for whom being white represents a more critical source of power, it is logical for those whites to more deeply resist the integration of schools and other sources of Black advancement or threats to white dominance. This also aligns with the depiction of those carrying out violent acts at this time: “a collection of uneducated misfits” (Wade 1987, 300), largely blue collared workers (Vander Zanden 1960), rejected by the “country club Klan” of White Citizens’ Councils (McGill 1963), and for whom violence was a central device of power and status.

However, while the results of this model estimation do provide us with the significance and directionality of the relationships between these variables and tolerance of violence, to illustrate the substantive effects of these variables, I plot the predicted probability of each variable in the model one standard deviation below and above their respective means. I call these categories, for instance, “Less Traditionalist” and “More Traditionalist” and plot the baseline predicted probability that respondents are tolerant of violence, with all else held at their means. I also collapse respondents who either “agree” or “strongly agree” that “It is important to protest

the integration of schools even if a few people have to get hurt” into one category for this analysis, shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Predicted Probability to Tolerate Violence



Note: Predicted probability of respondents to “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that “It is important to protest the integration of schools even if a few people have to get hurt,” calculated by setting each variable in the model one standard deviation below and above their respective means, with all other variables held at their respective means. Probabilities derived from ordered logistic regression coefficients in Table 2.2. For all variable coding, see Appendix 1.

Source: Negro Political Participation Study 1961-62.

In this Figure, we can compare the substantive effects of all variables in this model against each other. This Figure demonstrates that the respondents with the highest predicted probability to be tolerant of violence are those who are more traditionalist, those who are younger, those with lower income, those who are less educated, and those who have high white racial identity. We also observe that the predicted probability for all of these categories are

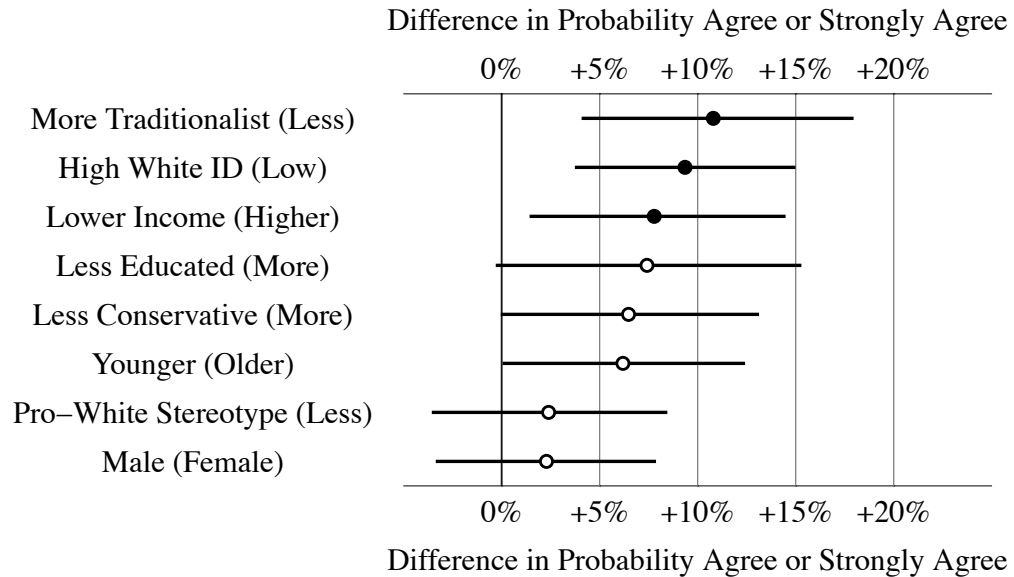
relatively low—at or below 20%. This comports with the general distribution of the data, since only about one-fifth of respondents report tolerance of violence in the first place.

In order to interpret the substantive meaning of the findings of this model, I turn toward differences in predicted probabilities of each variable in the model. Again, I plot the difference in predicted probability, for instance, between high and low identifying whites of either responding “Agree a little” or “Agree quite a bit” that “Demonstrations to protest integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt.” For the variables in the model that are not binary, I plot the difference in predicted probability between one standard deviation below and above their respective means. In this Figure, a dark dot reflects a statistically significant difference while a white dot reflects an insignificant difference. These results are displayed in Figure 2.3.

Through this Figure, we can observe even more clearly the substantive effect of the variables in this model on tolerance of violence. Regarding the primary variables of interest, we observe that the biggest difference in predicted probability that a respondent is tolerant of violence is between those who are more and less traditionalist and between those with high and low racial identity—about an 11% and 9% difference, respectively. This aligns with our theoretical expectations that the strength of one’s white racial identity generates greater tolerance of the violent resistance to the integration of schools, which highly identifying whites are likely to perceive as a challenge to white dominance and status. The finding that support for the status quo had the largest substantive effect on violence tolerance likewise fits within our expectations, given the deeply connected nature between preservation of the status quo and the preservation of white supremacy. This finding indicates that there is a clear relationship between white group attachment and commitment to the preservation of the systems and institutions that maintain

white dominance: collectively, they account for the biggest substantive effect on tolerance for violence.

Figure 2.3: Difference in Predicted Probability to Tolerate Violence



Note: Difference in predicted probability of respondents to “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that “It is important to protest the integration of schools even if a few people have to get hurt,” between each variable in the model one standard deviation below and above their respective means, calculated with all other variables held at their respective means. Probabilities derived from ordered logistic regression coefficients in Table 2.2. A white dot signifies a statistically significant difference. For all variable coding, see Appendix 1.

Source: Negro Political Participation Study 1961-62.

Puzzlingly, Figure 2.2 and 2.3 demonstrate the opposite effect of ideology than what was theoretically expected: respondents who are less conservative than average are in fact more tolerant of violence. This seems to directly conflict with the expectation that Southerners are generally conservative, articulated most often through a strong resistance to large, central government and the involvement of the Federal government in state politics. In the context of school integration, in which on some occasions the Executive called in the National Guard and U.S. military police to enforce a Supreme Court ruling, thus seems to embody the epitome of a

violation of state sovereignty around which a typical white Southerner might feel outrage. Indeed, this was the case across the South as whites resisted the integration of schools, not only on the basis of race but on the basis of states' rights. We do observe in Figure 2.3 that the difference between those who are more or less conservative is insignificant, which might suggest that there is less of a negative relationship between conservatism and tolerance of violence than there is simply little substantive difference across the ideological spectrum. However, this finding nonetheless indicates that greater research is required to understand the relationship between policy ideology and tolerance of violence in this time period.

In addition to conservatism, Figure 2.3 also demonstrates that there is no substantive relationship between education, age, racial stereotype, and gender and tolerance of violence. Again, the lack of substantive effect of racial stereotype on tolerance of violence is likely due to the lack of variation in this attitude across Southern whites: most possess negative stereotypical beliefs about Black Americans, which makes it incapable of explaining the variation in the tolerance of violence which does exist among respondents. However, the finding that there is no substantive difference between those who are more or less educated; younger or older; male or female is interesting, as it suggests that there is little difference demographically among whites that are more tolerant of violence. Gender, for instance, is weakly related to tolerance of violence: the directionality of the effect of gender comports with the expectation that men, who are socialized in patriarchal principles of violent anger and strength, might demonstrate a higher tolerance for violence, including as a component of political protest, but that effect is not statistically significant. In other words, this suggests that there is no meaningful difference between men and women in regard to their tolerance of violence. This pushes back against the popular notion that women are more gentle, passive, or nonviolent and suggests that men and

women alike support violence for the purpose of maintaining white group dominance. This also aligns with the qualitative evidence of white female commitment to white supremacy, evidenced for instance by their involvement in white supremacist organizations, like female chapters of the Ku Klux Klan (Gordon 2017; MacLean 1994) or their violent involvement in chattel slavery in the antebellum period (Jones-Rogers 2019).

More importantly, the lack of substantive difference between whites who are tolerant of violence according to the dimensions of gender, education, age, ideology, and racial stereotype underscores the significant roles that white racial identity and traditionalism play in generating white tolerance of violence. This analysis has found that the strongest determinants of white tolerance of violence—measured here by support for the violent resistance to school integration—are those that reflect their commitment to the maintenance of white racial dominance: the strength of their racial identity and support for the status quo. While Southern whites do possess deeply negative attitudes about Black Americans, the ubiquity of that racial animus makes it an inefficient means of predicting tolerance of violence. Rather, feelings of positive in-group attachment, measured here by feelings of closeness to other Southerners, and attachment to the traditional “way of life” that has long positioned whites at the top of the social hierarchy, do the best job at explaining white tolerance of its violent maintenance.

VI. Conclusion

This chapter set out to accomplish the chief aim of exploring how white group attachment influences attitudes about violence. To do so, I utilized a rare white identity measure occurring in data from the early 1960s in the South, at a time where white identity was highly activated and whites were engaging in widespread resistance to multiple challenges to white dominance. I found that contrary to the notion that most whites lack racial identity, most whites do report

strong group attachment to other white Southerners. This finding aligns with other research that has found that dominant identities become salient in moments of contestation to group status. Indeed, at the time this data was collected, whites were perceiving seemingly radical, symbolic and material, challenges to white supremacy and for many those challenges produced emotional, occasionally violent responses in the forms of violent protest and riots. Thus, I examined the extent to which white group attachment explains white tolerance for violent resistance in one particular context of white group threat: the integration of schools. I found that while white respondents were not universally supportive of violence, one-fifth of them supported the notion that it was acceptable for some people to get hurt in the process of protesting the integration of schools. Exploring other explanations for the tolerance of violence, I found that those who are less educated and less affluent are more tolerant of violence, which aligns with the traditional depictions of violent, Southern whites. Yet, I found that the differences between those who are more or less affluent and educated, while significant, was not substantively great. Furthermore, I found that men and women are equally tolerant of violence. These findings, critically, point toward universal nature of violence tolerance among whites, across dimensions of sex, education, and affluence.

Rather, I find that more broadly held characteristics of Southern whites better explained tolerance for violent resistance of the integration of schools. Interestingly, this did not include racial stereotype, which I found did not adequately explain tolerance of violence (due perhaps in part to the fact that these attitudes were so broadly held by nearly every white respondent in the sample). Instead, I found that violence tolerance was better explained through white racial identity and Southern traditionalism combined. Indeed, this particular historical moment—the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in the passage of the Civil Rights

and Voting Rights Acts—has come to be remembered as the end of the most brazen, public forms of physical racial violence and old fashioned racism. This was not only a climax of white racial identity and threat to the white status quo for whites in the South in this time period, but has come to be remembered as one of the most exceptional challenges to white dominance in American history. I thus argue that support for the status quo at this time was fundamentally tied to the desire to maintain systems and institutions that prop up white group dominance, even through the use of violent resistance. The intersection of these two impulses—traditionalism and whiteness—represent the central dynamic of a distinctly white, Southern culture that is uniquely tolerant of violence.

Chapter 3

White Identity and the Use of Excessive Force by the Police

I. Introduction

Policing has long provided a unique, imperative function toward the preservation and restoration of white racial dominance, from the first slave patrols in the antebellum South, to the Texas Rangers in settler colonies of the West, to the over-policing and disproportionate use of lethal force in present day communities of color. The police in the United States have long served as a crucial instrument of “legitimate” racial violence. Working alongside and occasionally in tandem with unofficial forms of racial violence, the police have functioned as one half of the violent project of white supremacy, used to collect and consolidate power. The road encircling white hegemony is protected by violent policing, paved by white tolerance of its violent maintenance.

This chapter seeks to explore the circuitry that connects whites to violent policing—a symbiotic relationship that is central to the maintenance of both the carceral state and white racial dominance. What dimensions of identity, demography, and disposition motivate support for violent policing among whites? How broad is that support? This chapter takes up these questions, while building on the previous in two critical ways. First, it continues to explore how violence is wielded for the purpose of maintaining white racial dominance but shifts the analysis into a different context by investigating support for violence that is carried out by agents of the state, rather than citizen actors. Second, this chapter broadens the scope of investigation by relocating the analysis outside the context of the South alone, to instead consider white attitudes

across the entire United States. By altering these two dimensions, this chapter illuminates the contours of a different system of violence that plays a critical role in the maintenance of white supremacy in all corners of the nation: the police.

This chapter is situated at a transitional moment in American politics, marked by a heightened commitment to the utility of state violence for the preservation of white racial dominance: 1968, in the wake of the “long, hot summer.” Following not only the most significant, sustained challenge to white racial dominance during the Civil Rights Movement, but also years of racial upheaval throughout the nation after its formal conclusion, violent policing remained the most relied upon strategy to smother racial upheaval. Fears of racial unrest were distributed widely among whites across the nation, as contests to white racial dominance were no longer confined within the boundaries of Southern states, erupting instead in communities like Detroit, Newark, Minneapolis, and Cincinnati. This historical moment is a crucial one for understanding white attitudes about the police, as this moment laid the groundwork for the evolution of the carceral state that currently governs American politics.

Thus, this pivotal moment in the formation of the modern carceral state, at which time whiteness was under prolonged distress, activated, and threatened, provides a crucial opportunity to understand: what motivates greater support for violent policing among whites? To answer this question, this chapter utilizes data that emerged from this historical moment, The Violence Study, a nationally representative survey of voting-age adults and a component of the many hundreds of pages of reports produced by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, created by President Johnson about one year after he had established the National Advisory Committee of Civil Disorders (later referred to as the Kerner Commission). These reports, released to the President, Congress, and the public, synthesized multi-disciplinary

research and expertise, aimed to explain the sources of violent civil unrest and suggest paths forward to a safer Union. These reports ultimately set the terms for “legitimate” political contestation and the violent suppression by the police of those efforts deemed illegitimate by whites. The attitudes about policing practices that were captured in this critical moment by The Violence Study, are the same white attitudes which became entrenched in the modern carceral state, whose consequences reverberate today.

In this chapter, I find that white citizens possess a remarkable degree of support for the use of force, both in the abstract and the real. In other words, not only do whites support the use of force *theoretically* when asked to imagine scenarios in which force is appropriate, but they also tolerate the actual behavior of the police, *in the real*, a great deal. In order to understand what motivates that tolerance, I explore explanations like conservative criminal justice ideology, authoritarianism, and racial conservatism. In addition to these, I also take into account how whites’ perceptions of the events of Black resistance of the previous few years motivated greater tolerance of violent policing. I find that whites who perceived those events to be mostly violent were in fact more supportive of violent policing, suggesting that white attitudes about police violence are in part contextually determined by the events and actors toward which a violent police response is directed.

Yet, while I find that variables like conservative criminal justice ideology, region, gender, and perceptions of Black resistance are significantly related to tolerance of police force, the substantive effect of these variables is small. In other words, white tolerance of violence is not meaningfully explained by any particular dimension of identity, ideology, or context, but rather this study demonstrates a nearly universal tolerance of violent policing among whites. In the sections that follow, I explore various theoretical explanations for white support of the police in

general and the use of force. Next, I detail the data and methods utilized in this chapter and explore the results of that model, ultimately lending evidence to the notion that there exists a long, historical relationship between whiteness and policing, characterized by a widespread embrace of the utility of force, wielded to protect the white racial dominance.

II. Race and Policing

The relationship between race and perceptions of the police is well demonstrated by a vast body of research: whites are consistently more supportive of the police in general than people of color (e.g., Davis 1990; Hadar and Snortum 1975; Hagan and Albonetti 1982; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Jacob 1971; Murty et al. 1990; Peek et al. 1981; Scaglione and Condon 1980; Smith et al. 1991; Webb and Marshall 1995). This difference in approval of the police is due in part to the contrasting nature of police contact among people of color and whites: members of racial minority groups are more likely to rate contact with the police as negative and that contact has been shown to decrease approval of the police (Decker 1981; Poister and McDavid 1978; Walker et al. 1972; Walker 1997), particularly when that contact is involuntary or frequent (Bordua and Tiffet 1971; Carter 1985; Dean 1980). Vicarious contact, through a friend or family member (Weitzer and Tuch 2006), and having knowledge of episodes of police misconduct (Dean 1980; Smith and Hawkins 1973; Thomas and Hyman 1977) have also been shown to decrease approval of the police and have a greater effect on people of color in particular. This variation in exposure to the police results in two vastly different realities among whites and people of color about the police: not only of their efficacy, but their role in society and the fairness with which they carry out their duties.

White citizens are not only more supportive of the police, their performance, and their image, they are also more supportive of punitive policies and the use of force (Jefferis et al.

1997; Kaminski and Jefferis 1998; Cao et al. 1996; Elicker 2008; Halim and Stiles 2001; Thompson and Lee 2004; Weisburd et al. 2000; Rose and Ellison 2016) and although their support of the police does decrease in reaction to episodes of police brutality, that effect is much smaller and less durable for whites than for people of color (Jefferis et al. 1997; Goidel, Parent, and Mann 2011; Kaminski and Jefferis, 1998; Lasley, 1994; Sigelman et al., 1997; Tuch and Weitzer 1997). In an experiment designed to measure emotional responses to photos and videos of fatal encounters with the police, Reinka et al. (2017) found that “White participants felt “a little” anger and “very slight” sadness and fear about police violence. They reported almost no guilt or shame” and despite devoting high levels of attention to images of police violence initially, later demonstrated a general sense of indifference and disengagement in later stages of emotional processing. This finding has borne out in other research that has found whites to be more supportive of the use of deadly force (Cullen et al. 1996; Albrecht and Green 1977) and more supportive of the death penalty (Soss et al. 2003).

While these differences in attitudes about the police across race are well demonstrated, there is less consensus around what *explains* white attitudes about the use of force and punitive policies. This chapter takes up that task, aiming to explore what dimensions of identity, demography, and disposition best explain the unique relationship whites have to the police and the violent maintenance of the racial hierarchy, utilizing data from 1968—a pivotal moment in the formation of race, criminality, protest, and policing, which will be detailed in the following section.

III. Historical Period

In 1968, the nation was not only reeling the long, hot summer of 1967, but a decade of sustained challenges to white supremacy and racial uprisings. Indeed, civil unrest not only did

not end with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Acts, the climax of the Civil Rights Movement, but persisted and escalated, particularly in regions outside the South. In 1965, Los Angeles erupted in the Watts Uprising, which resulted in the calling in of the National Guard, thirty-four deaths, hundreds of injured individuals, and nearly 4,000 arrests (The Kerner Report 1968, 40). In 1966, unrest broke out for four days in Chicago's West Side, wherein the National Guard was again mobilized, three Black residents were killed by stray bullets, and 533 arrests were made—one of forty-three events that took place that year (41). That pattern escalated dramatically in 1967 during the “long, hot summer,” by the end of which at least 150 events of racial disorder had occurred in Tampa, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Newark, Plainfield, Jersey City, New Brunswick, Detroit, and 120 more cities across the country, resulting in “4,000 injured, about 10,000 arrests, and millions of dollars in property damage” (U.S. News & World Report 1967, in Weaver 253). As the Kerner Commission would later report, these events were fueled by white racism, the abysmal living conditions of most Black Americans resulting from housing and employment inequality, and widespread police brutality, concluding with a nationwide call upon America's institutions and citizens to take up the task of remedying in order to prevent future violence.

Yet, rather than answer that call, the nation responded by bolstering the carceral state and punitive criminal justice policy. Indeed, in the introduction to the Final Report produced by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, the Commission from which the data utilized in this chapter originated and which has come to be known as the Eisenhower Commission, Chairman Dr. Milton Eisenhower suggested a twin strategy to remedy racial disorder and civil unrest: to make violence unnecessary and unrewarding. To make violence unnecessary, he suggested creating greater opportunity for citizens to live “normal” lives in

American society and to make violence unrewarding, more importantly, he suggests “our institutions must be able to control violence when it occurs, and do so firmly, fairly, and within the law” (xxii). Thus, despite the multitudes of compelling analyses produced by the Kerner Commission and the Eisenhower Commission that called directly for racial and economic equality, the nation instead narrowly directed its response to act upon the conclusions which called for the expansion of the power of institutions to suppress violent uprisings and contain violent crime.

A great body of literature figures the next phase of criminal justice policy through the frame of backlash: white conservatives painstakingly and deliberately exploited white anxiety and resentment to reassert white racial dominance through an expanded carceral state, by casting all protest, including even non-violent protest activity of the Civil Rights Movement, as simple lawlessness and thus as depoliticized criminal activity, divorced from any legitimate grievance or political objective (Weaver 2007). Vesla Weaver terms this process *frontlash*, emphasizing the proactive redirection of the national agenda by white conservative elites away from strategies of economic opportunity and racial equality, toward punitive criminal justice policy while simultaneously precluding the possibility of future legitimate protest by marginalized racial groups by binding protest to crime: “In order to discredit the idea that violent racial struggle was an outcome of social conditions, conservative strategists became preoccupied with showing that racial discord was neither motivated by police brutality nor did its origins emanate from racial discrimination; rather, it was criminality, pure and simple” (248). This tactic was buttressed by another: the events of racial disorder and (often inflated) reports of crime in the 1960s pointed not to the failures of President Johnson’s War on Poverty, but instead framed “black poverty as a fact of American life and crime and violence as somehow innate among African Americans. [...

and later] helped push the Nixon administration toward an understanding of black cultural pathology, rather than poverty, as the root cause of crime” (Hinton 21). Thus, these strategies coalesced around the delegitimizing of all Black struggle as crime, to be remedied by an expanded carceral state: “President Johnson saw urban police officers as the ‘frontline soldiers’ of the War on Crime, and, as such, law enforcement authorities received new military-grade weapons and surveillance technologies, along with new powers in the direction and administration of urban social programs” (Hinton 2016, 13). Returning to 1968, the year this data and project are situated, these dual strategies thus not only ensured that the policy recommendations of the Kerner and Eisenhower Commissions went ignored, but entrenched among white Americans the cognitive frame that justifies harsh policing of racial uprising and protest, in the name of reducing crime.

It is important to emphasize here that this strategy was not purely the work of white conservatives. I echo Naomi Murakawa here, who contends that “Accounts of conservative backlash are not wrong; rather, I believe that they are so overwhelmingly persuasive that they eclipse the specificity of racial liberalism against which they respond” (8) which were able to operate in the plain light of day and whose “agendas for race-neutral machinery actually propelled development of a punitive carceral state” (4). It was not white conservatives alone who carried out the task of pathologizing Black criminality and delegitimizing Black struggle: “by making political protest an explosive emotion that extended to violence, crime, and riots liberals were guilty of a strategy most associated with conservatives: they blurred together organized civil disobedience, street crime, and riots into one mess of psychological disorder” (13-14). Or, as Elizabeth Hinton writes, “Indeed, crime control may be *the* domestic policy issue in the late twentieth century where conservative and liberal interests most thoroughly intertwined” (8). It is

from this position that this paper will operate: the political and psychological work around crime and punishment, race and resistance, throughout this time period was a bipartisan task all whites carried out—a theoretical strategy that de-emphasizes the need to locate and “find out” the primary masterminds that conspired to accomplish this task, making space instead for the exploration of the consequences of that political and psychological work.

Last, it might be even more important to emphasize here that the use of the carceral state to suppress Black resistance was not only bipartisan, it was also not new: the framing of Black resistance as criminal and the weaponization of the police to stamp it out was not borne in the 1950s or 1960s but is, in truth, as old as the police itself. W. E. B. Du Bois writes, for instance, that the participation in slave patrols provided poor whites the opportunity to “ride with planters and now and then exercise unlimited force upon recalcitrant or runaway slaves” (27) and among the many wages of whiteness was the fact that “the police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness” (700). The fundamental purpose of policing, throughout the American frontier, along the Mason-Dixon line, and everywhere in between, was the regulation of Black and brown bodies, whose freedom was figured as intrinsically criminal. This distinctly white supremacist role of the police is fueled by a long tradition of figuring Black people as naturally criminal, dangerous, threatening, and essential to control, punish, and incarcerate. Thus, while it might be the case that in the 1950s and 1960s the framing of Black resistance as illegitimate and criminal did become a primary strategy among white elites, producing a meaningful shift in criminal justice policy that would impact the trajectory of policing and protest for the next many decades, this strategy was certainly not new but rather the reinvigoration and revitalization of a classic strategy of white supremacy.

IV. Theoretical Expectations

While the interdependent relationship that exists between white racial dominance and policing might be theoretically and historically understood, it remains to be seen exactly what dimensions of whiteness, demography, and attitudinal predispositions structure that support among whites, when those traits are disentangled. What motivated greater support for harsh policing at this pivotal moment in the evolution of the modern carceral state, which laid the groundwork for decades of policy to come? To answer this question, this chapter considers three main explanations to understand what generates support for the use of excessive force among whites: racial conservatism, authoritarianism, and conservative criminal justice ideology. Each of these three explanations capture different mechanisms by which whites express their attachment to their group's dominance and, in turn, the preservation of that status through violent policing: through resistance to Black advancement and the unsettling of the current racial order; through a commitment to hierarchical social arrangements, which for whites also implies a commitment to white racial dominance, specifically; and through particularly punitive beliefs and support for harsh punishment for lawbreaking, which reflect a belief in the utility of a violent carceral system, upon which whites have long relied to protect the interests of the group. Together, these three approaches illustrate different ways attachment to whiteness can manifest themselves in the attitudes and beliefs of whites. In this section, I clarify and expound upon the relationship between these three dimensions and support for violent policing and the use of excessive force, before turning to the analysis of these dimensions in the data.

Racial Conservatism

The first mode by which whites articulate their attachment to whiteness, that I argue might in turn generate greater tolerance of violent policing, that this paper explores, is racial

conservatism. First, racial attitudes have been shown to broadly animate attitudes about crime among whites, given that most white citizens believe most criminals belong to racial minority groups (e.g., Doleschal, 1979; Cohn et al., 1991). This suggests that negative racial attitudes might predict white support for harsh policing, which they perceive to be impacting primarily people of color. This relationship between racial prejudice and punitive attitudes has been demonstrated in numerous studies (Barkan and Cohn 1998; Carter and Corra 2016; Cohn et al. 1991; Green et al. 2006; Peffley and Hurwitz 2002; Roberts and Stalans 1997; Young 1991) and has also been tied to support for the death penalty (Soss et al. 2003). This relationship might also be understood through the frame of group position: whites who are most committed to the maintenance of their group status are more likely to possess attitudes that reflect that commitment, like negative racial attitudes or racial prejudice (eg. Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Coser 1956; Levine and Campbell 1972), and to in turn view harsh punishment by the police as a useful mechanism of control and domination of people of color (Bonacich 1972, 1980; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). In addition to racial prejudice, white commitment to the status and dominant position of the group might also be expressed through other conservative attitudes around race—like resistance to racial progress and other negative racial orientations that reflect a preference for the current racial order. Thus, I expect whites who possess conservative racial attitudes to be more supportive of the use of force and tolerance of police brutality, as they view the police as a key instrument of ongoing group dominance.

Authoritarianism

The second white attitude this paper explores is authoritarianism, or “a desire for a highly structured world in which individuals know their place, conform to social conventions, obey rules, and respect officialdom” (Soss et al. 2003), which also expresses a deep commitment to

the maintenance of the status quo and social order. Authoritarianism has been shown to explain general support of the police (Larsen 1968) and might drive approval of force in general by fostering a more absolutist orientation toward punishment and regard for the law (Stack 2000; Tyler and Weber 1982). This idea bears out in research on white attitudes in particular, where authoritarianism has been shown to predict white support of the use of force and punitive policies, like the death penalty (Soss et al. 2003). But for whites, authoritarianism is not only an absolutist orientation toward punishment and hierarchy in the abstract, it is also a racialized orientation. In other words, not only does it drive anti-Black racial attitudes (Peffley and Hurwitz 1998; Sears et al. 1997), it symbolically represents a desire to maintain not just any and all systems of order, but a white supremacist social order that places white citizens at the top of society (Parker and Towler 2019). At a time of social upheaval and civil unrest such as the late 1960s, I expect authoritarianism to be a key predictor of attitudes about the use of force and police brutality among whites in particular, as the police serve as a critical instrument in the preservation of order, the status quo, and, consequentially, the racial hierarchy.

Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology

Last, support for the use of force might be best explained by whites' ideological views about punishment and crime. Those with a more punitive orientation or conservative criminal justice ideology attribute crime to "a breakdown in traditional values, increased permissiveness, and lack of respect for authority" and this orientation is characterized specifically by support for very harsh sentencing for convicted criminals (McGarrell and Flanagan 1987, 106). Race has been shown to be one of the most significant predictors of criminal justice ideology, with white citizens being more conservative than African-Americans (Browning et al. 1992). As it relates to the use of force, conservative criminal justice ideology has in fact been shown to possess an even

greater effect on attitudes about the use of force in various contexts than race, although race does continue to play a significant role in shaping those attitudes (Cullen et al. 1996). Therefore, I expect whites to possess particularly punitive attitudes and for that punitiveness to predict support for harsh policing, given that this relationship has been well established. But even further, I believe that that punitiveness represents one facet of attachment to a whiteness, specifically, as the police have long served as an instrument state-sanctioned racial control, that has long worked to whiteness. Whites who articulate a more conservative ideology about criminal justice are thus reflecting a long tradition of white racial dominance, that is important to disentangle from other sets of conservative beliefs. Therefore, I expect the possession of a more punitive ideological orientation to be an important determinant of attitudes about police force and brutality.

Thus, this chapter takes these three dimensions into account—racial conservatism, authoritarianism, and conservative criminal justice ideology—in order to better understand what generates support for harsh policing among whites. There are many reasons white attitudes about policing are distinct: whites are less likely to experience frequent, involuntary contact with the police—particularly in this time period of white flight to the suburbs—, to witness police brutality, or experience vicarious contact with police violence through friends and family, which means they might be more supportive of violent police action, since they are less likely to be the victims of violent policing themselves and are distant from, or antagonistic toward, those communities that are. In addition to the variation in these lived experiences, whites are also more likely to harbor various ideological orientations, like authoritarianism, conservative criminal ideology, and racial conservatism, which are inherited by whites and originate from long-held traditions and practices tied directly to the maintenance of white racial status. These attitudes

motivate a commitment to various modes of enforcement of the status quo, like the police, which have evolved in tandem for the same purpose of white racial dominance. This paper tests these three explanations at a critical juncture in criminal justice policy, using a valuable, unique dataset to answer new questions related to white tolerance of violent policing, in hope they inform us not only about white attitudes in the 1960s, but white commitment to the carceral state broadly.

V. Data and Methods

This chapter utilizes data from The Violence Study, a national cross-section sample survey administered by Louis Harris and Associates and designed by The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. The Commission was created in response to the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, but also, as previously discussed, more broadly in the context of the violent uprisings which had occurred in the previous three years across the country and in the wake of the publication of the Kerner Report. Commonly referred to today as the Eisenhower Report, while the Commission submitted a Final Report—a single-volume, 365-page report on The Commission’s findings and recommendations to the President, Congress, and the nation—it also created specialized Task Forces, comprised of multi-disciplinary study teams, that produced more than fifteen volumes of reports on topics like violence in protest, criminal violence, firearms, mass media, and the long history of violence in American politics. The data used here was collected by the Task Force on “Assassination and Political Violence,” directed by James F. Kirkham, Sheldon G. Levy, and William J. Crotty. This survey was conducted by face-to-face interviews in October of 1968 and contains a nationally representative sample of 1176 respondents. In this analysis, I only utilize the white respondents, of which there are 941.

This instrument is useful for several reasons. First, this survey contains a wide range of measures about violence that were novel during the time period in which it was fielded, including measures about violence in both the abstract and in practice, across many different contexts. Second, this survey was fielded at time in which police violence and racial unrest were extremely salient throughout the nation, making it a prime opportunity to explore white Americans' deep commitment to policing, which was ultimately critical to the expansion of the carceral state that followed. Further, it builds on the existing body of literature, much of which has paid particular attention to white attitudes around violence in the South, due to the practice of, resistance to, and legacy of slavery and other forms of racial violence in that region. However, given that the events of racial disorder in this time period which prompted the administration of this survey were largely located outside the South, it is both a useful and necessary transition to broaden the scope of analysis out to the entire United States. Last, use of this data is exciting because it has not only been *rarely* used since the Commission published its findings in 1969, but it has also never been utilized to answer questions specifically related to white attitudes about policing and violence whatsoever (see Appendix 2 for a complete list of published works that utilize this data). Each of these features make the utilization of this data deeply valuable to understanding attitudes about violence and policing in the 1960s—a snapshot of analysis in the long relationship between policing and race, past and present.

Outcome Variable: Excessive Force Tolerance

To measure attitudes about the use of force by the police, I utilize an item taken from the “Police Violence” section of the survey, which is designed to measure attitudes police violence in different forms and contexts. I utilize the statement that asks respondents whether they agree that “The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties.” I

call this measure *Excessive Force Tolerance*. While this measure was not designed to measure tolerance, strictly speaking, I argue that it is an appropriate proxy for tolerance for a few reasons. First, this survey was administered against the backdrop of an excess of events civil unrest in the years that preceded it, many of which not only resulted in a harsh police response but were precipitated by harsh policing. Indeed, police abuse was undeniably at the center of national attention; the pervasive nature of police brutality was detailed by the state itself, in the reports produced by the Kerner and Eisenhower Commissions. With this context in mind, I believe that if a respondent indicates that they believe the police *do not* “frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties” reflects a broad sense of tolerance with the current state of policing, believing it to be not excessive, but proportionate. Importantly, this item also asks respondents to assess the actual police, rather than their philosophy about the appropriate role of force and punishment in the abstract. This feature is important because the goal of this paper is to understand how various forces, like certain attitudinal traits, influence how whites understand actual policing, not theoretical policing. Thus, this measure allows us to tap into how these dimensions shape white perceptions of real life, rather than broader ideological notions about policing and violence that might be unaffected or less affected by those dimensions. Last, this statement is preferable to others, as it taps into attitudes about the use of excessive force in routine policing, not lethal force specifically. This, I believe, captures a more general sense of tolerance of police violence rather than narrower attitudes about the use of lethal force.

Explanatory Variables: Racial Conservatism

As previously discussed, I also consider three explanatory variables that I expect to be significant drivers of white attitudes related to policing, the first of which is *Racial Conservatism*. While I am unable to include measures of racial prejudice in this data because

none were included in the survey interview, I am nonetheless able to examine the relationship of white racial attitudes broadly with the tolerance of excessive force and police brutality. Given that measures of racial prejudice are not available in this data, I have selected an item that captures negative racial attitudes in a different way, that measures resistance to Black advancement and the desire to preserve the current racial order, in the context of segregation: “As you know, some people feel segregation is good, others that it is bad. How about you—are you in favor of segregation, integration, or something in between?” I term this measure *Racial Conservatism* and argue that it captures important aspects of white racial attitudes and ideology, which might play a key role in driving support for harsh policing against criminals they largely believe to be people of color. This measure taps into attitudes about a central policy area of racial progress and struggle at this time period and I believe it is reasonable to expect that those who are particularly resistant to integration would likewise possess other broadly conservative racial views. Given that policing at this time might have been cognitively tied to the suppression of events of racial disorder and resistance of the preceding years, I therefore expect whites who are more racially conservative to be more tolerant of police brutality and the use of force, which they might see as an instrumental component of the management of challenges to the racial order and the maintenance of white supremacy.

Explanatory Variables: Authoritarianism

The second independent variable on which I will focus is *Authoritarianism*. To do so, I utilize the six-item anomic authoritarianism battery included in the survey, which combines the following items into a single authoritarianism score:

1. Justice may have been a little rough and ready in the days of the Old West, but things worked better then than they do today with all the legal red tape.
2. Everything changes so quickly those days that I often have trouble deciding which are the right rules to follow.

3. People were better off in the old days when everyone knew just how he was expected to act.
4. What is lacking in the world today is the old kind of friendship that lasted for a lifetime.
5. What young people need most of all is strong discipline by their parents.
6. A few strong leaders could make this country better than all the laws and talk.

These items combined capture a thorough image of respondents' authoritarian disposition, which is connected to many intersecting dimensions of whiteness: support for traditional values, resistance to change, and nostalgia for a past in which white supremacy safe and secure. In the time period in which this survey is situated, in which disruptions to the racial order had become commonplace, attitudes associated with an authoritarian disposition would likely be directly related to race—"the old days" here might harken back to time periods in which white supremacy was more secure, less subject to challenge; "everything changes so quickly" might call to mind discomfort with challenges to the racial hierarchy occurring throughout the nation; and "all the laws and talk" here might refer to the passage of major laws related to social change, like the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, which drew to a close the era of American democracy in which full citizenship was a status enjoyed exclusively by whites. Thus, those with a greater authoritarian disposition might perceive the police to be agents of resistance to movements of social change and defenders of the status quo in which whites are positioned securely at the top of the racial hierarchy. I therefore expect a greater authoritarian disposition among whites to be positively related to white tolerance of police brutality and use of force.

Explanatory Variables: Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology

The last primary independent variable I utilize in this study is *Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology*, in order to test the extent to which white support for the use of force is tied to more conservative notions about crime and punishment itself. The belief that force is an appropriate method of social control has been connected to a retributivist philosophy about

criminal justice (Blumenthal 1972) and the contours of liberal or conservative criminal justice ideologies, of which whites have been shown to be more conservative (Browning et al. 1992; Cullen et al. 1996). The traditional method of measuring criminal justice ideology was developed by Cullen et al. (1985), who created two scales to measure liberal and conservative criminal justice ideology. These scales were comprised of eight and eleven items, respectively, to measure how respondents conceptualized the causes of and remedies to crime. This scale was later factor-analyzed by McGarrell and Flanagan (1987), and includes items like “Crime has increased in recent times because society has become too permissive,” “Punishing criminals more harshly would reduce crime by setting an example and showing others in society that crime does not pay,” and “The best way to reduce crime is to reestablish the traditional values that made our country great: hard work, religion, respect for authority, and firm discipline in both home and school” (see Appendix 3 for a full list of items).

Although there is no identical match of these items in the data used here, there are a number that tap into attitudes about punitive policies, traditional values, and public punishment. The variable which I have selected, support for the death penalty, is the most attractive measure for a number of reasons. First, while the other potential variables are situated in narrow contexts, like punishment of those convicted of sex crimes specifically or the appropriateness of sentencing an individual to a year of hard labor, support for the death penalty is an attitude that is located within a much more common policy area that frequently appears in public opinion survey instruments and in everyday political discourse. In other words, while it is likely that many respondents might have previously considered whether they support the death penalty, very few might have previously considered the appropriateness of public whippings of sex criminals or the sentencing of a year of hard labor. This suggests that support for capital punishment is more

likely to be an attitude a respondent has been developing for some time, about which they might feel more certain, whereas the latter two attitudes might be formed for the first time in the moment they answer this question in the interview, leading that attitude to be less stable. Furthermore, not only is support for the death penalty not situated in what is likely to be a new context, leading the measure to be more reliable, that feature also means support for the death penalty is not tied to any particular category of crime. This suggests that it might be related to punitiveness generally, rather than the harsh punishment of certain kinds of crime, making it a better proxy for conservative criminal justice ideology broadly (for a complete discussion of variable selection, a correlation matrix of the measures considered, a falsification test, the results of the model run with each potential measure, and a goodness-of-fit discussion, see Appendix 4).

Each of these three theoretical frames, racial conservatism, authoritarianism, and conservative criminal justice ideology, are critical to understanding the unique dimensions among whites which motivate greater support for violent policing. In addition to demographic characteristics like age, gender, and socioeconomic status, the remainder of this paper will use these three as primary lenses to understand what makes some whites more tolerant of the use of excessive force and how they each cohere with and support the notion that whites possess a long, historical relationship with violence, including that carried out by the state, which has been wielded to protect white racial dominance.

VI. Results

Turning to the analysis of the data, in the sections that follow I first explore white attitudes about policing in the abstract, briefly exploring respondents' tolerance of various forms of police violence in response to different hypothetical scenarios. Next, I explore the distribution of white responses to the outcome variable I will be using in this study, which asks respondents

whether they agree or disagree that “The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties.” Last, after exploring white tolerance for police violence in both the abstract and the real, I turn toward logistic regression to find the determinants of that tolerance.

While the primary outcome variable in this analysis measures respondents’ perception of actual police behavior, to what extent does this measure therefore reflect a narrow attitude about the police, in actual practice, at this particular moment in time, rather than a more generalizable attitude about the role of force in policing broadly? To answer this question, I briefly explore how whites conceive the role of the police abstractly, using a battery of questions related to theoretical tolerance of violent policing. These scenarios include a policeman striking or shooting an adult male citizen for such behavior as saying vulgar and obscene things, being questioned as a suspect in a murder case, attempting to escape from custody, or attacking a policeman with his fists. Table 3.1 shows the percent of white respondents that report “Yes,” they would approve of police violence in each scenario.

From this Table, we see that whites express a broad tolerance of violent policing, across many scenarios of varying severity. When asked if they can imagine *any* situation in which they would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen, 77.6 percent of white respondents said “Yes,” while, nearly 75.1 percent of white respondents said they could imagine a situation in which they would approve of a policeman shooting an adult male citizen. When asked more specifically about what contexts they imagine various forms of force as appropriate, whites did not express much support for the use of force against demonstrators against the Vietnam War nor against suspects in murder cases. However, whites did approve of the use of force in response to attacking a policeman with fists, with a gun, or attempting to escape custody. These differences

are interesting, as they seem to suggest that whites are less supportive of the use of force against protesters—at least in the context of protest against the war in Vietnam, as specified in the scenario here. This is perhaps the case because the war in Vietnam is a cause that likely does not trigger the same mechanisms of identity that make whites protective of their group’s position and, consequently, the use of violent policing. However, in the broader context of the use of force against those that resist arrest or attack the police, whites articulate a resounding rebuke.

Table 3.1
Comparison of Support for Use of Force by Racial Group

<i>Item</i>	<i>Percent “Yes”</i>
<i>Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen?</i>	77.6
- Said vulgar and obscene things	29.2
- Demonstrating against the war in Vietnam and carrying a VietCong flag	21.3
- Being questioned as a suspect in a murder case	7.8
- Attempting to escape from custody	85.3
- Attacking the policeman with his fists	97.7
<i>Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman shooting an adult male citizen?</i>	75.1
- Said vulgar and obscene things	0.3
- Demonstrating against the war in Vietnam and carrying a VietCong flag	1.2
- Being questioned as a suspect in a murder case	1.5
- Attempting to escape from custody	57.8
- Attacking the policeman with his fists	32.2
- Threatening the policeman with a gun	96.5

Source: The Violence Study, 1968

This suggests that whites are supportive of the use of force against those that challenge or contest the authority of the police, which whites might see as a critical instrument of their group’s dominance and vital to protect. Overall, these data demonstrate that white support of the use of force in these various contexts was consistently high in almost every scenario. Taken together, these data paint a much fuller picture of when force is legitimate across many contexts. By

inspecting these many scenarios, the contours of tolerance of violent policing, at least in this hypothetical space, are brought into sharper relief.

Turning toward white respondents' assessment of policing in the real, the distribution of responses to the primary outcome variable utilized in this analysis can be seen in Table 3.2. From this Table, we see that whites demonstrate a remarkably high tolerance of excessive force: more than seventy-five percent of white respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties, compared to an incredibly small 4.8 percent that strongly agree.

Table 3.2
White Tolerance of Excessive Force

<i>Item</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties.</i>	
Strongly Agree	4.8
Agree	16.6
Disagree	55.0
Strongly Disagree	23.7

Source: The Violence Study, 1968

These findings demonstrate that whites indeed have a high tolerance of the use of excessive force. This tolerance has been shown to be high not only in various hypothetical contexts, like protest, vulgarity, resisting arrest, or attacking the police, but in the real. When asked to assess whether the police are using force excessively, calling on their lived experience and perspective on the behavior of policing in action, whites exhibit a remarkably high tolerance of violent policing. These findings point to the deep support of policing among whites not only in their theoretical, abstract attitudes, but assessments of the behavior of the actual police in this time period.

In order to better understand what dimensions of white attitudes promote white attachment to the carceral state, including the reliance on strategies critical to the maintenance of

that system like the use of force by the police, I turn to ordered logistic regression to explore many possible determinants of that support—particularly racial conservatism, authoritarianism, and conservative criminal justice ideology. The outcome variable for this model, *Excessive Force Tolerance*, is coded from 1-4 where “4” represents high tolerance for the use of force (“Strongly Disagree” that “The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties”). In addition to my primary explanatory variables of interest, racial conservatism, conservative criminal justice ideology, and authoritarianism, I also include several controls related to individual characteristics of the respondents to the model, like demographic information, including gender, age, and income, and two contextual variables, size of city and Southern residence.

Last, I also include in this model a variable that controls for the extent to which respondents perceived the events of the past few years to be mostly violent or peaceful: *Perceptions of Black Resistance*. To do so, I utilize the item: “During the past year or so, would you say most of the actions Negroes have taken to get the things they want have been violent, or have most of these actions been peaceful?” The inclusion of this variable allows me to account for the extent to which support for the use of excessive force measured by this survey is motivated by the context of the past few years, in particular, in response to events they perceive as mostly violent and carried out by Black communities, rather than attitudes about the police broadly or abstractly. This measure accomplishes this task by situating the question attitudes in a clear racial context, that of Black resistance, and those of the past few years, rather than perhaps the more distant, more non-violent events of the early 1960s and the Civil Rights Movement.

This specificity feature is important, as the collection of this data also took place against the backdrop of an additional strain of protest movements and subsequent episodes of police

brutality: the multi-racial protest movements against the War in Vietnam, particularly the police riot in Chicago at the 1968 Democratic National Convention which occurred about a month and a half before these interviews took place. Consequentially, both the content of these interviews and the attitudes of respondents themselves were broadly shaped by both of these two different strains of protest and subsequent violence by the police. This is illustrated, for instance, by the use of phrases in other items included in this survey, like “using clubs on our boys in Chicago” as an example of government actions in the last few years to which respondents might object. This measure takes into account these dueling contexts of police brutality and ensures that respondents would have only one racial context in mind, at one particular time period, when reflecting on the “the events of the past few years.” I expect that those who did perceive the events of the past few years to be mostly violent to consequently view the use of force by the police to be more legitimate, as it was utilized in response to events they perceive to be more violent than peaceful. For complete details on variable coding, see Appendix 5. The results of this model are found in Table 3.3.

First, I find that while the three primary variables of interest, racial conservatism, authoritarianism, and conservative criminal justice ideology, were, as expected, positively related to tolerance of excessive force, only conservative criminal justice ideology was shown to be significant. While racial conservatism and authoritarianism were positively related, as expected, those relationships were not significant whatsoever ($p = 0.378$ and 0.196 , respectively). Part of this result might be a function of the item used to measure racial conservatism (support for segregation), which although it is evenly distributed among these data might be regionally skewed: only 25% of respondents live in the South, but they make up 42% of all who favor segregation.

Table 3.3: Determinants for Excessive Force Tolerance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Errors</i>
Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology	0.927***	(0.163)
Racial Conservatism	0.094	(0.106)
Authoritarianism	0.136	(0.106)
Perceptions of Black Resistance (Violent)	0.408**	(0.187)
Male	0.259*	(0.151)
Church Attendance	0.164**	(0.073)
South	-0.509***	(0.185)
Age	-0.056	(0.047)
Republican	0.056	(0.060)
Rural	0.076	(0.050)
Education	-0.106*	(0.064)
Income	0.002	(0.055)
1 2	-1.430**	(0.605)
2 3	0.337	(0.592)
3 4	3.040***	(0.605)
Observations	686	

Note: Coefficients are derived from ordered logistic regression, where * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. For all variable coding, see Appendix 5.
Source: The Violence Study, 1968

Although racial conservatism is positively and significantly correlated with the tolerance of excessive force, that relationship is very small (Pearson $r = 0.093$). Racial conservatism is, however, more correlated with Southern residence (Pearson $r = 0.19$), which is negatively (and

highly significantly) related to tolerance of violence, suggesting that regional influence might have negated the effect of racial conservatism.

Authoritarianism was also shown to be positively, but insignificantly related to tolerance of excessive force. However, this study nonetheless reveals an important finding that authoritarianism, unlike racial conservatism, is not located strictly in the South, but in fact distributed quite evenly across all regions—authoritarianism and southern residence are significantly ($p = 0.002$) and positively correlated, but that correlation is very weak (Pearson $r = 0.102$). Authoritarianism embodies many core tenants of whiteness, like attitudes that promote discipline, order, strict enforcement of the law, maintenance of the status quo, and support for the tradition. These attitudes have been produced by a long history of white dominance that embedded authoritarianism into white ideology and behavior. The even distribution of authoritarianism demonstrates that unique relationship, showing that attachment to the status quo and support for its forceful maintenance was not a disposition held primarily in the South, but instead an attitude felt broadly by all whites, across regions. Yet although authoritarianism is evenly distributed among all whites, it does not have a meaningful relationship to greater support for violent policing, as we theoretically expected.

A second, crucial, finding of this analysis is that perceptions of Black resistance as mostly violent is a strong predictor of greater tolerance of the use of excessive force. In other words, the extent to which respondents perceived Black resistance as violent and unjustified also had a direct relationship to greater support for more violent, harsh policing. It is also worth mentioning that the majority of whites did perceive those events to be mostly violent (74.2 percent of all whites respondents), meaning that this belief was not limited, but broadly adopted. The results of this analysis suggests that whites extend their support for violent policing in a way

that is tethered to their perception of the groups targeted by that policing. When that policing targets actors or events they perceive as challenging and resisting the status quo in a manner they believe to be less legitimate, they consequently believe the violent suppression of those actors as more legitimate and appropriate. Importantly, this reflects the strategy that white elites, conservative and liberal alike, were pursuing at the time, to cast all Black resistance as lawlessness and, thus, violence. From these data, that strategy appears to have been effective in motivating white support for harsh criminal justice policy. This finding also builds on that of the previous chapter of this dissertation, which demonstrated that whites support violent resistance carried out by whites for the purpose of maintaining white racial dominance (that chapter explored support for the violent resistance to integration of schools), here demonstrating that they in fact support the violent *suppression* of resistance when the tables are turned. This points to the relationship between whiteness and violence: exclusively employed by whites when it is expedient to the interests of the group, its use prohibited when it poses a threat to the racial hierarchy.

This analysis demonstrates another finding related to the events of Black resistance in the years preceding the administration of this survey: support for violent policing appears to be strongly and significantly related to residence outside of the South, where those events of Black resistance largely occurred and where they were violently suppressed by the police. Indeed, the finding that those who reside within the South are in fact less tolerant of violence than the rest of the nation is an important finding that challenges the notion that Southerners are distinctly violent. The idea that there exists a distinct relationship to violence in the South, emerges at the intersection of cultural factors, like a “culture of honor” (Nisbett and Cohen 1996) and the violent resistance to Reconstruction and Black advancement, and structural factors, like the

incredibly low likelihood of conviction for whites charged with a lethal crime (Francis 2014), both widespread episodes of violence and a distinct culture of violence (Bankston and Allen 1980, Huff-Corzine et al 1986) were made possible. Indeed, Southernness has not only been tied to greater tolerance of interpersonal violence, like striking a man who has hit a child (Dixon and Lizotte 1987; Ellison 1991), but has also been demonstrated to be tied to support of force—particularly among Southern white males (Halim and Stiles 2001; Hayes and Lee 2005).

However, this data was collected at a pivotal moment, wherein racial upheaval and violent suppression of that resistance was neither solely occurring within the South, nor primarily occurring within the South. In the years that preceded the Eisenhower and Kerner Commissions, events of racial disorder were primarily taking place in the Northeast and Midwest, in cities like Detroit, Michigan and Newark, New Jersey. Thus, while whites in the South prior to the end of the Civil Rights Movement might have had a unique relationship to violent forms of policing in response to protest, at the time in which this study situated, that tolerance might no longer be solely rooted in the South or its historically “violent” culture. This finding also suggests that tolerance of violence, specifically violent policing, might be activated by proximity to events of racial disorder. Taken together, these findings are deeply consequential to our knowledge about the lasting relationship between whites and the police: whites are highly supportive of the police in the first place and they become more tolerant of the use of violence by the police when they perceive events of racial resistance as depoliticized lawlessness and when they experience closer contact to those events.

The insignificance of party identification in this analysis also points to an important feature of white tolerance of violence. As this data did not measure ideology on a conservative-liberal scale, I rely upon party identification to measure political attitudes broadly. While party

identification does not capture all ideological nuances, it will nonetheless provide a close approximate understanding of the basic orientation of individuals, given that at this time in the United States, the ideology of the two major parties in American politics had become more solidified on the ideological spectrum, than it had been in the past. Ideology has indeed been found to predict attitudes about the police (Hindelang 1974; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Zamble and Annesley, 1987; Ray 1983; Larsen, 1968) and those who are more conservative have been shown to be more supportive of punitive policies (Cohn et al. 1991; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986). Given this relationship, I expected stronger Republicans to report higher tolerance of the use of excessive force. Yet instead, this study has found that neither white conservatives nor liberals are meaningfully more tolerance of violent policing. This indicates at the minimum that political party is not meaningfully related to tolerance of police use of force in this nationally representative sample but might also suggest that political ideology, in so far as it is connected to political party, fails to significantly explain tolerance of force. Additionally, I also find that stronger Republicanism has no meaningful relationship to a higher perception of events of Black resistance as violent, whatsoever (Pearson $r = -0.01$, $p = 0.76$). This finding supports the notion that support for more violent forms of policing are not unique to members of either political party, but instead shared among all whites, across the aisle. This finding challenges narratives that cast white conservatives as the sole proponents of punitive criminal justice at this moment in time, instead finding all whites tolerant of violent policing.

Among the controls included in the model, the inconsistent findings together demonstrate a broadly universal tolerance of violent policing among all whites. For instance, the insignificant relationship between age and rural residence with tolerance of excessive force does not comport with the expectations accepted in the literature. It is well established that younger individuals,

who are more likely to have frequent, involuntary contact with the police than old people (Hadar and Snortum 1975; Walker et al 1972; Weitzer 1999), have more negative attitudes about the police (Brown and Coulter, 1983; Leiber et al., 1998; Marenin, 1983; Reisig and Correia, 1997; Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998; Smith and Hawkins, 1973) and, by extension, the use of excessive force by the police (Jefferis et al 1997). In this analysis, although the relationship between age and tolerance of excessive force is negative, that relationship is insignificant. This suggests that at this time, whites of all ages were equally tolerant of excessive force, underscoring the nearly universal support for violent policing among whites.

In the same vein, I expected those with rural residence, who are also less likely to have frequent, involuntary interactions with the police which occur most often in urban settings, to be more supportive of excessive force. In more affluent areas or middle-class suburbs, police interactions are less frequent, are more often citizen-initiated, and residents are rarely witnesses to police brutality (Weitzer 1999), while in disadvantaged communities day-to-day lived experiences with the police can be starkly (and violently) different: "The empirical data make abundantly clear that the poor do not receive the same treatment at the hands of the agents of law enforcement as the well-to-do or middle class" (Chambliss and Seidman 1971, 475). Urban residence has been shown to impact attitudes about policing generally (Albrecht and Green 1977; Clark and Wenninger 1964; Kusow et al., 1997; Reisig and Parks, 2000; Sampson and Bartusch, 1998) and the use of force (Huang and Vaughn 1996; Worrall 1999; Hayes and Lee 2005; Nisbett and Cohen 1996; Weitzer 1999). Yet from this analysis, rural residence had a positive, but insignificant effect on tolerance of excessive force. In other words, urban whites who are more likely to have frequent, involuntary, and negative contact with the police, are just as supportive of the use of excessive force as rural whites, who are much more distant from that

kind of police contact. This demonstrates the resilient nature of white support for violent policing, which is somewhat unaffected by their lived experiences with the police, at least in the context of the kind of community in which they live.

The results related to age and size of city might also be explained by the inconsistent relationship between socioeconomic status and tolerance of excessive force—given that they are each positively related to education and income. Indeed, the significant, but negative, relationship between education and tolerance of excessive force, and insignificant relationship with income, in fact aligns with the mixed or weak relationship previous research has found between socioeconomic status and attitudes about policing. For instance, education, often an important indicator of socioeconomic status, has been shown to have a weak (Correia et. al 1996; Preiss and Ehrlich 1958) or unclear (Arthur and Case 1994; Thomas and Hyman 1977) relationship to attitudes about the police generally. Similarly, another marker of socioeconomic status, income, has been shown to be positively related to approval of the police by some (Benson 1981; Brown and Coulter 1983; Cao, Frank, and Cullen 1996; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Marenin, 1983; Murty et al., 1990; Parker et al. 1995; Percy 1980; Sampson and Bartusch, 1998; Smith et al., 1991; Zevitz and Rettammel, 1990), while others have found that income has no effect (Davis 1990; Parker et al. 1995; Smith and Hawkins 1973; Weitzer and Tuch 1999). Here, education was found to have a negative relationship with tolerance of excessive force, while income had no effect. In the case of education, age, and income, these findings might collectively suggest that these variables require unique scales and analysis to reflect cohort and generational effects that are obscured in analyses that simply examine their linear effects. More broadly, these might findings indicate that among whites, various dimensions of socioeconomic status and lived experience have less effect on tolerance of excessive force than expected.

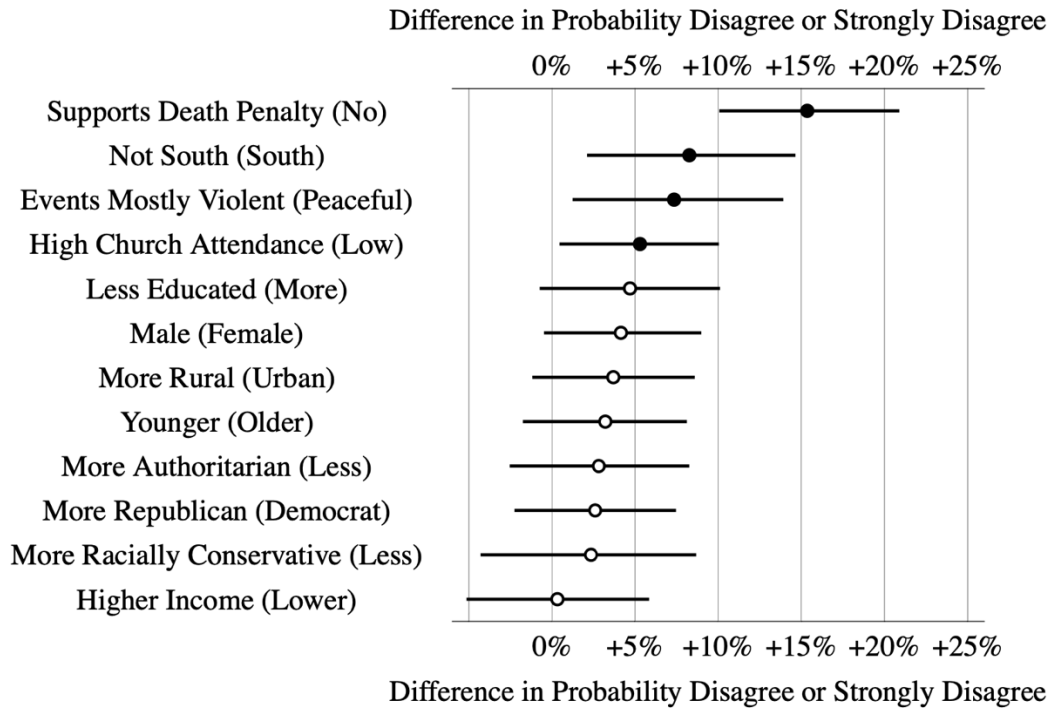
Rather, whites of all ages, income, and education, across residential settings, are equally tolerance of violent forms of policing.

While the results of this model estimation do provide us with the significance and directionality of the relationships between these variables and tolerance of violence, I illustrate the magnitude of these results by plotting the difference in predicted probabilities for each variable in the model between those who are, for example, “More Racially Conservative” and “Less Racially Conservative”, which I calculate as one standard deviation above and below their respective means, to either “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” that “The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties” with all else held at their means. These results are displayed in Figure 3.1.

In this Figure, we can observe a number of important findings. First, we learn that only four variables have a statistically significant difference in predicted probability between individuals one standard deviation above and below their respective means: higher church attendance, violent perceptions of events of Black resistance, those who reside outside the South, and more conservative criminal justice ideology. Among the rest of the variables explored in this model, there is no substantive difference in tolerance of excessive force. Among those four significant factors, I find that conservative criminal justice ideology is the strongest determinant of tolerance of excessive force: those who support the death penalty are more than 15% likelier to either “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” that “The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties” with all else held at their means. Indeed, there is an 86% predicted probability that those who support the death penalty are tolerant of excessive force—the highest of all variables considered in the model. This comports with our expectation that

those who possess more punitive attitudes generally, might be more tolerance of the use of force specifically.

Figure 3.1: Difference in Predicted Probability of White Tolerance of Excessive Force



Note: Difference in predicted probability of respondents to “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” that “The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties” between each variable in the model, one standard deviation below and above their respective means. Probabilities derived from ordered logistic regression coefficients found in Table 3.3, with all other variables held at their respective means. A white dot signifies a statistically significant difference. For all variable coding, see Appendix 5. *Source:* The Violence Study, 1968.

Next, we find that the second strongest effect size was produced by Southern residence: those who reside outside of the South have an 8% greater predicted probability to be tolerant of excessive force, compared to those who live in the South. This finding, combined with the finding that the perception of the events of Black resistance of the past few years to be mostly violent was also a significant determinant of tolerance of excessive force, supports the overarching notion explored here that the effects of the long, hot summer and racial disorder had a unique role in shaping white attitudes about policing at this particular historical moment. First,

these findings demonstrate that the strategy adopted at this time, which sought to cast all events of racial unrest as violent, lawlessness, depoliticized from any legitimate political grievance, was successful: those who perceived the events of the previous few years to be mostly violent had a substantively higher predicted probability to be tolerant of violent policing (82.9%) and that predicted probability is in the top quartile of all point estimates in the model. Second, this reveals a twin finding that those who reside in the regions in which the majority of those events took place, where police had more frequently been called upon to suppress events of civil unrest, also had a greater predicted probability to be more tolerant of excessive force. Together, this demonstrates that whites are much more tolerant of the violent policing when they see the use of force as targeting acts of resistance they believe are illegitimate and this is particularly true among whites with the closest proximity to those events.

The last variable that has a significant difference in predicted probability is found between those who have higher church attendance and those with lower church attendance, calculated by one standard deviation above and below the mean church attendance. Upon closer examination, although 63% of white respondents are Protestant, Protestantism itself is not significantly correlated with higher tolerance (Pearson $r = 0.04$, $p = 0.25$), nor is any specific branch of Protestantism: Baptists comprise the largest share of all Protestants, but Baptist affiliation is weakly and negatively correlated with tolerance of excessive force (Pearson $r = -0.08$, $p = 0.07$), while the second largest group of Protestants, Methodists have an insignificant relationship to tolerance of excessive force (Pearson $r = -0.04$, $p = 0.37$). Likewise, although 29% of all white respondents are Catholic, Catholicism is not significantly correlated to tolerance of excessive force (Pearson $r = 0.04$, $p = 0.29$). However, while it does not appear at first blush that any particular denomination is connected to higher tolerance of violent policing, when we

explore which affiliation has members with the highest church attendance, we find that 54% of them are Protestant and among that group, 27% are Baptists, 15% are Methodists, and 15% are Lutherans. As a group, however, Catholics are the most likely to attend church “regularly”: 62% of Catholics reported doing so, while 37% of Protestants did similarly. Thus, these findings do not point to the effect of high attendance in any one denomination, nor is that question within the scope of this paper. What this analysis does demonstrate, however, is that those who do attend church more regularly—sites of communal political as well as spiritual learning—do have a modestly, but statistically significantly, higher tolerance of the use of excessive force than those who attend less frequently.

Last, we find that apart from these four variables, there is no meaningful difference among whites in terms of their tolerance of excessive force. In other words, it is not the case that Southern, authoritarian, less affluent, less educated, highly religious white men emerge as the clear typology of who is tolerant of force. Rather, all whites are highly tolerant of violent policing, with only some relatively small differences between them. In regard to the effect of gender, for instance, I find that the difference between white men and women is incredibly small; among whites there is almost no substantive difference between men and women regarding tolerance of violence. The finding that masculinity has a positive, statistically significant, but substantively small, relationship with tolerance of excessive force is a curious one: it is *consistent* with research that has found that gender has an inconsistent effect on perceptions of the police in general (Brown and Benedict 2002), but *inconsistent* with other research that has demonstrated that gender is significantly related to the use of force by the police (Blumenthal et al 1972; Hartnagel 1980; Halim and Stiles 2001; Thompson and Lee 2004), specifically that “males are somewhat more likely than females to believe that the police use too much force”

(Jefferis et al 1997, 391). Importantly, this study indicates that for whites, men and women are both equally tolerant of violent policing.

This observation is consistent across many dimensions of identity among whites. For instance, it is not the case that whites who might be more likely to have frequent contact with the police and thus more negative attitudes about policing, have meaningfully lower tolerance of the use of excessive force—like those who are less affluent, younger, or who reside in bigger cities. While education, another measure of socioeconomic status that might be connected to more frequent, involuntary police contact, was statistically significant in the general model, the difference among those who are more or less educated was not significant. Rather, these findings collectively reveal that tolerance of violence is shared almost universally among whites across gender, age, education, and income, demonstrating the deep commitment to violence and the role of policing in the maintenance of white supremacy shared by all whites.

VII. Conclusion

This dissertation broadly seeks to understand the relationship between white identity and violence, both abstractly and in particular contexts of violence. While the previous chapter of this dissertation explored white tolerance for violent forms of protest, specifically among whites in former Confederate states in 1961 in the context of protesting the integration of schools, this chapter cast a wider net by using a nationally representative sample of voting age Americans in 1968 and focused on white commitment to violence in a different context: the use of excessive force by the police. While the relationship between white racial dominance and policing has persisted throughout history and into the present day, the question explored here has been: what best explains the tolerance of violent policing among white Americans at this moment in time? To answer this question, I explored data that has been not only under-utilized generally, but also

which has never before been utilized in this fashion. This data was collected at a pivotal moment in the history of the American carceral state, at the end of the long, hot summer, characterized by 250 events of racial disorder and civil unrest and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. These events spurred the creation of the National Advisory Committee of Civil Disorders (later referred to as the Kerner Commission) and, about one year later, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (later referred to as the Eisenhower Commission), for which this data, The Violence Study, was collected. This time period marked a renewed emphasis on the employment of the criminal justice system and policing to suppress events of Black resistance, a bipartisan effort carried out by white liberal and conservative elites alike. This strategy groups all events of Black protest, racial unrest, and civil disorder under the broader category of crime, devoid of political legitimacy, and deserving of punitive responses.

Using this data, this study first explored white attitudes about police violence in the abstract, using a battery of questions that posed hypothetical scenarios resulting in violent policing to respondents. It found when asked to imagine a scenario where striking or shooting an adult male citizen would be appropriate, white respondents approve of violence in the abstract a greater deal. Indeed, nearly 78 percent of white respondents said they could imagine a situation in which they would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen, and 78 percent of white respondents said they could imagine a situation in which they would approve of a policeman shooting an adult male citizen. This indicates that there is a high tolerance of police use of force among whites, at least in relationship to abstract notions about the appropriateness of violent policing.

To measure differences in tolerance of violence as it exists in the real, I utilized a measure that asked whether respondents agreed or disagreed that “The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties.” Given that police misconduct and violence was not a question of theoretical abstraction but rather a central matter of public concern at the time, this item requires respondents to assess the appropriateness of violence as it was known to exist at the time. Using an ordered logit analysis, I explored how various dimensions of identity, ideology, and context manifest themselves in the attitudes of white respondents. In addition to these, I tested three explanations tied to white attitudes about policing: racial conservatism, authoritarianism, and conservative criminal justice ideology. Last, I also explored how respondents’ perceptions of events of Black resistance in the past few years as mostly violent influence support for violent policing.

This analysis produced two main findings. First, I found that white tolerance of excessive force is particularly high among those who perceived the events of Black resistance of the previous few years as mostly violent. This finding points to the long relationship between whites and the utilization of policing and the carceral state for the suppression of racial resistance, when those events are perceived to be violent and therefore less legitimate. In this way, this finding seems to represent the fulfillment of the aim established by conservative and liberal white elites at this time, who sought to cast events of racial disorder as simple lawlessness and depoliticized violence, deserving of harsh policing. Coupled with the finding that whites who resided outside of the South, where the majority of events of civil unrest had recently occurred, expressed greater tolerance of the use of excessive force, these results demonstrate that both the proximity to events of disorder and the perception that those events were illegitimate contribute to greater support for violent policing among whites. In an era of American politics, wherein events of

resistance continue to be cast as violent lawlessness—and in which all events of disorder are cognitively “close” given their easy digital transmission—this analysis suggests that white attitudes about policing might be even more easily activated, even those who are not exposed to the events in their actual communities.

Second, although I found that whites with higher church attendance and a more conservative criminal justice ideology were more tolerant of the use of excessive force, no other variable explored here produced a meaningfully large effect. While gender and education were found to be significantly related to tolerance of excessive force, the substantive effect of that relationship was incredibly small. Further, two variables of particular interest that were expected to have a significant effect of tolerance of violent policing, racial conservatism and authoritarianism, were found to have no statistically significant effect. Instead, I found that there exists a nearly universal tolerance of violent policing among whites, not typified by any particular character trait or identity. This study lends evidence to the notion that there exists a deep, historical relationship between whiteness and policing, characterized by a general comfort with the utility of violence, wielded to protect the white racial dominance. Again, coupled with findings produced here that the negative perception of and exposure to events of disorder drive greater the tolerance of violent policing, this chapter indicates that whites of all socioeconomic classes, regional contexts, gender, and political ideologies are equally likely potential supporters of forms of violent policing, particularly those that are perceived by whites as deserving of violent control and those to which they spatially close. This chapter makes plain the nearly universal nature of white support for violent policing across all dimensions of identity and ideology, which has undergirded the long, interdependent relationship between whites and the carceral state throughout American history.

Chapter 4

White Identity and the Tolerance of Violence

I. Introduction

Over the course of the last decade, white political violence has occupied a renewed and growing space in American politics. That violence has taken the form of vigilante racial violence and a sharp rise in hate crimes; a growth of far-right, organized extremist groups; rising public awareness of state-sanctioned, racially-disparate violent policing and policy; and the normalization of violent rhetoric from political elites. This surge in violence is not a new phenomenon in American politics. Rather, violence has been a central tool of white racial dominance stretching back to the colonization of the Americas and through the entirety of the history of the United States. Indeed, whites have ardently defended an exclusive command of “legitimate” violence and have employed a near-complete suppression of competing exercises of violence by other groups. In the current moment, the renewed utility of white violence in the past decade has emerged in a pattern quite familiar: in response to many perceived challenges to white racial dominance, like the election of the first Black president, increasing demographic diversity, or economic downturn, which have all posed an existential threat to the symbolic and material status of white Americans.

Thus far, this dissertation has explored two forms of violence carried out by whites—violent protest in response to the integration of schools in the early 1960s American South and violent policing in the wake of racial unrest across the North and Midwest in the late 1960s—and has found essentially no substantive difference across whites who tolerate violence according to

traditional explanations, like socioeconomic status, religiosity, gender, and attitudinal differences like racial resentment or authoritarianism. Rather, these chapters have consistently demonstrated that the most powerful determinant of tolerance for different forms of violence is attachment to white identity itself or dimensions related to the maintenance of the status quo and white racial dominance. This chapter extends this analysis, this time testing white tolerance of political violence in a different context: when that violence is utilized for the purpose of contesting, rather than safeguarding, white racial dominance. To do this, this chapter uses nationally representative data collected by the American National Election Studies (ANES) before and after one of the most significant moments of mobilization and protest around racial justice in American history: the Black Lives Matter protests in the Summer of 2020, catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd. This strategy makes possible the exploration of how whites selectively extend and retract their tolerance of political violence in moments of racial unrest and the unsettling of the racial order. Along the way, this paper also explores two different measures of white identity—perceived group threat and group attachment—to find which dimensions of white identity most powerfully predicts greater tolerance of political violence in these different moments, before and after the unsettling of the white status quo.

The findings of this chapter are threefold. First, this analysis again demonstrates that the strength of white identity is the best predictor of tolerance of political violence. Further, I find that in this historical moment, the Summer of 2020, perceived threat to whites as a group seems to drive tolerance of violence more consistently than group attachment, although both measures possess a strong relationship to violence. Second, this analysis finds that that tolerance of political violence shrunk dramatically following the Summer 2020 protests. This suggests that following a moment of considerable contestation of the white racial dominance, whites retracted

their support for political violence. This suggests that in moments of political upheaval, whites close ranks around who has license to exercise violent protest, becoming less supportive when it is utilized by other groups, to challenge the racial hierarchy. Third, this analysis has found that in addition to white racial identity, other dimensions of identity that are tethered to the current status quo—like patriarchal and religious dominance—also predicted greater tolerance of political violence before the 2020 Summer protests and later drove the rescindment of that tolerance afterward. This suggests that when the current social order is challenged, whites respond protectively to maintain each domain of dominance to which they owe their power. Together, these findings demonstrate not only the close relationship whites have to violence—a central tool utilized by whites to maintain the racial hierarchy—but also the way whites retract their tolerance of violence when it is no longer expedient to the interests of the group.

In the sections that follow, I first explore the rise of political violence among white Americans in the last decade, to contextualize the changing role and normalization of violence in American politics. Then, I establish the primary theoretical frame I utilize in this chapter, which argues that the meaning of whiteness is wedded to violence and thus we can expect greater white identity to motivate greater support for political violence when it serves the interests of whites. I next lay out the landscape of white tolerance of violence across before and after the 2020 Summer protests, before analyzing the determinants of that tolerance in both time periods. I argue that these patterns found here reflect a cherished, familiar tradition among whites, that is neither new nor surprising. Rather, whites have long monopolized “legitimate” political violence, employing it at will and in many forms, both legal and extralegal, for the purpose of maintaining white racial dominance and excluding all other groups from wielding it for the purpose of resistance.

II. Contextualizing Contemporary White Violence

Although white violence has long occupied a central role in the ordering of American politics, the density of those events has varied over time. In the last decade, events of violence have transitioned from episodic to routine. Further, the violence of this time period that is growing in its ubiquity, spans across axes of organization and scale. It includes, for instance, a sharp rise in hate crimes: according to the 2020 FBI Hate Crime Statistics, between 2015 and 2020, the percent of racially-motivated hate crimes grew by 57 percent—from 3,330 reported incidents in 2015 to 5,227 in 2020—and the total share of hate crimes that were racially-motivated grew from 57 percent to 63 percent. The vast majority of these hate crimes were committed by whites: among those hate crimes which were aimed against non-white racial and ethnic groups in which the race of the offender was known, 80.9 percent of them were carried out by whites, while whites as a group only comprise 57.8 percent of the entire US population, according to the 2020 Census.⁵ That rise in hate crimes have also been mirrored by increased acts of terrorism, particularly those carried out by right-wing extremist groups, religious groups, and white supremacist ethnonationalist groups, with the totals of 2020 eclipsing the previous peak seen in 1994, according to data from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Jones and Doxsee 2020).

In addition to the growing occurrences of hate crimes and terrorism, white violence has also taken the shape of political violence within moments of political unrest and protest, as in, for instance, the riots in Charlottesville, VA following the “Unite the Right” rally in 2017. Preceded

⁵ It is important to note that these statistics most likely underrepresent the true number of racially-motivated hate crimes that occurred in this time period, for a number of reasons. First, the FBI relies on law enforcement agencies to voluntarily report their crime data and many agencies underreport or do not participate, leading to a systematic missingness problem in the data. Second, the data cannot account for hate crimes which are not reported to law enforcement. Last, in order to be considered a hate crime, evidence of racial bias must be demonstrated. In short, data on hate crimes is itself politically contested.

by an evening march that protested the removal of a Confederate statue, illuminated by tiki-torches, and bursting with white supremacist chants, white rioters roamed the city throughout the day of the alt-right organized rally, unleashing widespread violence, beating counter protesters, like DeAndre Harris who was attacked by a mob of white men in a parking garage that resulted in a spinal injury and severe head lacerations (Shapira 2018), resulting in 35 injuries, and culminating in the death of Heather Heyer who was killed when a neo-Nazi extremist drove his car through a crowd of counter-protesters. These outbursts of white political violence throughout the Trump administration became more common and were often mirrored or fueled by violent rhetoric from the White House saying, for instance, there were “very fine people on both sides” in moments of conflict motivated primarily by white nationalist groups, or other xenophobic and racist language that normalized bigotry and violence from the top down. But while Trump perhaps exacerbated and intensified violent language on the Right, he was also capitalizing on a broader trend of right wing, reactionary groups that reemerged as a response to increasing demographic diversity, economic anxiety, and, principally, the election of the first Black President (Parker and Barreto 2013; Fording and Schram 2020).

All of these changes, representing an existential threat to white racial dominance and the Anglo-Protestant patriarchal way of life, motivated both violent and nonviolent white resistance to restore, above all else, the restoration of white democracy. On January 6th, 2021, it appeared that the wave of white violence had begun to crest over the Capitol building: following a rallying speech by Donald Trump, perpetuating baseless, conspiratorial claims about his 2020 election defeat, thousands of members drawn from dozens of far-right extremist groups gathered at the “Stop the Steal” rally followed his call to march on the Capitol building. Rioters stormed the building and chambers of Congress in hopes of preventing the vote to confirm the election

results, causing the Capitol complex to be shut down and members to be evacuated, while rioters vandalized rooms and offices, engaged law enforcement officers in physical violence, and livestreamed their exploits, underscoring their broad willingness to engage in remorseless political violence on a national stage. By the end of the riots, more than 150 officers were injured and at least seven people died in connection to the events, including a police officer who died of injuries he sustained after being bear sprayed, dragged into the crowd of rioters, and beaten by the mob (Dominus and Broadwater 2022; Cameron 2022; Hill et al 2021). A year later, more than 700 individuals have been arrested of the 2,500 the government estimates could be prosecuted, and about 20 percent of those have been charged and sentenced (Feuer 2022). The events of January 6th, which the Republican National Committee has recently called “legitimate political discourse” (Weisman and Epstein 2022) and about which the white public is growing less outraged (Gramlich 2022), caused many to wonder: has political violence entered the mainstream on the Right (Lerer and Herndon 2021)?

But although mainstreaming of political violence on the Right has become growingly evident, is the tolerance of violence located only among those whites? It is undeniable that the overwhelming majority of terrorist acts and other episodes of political violence have been carried out by white supremacist extremists on the far-right, but white violence on the far-left, although it has been declining, nonetheless did comprise a small share of the acts of terrorism that took place in the last five years (Jones and Doxsee 2020). Further, in the aftermath of the murders of Black citizens like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery by white police officers and vigilantes, whites participated in protests across the country at unprecedented rates (Buchanan, Bui, and Patel 2020; Harmon and Tavernise 2020). More than ever before, whites showed up in vast numbers, comprising the majority of attendees in some cases, and these whites

participated in peaceful marches, but also in stand-offs with the police which did on occasion erupt in violence, albeit most often due to provocation by law enforcement and swat teams, enduring clouds of tear gas and police violence to contest racial injustice (Barker, Baker, and Watkins 2021). This seemingly broad willingness to engage in political violence requires closer examination, in order to determine what motivates the tolerance of political violence on the right and left, how they are different or similar, and when.

In the historical moment in which this chapter is located, the sustained threat to white dominance many have perceived since the Obama administration seemed to reach a crescendo with the protests of the Summer of 2020. These centered around not only the use of lethal force by the police against people of color, but also unleashed a prolonged period of upheaval around race and ethnicity in American society that extended far beyond just the role of the police. Institutions both public and private began to interrogate the ways in which white supremacy was laced throughout their practices, rules, and cultures. Thus, this is not only an exceptional opportunity to explore what best predicts the support of political violence among whites in the current political moment, filling in our quantitative timeline of white identity and violence. But the unique conditions of this time period also allow us to take up new questions, namely, to analyze how white attitudes about political violence shift during moments in which white racial dominance is under broad threat and contestation.

III. White Identity and Other Theoretical Expectations

What might motivate some whites to be more tolerant of political violence? Given that violence has been and is used by whites to advance and protect group dominance, I expect various dimensions of dominance to motivate that support. Thus, the central frame this analysis takes up to understand the tolerance of political violence among whites is *White Identity*—whites

who are more attached to their racial group should be more supportive of the use of violence to preserve white dominance. In addition to this primary explanatory lens, I also explore other dimensions of power that intersect with white racial dominance which I expect to be related to a greater tolerance of the use of political violence. These include religiosity, authoritarianism, and negative racial attitudes. However, it is important to emphasize that this paper not only explores white tolerance of political violence generally, but at two different political moments: before and after a massive significant political event that challenged white racial dominance in many corners of society. This design therefore requires individualized theoretical attention for each moment, as I expect whites' articulation of their attitudes about political violence to be contextually contingent, which I detail in the following section.

White Identity

The primary frame this analysis utilizes to understand what generates support for political violence among whites is white identity itself. In response to real or perceived threats, violence has long served a primary tool of the maintenance of white supremacy, both extralegal and legal. Indeed, the American carceral system has been organized since its conception around the task of regulating and punishing Black and Brown bodies whose very freedom was figured as criminal, denying them of the right to mobilize and resist enslavement, patrolling the Mason-Dixon line, carrying out the removal of indigenous nations in the West, and, post-Emancipation, enforcing Black codes and wielding incarceration to return Black men and women to the status of enslavement—all made possible by claiming sole ownership of the use of “legitimate” violence. All whites benefit from white supremacy, albeit to varying degrees and in different ways (Lipsitz 1995), including the exercise of legitimate political violence and a justice system that serves the interests of whites' racial dominance. I do expect, however, those whites with greater attachment

to the group to be more protective of white group interests, which has been long secured through strategies like political violence.

The time period in which this chapter is situated offers a prime opportunity to explore the shifting nature of the effect white identity has on tolerance of political violence because this data was collected at a flashpoint of racial politics in the United States. The protests in the Summer of 2020 centered explicitly around locating and challenging white supremacy in all corners of American society, resulting in a period of broad examination of the role of race in the lives of whites. Thus, we should expect white identity to be quite activated, particularly after the 2020 Summer protests, and, consequently, be impactful on white attitudes about political violence. But more specifically, we should expect the effect of white identity on tolerance of political violence to shift following the 2020 Summer protests, as episodes of racial upheaval might motivate highly identifying whites to restrict the legitimate exercise of political from groups who pose a threat to white dominance.

Out-Group (Racial) Attitudes

In addition to white racial identity, I also consider a second, related theoretical framework to understand what motivates whites' tolerance of political violence in terms of group position: negative racial attitudes. Another way of thinking about white racial identity is as what Ashley Jardina (2019) terms white solidarity: an orientation that measures in-group attitudes, which taps into positive feelings of group attachment, commitment, commonality, and unity, that is distinct from individual's attitudes toward other groups, both of which Jardina (2020) has argued must be included in the study of white public opinion. So, in the context of political violence, it might be the case that whites' desire to maintain the status and position of the group through strategies like political violence are not only related to positive in-group attitudes that

whites possess about their group's superiority. Rather, support for political violence among whites might also be driven by negative out-group attitudes. These out-group attitudes might include negative feelings about other racial groups and qualities whites associate with those groups which prompt whites to view them as inherently undeserving of higher status and power. Thus, I expect whites who do not possess negative attitudes about other racial groups to be more tolerant of the use of political violence, as they are less concerned that that political violence might be utilized by out-groups, because they do not view those out-groups negatively. However, after the 2020 Summer protests, in which out-groups across the nation contested their relegated status through broad political mobilization and resistance, I expect that those who do possess more negative attitudes about those marginalized groups to become even less tolerant of political violence than they were beforehand. Thus, both of these theoretical frameworks—in-group and out-group attitudes—are necessary to consider as they isolate important differences in what exactly motivates white attitudes in the context of political violence and how those mechanisms differently impact attitudes about political violence as they shift across time.

Dimensions of Patriarchal and Religious Dominance

For some whites, racial dominance might not be the only dimension of power that motivates greater support for political violence, because there might be additional identities that overlap or intersect with whiteness which they are also motivated to protect. For these whites, their power is not only located in their racial identity but might also be distributed across other domains of the Anglo-Protestant, patriarchal status quo which governs American politics. Each of these individual components—race, gender, and religion—comprise whites' portfolio of dominance and we should therefore expect them to operate in tandem, by predicting both their support of political violence and how that support is retracted when violence is wielded to

challenge the dominant order. Thus, I explore how gender and religiosity respond alongside racial attitudes in seasons of political upheaval that touch on each of these dimensions, like that following the 2020 Summer protests, which together comprise the dominant “way of life” many whites violently defend.

Churches in the United States are powerful arbiters of political belief, shaping political ideology through the lens of church doctrine, and are, for many, some of the most influential moderators of political attitudes. The Christian church has long maintained a vital place in the composition of dominant culture throughout American history, shaping white commitment to values like motivational individualism and a rejection of structural explanations for racial inequality (Brimeyer 2008; Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2000; Hunt 2007). Indeed, white, American Christianity is categorically different in content and political ideology from both the Christian church in other nations and the Christian tradition practiced within other racial and ethnic communities in the United States (Shelton and Emerson 2012) and is in many ways tethered to the maintenance of white racial dominance, specifically (Tranby and Hartmann 2008). Most white Americans do identify with some kind of Christian denomination: 73 percent, according to data from the 2012 American National Election Studies, with almost half of those identifying as either Mainline or Evangelical Protestants (Jardina 2019). However, white Christians no longer comprise the majority in the United States and that decline has been occurring for the past few decades: according to research conducted by the Public Religion Religious Institute in 2020, although the decline of white Christians has slowed, they are now only about 44 percent of all Americans, down from 65 percent in 1996 (2021).

How does religiosity impact attitudes about political violence, then? White Christians might now face a dilemma, experiencing tension between 1) a decline in their group’s

dominance, which might call for political action, making them more sympathetic, perhaps, to extra-legal resistance and 2) attachment to the political institutions, like the rule of law, which have long maintained that group's dominance. I expect this tension to be reflected in differences across the two time periods explored here: before and after the 2020 Summer protests. When the reigning social order is contested, I expect more religious whites to retract their support of political violence because they have greater incentive to support the institutions which have protected their group's dominance throughout American history and to oppose the use of political violence by groups that challenge that dominance.

Similarly, we might also expect gender to motivate white tolerance of political violence. Gender powerfully shapes the lived experience of individuals, which makes it an important dimension to explore in any analysis of political attitudes, but it is also relevant to the formation of attitudes about violence, specifically. Men, who are socialized to conform to masculine notions of aggression and force, are more likely to be supportive of violence in the first place. Even further, we should also expect gender to influence white attitudes about violence, as patriarchal dominance is a central component of the power white men possess. This suggests that, alongside religious and racial commitments, white men will also express a commitment to the violent maintenance of the status quo that integrates each of these dimensions. Again, when political violence is utilized to challenge that status quo, as in the season following the 2020 Summer protests, I expect white men to retract their support. Together, I expect these dimensions of dominance—gender, race, and religion—to behave in unison, reflecting whites' attachment to multiple, intersecting sources of power, which they are motivated to protect.

Authoritarianism

Last, it might be the case that whites' support for political violence is not only related to feelings of in-group superiority, out-group inferiority, or commitment to other intersecting dimensions of dominance like religiosity and gender. Rather, white support for political violence might be explained by their commitment to the preservation of the status quo and hierarchical systems of order through strategies that includes political violence. For this reason, I also consider authoritarianism, a concept first developed by Theodor Adorno (1950) which measures individual's attachment to values like obedience, conformity, and order. More recently, scholars have explored authoritarianism's unique relationship to whiteness, who as members of the dominant group might possess a stronger commitment to the maintenance of the status quo, social hierarchies, and power arrangements as they exist under white supremacy, governing their perceptions of and reactions to threat (Parker and Towler 2019; Pérez and Hetherington 2014). These scholars argue that the measure used in this study, the child-rearing scale first developed by Feldman and Stenner (1997), which gauges the respondents' commitments to instill values like obedience, good manners, good behavior, and respect for elders in young children compared to values like independence and curiosity, extends beyond "*individual* dominance within a family hierarchy and meshes with *group* dominance within America's racial order" (Pérez and Hetherington 2014, 399). Thus, I expect more authoritarian whites, who have a distinctly high attachment to the maintenance of order, to be less supportive of the use of political violence because they might perceive it as violating those commitments to law and order. However, because authoritarianism for whites also reflects a deep commitment to the preservation of hierarchical arrangements, namely white racial dominance, I expect the effect of authoritarianism to be weakened when group dominance is threatened, making them less opposed to extralegal

violence. Last, given the tension between these two commitments, I expect the effect of authoritarianism to be weak or inconsistent.

IV. Data

This chapter utilizes data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2020 Exploratory Testing Survey and 2020 Time Series. While both of these surveys are a cross-sectional surveys of voting age, U.S. citizens that measure a wide range of political attitudes, voting behavior, and other forms of political participation, each survey used here is unique in its purpose and design. The Time Series (TS) has been conducted most election years since the 1940s and is the largest, most robust survey that is consistently offered by the ANES. In contrast, The Exploratory Testing Survey (ETS) is a form of Pilot Study, which the ANES typically conducts in between or before elections to inform the methodological design of and test new questions for potential inclusion for future Time Series surveys. The ETS also differs from the Time Series in that it was delivered not through interview but through online survey and was delivered only in one moment of measurement, rather than two phases of interview, and surveys a smaller sample of respondents. Thus, the ETS produced 3,080 completions across three separate online panels while the TS produced 8,280 pre-election interviews but 7,449 post-election interviews. In this analysis, I utilize only on the attitudes of self-reported, non-Hispanic white respondents, resulting in a sample of 2,237 respondents in the ETS and 5,963 in the TS.

Dependent Variable: Tolerance of Violence

Importantly, these surveys each include a measure of *Violence Tolerance*, my primary outcome variable utilized in this study. This item first appeared in the 2018 Pilot Study and reads: “How much do you feel it is justified for people to use violence to pursue their political

goals in this country?”⁶ Thus, these surveys present a unique opportunity to explore understudied attitudes about violence first by the mere inclusion of this measure alone. Even more crucially, the timing of each survey provides the opportunity to measure attitudes about violent protest before and after one of the most exceptional periods of protest since the 1960s: the 2020 Exploratory Testing Survey was conducted from April 10th-18th, 2020 while the Time Series was conducted from August 2020 until election day on November 3rd. The protests catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd began on May 26th and quickly spread across not only the nation but around the world, with the heaviest days of protest lasting through the first weeks of June, but more protests continuing through July. This timing means that the most contentious moments of the protests that occurred that Summer had concluded by August, when interviews for the Time Series began.

Explanatory Variables

The two measures I use to assess white identity are two components of group consciousness, which is a concept that seeks to measure the extent to which identities are politicized and activated, by taking into account not only identification with a group, but also the perceived deprivation or threat to the group’s status, and the extent to which individuals believe members of the group should work together to protect or advance the status of the group. Here, I explore the first two dimensions of group consciousness, which are the only two that exist in both datasets: *Perceived Group Threat* and *Group Attachment*. The first item, *Group Attachment*, asks respondents “How important is being white to your identity?” This measure requires respondents to move past mere categorization of the self as white and instead to gauge the extent

⁶ In the 2020 Exploratory Testing Survey, this item was measured in two ways: half the sample was asked, “How much do you feel it is *justified* for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country?” while the second half was asked “How much do you feel it is *acceptable* for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country?” (emphasis mine).

to which whiteness is central to their personal sense of self, ranging from extremely important to not at all important. The second item explored here, differs from group attachment, by measuring the extent to which whites perceive the group of whites, to which they self-categorize, as under threat. *Perceived Group Threat* is measured through the item “How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?” This item captures the extent to which whites see whites as a group as threatened, in this case economically, by other racial groups.

It is important to note that this measure does reflect individuals’ sense of interethnic competition in a narrowly material, economic lens, rather than whites’ senses of threat against the group’s social status or way of life, which has been shown to better explain white participation in reactionary groups, in particular (Parker 2021; Parker and Barreto 2013). However, this measure is more useful than items which consider only individuals’ personal anxiety around their real economic status, whose utility in explaining white attitudes on the Right has been shown to be inferior to status threat (Mutz 2018). To measure status threat, scholars often rely on the Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) index (Sidanius and Pratto 1999), which accounts for preferences like hierarchical group arrangements, in-group interested actions, and the believed inferiority of out-groups. While SDO is not included on the ANES, I argue that the measure of white group threat used here, which accounts for in-group attitudes, combined with authoritarianism and measures of negative out-group attitudes, is sufficient. *Authoritarianism*, for instance, has been shown to predict many of the same policy attitudes as SDO, although they do appear to tap into different, but related, attitude dimensions (Duckitt 2003)—namely, authoritarianism being more closely related to traditionalism and conservatism and SDO related more to “economic conservatism, support for inequality, and power distance” (Jardina 2019,

301). In this analysis, I utilize Feldman and Stenner's (1997) child-rearing scale which requires respondents to rank which values they believe are most important to instill in young children, like obedience, good manners, good behavior, and respect for elders as opposed to independence or curiosity. In this way, authoritarianism accounts for attachment to order, obedience, and hierarchy which reflects whites' commitment to maintaining the current configuration of power and social order.

In order to capture out-group inferiority, I also consider negative racial attitudes which I measure here using *Racial Resentment*. This measure was first developed by Kinder and Sanders (1996), who sought to understand how modern racism was articulated by whites through commitments to values like individualism and work ethic, rather than through old-fashioned racism, like biological inferiority. This index has been included on the ANES since 1986 and has revealed how white racism has not declined nor disappeared, but rather shifted toward a more subtle, covert form of racism which whites feel more willing to voice (Bonilla-Silva 2006). With these symbolic racial attitudes uncovered, racial resentment has been shown to continue to influence a wide range of policy attitudes. Whites who are more racially resentful also articulate other group-interested attitudes: they are more likely to believe that whites experience discrimination and to oppose affirmative action to universities, for instance, but the relationship between racial resentment and other racialized policies are at other times inconsistent, like with social security spending (Jardina 2019). As it relates to attitudes about violence, racial resentment has been found to be significantly and consistently related to the support of the use of force by the police (Carter and Corra 2016).

Last, to measure dimensions of patriarchal and religious dominance, I include *Gender* and *Church Attendance*. These two items capture central features of the dominant Anglo-

Protestant, patriarchal order to which many whites are committed. I expect these identities to operate in tandem with white identity, by motivating greater tolerance of political violence when the status of the group is more secure and by triggering protective attitudes when that dominant “way of life” is threatened, causing them to retract their support for political violence when utilized to challenge, rather than uphold, the dominance of the group. In addition to these primary explanatory variables, which I believe capture the most important mechanisms that generate support for political violence among whites and that support’s contextually contingent nature, I also include several controls to the model. These include political party, age, education, region, and income. All coding of the variables in the model can be found in Appendix 6.

V. Landscape of Tolerance of Violence and Identity

Turning toward the landscape of the tolerance of violence in these data: as demonstrated in Table 4.1, most whites do not express high levels tolerance of violence. This comports with findings of Chapter 2, which found that 82.3 percent of all whites in 1961 in former Confederate states disagreed a little or disagreed quite a bit that “Demonstrations to protest the integration of school are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt.” However, given the extreme pressure in American society to support nonviolent political protest and reject the use of violence, it is in fact remarkable to observe hardly any support for violence whatsoever. Further, this social desirability effect suggests that these findings might underreport support for violence, meaning the extent of support for violence might be even greater than what is observed here. In these data, we observe that 77.9 percent of whites in April of 2020 when the Exploratory Testing Survey was administered reported feeling that it is not at all “justified for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country.” However, just a few months later, between August and November 3rd when the Time Series was administered, 89.1 percent reported no tolerance of

violence. Put differently, in April of 2020, before the protests catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd, 22.1 percent of whites expressed some degree of tolerance—whereas in August of 2020, in the wake of those protests related to race, policing, and spearheaded by groups like the Black Lives Matter movement, about half as many whites (10.9) expressed some tolerance of violence in the pursuit of political goals.

Table 4.1
Comparison Tolerance of Violence

<i>Item</i>	<i>2020 ETS</i> <i>(N=2236)</i>	<i>2020 TS</i> <i>(N=5941)</i>
<i>How much do you feel it is justified for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country?</i>		
Not at all	77.9	89.1
A little	6.6	5.6
A moderate amount	8.4	3.3
A lot	3.3	1.1
A great deal	3.9	0.9

Source: ANES 2020 Exploratory Testing Study, ANES 2020 Time Series

Turning to the two measures of white racial identity explored here, as seen in Table 4.2, both measures are distributed more evenly across whites than tolerance of violence, albeit skewed toward the lower end in terms of strength: somewhere between one-fourth and one-third of whites report the lowest level of white identity across both datasets and measures, while a mean of 10 percent of whites report the highest possible level of either white identity measures. We also observe that whites appear to express greater levels of group attachment than perceived group threat—in both the ETS and the TS, nearly twice as many whites report that being white is very or extremely important to their identity than there are whites that report that it is very or extremely likely that whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead. This finding demonstrates that whites are more likely articulate that being white is important to their sense of self than they are to express the belief that they see whites as a group as under threat.

Table 4.2
Distribution of White Identity and Perceived Group Threat

<i>Item</i>	<i>ETS</i>	<i>TS</i>
<i>How important is being white to your identity?</i>		
Not at all important	24.1	35.6
A little important	14.3	20.4
Moderately important	28.1	23.7
Very important	15.9	12.9
Extremely important	17.6	7.5
<i>How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?</i>		
Not at all likely	28.6	30.3
A little likely	31.1	35.5
Somewhat likely	22.2	22.1
Very likely	10.4	9.0
Extremely likely	7.8	3.2

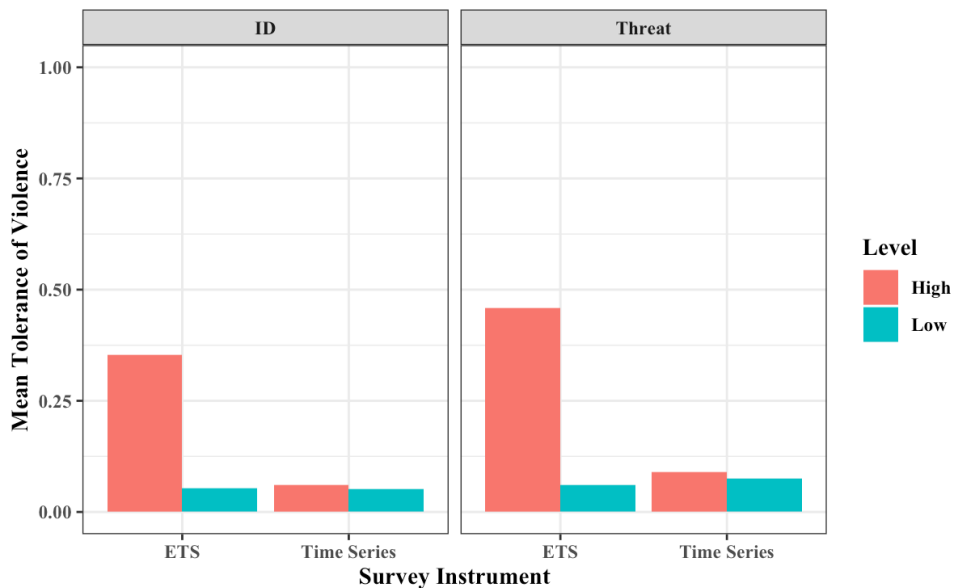
Source: ANES 2020 Exploratory Testing Study, ANES 2020 Time Series

These two findings might be explained first by the group position of whites, who are not only undeniably situated at the top of the racial hierarchy in the United States, but are also believed to be situated at the top by most, including by whites themselves. It is thus reasonable to expect more whites to acknowledge that being white is important to their identity: given that they do self-identify as white, and whites as a group are situated at the top of the racial hierarchy, it follows that that identity would be deeply consequential to who they are and to their lived experiences. Yet, as other research has shown, the extent to which whites consider being white to be important to their identity is nonetheless relatively low compared to other racial groups for whom that identity is a source of marginalization, not domination. We also observe in Table 4.2 that the percent of whites that have high group attachment and high perceived group threat decreased between April 2020 and August 2020, by 39.1 percent and 33 percent respectively. While why these dimensions of white identity decreased during this time is outside the scope of this chapter, it is nonetheless interesting to consider how the events of June and July impacted

whites’ willingness to either articulate strong white identity or potentially caused white identity itself to be weakened among whites.

In order to better understand the landscape of that tolerance among whites and how it is related to white identity, I next plot the mean tolerance on a scale of 0-1 among the highest and lowest possible white identifiers, for each dataset. As seen in Figure 4.1, I find that the highest white identifiers in both measures do have a higher mean tolerance of violence than those with the lowest possible white identity.

Figure 4.1. Mean Tolerance of Violence among High and Low White Identifiers



Note: Tolerance of Violence is a five-category item, rescaled to a binary outcome where “1” represents those who believe it is “Moderately,” “A bit, or “A great deal” “justified for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country.” For all variable coding, see Appendix 6.

Source: ANES 2020 Exploratory Testing Study, ANES 2020 Time Series

I also find that group attachment and group threat appear to be related to tolerance of violence slightly differently: in the ETS, those who believe it is extremely likely that whites are unable to find jobs because employers are hiring minorities instead have a mean tolerance of violence of 0.46, while those who report that being white is extremely important to their identity have a mean tolerance of violence of 0.35. In the TS, that difference is smaller, but nonetheless exists:

0.09 and 0.06, respectively. Again, given the material and political reality in the United States, in which whites as a group are not under threat, it follows that those who nonetheless possess high degrees of perceived group threat also possess markedly different attitudes in other dimensions related to group position, like the role of violence in the pursuit of political goals.

Crucially, this Figure demonstrates that the difference in mean tolerance of violence between high and low identifiers shrunk dramatically between the ETS, which was conducted in April, and the TS, which began in August. While there was a difference of 30.0 and 39.7 percent between high and low identifiers, according to group attachment and perceived group threat respectively, those differences shrunk to 0.7 in the ETS and 1.40 percent in the TS. Further, those differences are only statistically significant in the context of perceived group threat ($t = -2.303$, $p = 0.037$), while they are insignificant in the context of group attachment ($t = -1.373$, $p = 0.181$). This finding lends evidence to the notion that white group attachment might possess less explanatory power than perceived group threat, as there is no meaningful difference between those with the highest group attachment and those with the lowest, as it relates to tolerance of violence. However, more importantly, this Figure exposes a clear pattern in how tolerance of violence changed between Spring and Fall of 2020: tolerance of violence decreased a great deal and the difference between high and low white identifiers nearly disappeared. These findings are fascinating and seem to indicate that the effect of white identity on tolerance changed in this space of time, as whites coalesced around their lack of support for political violence at the end of the Summer—a phenomenon which will be explored in the following section.

VI. Results and Discussion

To explore the determinants of tolerance of political violence, I use ordered logit regression, whose results are found in Table 4.3. All variables have been rescaled from 0-1 in

this analysis, except the outcome variable, which remains a four category, ordered variable. As previously discussed, I explore two strategies in measuring *White Identity*, which is the primary theoretical lens I use to understand tolerance of violence among whites. Thus, I run this model twice for each dataset, using *Group Attachment* and *Perceived Group Threat* independently. As a reminder, group attachment is measured using the question “How important is being white to your identity?” and group threat is measured using the question “How likely is it that whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?” This strategy allows me to understand which aspects of white identity are most strongly influencing white attitudes about political violence, as well as how the effect of those dimensions of identity changed over time.

Before the 2020 Protests

First, I will discuss the results of the analysis of the Exploratory Testing Survey, which was conducted before the 2020 Summer protests to identify what dimensions taken up here predict greater tolerance of political violence before the season of racial upheaval had begun. As demonstrated in Table 4.3, the results of this analysis comported with many of the theoretical expectations previously established. Most significantly, this analysis demonstrates that both measures of white identity utilized here are significantly related to the tolerance of political violence. Whites who have greater group attachment and whites that have a greater perception that whites as a group are under threat are more likely to be tolerant of political violence than those with weaker white identity—with the effect of group threat being slightly stronger than group attachment. This finding supports the notion that whites who are more invested in white racial dominance are more tolerant of the violent maintenance of that dominance. Relatedly, analysis of this data also demonstrates that whites who are invested in other dimensions of the status quo, like more religious whites and white men, are also more tolerant of political violence.

Table 4.3: Determinants of Tolerance of Violence

<i>Variables</i>	<i>ETS</i>		<i>TS</i>	
	<i>Group Attachment</i>	<i>Group Threat</i>	<i>Group Attachment</i>	<i>Group Threat</i>
Group Attachment	2.481*** (0.195)		0.136 (0.161)	
Group Threat		2.856*** (0.219)		0.308 (0.219)
Education	0.684** (0.237)	0.785*** (0.232)	-0.441** (0.183)	-0.441** (0.182)
Male	0.616*** (0.128)	0.735*** (0.128)	0.011 (0.096)	0.019 (0.096)
Republican	-0.310* (0.173)	-0.253 (0.174)	-0.386** (0.178)	-0.424** (0.179)
Age	-5.235*** (0.324)	-4.625*** (0.325)	-2.184*** (0.183)	-2.185*** (0.181)
Racial Resentment	-0.411 (0.295)	-1.152*** (0.308)	-1.171*** (0.231)	-1.255*** (0.239)
Income	-0.015 (0.260)	-0.112 (0.257)	-0.825*** (0.193)	-0.815*** (0.193)
Church Attendance	0.797*** (0.157)	0.772*** (0.156)	-0.386** (0.150)	-0.385** (0.150)
South	0.290** (0.127)	0.258** (0.127)	0.174* (0.100)	0.157* (0.100)
Authoritarianism	-0.337 (0.207)	-0.241 (0.207)	0.186 (0.180)	0.202* (0.179)
1 2	1.045*** (0.248)	0.901*** (0.243)	-0.213 (0.182)	-0.215 (0.180)
2 3	1.673*** (0.251)	1.524*** (0.245)	0.656*** (0.184)	0.645*** (0.183)
3 4	2.864*** (0.264)	2.751*** (0.259)	1.721*** (0.200)	1.713*** (0.199)
Observations	2,139	2,140	4,764	4,770

Note: Coefficients are derived from ordered logistic regression, where *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. For all variable coding, see Appendix 6.

Source: ANES 2020 Exploratory Testing Study, ANES 2020 Time Series

These findings support the notion that these facets of identity and power work in tandem, driving greater support for political violence and, ostensibly, the violent maintenance of the status quo and group dominance.

As theoretically expected, racial resentment was shown to have a negative relationship with the tolerance of political violence: those who are less racially resentful have more tolerance of political violence than those who were more racially resentful, although the effect was only significant in the model which included group threat as a measure of white identity. This suggests that negative out-group attitudes do make whites less supportive of political violence, as that strategy could perhaps be utilized by out-group members in ways they do not support. Authoritarianism also had a negative relationship with the tolerance of violence, but that effect was statistically insignificant. This finding might be related to the tension in values that exists for authoritarian whites, whose commitment to order and hierarchy might make them less supportive of extralegal violence, while their commitment to white racial dominance might mandate the violent preservation of the status quo when that dominance is challenged. Together, these findings beg the question: what violence, carried out by whom, are whites conceptualizing when responding to this survey item? In order to understand how negative out-group attitudes and authoritarianism influence support for political violence, greater methodological specificity in future analyses might be necessary to determine whether they might be imagining adversaries, rather than allies, when responding to survey items related to political violence.

After the 2020 Protests

Following the 2020 Summer protests, however, the picture looks much different. The first, and one of the most central findings of this analysis, is that not only did the overall

tolerance of political violence shrink dramatically, as previously seen in Figure 4.1. But from the results of this analysis, we see that many of the variables that motivated greater tolerance of political violence in April, 2020, were the same variables that motivated lower tolerance in August. In other words, before the George Floyd protests, white men were significantly more likely to be tolerant of political violence than white women, but by August this analysis indicates that there was *no* significant relationship between gender and tolerance of violence. Those who attended church more often also reported a higher tolerance of political violence before the Summer of 2020, yet after those events high church attenders had a *negative* relationship to political violence.

This change over time is perhaps most striking in the context of white identity. In April of 2020, both white group identity and group threat had a highly significant, positive relationship to the tolerance of political violence, with group threat having a slightly larger effect size. However, by August-October of 2020, the effect size of both group attachment and group threat were greatly reduced and insignificant. This finding is crucial, suggesting that following the events of the Summer of 2020, characterized by widespread political mobilization, protest, and unrest, motivated primarily by resistance to racial injustice in all corners of society, whites with greater group attachment and senses of group threat, became *less* tolerant of political violence.

Importantly, we also observe from these results that while both measures of white identity are strongly related to the tolerance of violence, it also seems that each measure does behave slightly differently than the other, across time. For instance, we do observe that the effect size of group threat is larger than group attachment at both periods of measurement.⁷ It's

⁷ Further, when this model is run using OLS regression, it does appear that group threat, not group attachment, continues to be significantly related to the tolerance of political violence following the 2020 Summer protests while the significance of group attachment disappears. The results of that analysis can be found in Appendix 7.

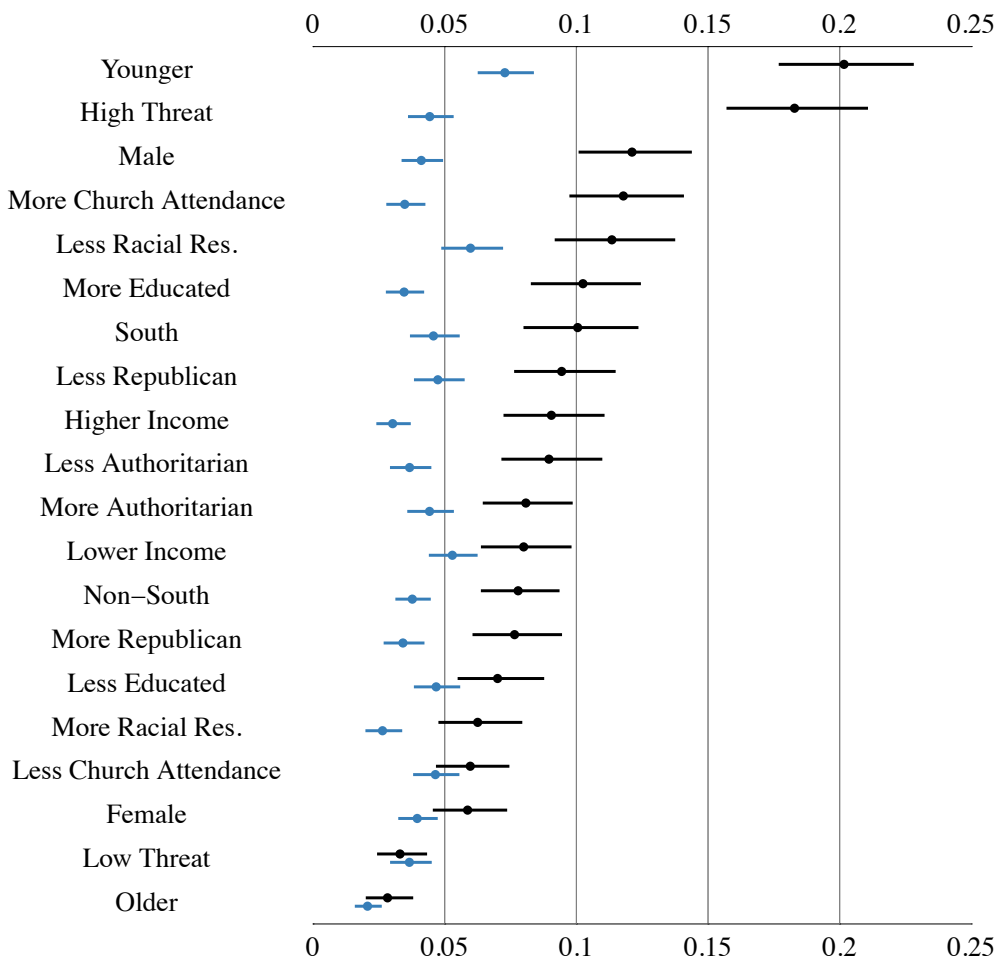
important to emphasize here how different components of white identity behave differently at different times. As I previously discussed, white identity is a reactive identity that is most impactful when it is triggered by exogenous factors. Intuitively, it therefore makes sense that following a season of racial unrest and upheaval, perceived group threat felt among whites would be greater and influence other attitudes related to the needs and status of the group. But that finding is contextually and temporally specific—other dimensions of whiteness might be more impactful when other triggering factors arise. In this specific context and time, however, this analysis does seem to indicate that group threat is more responsible for the tolerance of violence than group attachment, meaning whites who have a greater sense that the status of whites is under threat by other racial groups are more inclined to believe that the violent pursuit of political goals is somewhat justified.

Substantive Effects Across Time

To appreciate the magnitude of the variables included in this model on tolerance of political violence, particularly across time, I plot the predicted probability of respondents who are, for instance, more or less educated, to report that violent pursuit of political goals is “Moderately,” “A Lot,” or “A Great Deal” justified. To do so, I plot each variable one standard deviation above and below their means, with all else held at their respective means. Given that group threat appears to be motivating tolerance of violence among whites more consistently and more sizably, I utilize only this measure for the remainder of the analysis. These results are displayed in Figure 4.2. In this Figure, we see that age and group threat had the largest substantive effect on tolerance of political violence before the summer protests and that that effect size was substantially greater than all other variables included in the analysis. This finding comports with our theoretical expectation that high identifying whites, measured here by the

belief that it is likely that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead, would be more likely to support the protection or advancement of the group’s interests, including perhaps the use of political violence. Indeed, those whites with greater perceived group threat had about an 18 percent predicted probability to be somewhat tolerant of political violence, with all else held at the mean. This demonstrates that this dimension of white identity is one of the best determinants of tolerance of violence, all else considered.

Figure 4.2: Predicted Probability of White Tolerance of Political Violence



Note: Black color reflects the ANES Time Series, blue color reflects the ANES Exploratory Testing Study. Figure plots the predicted probability of respondents to believe it is “Moderately,” “A bit, or “A great deal” “justified for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country” for each variable in the model, one standard deviation below and above their respective means. Probabilities are derived from ordered logistic regression coefficients found in Table 4.3, with all other variables held at their respective means. For all variable coding, see Appendix 6.

Source: ANES 2020 Exploratory Testing Study, ANES 2020 Time Series

The variable with the largest substantive effect, however, was age: those whites that were one standard deviation below the mean age of all white respondents, with everything else held at their respective means, had 20 percent predicted probability to be somewhat tolerant of political violence. This finding comports with a large body of research that has demonstrated a consistent relationship between age and various attitudes related to violence. For instance, young people are more likely to commit crime and to consequently have more negative, involuntary contact with the police, leading to more negative attitudes about the police (e.g., Hadar and Snortum 1975; Walker et al 1972; Weitzer 1999). This relationship between crime and dissatisfaction with the police might suggest a broader antagonism toward the rule of law that might also make younger people more likely to support political violence. Indeed, in the international context, nations with a higher proportion of young people in their populations have been linked to a greater likelihood of terrorism, riots, and organized crime and young people are also overrepresented in those events and organizations (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Lee 2011), although that effect is weakened when other conditions, like stronger labor markets and educational systems, are taken into account (Weber 2019). The relationship between youth and participation in political violence has been attributed to socialization processes, like the unsettling of or rejection of parent belief systems in young adulthood that might make them more likely to adopt fundamentalist ideologies (Weber 2013), or to the unstable conditions of young adults' lives, which are less likely to be anchored to institutions like marriage, childrearing, or homeownership, which discourage lawlessness by burdening them with responsibility (Greenberg 1977), or to the greater propensity to risk-taking among young people generally, particularly among men (Wilson and Daly 1985). Thus, the results of this analysis also align with the expectation that people who are younger, who are perhaps more prone (or more

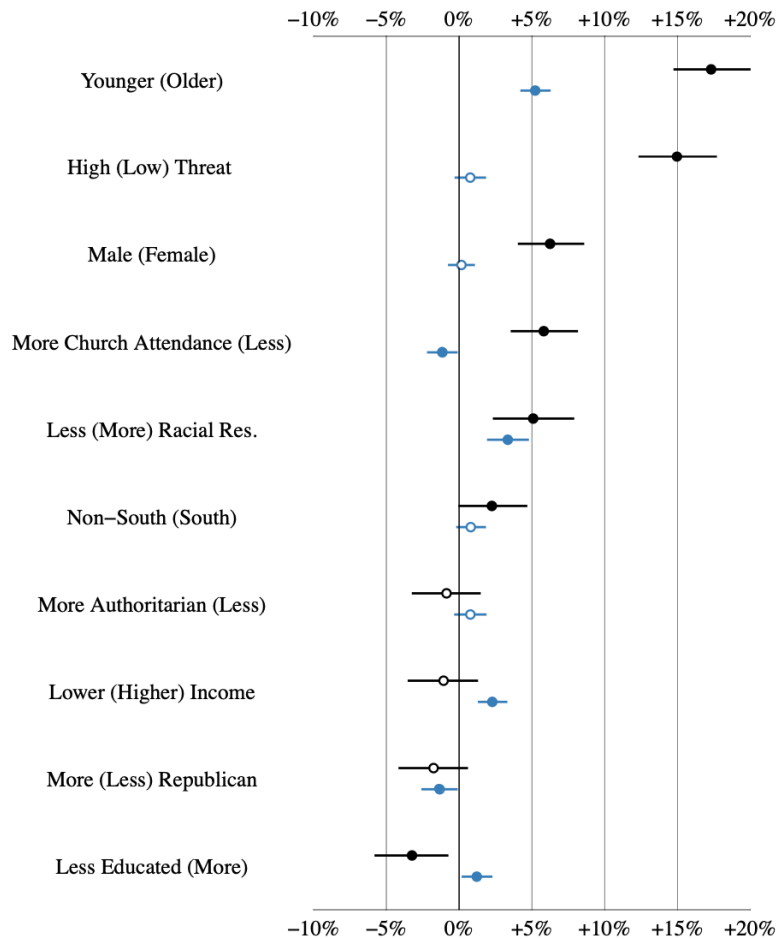
unencumbered by responsibilities associated with higher age) to take risks, more likely to reject the status quo, or more resistant to the rule of law are more likely to support the use of violence to pursue their political goals.

We also find that before the 2020 Summer protests, there was a moderate relationship between dimensions of patriarchal and religious dominance, with men and higher church attenders having between a 12-13 percent predicted probability to tolerate political violence to some degree. That finding related to gender does align with other research that has found that those assigned male at birth, who are socialized within patriarchal notions of male dominance, aggression, and violence, do commit more violent crime than women (e.g., Steffensmeier 2006) and might also be more tolerant of other forms of violence, like political violence. This finding also demonstrates how different dimensions of group dominance also motivate whites to be tolerant of political violence in the same way white identity does. This is mirrored in the effect of religiosity, which indicates that whites who are more religious are also more supportive of political violence. Together, these findings suggest that greater attachment to different dimensions of power, like gender, religiosity, and whiteness, tend to motivate those individuals to be more tolerant of the role of violence in the maintenance of group dominance.

In order to better examine these effect size of each variable in the model, I plot the difference in predicted probability between those who are, for instance, more or less racially resentful, which I calculate as one standard deviation above and below their respective means, to be somewhat tolerant of political violence. I plot these differences for each dataset, with the significance of each difference represented by a white dot for insignificance and a filled dot for significance. These results are displayed in Figure 4.3. In this Figure, we can observe that younger whites in April of 2020 were about 17 percent more likely to report some level of

tolerance of political violence compared to older whites—the largest substantive effect of any variable in either dataset. In the ETS, this refers to whites who are 38 years old compared to whites who are 69 years old, and 36 and 70 years old in the TS. Again, these findings underscore the dramatic differences among younger and older whites in their support for political violence, which are apparent in both time periods.

Figure 4.3: Difference in Predicted Probability of White Tolerance of Political Violence



Note: Black color reflects the ANES Time Series, blue color reflects the ANES Exploratory Testing Study. Figure plots the difference in predicted probability of respondents to believe it is “Moderately,” “A bit, or “A great deal” “justified for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country” between each variable in the model, one standard deviation below and above their respective means. Probabilities derived from ordered logistic regression coefficients found in Table 3.3, with all other variables held at their respective means. White dots reflect a statistically significant difference. For all variable coding, see Appendix 6.

Source: ANES 2020 Exploratory Testing Study, ANES 2020 Time Series

This Figure also demonstrates how the effect of white group threat changed over these two periods of time: whites with a high sense of group threat had 15 percent greater predicted probability to be tolerant of political violence than those with low group threat before the Summer protests, which is the second greatest difference of any variable contained within the model. After the height of those protests, however, there was no significance between high and low identifying whites. In other words, whites who had a greater sense of group threat became less likely to support political violence following the events of the Summer of 2020. So, too, did men and high church attending whites: by August, there was no significant difference across gender or religiosity.

Collectively, the results illustrated in Figure 4.3, particularly those following the 2020 Summer protests highlight the extent to which nearly all whites became unified in their rejection of political violence. Before the Summer protests, particular dimensions of identity among whites did significantly influence tolerance of violence in ways that were theoretically expected: those who were younger, higher white identifiers, men, and more religious were all more tolerant of violence. However, in the very different political context a few months later, those differences all but disappeared: only age continued to have a small, but substantive, impact on tolerance of violence, while income, education, racial resentment, and region all had significant, but substantively very small effects. This demonstrates how the same dimensions of identity that drove the tolerance of violence, motivated its rejection a few months later when that violence was primarily centered around the unsettling of white racial dominance—a crucial finding that shows whites selective willingness to use violence when it serves the interests of whites.

Gender, for instance, is a good example of this phenomenon. Before the 2020 Summer protests, there was a meaningful difference between men and women in their tolerance of

political violence, albeit smaller than that of white identity or age. But following those protests, the difference across gender disappeared, as white men and women coalesced around their tolerance of violence—pointing to the unique relationship between white women specifically and political violence, whose utility is not limited to men alone. Indeed, although women are undeniably the subjects of gender violence, white women are not exclusively subjects of violence, but often participants in and administrators of, namely, racial violence. For white men, this finding demonstrates how their gender identity intersects with other dimensions of power, motivating them to retract their support of political violence when that violence is utilized to challenge the social order.

For other variables, the effect on the tolerance of political violence not only shrank, but in fact reversed direction. Church attendance is a good example of this: before the 2020 Summer protests, whites that attended church more frequently had a higher predicted probability to be tolerant of political violence (the difference between those who attended church more frequently and those who attended less frequently was the fourth highest among all variables in the model). But after the protests, higher church attendance still had a significant relationship with tolerance of violence, but that effect was now negative, albeit a small one. Again, these results suggest that the same dimensions that once motivated greater tolerance of violence, motivated its rescindment when the conditions shifted to challenge the status quo, rather than uphold it.

Taken together, these results demonstrate a few key findings. The first, is that factors related to different dimensions of dominance, like gender and religiosity, but particularly white identity, tend to predict a higher tolerance of political violence. The second, and equally consequential finding, is that following a period of political upheaval, first, that tolerance shrinks

and second, there is almost no substantive difference among whites, across most dimensions and characteristics considered here, in their diminished tolerance of political violence.

VII. Conclusion

Motivated by the growing ubiquity of white violence of all forms, this chapter set out to understand whether the tolerance of political violence was distributed evenly among whites and what explained that tolerance. This chapter has built upon the chapters that preceded it, demonstrating again very little substantive difference among whites who tolerate political violence. These chapters have demonstrated that socioeconomic status, religiosity, gender, and attitudinal differences like authoritarianism and racial resentment, are all less efficient means of explaining white unity around political violence. Rather, attachment to whiteness itself does the best job at explaining white support for political violence and all other factors determine tolerance of violence only to the extent to which they are related to the maintenance of white group status. This chapter also answered new questions about white tolerance of political violence by examining white attitudes before and after a pivotal moment in racial politics, to demonstrate how whites extend and retract their support for political violence when white racial dominance is challenged. Last, this chapter sought to understand how many different dimensions of power which together comprise the reigning social order behave in tandem to restrict the license of political violence from groups who seek to challenge that order.

The findings of this chapter were threefold. First, this chapter found that white identity is the best predictor of white tolerance of political violence. Even more specifically, this chapter considered two different dimensions of white group consciousness in independent analyses: group attachment and perceived group threat. I found that in this period of measurement and particular configuration of racial politics in the United States, perceived group threat seems to

drive white tolerance of political violence more consistently and powerfully than group attachment. However, while group threat is the stronger predictor of tolerance of violence in this analysis, it's important to note that white identity is reactive and which component of white identity is most influential on attitudes about violence varies by time and context. Overall, both measures of white identity, group attachment and group threat, were found to be very strong determinants of tolerance of violence, a finding which comports with the theoretical framework advanced here: that violence is a crucial tool of white racial dominance and thus whiteness prompts whites to coalesce around the utility and legitimacy of violence when it is expedient to the group's interests.

Second, this chapter found that whites rescind their tolerance of violence in response to challenges to white racial dominance: white tolerance of political violence was substantially diminished after the Summer 2020, following one of the largest seasons of protest and political mobilization, centered around racial justice. Third, this analysis further specified that the mechanisms that motivated that diminished support for political violence were tied to domains of power that together comprise the dominant social order, namely gender, religiosity, and whiteness. In other words, the dimensions that predicted higher tolerance of violence before the protests also drove its rescindment; whites with additional commitments to power responded reactively to the unsettling of social hierarchies by limiting their tolerance of political violence. Again, this finding demonstrates how white tolerance of political violence is deeply dependent on time and context: to what end political violence is being utilized, alters white support and when it is wielded for the purpose of challenging white group dominance, whites demonstrate remarkable unity in their rejection of political violence. Together, these findings demonstrate whites' willingness to utilize political violence when it serves the interests of the group and to

rescind that support when violence unsettles white racial dominance, a disturbing pattern that while not new to American politics, nonetheless urgently requires consideration as whites continue to perceive their position at the top of the racial hierarchy as under siege.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I. Introduction

Modern episodes of white violence, like the riot in Charlottesville or the January 6th attack on the Capitol, harken back to an era of American politics that was once saturated by collective white violence. For the first half of American history, whites routinely gathered together in communal exercises of violence to partake in one of the cardinal rites of whiteness: they razed entire Black communities, terrorized Black citizens, and unleashed torrents of horrific violence that dominated cities for days on end. When we consider these episodes of white mob violence retrospectively, we often place them in a distant, anti-democratic memory, a great stain on our country's past that reflects a disordered democracy from which we have evolved. In turn, this psychological tendency casts contemporary episodes of white violence as deviant to the norm: anomalies to an otherwise egalitarian political present.

Yet as this dissertation has explored, the relationship between whiteness and violence is intrinsic and constant: through a quantitative analysis of historical and contemporary white public opinion data, I have found that the best determinant of support for political violence is attachment to whiteness itself. This relationship reflects the legacy of white reliance upon violence, both physical, material, and symbolic, legal and extralegal, collective and vigilante, en masse and individualized, throughout American history to both distinguish themselves as white and to assert white racial dominance. I have found that whites consistently support the use of violence when wielded to uphold the racial hierarchy: for instance, to violently protest the

integration of schools in the South at the height of the Civil Rights Movement or to suppress events of Black resistance through violent policing during the Long, Hot Summer in 1968. Yet when white racial dominance is challenged—during, for instance, the 2020 Summer protests for Black Lives—whites retract their support for violence. This symbiotic relationship between whites and violence has structured the racial order throughout American history, defining, rather than defying, democratic politics. Communal white violence has long served as the marker and maker of whiteness—through the violence of slavery, indigenous genocide, repression of resistance, and violent enforcement of the law, whites brought the category of whiteness into existence. Otherwise-unrelated ethnic groups negotiated their way into whiteness by knitting themselves together through acts of violent domination to create the patchwork fabric of whiteness.

Yet while there exists a rich literature that details white racial violence throughout American history and its utility for whites, these accounts ultimately produce a depiction of white violence that is aberrational, rather than a persistent feature of American politics and whiteness. In this dissertation, I sought to identify the throughlines of white tolerance of violence quantitatively, with the guiding desire to understand what motivates some whites to be more supportive of the use of violence, when, and why. Drawing on survey data at three critical moments in American politics, I explored what facets of dominance best explain white tolerance of violence, while manipulating contextual dimensions to find when whites articulate that support: for what causes, by which actors, and with what kind of violence? I found that whites do not express support for violence at all times, for all purposes, and by all actors. Rather, whites selectively extend their support for violence when it is used by whites or for the purpose of maintaining, rather than contesting, white racial dominance. I found that among whites that do

tolerate violence, there is hardly anything that distinguishes them from other whites demographically. Rather, the best explanation for what makes some whites more tolerant of violence than others is their attachment to whiteness itself and other dimensions of dominance, like religiosity, gender, authoritarianism, and support for the status quo, which together comprise the reigning “way of life” they ardently, and violently, seek to defend. In this conclusion, I revisit these chapters to explore their findings and identify what remains to be known about whites’ relationship to political violence. Last, I detail the implications of these findings on American democracy and race and suggest paths forward to dismantling the relationship between whiteness and violence.

II. Summary of Chapters

This dissertation took up new questions about the relationship between whiteness and violence, by exploring the attitudinal and demographic mechanisms that generate greater support for violence among whites. This strategy advanced our understanding of white attitudes about violence by offering a quantitative analysis of what has previously been examined through historical, theoretical, and qualitative lenses. Further, I explored the relationship between violence and white racial identity in particular, a determinant of white attitudes that research in American Politics and Race and Ethnic Politics have been slow to adopt until the last ten years, due in large part to its lack of inclusion on major survey instruments until 2012. It is now well-established that whites do in fact possess racial identity, particularly when activated by threats to the group, both real and perceived, symbolic and material, and that racial identity is a strong predictor of white political behavior and attitudes. This dissertation, then, adopts this strategy and explores the role of white racial identity in a new topical area: political violence. To do so, the main chapters of this project each explore the relationship between white identity and

violence, while manipulating contextual conditions like the kind of violence, the purpose of violence, and the actors that carry out violence, to see when whites extend and retract their support for violence.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I situated my analysis in the center of the Civil Rights Movement and its main arena of struggle: in 1961, in former Confederate States. At this pivotal time in racial politics in the United States, whites resisted challenges to the racial order through legal and extralegal means, violent and nonviolent. Thus, the primary focus of this chapter was on white support for violent protest, in the narrow context of white resistance to the integration of schools—a critical battleground of white racial dominance which whites ardently defended across the South at this time. To do so, I utilized survey data from the Negro Political Participation Study, which includes the earliest measure of group attachment in existence in survey instruments. That measure taps into how *close* white respondents feel to other whites, which I argue extends beyond group affect and captures an important component of group attachment that meaningfully reflects the strength of white racial identity. I find that while dimensions related to attachment to the status quo, like authoritarianism and racial stereotype, were broadly held by Southern whites at this time, the best predictor of tolerance of violent protest is attachment to whiteness itself. This finding demonstrates how whites—particularly those who are most attached to whiteness—tolerate violence when it is utilized by whites, for the purpose of upholding white racial dominance.

Next, I expanded my analysis out of the South alone and into the whole United States, in the year 1968. Utilizing data from the Eisenhower Commission, one of the two federal commissions created in the wake of ongoing violence during the “Long, Hot Summer” across the country, which renewed national attention on the use of harsh policing that was employed in

response. This season of racial uprisings in major cities across the Northern and Midwestern United States, as well as the prominent assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, prompted a broad investigation into the origins of civil unrest and political violence, which yielded numerous studies and reports issued to Congress and the nation. One such study produced a survey instrument, The Violence Study, which was administered to voting age adults across the country and asked respondents important questions about their attitudes about policing and the use of force. Using this data, Chapter 3 explored the historical relationship that has long existed between whites and the police and found that relationship to be reflected in whites' significant levels of support of the use of force, both in the abstract and the real. To understand this support, I explored attitudinal characteristics like punitive criminal justice ideology, authoritarianism, and racial conservatism. Last, I also explored how whites' perceptions of the events of Black resistance of the previous years influenced their tolerance of excessive force by the police. I found that whites who perceived those events to be mostly violent were more supportive of violent policing, suggesting that whites' support is in part determined by which actors they perceive as requiring or deserving a violent police response. However, I find that the substantive effect of other explanations considered here, like conservative criminal justice ideology, region, gender, and perceptions of Black resistance, while statistically significant, are quite small. Instead, whites express a nearly universal tolerance of violent policing, a relationship that is reflective of the longstanding, principal role it has served in the maintenance of white racial dominance.

Last, Chapter 4 of this dissertation again manipulated the contextual dimensions that generate white support of political violence, bringing my analysis into the present and exploring white attitudes about violence when it is utilized to contest, rather than uphold, white racial

dominance. To do so, I explored white attitudes about political violence before and after one of the most significant moments of protest in American history: the Black Lives Matter protests in the Summer of 2020, catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police. Not only did these protests occur against the backdrop of rising national concern about surging white political violence in the past decade, but these protests also catalyzed a vast reckoning on race and American politics that represented an existential unsettling of the racial order for many white Americans, making this an excellent time period to explore what conditions drive whites to extend and retract their support for political violence. I found that dimensions of dominance—most significantly white racial identity, but also gender and religiosity—work in unison, by predicting both whites’ support of political violence when utilized to protect the status quo, as well as the rescindment of that support when utilized to challenge it. Indeed, in the aftermath of the most significant challenge to white racial dominance since the 1960s, white support for political violence shrunk dramatically. Together, these findings indicate that whites selectively extend and withdraw their support for political violence when it is utilized to challenge, rather than maintain, white dominance.

III. Areas for Future Research

Yet, while this exploration yielded important findings about the relationship between whiteness and violence, it also produced a number of questions that remain unanswered. Many of these questions remain unanswered because they require methodological specificity that taps into precise concepts and mechanisms related to identity and violence that existing survey instruments have not explored. What kinds of violence do whites tolerate—organized, vigilante, harassment, mob violence, threats, state-sanctioned? Under what conditions—after an electoral loss, to prevent the implementation of policy they oppose, in response to lawbreaking? Who do

they support carrying out the violence—all citizens, allies, the state? And what is the threshold that divides theoretical support and the likelihood that an individual is willing to participate in acts of violence themselves? While more researchers have taken up these questions in the past few years, they are much rarer in historical survey data. For this reason, while this dissertation has attempted to take up important questions related to white racial identity and political violence that begins to address some of these dimensions, the scope of this study is inevitably constrained by the data on which it had to rely. In order to understand the nuanced contours of support for political violence, future survey instruments must implement measures that tap into the necessary dimensions with greater precision.

For instance, one recurrent issue with extant research on white attitudes about political violence is one that has plagued research about all white attitudes: the lack of attention paid to the role of white racial identity, which only began to be included on major survey instruments in 2012 and continues to be neglected in mainstream survey research. For this reason, this dissertation project has had to utilize two of the only appropriate historical surveys to explore attitudes about violence, only one of which included a measure of white racial identity. In the absence of those measures, I was compelled to take up creative methods to explore how different dimensions of identity and attachment to the dominant social order motivates whites to tolerate violence, like authoritarianism, negative racial attitudes, commitment to the status quo, religiosity, and gender. However, without including measures of white identity on survey instruments, questions about the relationship between racial identity and violence simply cannot be answered, making the historical examination of white racial identity and political violence challenging or impossible. While it is clear in hindsight that measures of white identity would have been useful to include on survey instruments, this is of course impossible to remedy

retroactively. However, in order to take up questions related to white political attitudes, including the tolerance of political violence, measures of white racial identity must be incorporated in future surveys as it has been shown to motivate a litany of important white attitudes and political behavior (e.g. Jardina 2019). Going forward, in addition to studying more common measures of racial animus, prejudice, and racial resentment, researchers of white attitudes also must recognize the centrality of in-group racial identity for whites, which not only has been shown to be an important determinant of white attitudes but a *vital* and distinct determinant (Jardina 2020), without which any model is incomplete.

This fact is particularly true in the study of political violence which, although it has become a more popular object of study due to the recent rise of political violence, has so far largely failed to integrate adequate analyses of race, let alone of white racial identity, by placing an overemphasis on the role of political party. Given the surge of violence on the far-Right, the attention paid to the role of radical partisanship is sensible, but even these analyses often insufficiently account for the role of whiteness in the formation and motivation of the far-Right. Second, the overemphasis on the attitudes on the far-Right often under-accounts for white support for violence across the political spectrum, not only on the Right. For instance, in their expansive account of political violence throughout American history, political scientists Nathan Kalmoe and Lilliana Mason attribute the recent surge of political violence to rising, radical partisanship: “about 1 in 5 Americans with strong political affiliation says they are quite willing to endorse violence if the other party wins the presidency” (Kalmoe and Mason 2022). Elsewhere, they’ve found that “Among Americans who identify as Democrat or Republican, 1 in 3 now believe that violence could be justified to advance their parties’ political goals—a substantial increase over the last three years” (Diamond et al 2020). Yet, this account flattens the

relationship to violence along the partisan spectrum by failing to interrogate how tolerance of violence is differently motivated and expressed on the Right and Left. In a rush to understand far-Right extremism and events like January 6th, this gap has been reproduced in new surveys on political violence, like that administered by Bright Line Watch, which not only fails to consider the role of white racial identity, it does not consider respondents' race in their analysis whatsoever (2020). While these surveys do investigate other, important determinants like distrust in government, aggressive personality profiles, and moral disengagement that reflects a belief that opposing parties are morally evil, much more attention must be dedicated to how race structures those attitudes—which this dissertation has demonstrated is central to support for political violence. It is not merely the case that fierce attachment to political parties alone motivates greater support of violence, but rather how those parties represent a promise to preserve racial, religious, and patriarchal dominance to many whites.

With closer attention paid to the role of white racial identity, only then can researchers begin to properly investigate and interpret attitudes about political violence with the specificity it requires. When respondents articulate support for political violence, what kind of violence are they supporting? For what causes? Carried out by whom? As previously mentioned, after the attack on the Capitol on January 6th, there has been increasing scholarly attention paid to attitudes about political violence. This research has gotten closer to disentangling some of these components, but much more is left to be done. It is important that future studies take great care not only to specify what kind of violence whites support and at what scale, but also respondents' individual propensity to participate themselves in actual acts of violence. What conditions generate hypothetical support for violence and what generates actual willingness to participate? What conditions generate support for violence carried out by other actors? What kind of violence

carried out by others—state sanctioned, vigilante, organized? For what purposes do whites support political violence, directed at what groups and actors? What causes whites to withdraw their support and what is the threshold of severity at which they are unwilling tolerate violence? Much more detail in survey instruments must parse out these differences and it must be accompanied by a thorough integration of the lens of race—without which, the noise surrounding political violence is likely to continue, preventing research from properly discerning what meaningfully predicts support for violence among whites.

IV. Implications of Findings on Identity Research

Together, these chapters produce a set of deeply consequential implications. First, this dissertation has lent evidence to the centrality of white racial identity in the formation of white public opinion. While the role of Race and Ethnic Politics has occupied a growing space in the field of American Politics in the last twenty years (Hutchings and Valentino 2004), which has led to an increasing amount of attention paid to the role of racial identity and group attachment in the formation of political attitudes and political behavior (Dawson 1994; Sanchez 2006), that subfield has been slow to apply measures of racial identity to the study of white political attitudes in particular until very recently. Political scientist Ashley Jardina has been central to that growing field of study, spearheading the effort to include measures of white group attachment on major survey instruments, like the American National Election Studies, beginning in 2012. This advancement alone has opened the door to new quantitative analyses of white racial identity and its effect on political behavior across a myriad of new policy domains, which Jardina demonstrates in her seminal book *White Identity Politics* (2019). That analysis carefully and comprehensively demonstrates that in order to properly understand white political behavior, scholars cannot only rely upon frames of explicit racial animus, prejudice, and stereotype

(Sniderman and Piazza 1993) or covert forms of new-racism (e.g., Kinder and Sanders 1996; Bobo et al. 1997; Sniderman et al. 1991), which have been a main focus of research in the post-civil rights era (Huddy and Feldman 2009). Rather, scholars must apply a more nuanced analysis of white group attachment, which is motivated not only by out-group animosity but also in-group solidarity (Jardina 2019; Jardina 2020). This dissertation lends evidence to this claim, joining challenges to the dominant perspective in the identity literature that has argued whites not only lack racial identity but that it is political inconsequential (Sears and Henry 2005; Seasons and Savalei 2006). Instead, these chapters have demonstrated that negative, out-group attitudes alone do not adequately explain white public opinion. Rather, I have found that white racial identity is critical to understanding white public opinion in the domain explored here: attitudes about violence.

Second, these chapters have not only illuminated and clarified the mechanisms that generate support for violence, among which white racial identity is central, but it has also demonstrated that they have been constant: commitment to whiteness and other forms of social dominance have structured white support for political violence from the 1960s to the 2020s. While a large body of research Race and Ethnic Politics has set out to determine whether white racial attitudes have improved and how they have changed over time (e.g., Kinder and Sanders 1981; Mendelberg 2001), others have questioned whether the role of explicit racial attitudes have been prematurely dismissed or have disappeared (Huddy and Feldman 2006). While some elements of old-fashioned racism have declined in the post-civil rights era (Schuman et al. 1997) and have been replaced by forms of symbolic racism, is not the case that all white attitudes have shifted improved or have been erased completely; indeed, explicit racism continues to structure electoral politics today (Tesler 2016). Likewise, the findings of this dissertation seem to suggest

that another dimension of white racial attitudes have persevered through the post-civil rights era and into the present: both the dimensions that structure white attitudes about political violence and the levels of that white support have been relatively constant. Whites continue to support the use of political violence to uphold white racial dominance and that support is best explained through white racial identity, in a manner that closely resembles white public opinion in the early 1960s. Taken together with the increasingly common episodes of white racial violence, the enduring influence of white racial identity and the tolerance of violence it generates challenge the notion that racial politics have improved.

Third, while this dissertation has shown that tolerance of violence is not widely held by whites, we nonetheless have great reason to expect white tolerance to worsen in coming years. First, the attributes that predispose whites to being more supportive of political violence—like white racial identity, authoritarianism, religiosity, punitiveness—are commonly held by many whites, which suggests that the groundwork is laid for more whites to become more tolerant of political violence in the future. Second, there is some evidence that whites are becoming even less supportive of policies designed to remedy racial injustice, especially in the wake of events like the election of the first Black president, which whites take as evidence that racism is no longer pervasive (Kaiser et al. 2009). Further, in the Obama-era of American politics, research has demonstrated that role of race has intensified, driving polarization and electoral behavior (Tesler 2016) and public opinion data suggests that explicit racial animus and old-fashioned racism is growing among the white populace (Tesler 2013). As norms of racial equality that have governing American politics in the post-civil rights era continue to be eroded, the impulse among whites to distance themselves from explicitly racist appeals by elites (Mendelberg 2001) has been weakened (Valentino et al. 2018). As whites perceive the challenges to white dominance

mounting, whether through the election of the first Black president, growing concern about immigration and racial diversity, or increased societal attention paid to the pervasive influence of structural racism increased, white racial identity—previously under-interrogated by whites—is made increasingly visible to its beholders, in turn generating the urgent desire to protect the dominance of the group (Jardina 2019). Together, these findings suggest that we have very real reason to fear that the threat of white racial violence is not a thing of the past but continues to pose a grave threat to the future of American politics. Likewise, this dissertation has demonstrated that white support for political violence has not declined but is instead an enduring feature of American politics and white racial identity. As whites increasingly see their “way of life” to be under siege, the powder keg of white violence grows dangerously closer to explosion.

Last, this dissertation has produced a disturbing account of whites’ conceptualization of democracy and the utility of violence that heightens this threat even more. White commitment to the reigning social order is tethered to their conceptualization of American democracy itself, which they perceive to be designed to advantage and serve their interests as whites. From this perspective, white engagement in collective violence, from the distant past and into the present moment, is brought into sharper focus: when employed to protect white racial dominance, whites view political violence not only as justified, but patriotic. This throughline of white support for violence is laid bare by comparing episodes of collective white violence of the past with contemporary episodes like Charlottesville or January 6th. As Joel Olson writes, whites that participated in historical white violence viewed those actions not as anti-democratic but in fact:

They took themselves to be the protectors of republican institutions. Mob leaders presented themselves as patriots—several claimed to have ancestors who came over on the Mayflower—while mobs christened themselves with names like the Sons of Liberty and the Minutemen. The mobs saw anti-Black riots as absolutely democratic, whether they involved tarring Black people or smashing abolitionist

presses. The question, then, is not whether the white rioters were democratic but what kind of democracy they believed in, practiced, and fought for (32).

Compare this description with the events of January 6th. Those whites who gathered that day on the National Mall and marched to the Capitol building, did so to carry out actions that most consider to be plainly anti-democratic: to stop the certification of the presidential vote and prevent the peaceful transfer of power to the next administration. Yet, to the white men and women who participated that day, not only was the attack on the Capitol not anti-democratic, it was a heroic battle to save American democracy itself. This fact is reflected by the nature of the groups that attended, who adorned themselves with symbols of patriotism and utilize names like the Three Percenters, a reference to the militias who fought the Revolutionary War. These groups possessed a deeply held belief that they were in fact constitutionally mandated to protect American democracy by preventing the certification of the vote. This belief is exemplified by a message by Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the Oath Keepers, a far-Right, militaristic group comprised of active and retired law enforcement officials, military veterans, and soldiers who figure themselves as true defenders of American democracy against tyranny. Two days before the attack on the Capitol, Rhodes wrote:

It is CRITICAL that all patriots who can be in D.C. get to D.C. to stand tall in support of President Trump's fight to defeat the enemies foreign and domestic who are attempting a coup, through the massive voter fraud and related attacks on our Republic. We Oath Keepers are both honor-bound and eager to be there in strength to do our part (Southern Poverty Law Center).

Groups like the Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters articulate an attachment to not only the nation, but to a very specific conceptualization of the United States that was created for whites and their freedoms, premised upon the exclusion and domination of other groups. This distinction is commonly betrayed by the mix of both American and Confederate flags in the crowd on January 6th or Donald Trump's infamous "Make America Great Again" slogan. For

these whites, they are mobilized not to protect democracy for all Americans, but democracy for whites and the preservation of the dominant Christian, patriarchal social order. Oath Keeper Jessica Watkins illustrates this commitment in her comment, issued a few weeks after the 2020 election: “I can’t predict. I don’t underestimate the resolve of the Deep State. Biden may still yet be our President. If he is, our way of life as we know it is over. Our Republic would be over. Then it is our duty as Americans to fight, kill and die for our rights” (Southern Poverty Law Center).

And while much of the nation watched the attack on the Capitol in horror, witnessing what they believed to be a fundamentally undemocratic subversion of a national election, others experienced a very different emotion—or, at least, a less durable sense of dismay. According to polling data from Pew Research Center, in March of 2021, 87% of U.S. adults said it was very or somewhat important to find and prosecute those who carried out the attack on the Capitol, but by September that number had dropped to 78%. Among Republicans, that drop was even more steep—falling from 79% to 57% by September—and, by that time, 38% of Republicans also believed that the criminal penalties for the January 6th rioters had been too severe (Thomas and Horowitz 2020). This phenomenon reflects, to some extent, the broad comfortability among some whites with political violence, particularly when utilized for the ostensible defense of their way of life and a government designed to protect their freedoms as whites. In this way, the whites from the near present mirror those from a century past, for whom political violence is not antithetical to democratic politics, but co-constitutive.

This dissertation has shown that whites who are more tolerant of violence perceive that violence as protective, not subversive, of American democracy. This indicates that many whites might view political violence not in a negative light, but in a positive one that valorizes violence

and makes champions of those who wield violence to combat all opponents to white dominance, both real and imaginary. This complementary relationship creates frightening conditions that emboldens whites to engage in violence, who can also count upon an audience of other whites who support them, weakening their fear of consequence. Coupled with the growing evidence that whites feel less constrained by norms of racial equality, are more responsive to explicit racial appeals, dimensions of old-fashioned racism are growing, and racial animus plays an increasingly powerful role in electoral politics, the conditions have grown even more amenable to white violence. As whites perceive the threats to white dominance to be mounting, these conditions should leave us with extreme concern for the future of American politics, as whites violently defend the dominance of whites and the way of life they vehemently seek to protect.

V. Conclusion: Dismantling Whiteness and Violence

This dissertation has detailed the long, intimate relationship between white Americans and violence. The origins of that relationship stretch back to the very beginnings of American politics, serving as a primary tool whites used to create the meaning of whiteness: far from being a static, natural category, whiteness was manufactured by various ethnic groups who wielded violence to distinguish themselves as white. This legacy of the utility of violence for whites echoes through the present. I have found that whites' commitment to the preservation of white racial dominance, as well as other dimensions of the reigning patriarchal, Christian order, has continued to structure their support for the violent defense of that dominance in a manner that is relatively unwavering. Whites in the South at the height of the Civil Rights Movement articulated support for the violent resistance to the integration of schools for many of the same reasons whites across the country articulate support for political violence 60 years later. This dissertation thus has built upon growing evidence that not only do whites not lack racial identity,

they in fact consistently express attachment to whiteness when given the opportunity to articulate their racial identity in survey instruments. Further, the strength of that racial identity is a powerful determinant of white political attitudes, including the tolerance of violence.

This dissertation has explored the mechanisms that generate white support for different forms of violence and has found that commitment to whiteness, as well as other sources of dominance like religiosity and gender, structures that tolerance. I have found that these dimensions do a much better job predicting white support for violence than demographic characteristics, like socioeconomic status. Rather, whites who are most attached to whiteness are the most supportive of violence. It is sensible that many whites express attachment to whiteness: although the benefits of white supremacy might not be enjoyed by all whites equally, all whites do benefit from white supremacy (Lipsitz 1995), not only through material privilege, but alternative “wages of whiteness,” like the psychological and social benefits of whiteness (Du Bois 1935; Roediger 1999) which all whites are paid: “whiteness retains its value as a ‘consolation prize’: it does not mean that all whites will win, but simply that they will not lose if losing is defined as being on the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy—the position to which Blacks have been consigned” (Harris 1993, 1758-1759). For this reason, whiteness certainly matters to whites at the margins, for whom much of their power is located in whiteness, but it is not limited to only less powerful whites. Rather, all whites have a possessive investment in whiteness, which incentivizes the preservation of the group’s continued dominance and motivates whites to zealously guard the boundaries of whiteness.

Not only do whites believe the enormous material, social, psychological, and political privileges they enjoy are owed to them as whites, but they also see these privileges as ones to which they are democratically owed. In this way, when whites perceive their free exercise and

enjoyment of the wages of whiteness as inhibited, they perceive this as a violation not only of their freedoms as whites, but also of their freedoms as citizens. It is for this reason the Oath Keepers and Three Percenters see no inherent contradiction between the subversion of a national election by attacking the Capitol building and democracy itself—they are vehemently defending the only form they have imagined democracy can take, created by and for their benefit as white. For Joel Olson, the remedy for this limited democratic imagination, which necessarily calls for the violent exclusion of all other groups from a democratic civic life, is not to simply expand the boundaries of whiteness and extend the benefits of whiteness to other racial groups. This strategy, he writes, ultimately reifies the existing structures and institutions that continue to privilege some and harm others, which ultimately incentivizes their ongoing violent maintenance. Instead, we must work to actively undermine the institutions that protect the value of whiteness, “because whiteness is a decision made, it is also a decision that can be undone” (xviii). To do so, we must transform whiteness into a category that is irrational or impossible to defend:

Since whiteness is a position of privilege, I argue that the subversion of this privilege amounts to no less than the *abolition* of white citizenship itself. This, of course, is not ethnic cleansing. The white citizen is not a biological or cultural group but a political category. Eliminating the power of the category eliminates the category itself, much like the end of feudalism abolished the aristocracy and the Civil War abolished slaveholders (xxii).

This task must be accomplished by intentionally and actively undermining institutions and policies that privilege whites, through race-conscious policies in education, criminal justice, employment, housing, voting, healthcare, and all areas of political life that bring about an end to the advantages whites have come to enjoy and expect. Once whiteness is made into a status that is impossible to enjoy, attachment to whiteness is made irrational and the violent maintenance of whiteness will likewise be made irrational, paving the way toward a democracy in which

“privilege would be inimical to democracy rather than a functional part of it” (xxii). This strategy, I believe, empowers and equips us with tangible steps that can be employed to dismantle the mechanism that, as this dissertation has demonstrated, has consistently structured white tolerance of political violence and, in turn, fueled racial violence and terror throughout American history: attachment to whiteness itself. In this vision, it is possible for the political power of whiteness can be incrementally weakened, until the wages of whiteness are erased.

However, given what this dissertation has found, we have very real reason to expect that the active dismantling of white political power that Olson suggests will prompt a violent response by whites—it already has. As whites cling to power, we should expect them to grow increasingly tolerant of the violent maintenance of white racial dominance. This dissertation has suggested that many whites are already tolerant of political violence, providing a baseline of support for violence: including violent protest, vigilante violence, and violent policing. But I have also found that the necessary dimensions that predispose whites to becoming more tolerant of violence, like gender, religiosity, negative racial attitudes, authoritarianism, or attachment to the status quo, are already in place in many more whites who therefore eligible for radicalization. These whites are primed for activation by white elites, who might transform their abstract tolerance of violence into a willingness to personally participate in the violent preservation of white racial dominance and the Christian, patriarchal social order. The relationship between whiteness and violence has held an enduring, formative place in the structuring of politics and race throughout American history and we should expect the dismantling of that relationship to have tremendous reverberations throughout society that we should take very seriously. As the structures that maintain white dominance are weakened, the threat of white violence is likely to

rise, but, I argue, this makes the path toward a more democratic future a fearsome one, but not impossible.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Negro Political Participation Study Variable Coding

Dependent Variable: Tolerance of Violence

“Demonstrations to protest integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt”

- 1 Disagree quite a bit
- 2 Disagree a little
- 3 Agree a little
- 4 Agree quite a bit

White Group Attachment

“Some people in the South feel they have a lot in common with other Southerners, but others we talk to don’t feel this way much. How about you? Would you say you feel pretty close to Southerners in general or that you don’t feel much closer to them than you do to other people?”

- 0 “Not Closer than Others”
- 1 “Pretty Close”

Male

- 0 Female
- 1 Male

Education

- 1 None
- 2 Some Grade School
- 3 Completed Grade School
- 4 Some High School
- 5 Completed High School
- 6 Some College
- 7 Completed College or More

Age – Age at time survey was administered, by year.

Pro-White Stereotype Index

By and large, do you think white people _____ than colored people, colored people _____ than white people, or that they are about the same?

- Are smarter
- Behave better
- Are more dependable
- Try to get ahead more

- 0 Most Pro-Black Stereotype
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 Same
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8 Most Pro-White Stereotype

Traditionalism Index

- If you start trying to change things very much, you usually make them worse.
- If something grows up over a long time, there will always be much wisdom in it.
- It's better to stick by what you have than to be trying new things you do not really know about.
- We must respect the work of our forefathers and not think that we know better than they did.
- A man doesn't really get to have much wisdom until he's well along in years

- 0 Most favorable to change
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 Least favorable to change

Social Welfare Liberalism-Conservatism Scale

- The government should leave things like electric power and housing for private businessmen to handle.
- The government in Washington ought to see to it that everybody who wants to work can find a job.
- The government ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost.

- 1 Most liberal
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 Most conservative

Income

- 1 Under \$1000
- 2 \$1000-\$1999
- 3 \$2000-\$2999

- 4 \$3000-\$3999
- 5 \$4000-\$4999
- 6 \$5000-\$5999
- 7 \$6000-\$6999
- 8 \$7500-\$9999
- 9 \$10,000 and over

Appendix 2: List of Published Works that Utilize The Violence Study (1968)

- Doepke, M., & Zilibotti, F. (2017). Parenting with Style: Altruism and Paternalism in Intergenerational Preference Transmission. *Econometrica*, 85(5), 1331-1371.
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Appendix 3: Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology Scale

McGarrell, E. F. and T. J. Flanagan (1987) "Measuring and Explaining Legislator Crime Control Ideology." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 24: 102-18.

1. Crime has increased in recent times because society has become too permissive.
2. Stiffer jail sentences are needed to show criminals that crime does not pay and thus to make sure that they do not go into crime again.
3. We should hire a lot more police and give them the power to catch criminals.
4. If we really cared about crime victims, we would make sure that criminals were caught and given harsh punishments.
5. We should stop viewing criminals as victims of society who deserve our help, and start paying more attention to the victims of these criminals.
6. Criminals these days have too many legal rights.
7. The best way to reduce crime is to reestablish the traditional values that made our country great: hard work, religion, respect for authority, and firm discipline in both home and school.
8. Even if prisons cannot deter or rehabilitate criminals, long prison sentences are needed so that we can keep habitual and dangerous offenders off of our streets.

9. Juveniles are treated too leniently by our courts.
10. Punishing criminals more harshly would reduce crime by setting an example and showing others in society that crime does not pay.
11. A main reason why we have so many crimes these days is because young people are just not taught to respect authority.

Appendix 4: Discussion of Variable Selection for Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology

This study utilizes *Death Penalty Support* as a proxy for *Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology*, which was selected after consideration of two other potential measures. In this Appendix, I discuss the theoretical advantages of each, run the model using each potential proxy and discuss its behavior, explore the correlation of each with each other, the outcome variable, *Authoritarianism*, and perform a brief falsification test in order to support the ultimate selection of *Death Penalty Support* in the main analysis. First, I'll provide a brief theoretical rationale for the selection of the two proxies which were not utilized in the final study. These are:

1. *Whipped or Worse*: "Sex criminals deserve more than prison, they should be publicly whipped or worse."
2. *Hard Labor*: "Are there any situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a judge sentencing a person to death?"

Whipped or Worse: While this statement might at first blush appear to tap into narrow attitudes related to gender and sexual violence, this statement integrates several important features of conservative criminal justice ideology. First, it is plainly severe and punitive, a central dimension of conservative criminal justice ideology, which supports stiff, harsh punishments. Second, it is retributive: this statement communicates a belief that suffering is the proper remedy to injury and brings about justice to victims of crime. Third, it supports harsh punishment for the purpose of reinstating or protecting traditional values in particular, a common theme in conservative criminal justice ideology. Fourth, the "public whipping" feature of this statement possesses a certain kind of dehumanizing orientation toward criminals, which is a

prevalent theme in highly conservative attitudes. In this ideological framework, criminality is a pathological condition and criminals are thus deserving of punishment and should be rounded up and incarcerated for the betterment of society. Even further, criminals are believed to have too many rights in the criminal justice system and should not be viewed as victims deserving of help—a sentiment I argue is apparent in the context of this statement. Last, there is an emphasis on the role of public punishment here, which aligns with features of criminal justice conservatism that believe criminals should be harshly punished to deter future crime and “set an example” to potential criminals that crime does not pay. In this statement, the whipping is meant to occur in public, for very similar, ostensible reasons. For these reasons, I argue this measure, while not ideal, integrates multiple, integral dimensions of conservative criminal justice ideology and can serve as an appropriate control.

Hard Labor: The second variable I considered as an appropriate proxy for conservative criminal justice ideology is support for a sentence of one year of hard labor. At first glance, this item also appears to be a somewhat unusual measure that invokes an archaic form of punishment. However, I argue that that very nature makes it a useful measure of conservative criminal justice: it is plainly punitive and severe, which is a central theme of conservative criminal justice ideology. Second, it is not situated in any specific context of lawbreaking, but instead is ostensibly a punishment a judge could hand down in response to any number of unspecified crimes. Importantly, it is also a non-lethal form of punishment, which might lower the barrier to the vocalization of support and the articulation of conservative criminal justice ideology. In other words, those who do indeed harbor more conservative attitudes about punishment might nonetheless be uncomfortable with capital punishment because the consequences of that punishment are uniquely permanent and lethal. A year of hard labor, on the other hand, is a

temporary punishment and those lower stakes might lead more respondents to articulate their support of that punishment and thus might to a better job capturing more individuals who have a conservative criminal justice ideology. Indeed, the distribution of hard labor is much less evenly distributed than the death penalty, with 807 respondents in support and only about 115 disapproving, while 529 support the death penalty and 403 do not. This might support the claim that *Hard Labor* better captures *Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology* as more respondents are comfortable articulating that stance.

In order to observe how each measure for *Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology* influences the fit and results of the model, and which is most appropriate for the remainder of the study, I then ran this analysis once using each measure, recoding each as a binary outcome. I find that no measure produces dramatically different results in the behavior of the other variables in the model, the directionality of each result is the same in each model, and the effect size is largely consistent across each model. While *Whipped or Worse* does not appear to be significantly related to tolerance of excessive force, this does not necessarily indicate that it is the least effective measure of *Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology*, as this analysis could perhaps demonstrate that *Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology* is itself unrelated to tolerance of excessive force. However, given that it is the only measure to produce an insignificant effect, this does support the notion that it at least behaves differently from the other two. Furthermore, *Whipped or Worse* also fits the data the worst when using AIC and BIC for goodness of fit, meaning its inclusion makes model less effective at explaining the tolerance of excessive force.

Determinants for Excessive Force Tolerance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Death Penalty</i>	<i>Whipped or Worse</i>	<i>Hard Labor</i>
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			0.679*** (0.246)
Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology		0.134 (0.160)	
	0.927*** (0.163)		
Racial Conservatism	0.094 (0.106)	0.131 (0.105)	0.167 (0.107)
Authoritarianism	0.136 (0.106)	0.142 (0.107)	0.146 (0.106)
(Violent) Perceptions of Black Resistance	0.408** (0.187)	0.527*** (0.185)	0.527*** (0.187)
Male	0.259* (0.151)	0.360** (0.149)	0.361** (0.151)
Church Attendance	0.164** (0.073)	0.171** (0.073)	0.163** (0.074)
South	-0.509*** (0.185)	-0.573*** (0.182)	-0.613*** (0.185)
Age	-0.056 (0.047)	-0.058 (0.046)	-0.062 (0.047)
Republican	0.056 (0.060)	0.052 (0.059)	0.050 (0.060)
Rural	0.076 (0.050)	0.059 (0.049)	0.061 (0.050)
Education	-0.106* (0.064)	-0.064 (0.063)	-0.068 (0.063)
Income	0.002 (0.055)	0.038 (0.054)	0.026 (0.055)
1 2	-1.430** (0.605)	-1.386** (0.604)	-0.892 (0.645)

2 3	0.337 (0.592)	0.329 (0.589)	0.848 (0.632)
3 4	3.040*** (0.605)	2.941*** (0.602)	3.466*** (0.647)
Observations	686	689	678
AIC	1474.6	1512.0	1483.0
BIC	1542.6	1580.0	1550.8

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

Source: The Violence Study, 1968

In order to further test which measure is the best proxy for conservative criminal justice ideology, I then explored the correlations between each proxy and with the outcome variable. I find that *Whipped or Worse* and *Hard Labor* are not significantly correlated with one another, while *Death Penalty* is significantly correlated with both. However, while that correlation is low in both cases, *Death Penalty* is slightly more correlated with *Hard Labor*. This lends more support to notion that *Whipped or Worse* is distinct from the two other candidates. *Whipped or Worse* is also the least correlated of the three potential measures to the outcome variable, *Tolerance of Excessive Force*, while *Death Penalty* is the most correlated. The entire correlation matrix can be found in Table 3.4.

In order to test the extent to which each proxy measures punitiveness specifically, I also examine the correlation of each with *Authoritarianism*. While those who are more authoritarian might also possess more punitive attitudes, it is important that the measure for conservative criminal justice ideology is distinct from authoritarian attitudes, like the preservation of the status quo, resistance to change, strong leadership, and lower attachment to democratic norms. However, I do expect these two attitudes to be positively correlated as they are theoretically related. I find that *Whipped or Worse* is moderately correlated with *Authoritarianism*, meaning that it does the worst job measuring conservative criminal justice ideology as a unique

disposition, as theorized here. I also find that while neither *Death Penalty* nor *Hard Labor* are significantly correlated to *Authoritarianism*, *Hard Labor* is negatively correlated. This result, while insignificant, does not comport with the theoretical expectation that conservative criminal justice ideology would be positively correlated with *Authoritarianism*, lending more support for *Death Penalty* as the best proxy.

Table 3.4
Correlation Matrix of Potential Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Death Penalty Support</i>	<i>Whipped or Worse</i>	<i>Hard Labor</i>
<i>Excessive Force Tolerance</i>	0.236*	0.106*	0.116*
<i>Authoritarianism</i>	0.018	0.301*	-0.013
<i>Anything but Force</i>	0.067*	0.114*	0.044
<i>Beat Up Protesters</i>	0.144*	0.238*	0.089*
<i>Death Penalty Support</i>	1.00*	0.124*	0.199*
<i>Whipped or Worse</i>		1.00*	0.033
<i>Hard Labor</i>			1.00*

Source: The Violence Study, 1968

Note: * Indicates correlation is significant at $p < .1$ or lower. Shading indicates increasing correlation in increments of one tenth, rounded to the nearest tenth.

As a final test to determine whether *Death Penalty* or *Hard Labor* is the most ideal proxy, I then explored their correlation with two more measures of punitiveness. These measures are not appropriate measures for conservative criminal justice ideology itself, but I would expect that those who do in fact have a more conservative criminal justice ideology to also agree with these measures. They are:

- *Beat Up Protesters:* “The police are wrong to beat up unarmed protesters, even when these people are rude and call them names

- *Anything but Force*: “Some people don’t understand anything but force”

These items tap into notions I argue are related to themes of conservative criminal justice ideology, particularly the support for harsh punishment, support of strong or even violent policing for even slight disobedience, and the notion that force is often the most or only appropriate means of social control. Thus, if *Hard Labor* or *Death Penalty* were truly measuring punitiveness, we would expect them to be positively correlated with these other punitive attitudes. I find that while both measures are moderately correlated to each punitive measure, *Death Penalty* is both slightly more correlated and those correlations are significant, while *Hard Labor* is only significantly correlated to one.

This, I argue, demonstrates that *Death Penalty* is the best measure of conservative criminal justice ideology. First, it is positively correlated to but meaningfully distinct from *Authoritarianism*, indicating that it contributes theoretical power that is unique from what is already in the model. Second, it is significantly correlated to two alternative measures of punitiveness, while *Hard Labor* is not. *Whipped or Worse*, appears to be the worst measure of conservative criminal justice ideology, first because it is the only measure that is not significantly related to *Tolerance of Excessive Force*, indicating it is distinct from the other two. Second, this distinctiveness is again demonstrated by the significant correlation of *Death Penalty* to both *Hard Labor* and *Whipped or Worse*, but the insignificant correlation between *Hard Labor* and *Whipped or Worse*.

Appendix 5: The Violence Study Variable Coding

Dependent Variable: Excessive Force Tolerance

The police frequently use more force than they need to when carrying out their duties.

- 1 Strongly agree

- 2 Just agree
- 3 Disagreed
- 4 Strongly disagree

Racial Conservatism

As you know, some people feel segregation is good, others that it is bad. How about you—are you in favor of segregation, integration, or something in between?

- 1 Integration
- 2 Something in between
- 3 Segregation

Authoritarianism – Single value created by taking the average of all six responses to the following questions.

- Justice may have been a little rough and ready in the days of the Old West, but things worked better then than they do today with all the legal red tape.
- Everything changes so quickly those days that I often have trouble deciding which are the right rules to follow.
- People were better off in the old days when everyone knew just how he was expected to act.
- What is lacking in the world today is the old kind of friendship that lasted for a lifetime.
- What young people need most of all is strong discipline by their parents.
- A few strong leaders could make this country better than all the laws and talk.

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Just agree
- 4 Strongly agree

Conservative Criminal Justice Ideology Measures

“Whipped or Worse” —recoded to create a binary variable.

Sex criminals deserve more than prison, they should be publicly whipped or worse

- 0 “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”
- 1 “Just Agree” and “Strongly Agree”

“Hard Labor” —recoded to create a binary variable.

Are there any situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a judge sentencing a person to one or more years of hard labor?

- 0 “No” and “Not Sure”
- 1 Yes

Death Penalty Support—recoded to create a binary variable.

Are there any situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a judge sentencing a person to death?

- 0 “No” and “Not Sure”
- 1 Yes

Perceptions of Black Resistance—recoded to create a binary variable.

During the past year or so, would you say most of the actions Negroes have taken to get the things they want have been violent, or have most of these actions been peaceful?

- 0 “Peaceful” and “Not Sure”
- 1 Violent

Race – Categories “Oriental,” “Puerto Rican,” “Other,” and “Not sure” coded as NA

- 0 Black
- 1 White

Age – Age, originally in coded in nine, unevenly spaced increments, rescaled to decade

- 1 18 – 20
- 2 21 – 30
- 3 31 – 40
- 4 41 – 50
- 5 65 and older

Male

- 0 Female
- 1 Male

Religious Attendance

Would you say you go to church regularly, often, seldom, or never?

- 1 Never
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Often
- 4 Regularly

Party Identification – Recoded to combine responses from Q7f (Party ID) and Q7g (Strength of Party ID)

- Q7f: Regardless of how you may vote do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?
- Q7g: Would you call yourself a strong (Republican)(Democrat) or a not very strong (Republican)(Democrat)?

- 1 Strong Democrat
- 2 Not very strong Democrat
- 3 Independent (from Q7f)
- 4 Not very strong Republican
- 5 Strong Republican

Education

What is the last grade of school you attended?

- 1 4th grade or less
- 2 5th grade to 8th grade
- 3 Some high school
- 4 High school graduate
- 5 Some college
- 6 College graduate
- 7 Post-graduate on

Income

For statistical purposes only, we need to know your total family income for 1967. Will you please look at this card and tell me which letter best represents all the money the members of this household either earned or received from salary or wages or other sources, such as pensions, stocks and bonds, real estate, and other investments, in 1967 before taxes?

- 1 Under \$3000
- 2 \$3000 - \$4999
- 3 \$5000 - \$6999
- 4 \$7000 - \$9999
- 5 \$10,000 – \$14,999
- 6 \$15,000 - \$19,999
- 7 \$20,000 - \$24,999
- 8 \$25,000 and over.

Size of City

- 1 Central city
- 2 Suburban
- 3 Town (10,000-50,000)
- 4 Small town (less than 10,000)
- 5 Rural

Southern Residence

- 0 Non-Southern
- 1 Southern

Appendix 6: American National Election Studies Variable Coding

2020 Exploratory Testing Survey

Dependent Variable: Violence Tolerance—recoded to combine those who feel “a lot” or “a great deal” that it is justified to use violence and to combine the two versions of the question, which were each given to half the sample.

- “How much do you feel it is justified for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country?”
 - “How much do you feel it is acceptable for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country?”
- 1 Not at all
 - 2 A little
 - 3 A moderate amount
 - 4 “A lot” and “a great deal”

White Group Attachment

“How important is being White to your identity?”

- 5 “Not at all important”
- 6 “A little important”
- 7 Moderately important
- 8 “Very important”
- 9 “Extremely important”

White Group Threat

“How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?”

- 1 Not at all likely
- 2 Slightly likely
- 3 Moderately likely
- 4 Very likely
- 5 Extremely likely

Racial Resentment—recoded so a higher score reflects greater racial resentment, then expressed as the additive score of each question combined.

- Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
- Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
- Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
- It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

- 8 Disagree strongly
- 9 Disagree somewhat
- 10 Neither agree or disagree
- 11 Agree somewhat
- 12 Agree strongly

Age – Age at time survey was administered, by year.

Male

- 0 Female
- 1 Male

Church Attendance

Would you say you go to religious services every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?

- 7 Never
- 8 A few times a year
- 9 Once or twice a month
- 10 Almost every week
- 11 Every week

Republican Party Identification – Recoded to create a 5-category variable.

- 1 Strong Democrat
- 2 “Not very strong Democrat” and “Closer to Democratic Party”
- 3 Independent
- 4 “Not very strong Republican” and “Closer to Republican Party”
- 5 Strong Republican

Education – recoded to create 6-category variable with all post-grad levels combined.

What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- 1 12th grade or below, no high school diploma
- 2 High school graduate/diploma equivalent
- 3 Some college but no degree
- 4 Associate degree
- 5 Bachelor’s degree
- 6 “Master’s degree,” “Professional degree,” “Doctorate”

Income

Thinking back over the last year, what was your family’s annual income?

- 1 \$0 - \$9,999
- 2 \$10,000 - \$19,999
- 3 \$20,000 - \$29,999
- 4 \$30,000 - \$39,999
- ...
- 12 \$150,000 - \$174,999
- 13 \$175,000 - \$199,999
- 14 \$200,000 - \$249,999
- 15 \$250,000 or more

Authoritarianism—combined and rescaled from 0-1.

Which child trait is more important?

- 0 “Curiosity,” “Self-Reliance,” “Independence,” “Considerate”
- 1 “Good Manners,” “Obedience,” “Respect for Elders,” “Well behaved”

Southern Residence—recoded to create binary variable.

“In what state do you currently reside?”

- 0 All other states
- 1 Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington D.C.

2020 Time Series

Dependent Variable: Violence Tolerance—recoded to combine those who feel “a lot” or “a great deal” that it is justified to use violence.

How much do you feel it is justified for people to use violence to pursue their political goals in this country?

- 1 Not at all
- 2 A little
- 3 A moderate amount
- 4 “A lot” and “a great deal”

White Group Attachment

“How important is being White to your identity?”

- 1 “Not at all important”
- 2 “A little important”
- 3 Moderately important
- 4 “Very important”
- 5 “Extremely important”

White Group Threat

“How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?”

- 1 Not at all likely
- 2 Slightly likely
- 3 Moderately likely
- 4 Very likely
- 5 Extremely likely

Racial Resentment—recoded so a higher score reflects greater racial resentment, then rescaled from 0-1.

- Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
- Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
- Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
- It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

- 1 Disagree strongly
- 2 Disagree somewhat
- 3 Neither agree or disagree
- 4 Agree somewhat
- 5 Agree strongly

Age – Age at time survey was administered, by year.

Male

- 0 Female
- 1 Male

Church Attendance

Would you say you go to religious services every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?

- 1 Never
- 2 A few times a year
- 3 Once or twice a month
- 4 Almost every week
- 5 Every week

Republican Party Identification – Recoded to create a 5-category variable.

- 1 Strong Democrat

- 2 “Not very strong Democrat” and “Closer to Democratic Party”
- 3 Independent
- 4 “Not very strong Republican” and “Closer to Republican Party”
- 5 Strong Republican

Education – recoded to create 6-category variable with all post-grad levels combined.
 What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- 1 12th grade or below, no high school diploma
- 2 High school graduate/diploma equivalent
- 3 Some college but no degree
- 4 Associate degree
- 5 Bachelor’s degree
- 6 “Master’s degree,” “Professional degree,” “Doctorate”

Income

Thinking back over the last year, what was your family’s annual income?

- 0 \$0 - \$9,999
- 1 \$10,000 - \$19,999
- 2 \$20,000 - \$29,999
- 3 \$30,000 - \$39,999
- ...
- 12 \$150,000 - \$174,999
- 13 \$175,000 - \$199,999
- 14 \$200,000 - \$249,999
- 15 \$250,000 or more

Southern Residence—recoded to create binary variable.
 Census Region

- 0 All other regions
- 1 South

Authoritarianism—combined and rescaled from 0-1.
 Which child trait is more important?

- 2 “Curiosity,” “Self-Reliance,” “Independence,” “Considerate”
- 3 “Good Manners,” “Obedience,” “Respect for Elders,” “Well behaved”

Perception of Protest Events

During the past few months, would you say that most of the actions taken by protesters to get the things they want have been violent, or have most of these actions by protesters been peaceful, or have these actions been equally violent and peaceful?”

- 0 Mostly peaceful
- 1 Equally violent and peaceful
- 2 Mostly violent

Appendix 7: OLS Analysis of ANES Data

Table 4.4: Determinants of Tolerance of Violence—OLS Regression

<i>Variables</i>	<i>ETS</i>		<i>TS</i>	
	<i>Group Attachment</i>	<i>Group Threat</i>	<i>Group Attachment</i>	<i>Group Threat</i>
Group Attachment	0.250*** (0.016)		0.014 (0.009)	
Group Threat		0.326*** (0.020)		0.023* (0.012)
Education	0.064*** (0.021)	0.067*** (0.021)	-0.036*** (0.011)	-0.036*** (0.011)
Male	0.065*** (0.011)	0.072*** (0.011)	0.000 (0.006)	0.001 (0.006)
Republican	-0.032* (0.017)	-0.035** (0.017)	-0.012 (0.010)	-0.014 (0.010)
Age	-0.496*** (0.027)	-0.430*** (0.027)	-0.124*** (0.010)	-0.122*** (0.010)
Racial Resentment	-0.037*** (0.025)	-0.109*** (0.026)	-0.055*** (0.013)	-0.061*** (0.013)
Income	0.014 (0.024)	0.0126 (0.024)	-0.064*** (0.011)	-0.064*** (0.011)
Church Attendance	0.110*** (0.014)	0.108*** (0.014)	-0.015** (0.008)	-0.016** (0.008)
South	0.025** (0.012)	0.026** (0.012)	0.010* (0.006)	0.010* (0.006)
Authoritarianism	-0.028 (0.024)	-0.033* (0.019)	0.016 (0.010)	0.017* (0.010)
Observations	2,139	2,140	4,764	4,770

