The Politics of Place: How Southern Identity Shapes Americans' Political Beliefs

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Political Science)
in the University of Michigan
2021

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mama, grandmamas, aunties, sisters, sister-friends, and all of the women in my life who have showed me the *way*...

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For many years, I have envisioned the point where I get to express my gratitude for all of the people who have helped me on this journey. I have thought about this moment more than I have thought about the idea of becoming Dr. Williams or Professor Williams. Why? Because - I know that I "neva neva neva would not have made it" without my team supporting me through the highs and lows. So first, I just want to thank God – who is the head of my life. I strive to live a purpose driven life and God has blessed me tremendously. He intentionally placed so many people on my life who has served as elevators - taking me to higher levels of love, grace, and abundant life. He has used the test and challenges of life to increase my grit, patience and understanding – while gifting me wisdom, persistence, and discernment. Most importantly, he has granted me mercy and favor to freely pursue endeavors that allow me to experience life abundantly, pursue my purpose and passions, and to be of service to others. God is intentional, God is good, and God is faithful. All Glory Be to God.

Next, to my parents – Bettie Lonnie – I am appreciative of all of the love, support, grace, and mercy you have given me. I am nothing without my parents and God. I am truly grateful for the values that my parents instilled in me as a child – faith, humility, persistence, individuality, courage, empathy, and kindness. More important, they showed me how to achieve these qualities via how they lived their lives. I also want to thank my 7 best friends – also known as my 7 siblings – John, Maurice, Cordero, Lonnie, Cathleen, Catherine, and Colleen. My siblings are cheerleaders and inspiration. All of them are doing amazing things across the country – teachers, coaches, attorneys, entrepreneurs, artists. My only goal is to keep up with their accomplishments and brilliance. And. I am extremely thankful for my nieces (Caitlyn and Jocelyn) and nephews (Jeremiah and Jaxson) who serve as extra motivation given their expensive preferences.

A profound thank you goes to many teachers and mentors - who have poured into me over the years. The teachers that I encountered at Raines Elementary School, Hardy Middle

School, and Provine High School – helped cultivated my curiosity for learning and confidence in my intellectual abilities. At an early age, I knew I was gifted with the intellectually ability to do anything I wanted to - because my parents and teachers consistently told me. Because of their affirmations, I know this to be true and not one has been able to convince me otherwise. Moreover, I am grateful form my teachers who helped me develop an appreciation for listening more than speaking. After middle school, I became quieter and a better listening – because I was tired of getting in trouble for talking to much. As a result, I also became more observant and reflective – which helped me tremendously while developing my dissertation.

Additionally, I am thankful for my college mentors and professors at Thee Jackson State University (JSU) – they are committed to JSU's mission of "challenge minds and change lives." A special thank you to my undergraduate mentor, Dr. D'Andra Orey – he was the divine vehicle that helped commence this PhD journey. As a sophomore in college, Dr. Orey confidently told me that I would get a PhD. I simply believed him, and he showed me the way. I am profoundly grateful for his guidance and support. Additionally, a special shout out to my other mentor from undergraduate, Dr. Matthew Platt. I am very grateful for Dr. Platt, who gave me a summer research opportunity that opened so many doors for me. He continued to mentor me in graduate school – always willing to give me advice and feedback on my work.

A special thank you to my many college and graduate school friends, mentors, and organizations that have made a positive contribution to my PhD journey and life. A preTTy shout-out goes to my line sisters - Thee 50 PearlKuliar F.O.R.C.E.S , the Spring 2014 initiates of Thee Gamma Rho Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. To my favorite line sister, Alesha Jackson – thank you for also attending Michigan for graduate school. I am so grateful for our sisterhood – it was central in my ability to survive and actually enjoy my time in Michigan. Moreover, also shout out to my line sisters - Ebony and Chelsea, thank you for your unwavering support and affirmations during this j ourney. I am incredible grateful for Emma Flores, Larry Rowley, Regina Sims and my Rackham Merit Fellows community. My time at Michigan would not have been as amazing, warm and enjoyable without this community. My PhD sisters, Jallicia, Christian, Rosalyn, Shanice, Crystal(s), Krystal, Kamirah, Sierra, Alesha, Lydia, Naomi, Lacretia – I love you all and I am grateful we found ways to have fun and connect while in the fire.

Additionally, thank you to the many lifelong friendships I gained while been a part

of various organizations such as, the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS), Students of Color of Rackham (SCOR), Rackham Student Government (RSG), and Political Scientists of Color (PSOC). Thank you all for camaraderie and your support throughout the years. A big shout out to my PSOC family - LaGina, LaShonda, Portia, Nicole, Hakeem, Steven, Chinbo, Marty, Davin, LaFleur, Andrea, Kamri, Sydney, Eugenia, Zoe, Erin, Kiela, Shekinah – and the many Michigan alumni and graduate students who were central to the development of this dissertation and protection of my sanity while in graduate school. Moreover, a special thank you to my Michigan family at Canton Christian Fellowship (CCF). To Pastor Washington, Deacons Caldwell Fowler, My Michigan Aunties Tenecia Connie, my Michigan sisters Ebony, Ashley, Chandler, and Noel, my ROC family and the entire CCF family – thank you all for welcoming me in your community, helping me protect my spirit, further develop my relationship with God, and connecting me with the great Detroit community.

Last but certainly not least, a heartfelt thank you goes to my dissertation committee: Chairs, Vincent Hutchings Nicholas Valentino, along with Nancy Burns, Rob Mickey, and Matthew Lassiter. To Vince Nick, thank you both for your support throughout the years. Your unwavering support of my work, your constructive feedback, and your ministry has made me a better scholar and person. Moreover, your dedication and support of my scholarship has empowered me to be more confident in my own ideas – even if no one believes me at first. Although this process was definitely equivalent to going through the fire, it was worth it and I am grateful. I wouldn't be here without your mentorship and advisement. I remember during my first year of graduate school, I was feeling low about my obvious "southerneess", meeting the rigorous academic standards, and just the trauma of change.

At various times during my first year of grad school, my co-chairs both gave me words of affirmation that were really critical for me in terms of developing a sense of belonging in the academy and protecting my confidence while being in the academic Lion's Den. I remember going to Vince's office for 100th time to question whether I belonged in graduate school. And I remember you telling me, "The thing that is making this experience most uncomfortable will be the thing that sets you apart and make you successful in this business." These words of encouragement meant so much to me. They were so empowering, and I have often reflected upon them during tough times in graduate school I also remember after my first year of graduate school, I sent Nick a very rough draft of a paper - which included the unrefined idea

of what is now my dissertation. He gave me feedback within 2 days and offered to meet with me to discuss it. I was a bit hesitant to send the paper because I felt less confident after my first year of graduate school - and questioning whether I could actually finish the program. But during the meeting, he spoke so highly of my horribly written paper and told me, "This is going to be a great dissertation, a great job market paper, and a great book. People are going to read your work." These words definitely increased my confidence and affirmed my intellectual ability. Nick and Vick, thank you for being full of grace and mercy, supportive, and understanding – and thank you both for being dedicated to my intellectual growth. It has been an honor to work with you.

Nancy, Rob, Matt – I am also very grateful for your support and the critical role you all have played in my intellectual development. Nancy, thank you for your availability to be of service to help me reach important milestones in the program and for providing valuable feedback on my dissertation while in the program. Rob, thank you for always being supportive of me as a scholar and my work, and encouraging and inspiring me to buy books – even with a grad school budget. Matt – thank you for helping me develop the dissertation ideas – and especially given me critical feedback on my job market paper – which helped me gain so much clarity primary argument. I am extremely thankful for all of you and your willingness to serve on my dissertation committee.

In summary, I am so very grateful for God and my entire support team. I would not have been able to finish the PhD without you the support from so many people – and I honestly mean this. I did not make it this far by myself. God intentionally blessed me with an amazing community. And, I am the product of the love and support that so many people have poured into my life. My hope is that I am able to "pay it forward" – through my work, service, and life.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the role of place-based identification in influencing Americans' political attitudes and policy preferences. Specifically, I argue that Southern identity (i.e., identification with the American South) is an influential but omitted factor that affects American public opinion and political behavior. This dissertation includes three overarching arguments. First, the South residency variables and other inconsistent identity measurements are insufficient in helping us understand how and why sub-national identifications shape American public opinion and behavior. A new sub-national identity framework and survey measurement are needed to understand the values and norms people associate with social groups to understand how social identities translate into political beliefs. Second, this work argues that Southern identity has political consequences for Black Americans and White Americans. Finally, I contend that Southern identity is associated with beliefs that reflect the South's perceived communal, traditional, and hierarchical culture elements. The primary contribution of this dissertation is the creation of a novel multidimensional scale of Southern identity that was motivated and constructed from analysis of a variety of South-related qualitative data. Employing the Southern identity scale, I assess its affect on Americans' views about various race, social, and economic-related political issues, and public policies. Analyses from three original surveys suggest that Southern identity is, in fact, associated with distinct and nuanced political beliefs for both Black and White Americans. Specifically, Southern identity is associated with more group-centric and communalistic attitudes for Black and White Americans. Regarding social issues, Southern identity is associated with more conservative, hierarchical, and traditional attitudes across racial groups. With respect to economic policies, Southern identity is associated with communalistic and group centric attitudes as well. These results hint at a challenge to the claim that Southern identity among Black Americans is not as politically relevant as it is for White Americans. This work also speaks to the need for more nuanced approaches to understanding American's political beliefs across race and place.

CHAPTER 1

Same ole South, Just A Different Day

In his path-breaking book, Southern Politics in State in Nation, V.O. Key (1949) proclaims that from chattel slavery to the Jim Crow era, the politics of the South revolves around the position of the Negro. That is, the politics of the White South was concerned with maintaining White supremacy and Black oppression. Thus, following the Civil War, the presence of Black Americans in the region became an even more critical issue. Many Southern Whites believed the large concentration of newly emancipated Black Americans in the region posed significant threats to their political interests and economic status. For instance, in 1860, enslaved Black Americans made up 55 percent of Mississippi's population. This Black population share was the highest of any state in the country. Following the ratification of the 13th Amendment, over 50 percent of the state's population remained Black for the four decades that followed. As a result, Mississippi had high numbers of Black state legislators and experienced significant Black entrepreneurial success. These political and economic gains were also due to federal civil rights litigation and legislative efforts during the Reconstruction period.

Without free labor from formerly enslaved Black Americans, coupled with increasing Black political power, some Southern White elites in Mississippi and other Southern states mobilized to protect and promote what they perceived to be the interests of Whites. Most damaging to Black progress was the creation of Jim Crow laws. These laws legalized racial terrorism, segregation, voter disenfranchisement, and racial inequality. The legacy of slavery

and the Jim Crow era continues to shape the political landscape of the country and region and the political psyche of Americans. Moreover, the institutional efforts to subjugate recently emancipated Black Americans in the region created a distinct and enduring political culture in parts of the region with the highest enslaved populations in 1860 (Acharya, Blackwell, & Sen 2018' Acharya, Blackwell, & Sen 2016). The post-Civil War culture of White Supremacy has persisted across time. It continues to shape White Americans' socialization and the political beliefs of Whites' who currently live within counties where slavery was most prominent (Acharya, Blackwell, & Sen 2018; Acharya, Blackwell, & Sen 2016; Key 1949).

Given the racial and cultural dynamics of the South, political scientists recognize the possibility that regional differences in culture, socialization, and regional identity may influence the public opinions of White Americans. Many studies of American public opinion attempt to account for this phenomenon (Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010; Black & Black 1994; Valentino & Sears 2006; White 2014). Usually, a crude South residency dummy variable and other single-item measures are routinely included in behavioral models to account for the psychological impact of Southern attachment and its consequences for American political behavior. Using residency in the South as a rough proxy to capture the region's distinct culture and socialization, a lengthy line of the literature shows that Southern White Americans are, in fact, politically different.

Empirical findings concerning place and public opinion illustrates Southern Whites are more likely to adopt racially and socially conservative attitudes and are more likely to identify with the Republican Party in comparison to White Americans living in other parts of the country (Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010; Black & Black 1994; Valentino & Sears 2006; White 2014). Other proxies and measurements of Southern identity have also been also used. However, they have found inconclusive results about the relationship between Southern identity and measures of racial conservatism due to inconsistent and limited measurements

of Southern identity (Maxwell 2019; Strother, Piston & Ogorzalez 2018; Orey et al., 2010; Reingold and Wilke 1998). On the contrary, the relationship between Southern identity and Black political behavior receives limited focus in existing political science literature.

Nevertheless, there is much qualitative and historical evidence to suspect that Americans have a distinct sub-national identity associated with the South. Aligned with the historical and sociological literature, the primary argument of this dissertation is that a unique place-based identity, that is, Southern identity, exists amongst a sizable number of Americans across racial groups. Furthermore, this identity is politically consequential yet, an omitted variable in our empirical investigations of American public opinion. Much of the literature assumes that proximity to the South is politically distinct and that proximity, whether residential or psychological, makes Southerners dissimilar to non-southern Americans. However, existing literature investigating the phenomenon faces theoretical and empirical limitations.

The first limitation is a theoretical one. Previous studies focus almost exclusively on regional dynamics and the public opinions of White Americans. We know that the status of Black Americans has significant consequences for the political attitudes and behavior of Southern White Americans and Southern politics, in general (Key 1949). However, extant literature is limited concerning Black Americans' psychological relationship with the South, given its historical legacy and whether Southern identity has any political implications. Nearly 60 percent of Black Americans live in the region today. Since the 1970s, the region's Black population has steadily increased due to the migration of non-southern-born Black Americans to the location (Faulk & Hunt 2014).

Aim 1: Given the centrality of Black Americans in the South's political development and history, the first aim of this dissertation is to investigate the psychological relationship Black Americans have with the region and explore whether Southern identity is as politically salient

for tor Blacks as it is for Whites.

The second limitation of existing studies is various measurement issues due to the static and crude features of the South residency dummy variable and other single-item measures. Thus, we are limited in our theoretical and empirical understanding concerning the psychological mechanisms that drive political distinctions across regions. The South residency dummy variable does not entail any information about an individual's psychological orientation to place. Essentially, the dummy variable only captures an individual's residential status within a single period. It does not allow us to capture a change in identity over time. Besides, single-item measures used as proxies for Southern identity do not capture the multi-dimensional nature of identity. More importantly, the dummy variable and other single item measurements include abnormal amounts of measurement error given their designs. The limitations of the extant literature warrant nuanced investigations into the role Southern identity plays in forming White and Black political attitudes. For reasons outlined in previous work, I also argue that Southern identity is politically meaningful for Southern Whites, and a reliable measurement will allow us to predict better and theorize about the understudied yet significant intra-regional variation in the political attitudes of Southern Whites.

Aim 2: Thus, the second aim of this paper dissertation is to provide a novel measure that can be a) used across racial groups and b) serve as a framework for studying sub-national identities across the United States and globally.

1.1 Primary Argument

Ultimately, this dissertation aims to build on an interdisciplinary body of literature and understand the political implications of Southern identity across race and region. I employ a mixed-methods approach consisting of various original qualitative data and survey data to motivate my theory and construct my measurement of Southern identity. The qualitative efforts include content analyses of Black and Southern-based newspapers and magazines, in-depth interviews, textual analysis of Twitter data, and thematic analyses of open-ended survey questions. The quantitative data consists of three original surveys.

Using the variety of original data previously mentioned, I construct a valid and reliable cross-racial measurement of Southern identity. I then investigate its relationship with Black and Whites' political attitudes and policy preferences. Like other group identities, I argue that Southern identity can be empirically measured by capturing how much positive affection and psychological attachment an individual possesses towards the region. More specifically, my theory posits that Southern identity is a sub-national identity that equips individuals with a unique world view that reflects the perceived cultural values and norms associated with the region.

Perceptions of Southern culture fall into three primary element groups: communalism, traditionalism, and hierarchism. Communalism is a group-centric view entailing the promotion of the group's greater good, and one's political interests are focused on the social group rather than directed towards individual objects or interests. Traditionalism consists of views and efforts supporting traditional gender roles, sexuality, family structures, religion, and social-behavioral expectations. Hierarchism cultural features are conceptualized as a view that seeks to promote respect for those in authoritative or high-level positions, the social order, and encourages stiff punishment for behavioral deviance.

From the sub-national identity framework proposed in this dissertation, Southern identity

is similar to a camera filter used to record videos via Snapchat or Instagram. The filter provides a unique lens – influencing how one views the social and political world. Given this, I suspect that Southern identifiers should differ in their political beliefs and preferences in some areas compared to non-southern identifiers. Moreover, I also expect that Southern identity has implications for Americans' beliefs about social issues and their candidate preferences. Specifically, I argue that Southern identity is associated with more group-centric and communalistic racial attitudes and policy preferences for Black and White Americans. Regarding social issues, I argue that Southern identity should be associated with more conservative, hierarchical, and traditional attitudes across racial groups. Concerning economic policies, I also argue that that Southern identity is associated with communalistic and group-centric attitudes.

Analyses from three original surveys suggest that Southern identity is associated with distinct and nuanced political beliefs for Black and White Americans. Specifically, Southern identity is associated with more group-centric and communalistic racial attitudes for Black and White Americans. Regarding social issues, I find that Southern identity is associated with more conservative, hierarchical, and traditional attitudes across racial groups. Concerning economic policies, I find that Southern identity is associated with communalistic and group-centric attitudes as well. These results hint at a challenge to the claim that Southern identity among Black Americans is not as politically relevant for White Americans. This dissertation speaks to the need for more nuanced approaches to understanding American political beliefs across race and place. This dissertation also demonstrates that Southern identity is a politically influential but omitted factor that impacts the political behavior of both Black and White Americans. In summary, I argue that the meaning individuals give to their identity, not just the presence of the identity, decides the political consequences of the identity.

1.2 Contribution

The most significant contribution of this dissertation is the development of a novel scale of southern identity, which this dissertation applies to reveal that Black and White southerners alike profess a sense of communal regional kinship that influences conceptions of self and policy preferences—not unlike politically salient social identities such as race or partisanship. Political scientists have long understood the South as distinct, as shown by political models deriving from national data sets routinely include a control variable to denote whether or not respondents live in this region. Nevertheless, this work argued investigated the South is different and whether a cross-racial social identity existed relating to the region. Thus, the goal of this dissertation was to examine how and why identification with place, not just southern residence, constitutes a distinct force shaping the political beliefs of Black and White southerners.

Consequently, this work treads vital new ground in advancing our understanding of why politics in the South an altogether different beast is. Southern identity promotes strong intra-group ties and greater group solidarity among Black and White individuals. Accordingly, southern identity shapes people's stances on racialized issue areas in systematic—albeit sometimes counter-intuitive—ways. By conceptualizing and operationalizing southern identity as a salient and constraining social identity, this work astutely uncovers possibilities for this identity marker to be a facilitator of or a cudgel against interracial cooperation and perceptions of interest convergence. It also offers a definitive account of why and how the South is different—by engendering many residents with a sense of regional consciousness that informs how they engage with politics.

1.3 A Look Ahead

The dissertation continues as follows. Chapter 2 makes a case for why there is a need for a novel Southern identity scale in political science. Chapter 3 lays out the sub-national identity framework building from social psychology, sociology, history, and geography. Following Chapter 4, the paper includes a discussion on the theory and measurement of Southern identity. Chapter 5 presents a detailed description of Southern identifiers. Chapter 6 presents core results illustrating the relationship between Southern identity and Black and White racial attitudes and preferences. In Chapter 8, the paper concludes with a discussion on the broader implications of place-based identities in American politics and the contributions of the Southern identity scale.

CHAPTER 2

A Case for a Cross-racial Measurement of Southern Identity

A recognizably regional distinction exists in the political arena amongst White Americans. This regional distinction is partly a result of the unique socialization patterns in the South. The stable psychological attachments amongst some White Southern residents and unique socialization patterns developed during and after the Civil War, which has persisted across generations (Cobb 2005). Current evidence suggests that Southern White Americans hold politically distinct attitudes when using the residency to proxy psychological attachment and socialization (Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010; Black & Black 1994; Valentino & Sears 2006; White 2014). For instance, Southern Whites are likely to adopt racially and socially conservative attitudes and are more likely to identify with the Republican Party in comparison to White Americans living in other parts of the country (Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010; Black & Black 1994; Valentino & Sears 2006; White 2014).

Recent work has sought to directly measure Southern identity amongst Whites, using Confederate history knowledge as a proxy (Strother, Piston & Ogorzalez 2017). Strother and his colleagues' inconclusive results about whether the regional identity leads to higher levels of racial conservatism partly due to the measurement limitations and lack of national data (Strother, Piston & Ogorzalez 2018). For instance, Strother et al. use Confederacy knowledge

as a means for meaning Southern identity. This measurement conflates Southern identity with Confederate identity, limiting it and exclusive to Confederate sympathizers. By such standards, it also makes it challenging to capture Southern identity for Black Americans. I suspect that Southern identifying Whites will be more likely than Black people to hold positive affinity towards the Confederacy, given the identity was cultivated and ripened amongst the ancestors of Southern Whites during the region's Confederate era (Cash 1949). However, I argue that Confederate Identity and Southern identity are separate identities. It is crucial to have a distinct measurement from Confederate identity and capture variation in White Southern identity.

Nevertheless, socialized or psychologically attached to the South has a nontrivial influence on how White Americans think about politics (Black Black 2009). However, the literature focuses exclusively on regional dynamics and the public opinions of White Americans. Given Key's (1949) seminal work and recent work by Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen (2018), we know that Black Americans' political status economic conditions have always had a considerable influence on how White Southerners evaluated public policies and political candidates. Contrarily, the literature lacks discussions about Black Americans' psychological relationship with the South.

There are many plausible arguments against the idea that Southern identity being present and meaningful for Black Americans. First, the history of oppression the racial group experienced in the region may have turned Black's sour towards the place. Another argument is that Southern identity is not politically consequential for Black Americans because, regardless of region, Black Americans display political unity in the electoral arenas, and there is insignificant variation in how they vote. For instance, Black voters overwhelmingly vote for the Democratic Party' which is arguably symbolic of Black voters' rejection of the Republican South. Black Americans also have elevated levels of linked-fate and group consciousness, which leads most to support policies that help their racial group (Dawson 1994). Finally, other

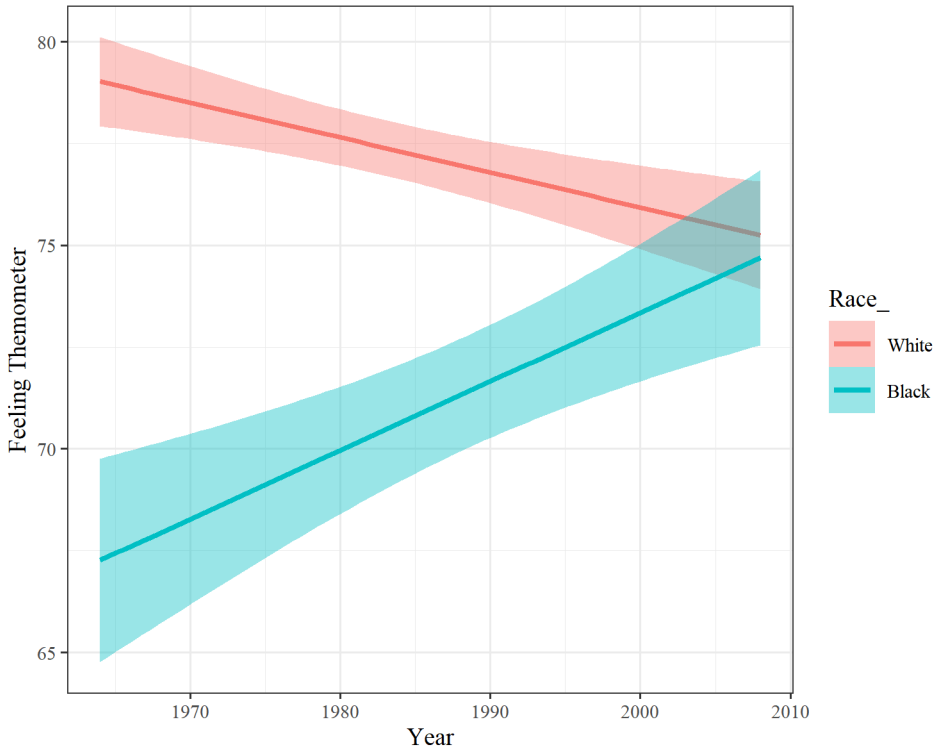


Figure 2.1: South Feeling Thermometer Across Race Within South

scholars argue that being a Southerner and being Black was politically incompatible and antithetical to Black progress given the Southern values promoted by some Whites in the region ((Ellison 1965; Cash 1941).

These arguments led the earliest scholars investigating Southern identity to proclaim that Whites were the only race that glamorized the South. It is even argued that it was outrageous that Black Americans were craving to identify as Southerners (Ellison 1965; Cash 1941). The available evidence supports this notion as Black and Whites have historically differed in affection expressed for the South.

Figure 2.2 shows how warm Black and White Americans feel towards the South using the American National Election Study (ANES) feeling thermometer survey item. In the 1960s, before the Civil Rights Movement, there was a 40-point difference in Southern White (.90) and

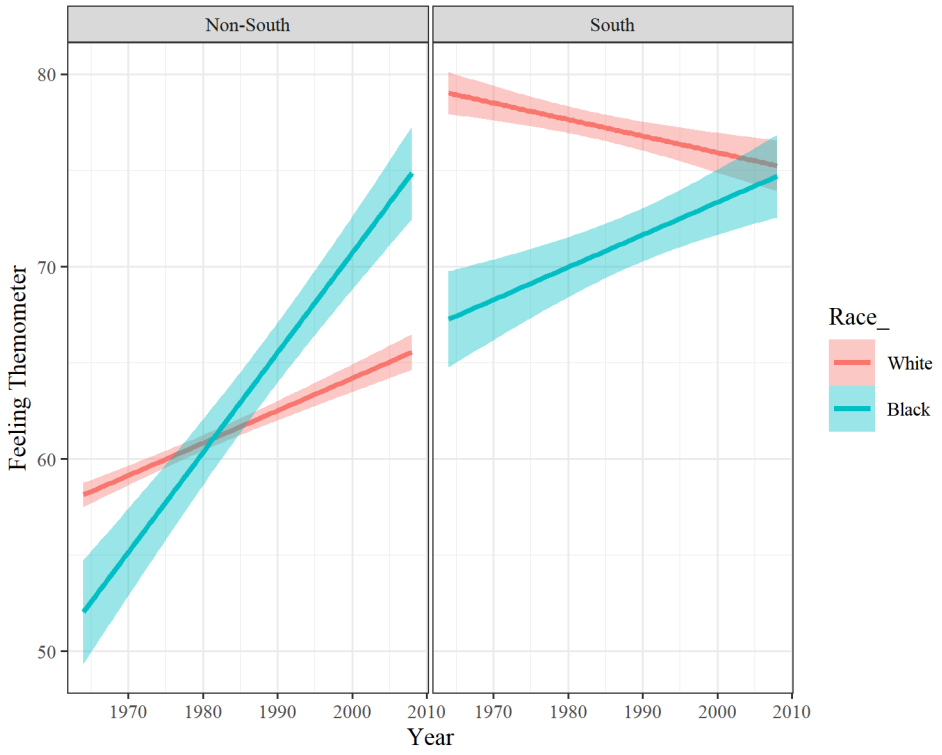


Figure 2.2: South Feeling Thermometer Across Race

Black (.50) feelings of warmth about this region. (footnote) The mean score for Non-Southern Whites and Black people was even lower. However, by 1976, after the movement's pinnacle, Southern Black and White feeling thermometer scores were statistically identical (around .85). The 2008 ANES suggests that Black Southern (.75) and White Southern residents (.76) share similar feelings towards the South.

Check out Figure 2.2.

The relative political gains and social and economic development resulting from the Civil Rights Movement led to increased positive sentiment about the South amongst Black Southern residents (Robinson 2014). Data illustrates that Southern states have experienced political and economic gains following the Civil Rights era in empirical support for Black people's Southern sentiments. For instance, these states have the highest number of Black institutions per

capita (e.g., churches, colleges, business). They also have the highest concentration of Black voters, translating into the highest numbers of Black elected officials and voter turnout rates in presidential elections (Fraga 2018). Also, Southern states have the highest Black home-ownership, employment, and entrepreneurship rates in the country. However, even before the perceived progress from the Civil Rights Movement, many Black people who did not migrate out of the South very well perceived themselves as" Southerners."

Furthermore, Black Southerners recognized their heavy influence on the region's culture and much stake in its progress (Cobb 2005; Applebon 1994; Reed & Black 1983). I contend that the perceptions individuals hold about the South, compared to the rest of the United States, shapes their level of identification with the region. The level of Southern identity reflects both one's perception of their place-based experiences and their perception of the place-based information narratives.

2.1 Black Migration

Black Americans' role in shaping the historical legacy and progress of the South and country alone calls for an investigation of Southern identity amongst Black people. One could assume that give the region's heritage of racial terror against the racial group, Black Americans would seek to escape the region at every chance, as six million did during the 20th century. Instead, black Americans in the region are primarily direct descendants of people who endured gruesome slavery conditions and state-sanctioned violence that state leaders promoted and legally protected. Nevertheless, given this historical legacy, most Black Americans still live in the region today. About 60 percent of Black Americans live in the region today. Since 1970, the region's Black population has increased due to the migration of non-southern-born Black Americans (Faulk & Hunt 2014). Black people not born in the region are moving back to the location at record rates. Census data illustrates that non-southern-born Black Americans

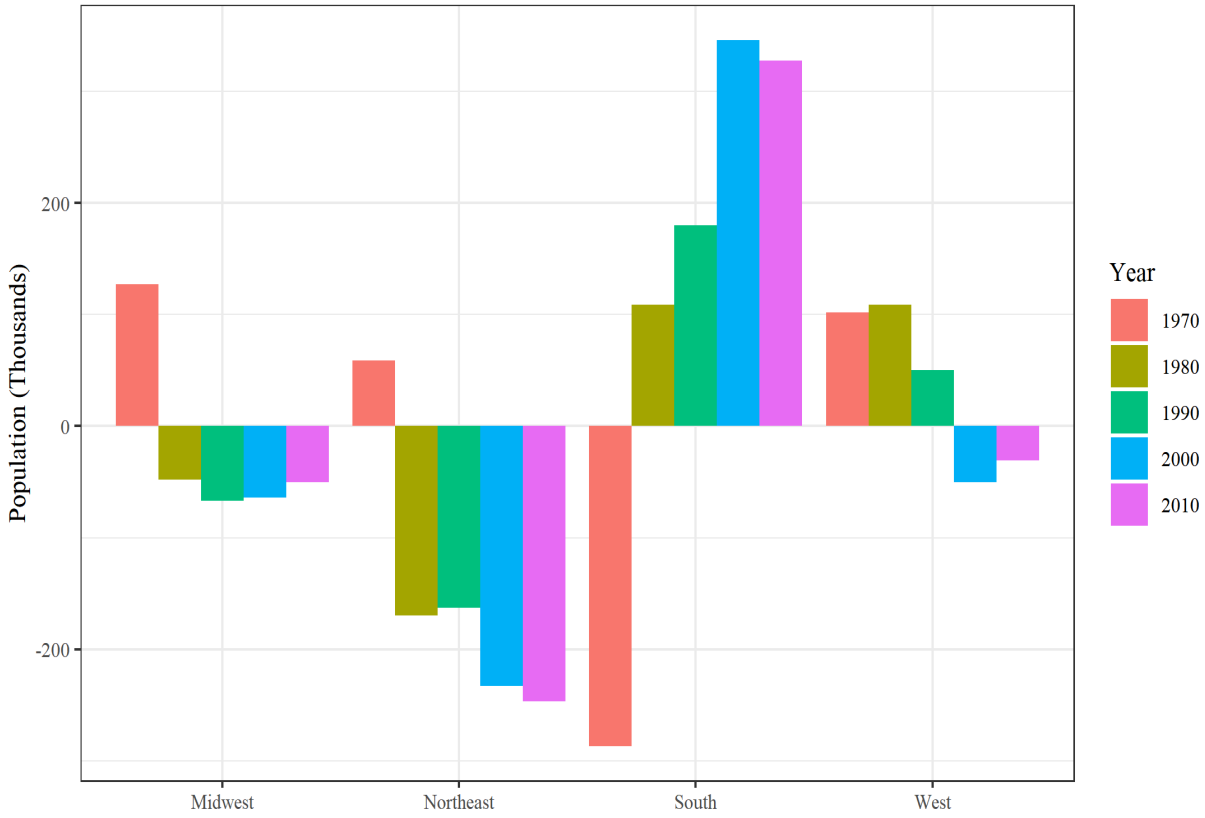


Figure 2.3: Black Migration

migrated to the South over the past three decades at record rates.

Figure 2.3 displays these migration trends for Black Americans. This phenomenon is refer to this migration phenomenon as ”the Reverse Great Migration” (Hunter & Robinson 2018). The ”Return Great Migration” is a geographic and demographic sorting of non-south-born Black Americans back in Southern states. The non-southern-born Black migrants returning to the South are primarily descendants of the six million Black Americans who migrated to other regions for a better opportunity and escaped Southern oppression.

Census estimates project that the Black population in the South will increase over the following decades. This population trend will have many implications for state and local politics in Southern states. The migration of Black and White Americans to the North during the 20th

century reshaped Northern cities and national politics (see Grant 2020). In the same vein, the reverse migration of Black Americans back to the South has had a significant impact (Gregory 2005; Grant 2020.) It would be informative to understand whether Southern identity plays a motivating role in the migration patterns of Black Americans. However, sociology and political science literature focus on empirically understanding how Southern identity shapes White American behavior.

2.2 Southern Narratives

Nevertheless, previous evidence that non-southern-born Black Americans have increased positive sentiments perceptions of the South (Hunt & Hunt 2013; Pendergrass 2013). Survey data suggest that non-southern-born Black Americans have also become increasingly warm toward the South over the past three decades.

The ANES South feeling thermometer results illustrated in Figure 2.4 display this finding. It has been argued that changing narratives about the region compared to the rest of the country are motivating factors influencing non-south-born Black people to move back to the region at record rates (Hunt & Hunt 2013; Pendergrass 2013; Cobb 2006). For example, earlier work shows that Black people born in the South and lived in other areas perceived similar levels of racism in the South as they experienced in other areas (Hunt & Hunt 2013; Pendergrass 2013; Cobb 2006). Black people born in other regions, but migrated to the South, also shared similar beliefs (Hunt & Hunt 2013; Pendergrass 2013; Cobb 2006).

Furthermore, some migrants hold more positive feelings about the South than their home region (Robinson 2014; Cobb 2006; Griffin 2006). For instance, Previous studies argue that non-south-born Southern Black residents perceived that Black Americans were more unified and had more political power in the region compared to other places (Cobb 2005; Moris & Monroe 2009; Feagin & Harlan). These migrants also believed that the lower living costs in

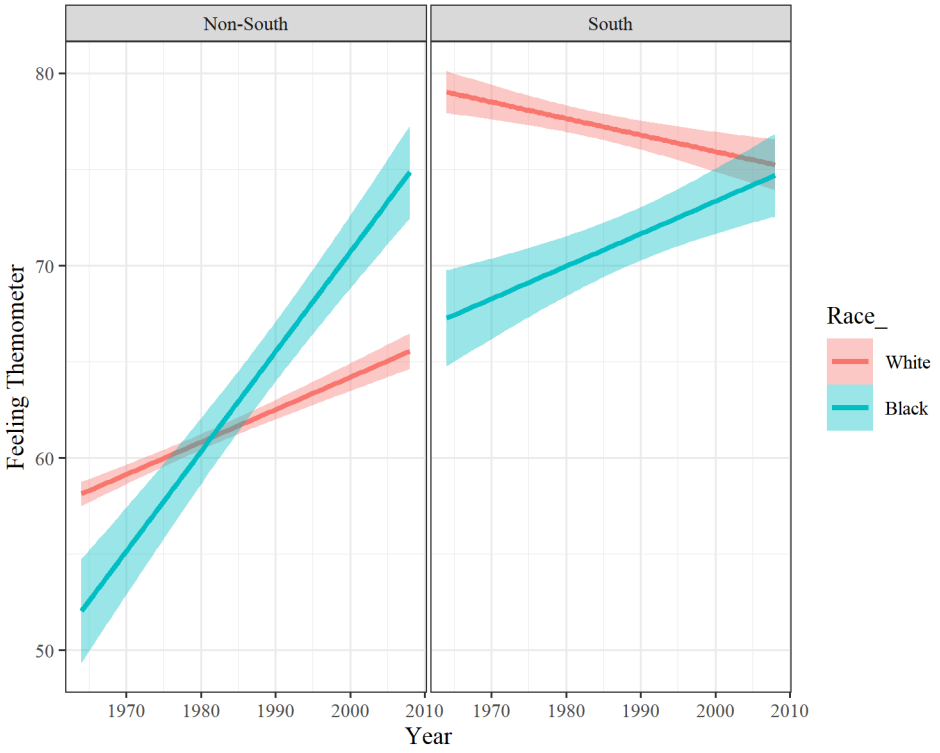


Figure 2.4: Data: American National Elections Study (ANES), 1964-2008

the region supplied better chances at social mobility. Additionally, they perceived historically black colleges & universities (HBCUs) in the region afforded more educational opportunities and less racist atmospheres for their children. Migrants also expressed high favorability of various Black Southern cultural attributes such as having access to various African American businesses, entertainment events, restaurants, churches, and other social organizations (Robinson 2014; Cobb 2006; Griffin 2006).

Evidence shows that Non-south-born Black migrants and Black Southern-born residents verbalized increasing positive narratives about the region (Robinson 2014; Cobb 2006; Griffin 2006). These increasingly positive narratives about the region may partly explain why non-south-born Black people move back to the region at record rates. The theory of Southern sub-national identity presented here asserts that the perceptions individuals hold about the South, compared to the rest of the United States, shapes their level of identification with the region. Tthe level of Southern identity reflects both one's perception of their place-based experiences and their perception of the place-based information narratives. Having a framework and measurement of Southern identity amongst Black and White Americans contributes to our theoretical and empirical understanding of the underlying motivations of public opinion and political behavior across groups and locations. Below, you will find responses that I received while conducting in-depth interviews investigating Black Americans' beliefs about the South. I completed the in-depth in the summers of 2015 and 2016. Furthermore, the in-depth interviews elucidated sentiments that Blacks across the region share regarding the South.

2.3 Qualitative Interviews

" I love it. I love people in the South. This place is home no matter where I go. So many negative stereotypes [about the region], but they do not represent the entire South. Most southern people love going to church and are friendly too. It is just different from other places

I have been to. I can tell you one thing, the food in the South is the best in the country. Cannot get good soul food anywhere else."- Black female, age 56, South

" It is comfortable for Blacks. It is rich in culture for Blacks. I love going down to Alabama to visit my family there. I also love going back for homecoming. I always have a good time. It feels less stressful down there down in the city. People are a lot ruder and angrier in the North. I guess it is because we deal with a lot of people on a daily living and many folks are in survival mode all the time. You must have that mentality because you can't trust everybody. The South is more widespread and slower. It seems like everybody knows everybody. The community is more tight-knit compared to the North."- Black female, 47, Midwest

2.4 The South Residency Variable

The second limitation of existing literature is various measurement issues due to the static and crude features of the South residency dummy variable and other single-item measures. We are limited in theoretical and empirical understanding concerning the psychological mechanisms that drive political distinctions across regions. The South residency dummy variable does not entail any information about an individual's psychological orientation to place. I hypothesis that Southern identity shapes the political behavior of White Southerners. Furthermore, based on various qualitative evidence, I contend that Southern identity influences Black political behavior. Although the extant literature recognizes the vital role of regional differences in socialization and cultural exposure in forming American public opinion, earlier work faces significant measurement limitations. First, current national social science surveys do not include a direct measurement of Southern identity, and thus, we have limited data to investigate the political consequences of Southern identity.

The residency survey item (e.g., which indicates whether one lives in the South at the time of survey or not) is often used to overcome the data limitations and account for the "southern

effect." Other studies exploring the Southern identity phenomenon have included state-level surveys that include various measurements of White Southern identity (Strother, Piston & Ogorzalez 2017; Cooper & Knotts 2006; Orey 2004; Reingold & Wike 1998). These studies provide us with meaningful evidence of how residency alone can distinguish Americans politically. However, existing proxy variables lack empirical precision and measurement error. Given the practical limitations of extant literature, we do not understand the psychological mechanisms driving political distinctions across regions.

The South residency dummy variable is overutilized in public opinion models to account for the assumed regional differences in behavior, worldview, and socialization (Hutchings, Walton, and Benjamin 2010; Black & Black 1994; Valentino & Sears 2006; White 2014). However, the South dummy does not entail any information about an individual's psychological orientation to place. Essentially, the dummy variable only captures an individual's residential status at the time of the survey, and it does not allow us to capture a change in identity over time.

Besides the temporal limitations, the single-item dummy variable is ill-equipped to capture the multi-dimensional nature of social identity. Residency in the region does not show psychological identification with the region, and social identities are dynamic and can change in strength over time and context. The dummy variable (and other single item measurements designed to measure psychological orientations) include abnormal amounts of measurement error given their designs.

Additionally, because nationally representative surveys samples are not sub-nationally representative, the south residency variable is even more insufficient in understanding how attachment or identification with place shapes American political behavior. To be clear, we do not have sub-nationally representative surveys. Therefore, our ability to describe and predict regional differences in opinion and behavior using clustered regional samples is highly lim-

ited in accuracy and precision. Of course, national surveys should be nationally representative – thus, the limitation lies with researchers. Combining samples and post-stratification techniques are usually employed to overcome the design limitations of national surveys (Caughey & Warsaw 2018; Little 1997). However, these techniques do not address assumptions about the psychological impact of place (i.e., place attachment, length of residence, sub-national identity) and how it shapes American public opinion.

Given the sampling design of national surveys, sampling biases are present in analyses using national surveys to focus on regional variation. Respondents in high-population states may be unrepresentative of the region, given the variation in politics, culture, and residential socialization across and within southern states. I argue that Southern-based public opinion literature can overcome such methodological issues using the Southern identity scale. Demography studies have also illustrated that Southern states like Florida, Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia are also hubs for internal migration (Hunt & Hunt 2012). Consequently, the increased migration to these high-probability sampling clusters also increases the likelihood of a person not being born and raised in the South as a select respondent. Using the dummy approach poses a measurement limitation to the possibility of overestimating the number of non- southern-born or newly southern transplants who identify as a southerner. The argument for including the south dummy variable in public opinion models is that residency captures distinct regional socialization.

Furthermore, if the length of residence is unmeasured, newly migrant residents within high-population southern states will cause more sampling biases. For instance, we would expect a resident who lived in the region their entire lives instead of a respondent who lived in the area for two years after living in New York City to have strikingly different socialization patterns and hold different views about the region. The dummy variable conceals variation of the areas the made up the American North. The Southern identity scale addresses limitations of

the dummy variable and other single-item measures of Southern identity by considering the impact variation in cultural exposure, residency, and socialization amongst residents living within the region and in other parts of the country.

The limitations of the extant literature warrant nuanced investigations into the role Southern identity plays in forming White and Black political attitudes. Thus, this paper aims to supply a novel measure that can be a) used across racial groups and b) serve as a framework for studying sub-national identities across the United States and globally.

This dissertation builds from the current political science literature by supplying a new theoretical framework to understand Southern identity's psychological, sociological, and historical substrates across racial groups. It also includes a novel survey measurement of Southern identity to explore public opinion and behavioral implications. More importantly, this dissertation supplies empirical and theoretical frameworks adapted to study the political consequences of sub-national identities in other parts of the United States and abroad.

CHAPTER 3

A Sub-national Identity Framework

Place serves as the foundation for geographically imagined communal and social groupings such as nations, regions, states, cities, and neighborhoods (Munis 2020; Dikshit 1971). Moreover, place and geography are central to the design and function of the U.S. government (Beramendi & León 2015; Dikshit 1971). For instance, the U.S. founding fathers considered the challenges and benefits of designing a government with expanding geographic boundaries and geographic diversity in interests and issues. The *Great Compromise 1787*, also known as the *Sherman Compromise*, dealt with whether geographic representation or population density should be the foundation of the federal legislative branch. They concluded both features were important – which led to the bicameral legislature design of the U.S. Congress.

Ultimately, the framers decided to adopt a representative democracy form of government and a federal government system. This design mandated that national representation be apportioned and selected along geographic boundaries (Munis 2020; Beramendi & León 2015; Dikshit 1971). As a result, nationally elected leaders represent geographic boundaries that include diverse voters with diverse issues and preferences. More importantly, the U.S government's design exacerbated the power of voters in certain states compared to others in deciding presidential elections. It also increased the leverage some geographic factions have in Congress when deciding national legislation applicable to all states. Therefore, geography and place-based identities provide a valuable theoretical lens to study American political behavior.

While geographers, sociologists, and psychologists have examined how geography and place-based identities impact mass, elite, and individual-level social phenomena, its investigation is limited in political science (Munis 2020; Zhengchun et al. 2018; Norton 2005). The extant literature recognizes the vital role of regional differences in socialization, cultural exposure, and place-based identification in public opinion formation. However, previous work faces significant measurement limitations.

In this chapter, I discuss the foundations of Social Identity Theory (SIT) which informs my theory of sub-national identity. Next, I discuss how research applies SIT to study varieties of social identities and their political implications. Finally, I lay out my proposed sub-national theory building from earlier literature on national and regional identities.

3.1 Theories of Group Identity

Over the past half-century, political scientists have investigated group identities' role in shaping political attitudes and behavior. Identity is suspected to be among the most influential factors in motivating citizens' opinions and behaviors. (Smith 2004). Despite agreement regarding the importance of identity, defining and measuring identity is inconsistent across disciplines. The difficulty of conceptualizing identity also stems from its ambivalent nature - identity indicates both sameness and difference (Citrin, Wong, Duff 2001). The formation of identities includes drawing boundaries around those like us and excluding those who are not. Nevertheless, Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory (SIT) sums up propositions of identity theories shared across disciplines.

SIT is one of the most widely employed theories explaining the impact of social group identity (e.g., racial groups, fraternal organizations, colleges, and universities, college, sports teams, political parties, etc.) (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Given its broad applicability, the sub-national identity theory presented in this dissertation also builds on social identity theory.

Tajfel and Turner posits that social group identity shapes how individuals define themselves and how group identity sources pride and self-esteem. Social identity is an essential cognitive tool to help us understand and navigate our social and physical world for survival. Social identity theory asserts that group members will look to find negative aspects of an out-group and positive aspects, which enhances their self-image. Social identities are multidimensional – they include a cognitive and affective component. Three mental processes are involved in social identity development: 1) categorization, 2) social identification, and 3) social comparison.

Social categorization involves sorting people, places, and things to understand them, identify and embrace them or avoid them as a survival tool. Social categorization is a psychological tool that humans also use outside of identity formation. For instance, during the Great Migration of Black Americans from the South to the North, many Black families used a ”Green Book,” developed via a group categorization process. This book essentially identified travel routes, hotels, restaurants, and other businesses that were ”friendly” to Black Americans and ”safe” from racial discrimination or violence – based on the previous travel experiences of group members. The categorization process allowed Black Americans to embrace safe locations and avoid other areas that had a reputation of being unsafe with the hopes of surviving their journey from their Jim Crow South to the North.

The social categorization process is also driven, in part, by how similar or different we perceive people and or groups to be. We categorize people like ourselves as ”us” or in-group members and those dissimilar as ”them” or out-group members. For instance, in the U.S context and globally, we use social categories like Black versus White, ”the South” versus ”the North,” urban versus rural, and Protestant and Catholic. Social categories grow out of narratives about historical legacies and cultural stereotypes associated with groups. Given what norms and values we ascribe to the categories, are individuals decide how similar or

different they are from the group. Here, norms refer to beliefs and behaviors considered normal for the group, and values are those things that the group finds essential. Additionally, social identity allows us to define and enact the proper beliefs and behaviors given the values and norms of each social category.

The second stage of social identity development is social identification. In this stage, people begin to develop solidarity with the groups to which they belong. If, for example, we have categorized ourselves as a "Northerner," we will likely adopt the identity of being a "Northerner" and begin to think and act in the ways we believe Northerner's act. This example can also apply to identifying as a "Southerner," sorority member, or a "college student." Identifying with the group should lead to us conforming to the values norms of the group. There is an emotional significance to placing with a group, and that is, the social group category affects one's self-esteem.

Social comparison is the final stage of the social identity model developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979). After people categorize themselves as part of a group and identify with that group, they compare it with other groups. If their self-esteem is to be enhanced, our group needs to compare favorably with other groups. Tajfel and Turner argue that this stage involves incorporating a level of prejudice or out-group bias. Essentially, in-group members develop a sense of competition (argues group competition comes from competing for resources and self-esteem), negative beliefs, and hostility about out-groups as a means to maintain or increase self-esteem.

The social comparison component of social identity, as indicated by Tajfel, offers the minimal group paradigm. This approach proposes that even small and inconsequential group biases such as in-group distinctions lead to in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice (Tajfel 1978). Even for a trivial or random reason, being assigned to a group seems enough to motivate individuals to favor group members and show prejudice towards other groups. There is

no ideological justification, esteem benefits, or personal factors to create out-group negative biases and hostility.

Aligned with Tajfel and Turner, most work recognizes that group identities can develop from trivial and non-trivial causes. Group identities are multidimensional with two primary components: 1) cognitive and 2) effective. The cognitive dimension refers to the act of self-categorization, and it answers the question regarding how individuals think of themselves. However, as Citrin and Sears (2009) explain, "identifying as is not the same as identifying with" (p.147). When someone indicates they identify with something, it characterizes the affective dimension of identity. This component describes the strength and centrality of emotional significance toward and psychological attachment to a group.

3.2 Group Identity & Public Opinion

Group identity provides individuals with crucial cognitive assistance to navigate the political world more effectively. We know that stronger identities are associated with greater political cohesion, including a propensity to internalize normative group beliefs, a greater likelihood of adopting pro-group policy positions, and a tendency to demonstrate or protest on behalf of one's group. Moreover, group identity in terms of race, religion, and partisanship often homogenizes political preferences amongst in-group members. However, group identity alone is not what drives political uniformity amongst group members. Shared experiences and struggles and the strength of identification with the group also impact how one aligns politically with members (Dawson 1994; Tate 1995). One of the central findings in this body of literature is that strong). Therefore, strong group identity can be a powerful predictor of political preferences (Campbell et al. 1961). Additionally, hostility towards out-group members also powerfully impacts individuals' political attitudes and behavior (Kinder & Sanders 1994; Tesler 2016; Mason 2018).

Group identity can also serve as a cue for political preferences and promote political engagement. For instance, group identity has undoubtedly played a significant role in understanding partisan identity's impact on vote choice and policy preferences (Campbell et al. 1961). Moreover, we know that group identity plays a critical role in political behavior among African Americans. Studies following the Civil Rights Movement, for example, found increased levels of racial identification lead Blacks to become more active in politics (Miller et al. 1981; Verba and Nie 1972). Moreover, group identity is associated with higher support for both redistributive policies beneficial to their group and government intervention on behalf of their group (Bobo 2004; Dawson 1995).

3.3 Place-based Social Identity

The theory of sub-national identity presented here builds on previous theories of national identity. Sub-national identity involves citizens identifying with socially constructed sub-national regions within a nation. Unlike national identity, however, sub-national identity theory explicitly asserts that the identity includes a place-based cultural lens that reflects some level of adaptation to the group's cultural values and norms. As a reminder, I focus on the American South and Southern sub-national identity in this dissertation. However, I contend that many sub-national identities exist in the U.S. that call for investigation (e.g., New Englander, DMV, Midwesterners, Northern/Southern Californian).

On the one hand, understanding the psychological content of national identity and its political implications help us pinpoint the psychological substrates of sub-national identity to determine its political implications. On the other, understanding sub-national identities in the U.S. will help us improve our theories and understanding of American identity. I provide a brief description of national identity and then outline my sub-national identity theory.

In simple terms, national identity is an individual's sense of belonging to one state or one

nation combined with the subjective feelings one shares with a group of people about a nation (Taylor Francis 1998). Nations are not empty or meaningless geographic territories, and they include distinctive traditions, cultures, histories, and languages. Therefore, national identity can arise due to unique place-based cultural elements such as national symbols, language, history, national consciousness, and artifacts (Cameron 1999). By recognizing commonalities related to origin, norms, and destiny, people identify with a nation and form an in-group (Taylor Francis 1998). They also develop views that people with different national origins as out-group.

Furthermore, national identity is a social identity, and it includes both self-categorization and in-group and out-group affect (Emerson 1960; Tajfel and Turner 1979). The self-categorization component refers to identifying with a nation and viewing oneself as a member of a country. The affective component of national identity includes positive emotions about the in-group such as having a sense of belonging to the nation, pride and love of one's nation, feelings of commitment toward other citizens, and exceptionalism (Emerson 1960; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Moreover, by identifying with one's nation, people inevitably invoke inter-group comparisons and tend to derogate out-groups. As a result of the affective component of national identity, other place-based psychological phenomena can also develop amongst citizens– patriotism and nationalism (Citrin, Wong, Duff 2001). Patriotism encompasses support and solidarity with one's national group – it has little to do with out-groups. On the other hand, nationalism includes blind solidarity, haughty pride for one's nation, and hostility towards others.

In terms of its political consequences, national identity becomes more salient during the war, national attacks, heightened immigration, and natural disasters. Moreover, national identity does not automatically result in out-group hostility and other countries' negative beliefs (Sybbis, Martin & Centeno 2017). However, increased immigration and globalization are

associated with heightened national identity, sometimes manifesting into nationalism.

The transmission of national identity across generations is possible (Smith 1999). However, national identities can also disappear across time as more people move to different countries with uniquely different cultures and can diminish as supranational identities grow. Moreover, national identity can dissipate because of competing salient identities negotiated with others and within society (Blumer 1969).

3.4 Theory of Sub-National Identity

Although American sub-national identities have received little attention, healthy literature exists regarding these phenomena in other countries. This literature interchangeably uses sub-national identity and regional identity. Actual or perceived membership in the group, defined along sub-national territorial and ethnocultural lines, characterizes the components of sub-national or regional identities(Leets, Clèment & Giles).). Sub-national identities, in some cases, are developed from a sense of pride and attachment to region as a result of its historical distinctiveness, distinctive cultural and linguistic features, as well as high concentrations of members of the same ethnic group clustered in a region of a country (Constitucio' & Espanola 1991).

In many multinational and multi-ethnic countries, such as Belgium and Ukraine, citizens sometimes compete for place-based identities and decide whether to take the national or the sub-national point of view when making political decisions support policies. Moreover, sub-national identities can also have consequences for how citizens feel about various aspects of a country's internal political issues (Munis 2020). These political issues include national security, administrative-territorial division, religious issues, immigration, principles of self-government, electoral politics at the regional and local level, language question, education standards, regulatory policies, national minority rights, etc (Singh 2015).

Sub-national identities are developed partly by psychological attachment to regions with perceived or actual distinct cultural histories and orientations. It can threaten national unity and lead to ethnic and regional conflict. These regional or ethnic conflicts can often lead to a phenomenon that internal politics scholars refer to as ”sub-nationalism” (Singh 2015). Sub-nationalism promotes one's sub-national group's interest and asserts it separate from the nation's common interest. Sub-nationalism often manifests political behaviors such as political agitation, rebellion, and movements to promote the sub-national group's cultural values and norms, languages, religion, and the need to separate from the nation (Singh 2015).

The concept of national and sub-national identity has been a central component to understanding the political consequences of nationalism and ethnic conflict globally (Sybbis, Martin & Centeno 2017). In recent years, national identity's political impact on responses to globalization, immigration, and the role that superordinate identities play in interstate economic and political decision-making has also heightened interest (Sybbis, Martin & Centeno 2017; Nab 1993). Given the critical political implications of national identity, various survey measures have been designed to tap the salience and strength of identity at the national, sub-national, or supranational level. The measurements include survey questions determining whether citizens hold a sense of belonging to one's country. It also determines whether one identifies with or thinks of themselves as members of the national group and whether they feel attached to specific nations or subnational areas (Singh 2015; Nag 1993). Although surveys have been primarily used to measure identity because of their centrality to research on public opinion and political behavior, few efforts have been made to cross-validate survey measures of identity or establish a standard approach cross-nationally. In practice, this lack of standardization means that there is no one particular source to draw when implementing a survey measure of sub-national identity.

The comparative literature provides rich insight into how attachments to sub-national re-

gions in a country or continent can shape citizens' perceptions about political issues. However, I offer a new theoretical framework for understanding and measuring sub-national identities that build on extant literature in two ways. First, it provides a robust theory of sub-national identity that can be applied to studying sub-national identities and place-based identities globally. Although many studies investigating regional or sub-national identities in various countries exist, the literature is scant and inconsistent in conceptualizing and measuring the identity (Sybbis, Martin & Centeno 2017). Secondly, this dissertation provides a framework to empirically create valid and reliable survey measurements of sub-national identity, which can also be adapted to understand place-based attachments in other countries. For example, the measurement presented here does not ask about specific cultural features that may be more salient in one place than another. This dissertation's measurement of sub-national identity measures the phenomenon focusing on various psychological effects and attachment elements, reflecting how central the place-based cultural lens is in shaping one's political beliefs.

3.5 New Theory of Sub-national Identity

I theorize that sub-national identity (SNI) is a multidimensional social identity that details the nature of individuals' psychological connections with sub-national areas within countries. Moreover, SNI includes two components: a cognitive and affective component. These components are depicted as individuals having a high level of positive place-based affection and psychological attachment. The two components of SNI also reflect that individuals internalize perceived place-based group cultural values and norms. Therefore, the level of affect and attachment one has for the group should reflect the internalization of group cultural values and norms. In simple terms, this theory asserts that by creating a sub-national identity measuring explicit positive affection and attachment towards the in-group (as opposed to other groups), we can capture the subjective lens/filter's dimensions and content sub-national identity.

The sub-national identity theory presented includes several assertions. First, regions in the U.S are perceived to be distinct in terms of their historical legacies, politics, people, etc. Second, sub-national areas in the United States serve as heuristics. This means we evaluate a place using the widely held stereotypes (e.g., perceived norms and values) we ascribe to places given our perceptions about the groups of people living in a location and the reputation associated with a place (Enos 2018). Third, living in a sub-national area or any place with a "way of life" and a group of people that is or perceived to be distinct from the rest of the country can create "us" versus "them" sentiments amongst residents and lead to psychological attachments and affect for individuals regarding that location. Finally, individuals can then classify themselves as being a part of the "us," "them," or "neither" group – depending on how they evaluate each group's cultural values and norms. This is how sub-national identifications are developed, with a place-based subjective lens central to how many individuals view themselves and think about politics. Sub-national identities are central to how Americans think about politics, regardless of the salience of racial and religious identities, partisanship, and beyond how nationalized American political information has become. In the following sections, I elaborate on the three primary psychological expectations that constitute the framework of sub-national identity: 1) Evaluation, 2) Place-identification, and 3) Cultural Reflection.

a. Evaluation of Place

Sub-national identity concerns understanding how individuals feel similar to people within a group or opposing groups. It considers that places are perceived to be culturally different, and therefore, the people in the group hold a unique cultural lens that filters how they see the world. As a result, the measurement of sub-national identity presented here captures several elements of place attachment and demonstrates how central the cultural lens shapes political views. Furthermore, Americans employ the geography heuristic to determine whether they should identify with a region or place in evaluating place. People use geography as a "mental

shortcut" or heuristic to ascribe meanings to geographic locations and groups within areas as a fundamental cognitive function for survival (Enos 2017). Moreover, geographic thinking, or neuroscientists referred to as "spatial cognition," is frequently activated for needs like geographic navigation, adaptation to new environments, detecting potential harm, and interpreting the physical and social environment.

Additionally, the "geographic heuristic" plays a vital role in helping humans construct group-based norms and narratives to define their group as well as others. Essentially, groups develop conscious and unconscious norms of acceptable behavior, enforce them through various formal and informal means, and sustain and justify them using place-based cultural narratives, history, and traditions. Using the geographic heuristic, groups create narratives to define and distinguish themselves from other groups within other geographic spaces. To put it simply, the geographic heuristic equips Americans (and humans in general) with objective and subjective narratives so that they can quickly judge and interact with out-groups and geographic spaces. In conclusion, when developing sub-national identities, individuals evaluate the values and norms they associate with the place and place-based group. The activation of the geographic heuristic is central to my survey measurement construction of Southern identity.

b. Identification Reflects Shared Values and Norms with Group

Second, identification with the place-based group should reflect how much one adopts perceived place-based group cultural values and norms. We know that groups can form for trivial reasons (Tajfel & Turner 1978). However, I contend that explaining how groups' perceived cultural norms and values shape what groups we decide to identify with can help us better understand irrational group cohesion in voting and political beliefs. Why do group members behave in ways that reiterate group norms and preferences and maximize group benefits instead of individual material interests (White & Laird 2020; Gainous & Radanovich 2005; Campbell et al. 1961)? An example of this would be the unwavering support of the Republican

Party by working-class White Southern voters or wealthy Black elites who support the Democratic Party. Moreover, Tajfel and Turner emphasize how individuals conform to the norms of their social groups during social identity development. Most scholarship incorporating this theory highlights the self-identification component as indicating their group membership and not detailing the group's content (e.g., group cultural values and norms). The scholarship in the political science literature provides numerous definitions of culture, and definitions of culture across the social sciences are also multi-faceted and varied. For instance, psychologists conducted an interdisciplinary review and analysis of literature relating to culture and found 300 unique definitions (Baldwin, Faulkner, & Hecht, 2006). In psychology, a widely used definition of culture refers not to groups of people but the beliefs, values, and rituals held within a given ethnocultural group (Betancourt and Lopez 1993). Other social scientists defined culture not on group values and norms but on social forces such as class, poverty, and marginality that work with culture to shape people's lived experiences (Lopez and Guarnaccia 2000). While the lack of a standard, widely accepted definition poses challenges for defining group cultural values and norms, this dissertation relies on the meaning of culture derived from the work provided by Marsella (2006). Marsella defines culture as "shared learned values, norms, behavior, and meanings that are socially transmitted in various life-activity settings for purposes of individual and collective adjustment and adaptation" (Marsella, 2006, p. 353). When referring to culture in this dissertation, I mean to indicate that culture has shared external (e.g., societal factors, institutions) and internal (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, values) features that are modified as the context changes (Marsella, 2006). In essence, this depiction acknowledges that beliefs and behaviors shaped by culture are dynamic and subject to continuous updating and evolution (Marsella, 2003). Although a group's cultural values and norms can shift for adaptation and adjustment to macro-changes in society, it should be noted that cultures can frequently become pathogenic because each individual's perception of reality is

culturally constructed (e.g., Edgerton, 1992). The definition here conceptualizes culture as a lens or filter that influences how individuals interpret and experience reality (Marsella, 2003). Therefore, social identity and other group identities should not be defined and measured separately from the cultural experience. Social groups are partly developed from perceived and shared cultural values and norms (Marsella, 1982, p. 363).

c. In-group Values & Norms Are Perceived Distinct from Out-group

Third, individuals perceive opposing groups to hold a unique set of cultural values and norms distinct from their in-group members. To reiterate, the definition of the place-based culture here is simply the perceived valued (e.g., preferred) and normalized (i.e., widely perpetuated) set of rules, principles, ideas, and behaviors that assist one with navigating the physical and social world in a location. Again, we know that culture is difficult to measure because it is challenging to conceptualize due to high culture variation within regions, racial groups, and interaction with various other factors. Furthermore, the sub-national identity theory does not claim that the identity reflects the internalization of objective and empirically defined place-based culture norms and values. The sub-national identity theory exclusively focuses on a sub-national identity centered around how Americans perceive place-based group cultural norms and values instead of the rest of the country.

d. Empirically Identifying Place-based Cultural Values and Norms

Undoubtedly, categorizing place-based cultural norms and values using Americans' perceptions of a place instead of other locations face important measurement and theoretical limitations. Perceptions are subjective views about the world. We know that incomplete information, bias, and stereotypes inform perception. We also know that one group or individual's perception of culture does not equate to a place's valid nature. Place-based perceptions of South residents may include more accurate information about a place, and non-residents may rely on antiquated facts and stereotypical and mythical information. However, the level of

shared place-based perceptions between residents and non-residents can create an informative typology of perceived place-based culture (Wong 2010; Wong 2007). This method will decrease bias when categorizing place-based cultural norms and values. Moreover, this method can utilize diverse qualitative data to determine the perceived norms and values ascribed to a place by its residents and non-residents.

CHAPTER 4

Theory of Southern Sub-national Identity

Throughout American history, news media, academic, and popular culture documenting the political and social conditions of the American South have depicted the region as distinctive. Beginning with the region's long commitment to the enslavement of African Americans and its unsuccessful efforts to secede from the Union during the Civil War, the political legacy of the South is a significant reason why the South is perceived to be unique. Moreover, shared socio-cultural practices (i.e., its staple foods & cuisines, music genres, religion, language and accents, mannerisms, wardrobes, preferred leisure activities) developed by its residents lead many Americans to think of the South as a distinct region (Gunter, Vaughn, & Kendall 2020; Bradly 2019; Cooley 2018). As a result, historically and contemporaneously, the region has distinctive cultural values and norms (Cox 2011; Thomas & Tian 2008; Cobb 2005; Reed 1986).

The perceived and actual distinctiveness of the South has led Americans from other regions of the country to view their fellow citizens from this region as "other" in other areas of the country. The "otherness" narratives regarding Southerners led to "us" versus "them" sentiments amongst many Americans, although the origins of the narratives differ across racial groups. Distinct narratives about Southern Whites developed leading up to the American Civil War and have endured over time. For Southern Blacks, distinct narratives arose in the early 20th century when Blacks migrated outside the region, obtained better economic and

political opportunities, and often perceived their southerner friends and family as ”beneath” them. Elitism and respectability traits of the earliest Black migrants resulted in harsh critique and policing of later Southern Black migrants and residents. For instance, in many Black newspapers, elites in non-south communities wrote editorials with guidelines on disbanding one’s ”southern ways” when moving to the North. Insert Chicago Defender and L.A. Black’s excerpt.

Perceptions about the region’s culture and its historical legacy created fertile grounds for developing a unique social identity among Americans from this region. I refer to this phenomenon as Southern Sub-national Identity – or more succinctly, Southern identity. Southern identity is a social identity comprised of possessing high positive psychological attachment and affection for a place. The sub-national identity equips individuals with a unique world view (Knotts & Cooper 2014; Cox 2011; Thomas & Tian 2008; Cobb 2005; Reed 1986). Thus, when measuring the identity, I pinpoint the subjective perceptions associated with the relevant groups (i.e., in-groups and out-groups) to 1) understand Southern identity’s content and 2) observe whether the identity translates into political beliefs.

In regards to the the South, historical and contemporary race relations are the basis of the region’s perceived distinctiveness (Brown 2005;Williamson 1984). In contrast, others argue that the North’s distinctiveness, relative distinctions to the South, is based upon the region’s racial history (McGerr 1988). Finally, a line of research in international politics investigates how identities rooted in place (e.g., ”regional identity,” ”sub-national identity,” and or ”place-based identity”) influence how people conceptualize, understand, and think about politics (Munis 2020;Sybbis, Martin & Centeno 2017; Nab 1993). This chapter presents a new general theory of sub-national identity. This theory can be used as a framework to study sub-national identities and place-based identities in the United and globally.

Much of the American politics literature recognizes the vital role that regional differences

play in forming American public opinion. However, previous work faces significant measurement limitations: 1) inadequate empirical measurements of ”southernness” (e, g., unique cognitive effect from Southern exposure or attachment), and 2) the exclusion of Southern Blacks in theories and analysis of Southern identity and its political consequences.

In this chapter, I discuss the limitation of the current Southern attachment literature. I then discuss information narratives and how, over time, these narratives can create politically relevant perceptions. Next, in detail, I discuss motivating historical and contemporary factors that shaped our distinct perceptions of the South, which has cultivated Southern identity. Using a variety of qualitative data, I create a typology of perceptions about the South. Finally, I discuss the psychological underpinnings of Southern identity, the survey questions used to capture the identity's psychological content, and how the survey measurement can be adapted to study sub-national identities in other locations.

4.1 How Is Southern Identity Developed?

A plethora of factors contribute to the development of social group identities. Previous work suggests significant variation in an individual's decision to identify with a social group. In particular, an individual's inclination to develop a social identity is partly various factors such as cognitive traits and contextual factors.

My theory of Southern identity development aligns with contextual theories of social identity development. In particular, social and cultural psychologists have investigated how distinct social, cultural, and historical narratives tied to groups or place-based groups (e.g., nations, regions, etc.) inform social identity contours. Previous work also suggests that the perceived distinctiveness of the group in terms of its norms and values factors into an individual's identity formation (János 2013). For instance, in national identity, individuals learn about distinctive group characteristics from cultural features in their daily lives. These cultural features include

national symbols, language, colors, nation's history, ethnic traits, music, cuisine, radio, entertainment, movies, media, etc. Moreover, cultural features inform narratives about a country. Because cultural features are present, at some level, in an individual's personal, professional, educational, entertainment, political, social, and leisure arenas, individuals learn what it means to be a member of a place-based group (János 2013).

As a result of exposure to cultural features and information narratives about place-based groups, individuals incorporate social identity into their identities by adopting beliefs, values, assumptions, and expectations aligned with one's national identity (János 2013). People identifying their place-based group then view place-based beliefs and values as personally meaningful and translate them into daily practices. However, the level of exposure to these cultural features and narratives and the valence of how individuals evaluate the cultural narratives will shape, I contend, how much one identifies with the place-based group.

The information narratives about the South include both factual and stereotypical information. Regardless of whether the narratives are valid or false, many Americans perceive that the people and the region's culture are unique from the rest of the country. This perceived distinctiveness of the region has led to many in-group and out-group sentiments amongst Americans. Additionally, many Americans hold various stereotypes and beliefs about the South. For example, many Southern Whites refer to White Americans from the North as "Yankees," and Southern Whites are sometimes characterized as "hillybillies" and "rednecks." Moreover, some Black Americans from non-south states refer to Black Southerners as "Bamas" or "Geechie" (Stadius 2001).

Moreover, although the South's historical legacy and political reputation have an enduring impact on American politics and mass public opinion, these perceptions are not static, and Southern states are not homogenous. The region has experienced various socio-cultural shifts over the past fifty years (Cobb 2005; Lassiter & Caspino 2010; Mickey 2015). However, old

narratives and reputations die slowly. Therefore, my construction of Southern identity includes a ”subjective” approach. This subjective approach includes pinpointing perceptions of the social groups' traits to more thoroughly understand how Americans distinguish Southerners from non-Southerners v.in their minds. If we know what Americans think about place-based groups, we can infer that one is likely to endorse this perception by identifying with the group. This approach allows us to understand Southern identity's content and observe whether it translates into distinct political beliefs. This assertation is also applicable to information narratives and reputations concerning the ”North.” essentially, emphasis on broadly held perceptions adds ”meat to the bones” of social identity theory. Furthermore, this approach informs my development of a sub-national identity measurement and helps us understand how it translates into political beliefs. For example, when designing survey questions including group labels such as ”Southerners” or ”the South,” we will know what stereotypes Americans tend to associate with the group.

4.2 Developing Narratives: Southern Distinctiveness

The origins of distinctive information narratives about the South's values and norms date before the U.S. became an independent nation. Conception. Socio-political features mainly relating to racial inequality and intergroup relations between Southern Blacks, Poor Southern Whites, Southern White elites are central to persistent narratives about the region (Key 1949). Although historical racial dynamics play a significant role in how Southerners are characterized, many other social conditions disproportionately associated with the region also infiltrate dominant narratives. These social conditions include homogeneity in Southern Baptist affiliation, segregation, high percentages of residents living in rural areas and poverty, and lower education levels. The racial dynamics and social conditions that define the South's narrative are not exclusive to the region and can be observed throughout history in other parts of the

country. However, because Southern states behaved uniformly and distinctively during critical periods of American political development, distinct and uniform narratives and perceptions about the region are crystallized in contemporary American perceptions.

Four critical periods in America's political development helped define the unique stereotypes associated with the South. Those four periods include the pre-Civil War antebellum period, the Reconstruction period and its aftermath, the era of industrialization, and the modern Civil Rights era. Each of these periods offered opportunities for new economic expansion, racial equality, and democratic governance. These opportunities were highly promoted by Black political leaders and gradually afforded by the federal government with much from Southern states. Although, throughout each period, Southern states resisted federal and civic pressures to adopt new democratic economic, legislative, and civic practices and reinforced conflict between racial groups and conflict between the federal government and states. However, successful protest, litigation, and federal legislative efforts during the Civil Rights Era presented the most influential shock to the (White) Southern way of life since the Civil War years. Had Southern states decide to adopt more democratic governing practices earlier in the 20th century, historians argue that the former Confederate states' identification as "Southern" would have likely converged into an "American" identity. However, because of the enforcement of anti-democratic norms in the region, narratives promoting a "Southern state of mind" persistently influence Americans to see the region as distinct. Thus, whether factual or perceived, Southern distinctiveness has endured over time and still impacts how Americans think about the region today. The following sections provide a brief overview of each period and how these eras have created a unique Southern identity among residents.

4.3 The Ambivalent Nature of Popular Narratives about the South

Common perceptions of the South are often inconsistent. Throughout the region's development, you will learn that Southern cultural values and norms conflicted with differing values and racial groups' norms. This ambivalence and conflicting values and norms associated with the region are present throughout the region's development. For instance, the unified Southern character (e.g., combing cultural norms and values of Black and White Southerners) both embraced progressive movements, yet it is reluctant to change. Southern character and culture promoted individual freedoms, yet at the same time, demanded conformity.

However, another inconsistency in the region was that an aristocracy arose in the South, even though it was antithetical to Christian theology as widely understood in the South. Additionally, the South's defeat in the Civil War included federal legislation that promised more equitable and humane conditions. Nevertheless, Southern White politicians successfully implemented legalized oppressive racial system of Jim Crow. Finally, the religious-inspired Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's1960s successfully obtained political and social wins for Blacks, women, and other racial minorities. However, the South continues to be a hotbed for xenophobia, homophobia, and racial nationalism.

4.4 Southern Identity Measurement

The Southern identity theory's foundation is that the South's perceived distinctiveness is associated with a unique sub-national identity (i.e., Southern identity). Many Americans share this sub-national identity because of the enduring perception that the region is distinct from other parts of the nation. Americans with a higher positive affection and psychological attachment

to the American South, as opposed to the rest of the country, can also have higher Southern identity levels. Southern identity equips individuals with a unique worldview (Knotts & Cooper 2014; Cox 2011; Thomas & Tian 2008; Cobb 2005; Reed 1986). To define the region's cultural values and norms without bias, we can create a typology using shared perceived cultural values and norms by residents and non-residents. Understanding the region helps us understand the worldview that Southern identity carries. In return, this understanding helps us predict the attitudes and preferences associated with Southern identity.

Moreover, identifying the underpinnings of Southern identity helps us precisely measure the psychological substrates of the identity. I focus on survey measurements in this dissertation. However, the measurement is motivated by multiple qualitative efforts, including interviews, content analysis, and social media data.

4.5 Measurement Expectations

Hypothesize that Southern identity is a sub-national identity that consists of high positive affection and psychological attachment. I designed seven survey items to measure varying manifestations of place-based affection and attachment derived from the prevalent themes observed in the in-depth interviews. The measurements of place-based attachment and affection included: the centrality of identity, perceived regional superiority, sense of connection with other Southern residents, hostility towards out-groups, perception of commonality, and in-group preferences. The seven proposed survey items are created to a) ensure that the measurement is dynamic, b) capture an affectionate and attachment dimension, and c) require respondents to evaluate the region concerning the rest of the country. Moreover, the proposed questions were designed to be apolitical and constructed to implicitly emphasize a sense of superiority or animus relative to an out-group.

Furthermore, the "the South" and "Southerners" labels embedded in my proposed survey

items of Southern identity will activate a heuristic among Americans that allows them to access information, narratives, and personal experiences about the South. We know that geography can serve as a heuristic and impact Americans' political views and behaviors (Enos 2017). This cognitive process works similarly to other social identity measurements, such as party identification and ideology. The items in my scale cue the identity group, and researchers assume that respondents can use heuristic thinking to decide whether they identify with the group quickly. Similarly, my survey items' "south" and "southern" references will prompt heuristic thinking.

Given the availability of information about the American South, most respondents should develop a "picture in their mind" to evaluate the region and its residents (Wong 2007). This picture must not be complete, expansive, high quality, or accurate in their mind. Many factors will shape the type of picture that comes to mind when thinking about the South. Some of the primary factors will be the residents in the region, travel to the region, familiar ties with the region, race, religion, and education. A good portion of Americans may not have a picture in their minds regarding the South – this is also meaningful for measuring Southern identity. If an individual does not have a picture regarding the South, we should not expect them to have a Southern identity. Nevertheless, when individuals think about the South, the type of picture that comes to mind will influence their affection and attachment with the region. Essentially, Individuals will filter their information about the South and the non-south through their cultural lens and make decisions to affirm those values and norms. Higher levels of Southern attachment and affection will be associated with political beliefs presumed to benefit the in-group, in this case, the region. The proposed measurement items are listed below. All questions include Likert-scale responses, which can be found in the Appendix.

Proposed Southern Identity Items

1. Commonality : How much do you feel you have in common with people from the U.S South? Centrality: How important is being a Southerner to your identity?

2. Connectedness: Whenever you speak about Southerners, how often do you say ”we ”instead of ”they”?

3. Impartiality: How strongly would you prefer or oppose to living in the South compared to any other U.S region?

4. Prideful : How much better do you think that other parts of the country would be if they were more like South?

5. Exaltation : When people praise the South, how does it make you feel?

6. Offense: If people criticize the South, how likely is it that it would feel like a personal insult to you?

7. Distinctiveness: How similar or different do you perceive Southern culture to be in comparison to the rest of the country?

4.6 Southern Identity Measurement Items

Attachment Questions 1. Centrality: How important is being a Southerner to your identity? This is a cognitive question seeking to understand whether individuals perceive their group membership as influential in their self-image. If being a part of the group is tied to self-image, we should suspect higher identifiers to promote values and norms that help the group.

2. Connectedness: Whenever you speak about Southerners, how often do you say ”we” instead of ”they ”? This is a cognitive question to determine whether individuals feel a sense of connection with in-group members. This question also informs us on whether the individual is in conversations discussing differences regarding regional groups.

3. Partiality: How strongly would you prefer or oppose living in the South compared to other U.S regions? This is a cognitive question – seeking to determine whether individuals affirm their place-based group membership by preferring residency where the group is originated. This requires one to assert whether their group membership is as essential to their identity to the extent to which they would want to live in proximity to group members. We should expect high identifiers to make decisions that affirm group affiliation. Affect Questions

4. Pride: How much better do you think other parts of the country would be if they were more like South? This is question measures affect. It seeks to determine whether individuals hold in-group biases or a sense of superiority regarding their place-based group. This requires an evaluation of the entire country. The geographic heuristic will help individuals think of the South and compare it to other parts of the country. A variety of factors will shape the amount and type of information one has about each region. We should suspect that high identifiers will have more favorable information about the South than low identifiers. Contrarily, we should expect low identifiers to hold less favorable information about the South than the non-south or no information that distinguishes the South from the non-south. Moreover, those whose identity score is in the middle should hold somewhat equally favorable information about the South and the rest of the country or little information distinguishing the South from the non-south. Individuals will filter the information they have about the South and the non-south through their cultural lens and make decisions to affirm those values and norms.

5. Exaltation: When people praise the South, how does it make you feel? This is an affect question seeking to understand whether individuals perceive how their group is evaluated shapes their emotional status. If being a part of the group is tied to individual personal emotions, we should suspect higher identifiers to promote values and norms that help how the group is evaluated and, in return, improves their emotional status.

6. Insult: If people criticize the South, how likely is it to feel like a personal insult to you? This is an affect question to understand whether individuals perceive how their group is evaluated shapes their emotional status. If being a part of the group is tied to individual personal emotions, we should suspect higher identifiers to promote values and norms that help how the group is evaluated and, in return, improves their emotional status. On the other hand, if they perceive the group to be assessed negatively – we should expect high identifiers to hold more negative attitudes of out-group members. Moreover, we should suspect them to defend

their group via supporting and promoting values and norms aligned with their group. To some extent, we should expect high identifiers to hold higher superiority, ethnocentrism, and seek to make out-group conform to their group values and norms.

7. Distinctive: How similar or different do you perceive Southern culture to be compared to the rest of the country? This question looks to understand whether individuals, regardless of Southern identity, perceive the values and norms of the South to be distinct. It is designed to affirm that Americans perceive that Southerners are a distinct group with non-trivial distinct norms and values compared to the rest of the country.

4.7 Measurement Expectations

Expectation 1: Given the media and popular cultural depictions perpetuating Southern distinctiveness compared to the rest of the U.S, many Americans also endorse popular perceptions of the region and its residents.

Expectation 2: Southern Identity is a sub-national social identity comprised of two components: place-based psychological attachment & positive effect toward the region affection.

4.8 Measurement Findings

The first goal of the dissertation was to develop a valid measure of Southern identity that captures the theoretical components of the construct. The second goal was to investigate the influence of Southern identity on American public opinion. Thus, I developed a battery of eight questions to capture how Southern identity is manifested and reflected different aspects of Southern attachment and affect. This initial battery of questions is based on questions adapted from the American identity scale, Southern politics literature, and themes observed in the qualitative data. The set of questions were refined using survey research best practices

to ensure sufficient construct validity. Later in the chapter, I will discuss various features of the questions and survey items used in pilot studies and the national survey. I first examined the measurement hypotheses using two 15-minute online surveys conducted via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (M-Turk) in February and July 2019. The survey samples were 400 and 600 respondents, respectively. Moreover, the samples only included Black and White Americans – each racial group comprised half of each sample. In the convenience sample, 53 percent were female, the mean family income was around $50,000, the mean education level was "some college but no degree," and the mean age was 49 years old. The surveys featured seven proposed Southern identity measurements and various attitudes regarding racial, social, and economic issues.

At the beginning of the survey, participants were told that "We are interested in understanding how people think about politics, government, and culture." Further, the preamble of the survey instructed them to answer all the ways that reflected their sincere beliefs. Before replying to the set of items related to Southern identity, respondents answered several demographic questions. The survey also included several questions related to personal and family residential history in U.S states. I included a labeled U.S map defining "the South" and the Southern identity items following the residential history questions. The goal of this ordering was to prompt geographic thinking among respondents implicitly. Based on data collected from qualitative interviews of residents living in the South their entire lives, I learned that when discussing the region, participants viewed the "South" as equivalent to American and as "the world." However, when explicitly discussing the South concerning the "North" and other specific regions, participants were more likely to express in-group and out-group sentiments. Although the prompting of geographic thinking may suggest that Southern identity is a latent identity for some respondents, later surveys randomize the order of the Southern identity items relative to the geographic questions.

For the sake of clarity, I do not explore all the features of the Mechanical Turk pilot studies in this dissertation. I use these surveys primarily to get an initial sense of the various items' properties and establish a cleaner, more succinct, and more theoretically appropriate measure of the underlying construct. Furthermore, the survey included different policy and attitudinal measurements – which were present after the Southern identity items. Thus, the first goal was to determine whether the proposed Southern identity items captured a latent build and could be created into a scale. The next goal was to determine the reliability of the scale. The third goal was to test the scale's relationship with various racial attitudes and preferences.

Following the two convenience surveys, I conducted a national YouGov survey consisting of 400 Blacks and 400 Whites in January 2020. The YouGov survey's primary aims were to confirm the structure of the Southern identity and investigate whether the M-Turk findings will replicate using a quasi-nationally representative sample. The YouGov survey featured seven proposed Southern identity measurements and various racial, social, and economic attitudinal measurements. I present findings from this dataset in chapters 5 and 6.

4.9 Identifying the Latent Construct

Exploratory Factor Analysis

I initially performed an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the scale's structure on each M-Turk survey to construct the scale. The analyses produced similar results across the two surveys. Thus, I will report results from the July 2019 survey. First, I examined my measurement hypotheses, which asserts that the Southern identity items constitute a latent construct and fit into two components (e.g., affection + attachment). I perform an iterated principal factor Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) on the seven proposed items. Table 1.2 shows the results from the EFA model across both surveys. So that factors and items can be correlated (and for eased interpretation of the results). This analysis resulted in six items with

Loadings:

	Factor 1	Factor 2
southbest	0.86	
southlive	0.68	
southpraise	0.61	
southconnect		0.70
southimport		0.82
southinsult		0.48
SS loadings	1.96	1.82
Proportion Var	0.33	0.30
Cumulative Var	0.33	0.63

Table 4.1: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

loadings that met the statistical threshold (< .40), and the items fell into two factors explaining most of the variation (4.1). The analysis indicates that the pride, impartiality, and exaltation items load strongly onto what I theorize about the psychological attachment factor. As shown in Table 4.1, the exploratory factor analysis results indicated these items load significantly onto this first factor (attachment), with loadings of .86, .68, and .61, respectively. Similarly, findings indicate that the connectedness, centrality, and insult items, which tap into affectionate beliefs, load significantly on factor 2 (4.1). The loadings are .70, .82, .48, respectively. As shown in Table 1.2, each item of the South identity scale loaded significantly into the same factors in both surveys. Additionally, the distinctiveness item loaded in a third factor due to little variance in response — over 70 percent of respondents perceived the South to be distinct. Thus, I drop factor 3 and the distinctiveness item.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

After performing the EFA, I ran a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using data from the YouGov study to confirm the scale identified using the Mechanical Turk survey data. The goal here is to test whether the scale maintains its six items and two-factor structure in this data to reflect the theorized dimensionality of Southern identity —that it has at its core a psy-

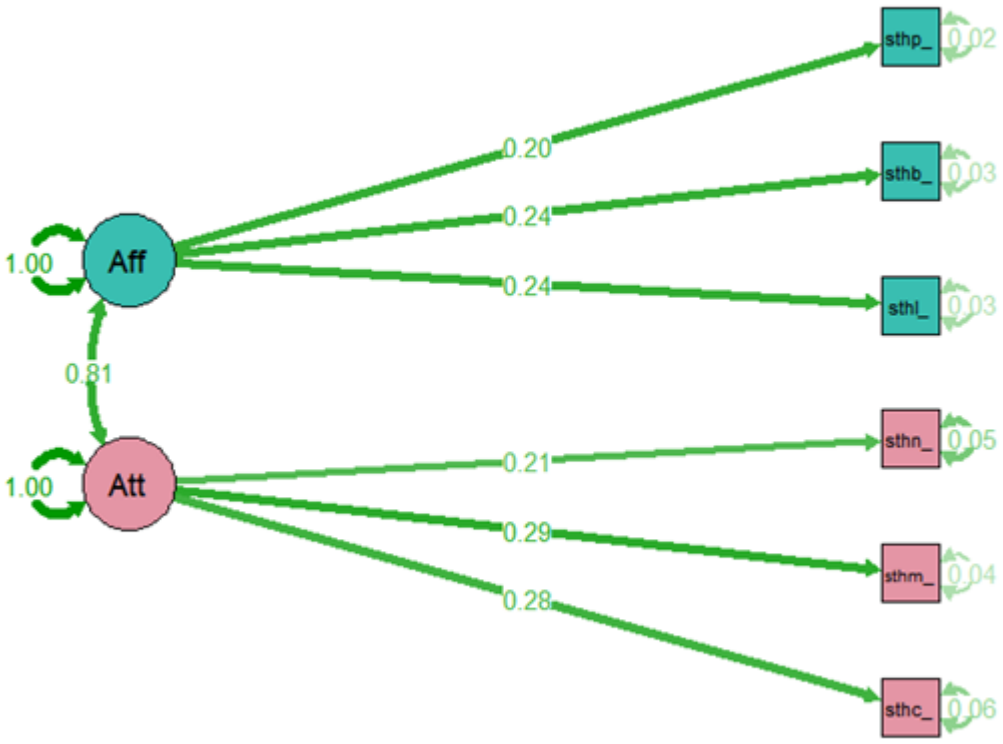


Figure 4.1: Structural Model for Southern Identity Scale

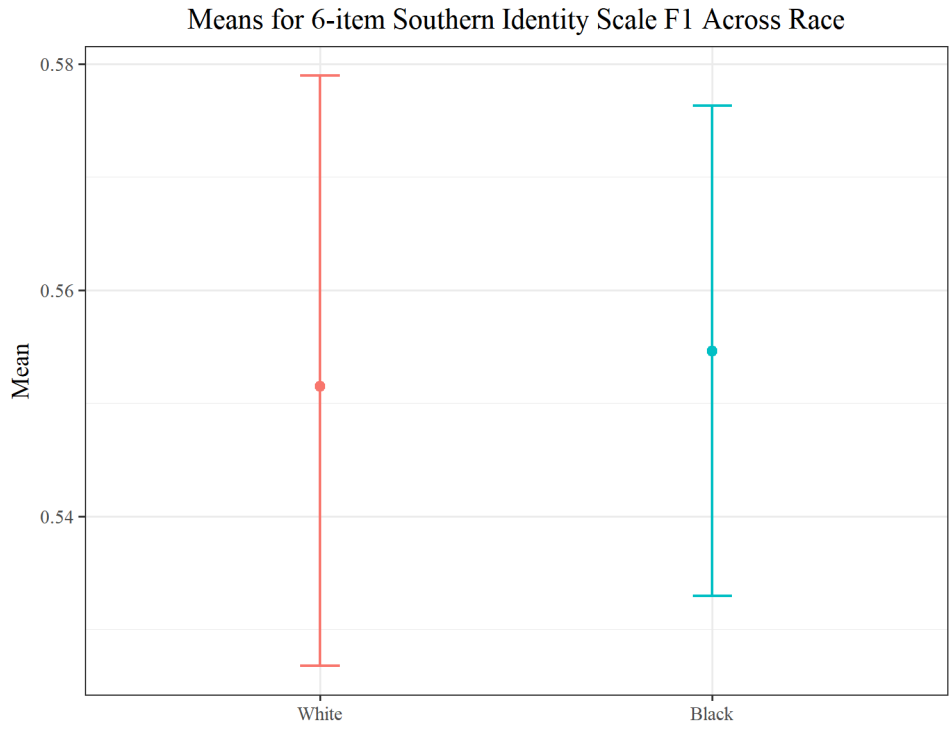


Figure 4.2: Factor 1 Mean for Southern Identity Scale

chological attachment component and an affection component. As previously mentioned, the theoretical expectation is that two factors jointly reflect the tenets of Southern identity. Figure 4.1 illustrates that the six-item and two-factor structure of the scale is sufficient. Moreover, the results indicate a strong correlation between the two factors (alpha = .81), suggesting that they are not independent and share a moderate, positive association.

Moreover, the chi-square value for the overall model was significant. This result suggests that the covariance matrix implied by the model is different from that observed in the data. However, previous work asserts that it should not serve as the sole basis for judging model fit. Results from other assessments of model fit suggest adequate model fit.

After I performed the EFA and CFA analyses, I created each factor into separate scales to

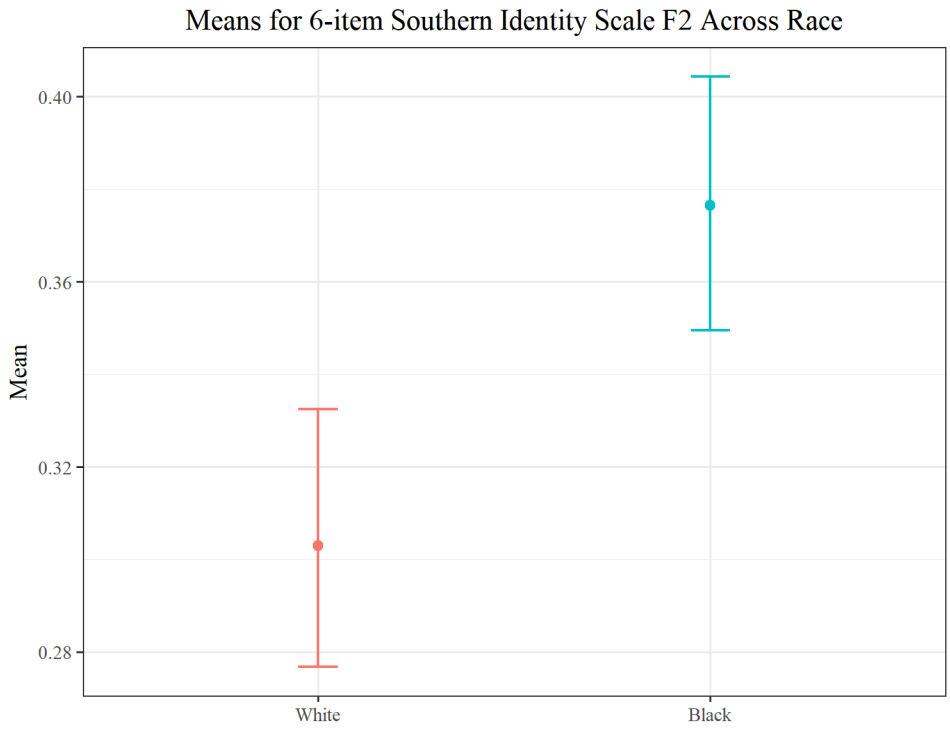


Figure 4.3: Factor 2 Mean for Southern Identity Scale

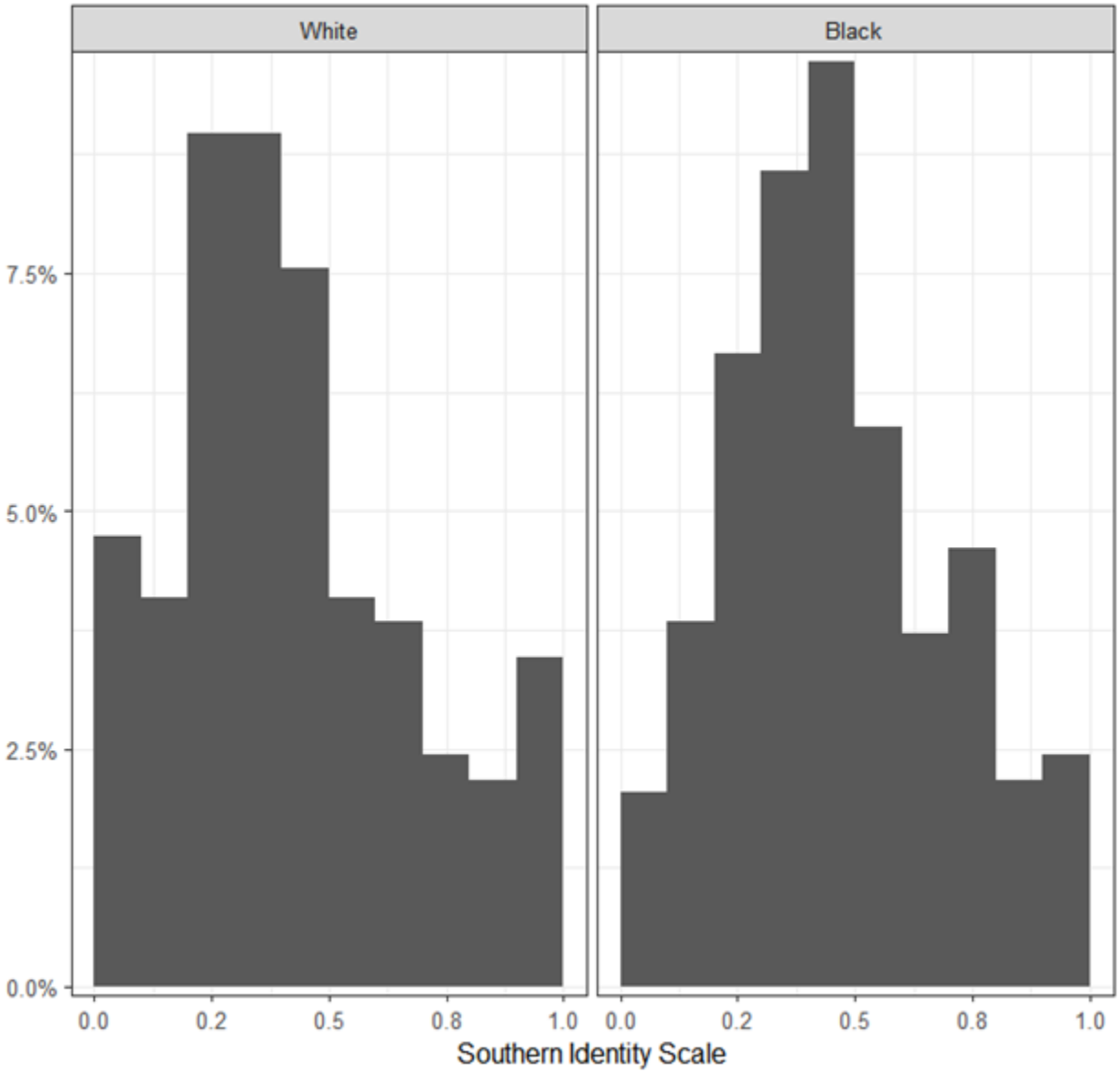


Figure 4.4: Distribution for Southern Identity Scale

test whether 1) there was variation across race in mean scores on each dimension, 2) whether items or factors should be weighted based on the strength of the factor loadings and eigenvalues, and 3) to determine whether the two factors predicted the same attitudinal outcomes. The results indicated little variation across the sub-scales The mean scores for both factors are outlined in Figure 4.2 and Figure4.3.

4.10 Scale Construction

Thus, the Southern Identity scale is a summated scale using all six items measuring affection and identity with the South. The scale is coded from 0-1 for interpretation purposes. Lastly, I checked the reliability of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha (alpha = .86) of the scale ensured high internal reliability on the six items. I ran the factor analyses, including all respondents across race and separately across the racial group. The findings did not differ when respondents were disaggregated by race. Moreover, the distribution of the scale across races suggests that Black Americans were more likely to score high on the scale (Figure 4.4). I will discuss the reasoning behind this result in Chapter 7.

4.11 Perceived Southern Culture Values & Norms

Researchers argue that the meaning people give to a social identity, not just its existence, determines the political consequences of the identity (Citrin, Wong, & Duff 2001; Sears 1994). For example, Citrin, Wong, & Duff 2001 demonstrates that the values and norms voters associate with the country shape their American identity definition (Citrin, Wong, & Duff 2001). Voters hold varying policy preferences depending on if they perceive American values in terms of either individualism or egalitarianism (Citrin, Wong, & Duff 2001). Additionally, defining American society in terms of liberalism, multiculturalism, or nativism also shapes their politi-

cal views (Citrin, Wong, & Duff 2001). There are many political consequences associated with the values individuals ascribe to being a "real American" or defined as the various elements of American identity. For instance, those Americans with more nativist views about being American are more conservative on immigration and religious policies (Citrin, Reingold, & Green, 1990; Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2000). I suspect that the values and norms associated with Southern identity will also determine its political consequences.

Given the extensive history of shared socio-political narratives about the South, I collect qualitative evidence to create a typology of perceived Southern traits. I argue that Americans' perceptions about the South can fall into three primary categories. The three categories are: communalism, traditionalism, and hierarchism.h To be clear, in this chapter, I only present suggestive evidence of perceived Southern culture norms. These three components are subjective and based on qualitative observations and perceptions. I concede that this is a limitation given I provide no empirical framework to identify and measure of Southern culture norms or values. However, future work will include a subjective typology of Southern culture values based on perception and an objective U.S county-level culture typology based on latent analyses of county-based defining traits and characteristics. Nevertheless, I contend that it is plausible and sufficient to use a subjective perception-based typology of the components of Southern culture to inform us on what beliefs should be associated with the identity.

When employing social identity theory, it is not empirically determine if a respondent is a part of a social group - it is determined by the respondent's perception of the group and perception of their group membership. Moreover, it is not empirically determine what norms, values, and beliefs should be expected to go with social groups – it is assumed based on shared associations that come from individual's perceptions using qualitative data. For example, how do we empirically determine what political attitudes should be associated with being an Evangelical or Democrat? Common assumptions and circumstantial evidence are

used to theorize about beliefs, norms, and values that should be associated with a social group (Campbell et al. 1961). I have yet to come across a study that empirically shows the beliefs, values, and norms that objectively belong to a social group. Some studies attempt to add "the meat on the bones" of social identity - meaning studies the layout content of the social identity using simple qualitative data and assumptions (Citrin et al. 2001). But, most studies form hypotheses around social identity based on common assumptions. Contrarily, my work uses various qualitative data to identify consensus about the perceived Southern cultural values and norms.

Undoubtedly, categorizing place-based cultural norms and values using Americans' perceptions of place face important measurement and theoretical limitations. Perceptions are subjective views about the world. Incomplete information, bias, and stereotypes inform perception. We know that one's perception of culture does not equate to the true nature of a place. However, determining the level of similarities in place-based perceptions of a place between residents and non-residents is a plausible method for creating a typology of perceived place-based culture (Wong 2010; Wong 2007). Focusing on how Americans perceive, Regardless of whether they live in the region, the South will decrease bias when categorizing the region's culture.

Given the themes discussed in the qualitative responses, I create types for the words and phrases used to construct a typology of perceived regional traits. Identification with the South, given its perceived communalistic, hierarchical, and traditionalistic features – should translate into a distinct set of political beliefs that seeks to maintain tradition, promote group and community preference, and perpetuates social hierarchies and order. Below, you will find a description of the perceived Southern traits and example narratives across multiple qualitative data sets.

Measurement Hypotheses 2: Perceived Southern Cultural Distinctiveness

4.12 Information Narratives: Open-end Responses

Both Mechanical Turk surveys include an open-ended question that prompts respondents to list their perceptions of the South. The question states, "When you hear the phrase, 'the South' or the word 'Southerners,' what traits and characteristics come to mind?" In both surveys, over 70 percent of respondents could ascribe adjectives and characteristics to the region. To define the traits associated with the region, I perform a thematic analysis using open-ended responses. The results suggest that respondents' perceptions were focused broadly on three features relating to the region: 1) race relations, 2) Southern history and development, distinct traits, values, and 3) characters of Southern residents. Below, in Figures 5.1 and 5.2, you will find results from the structural topic model and word clouds analyzing open-ended responses, which assisted me in creating the typology. *Perceived Southern Traits* 1. Communalism – Communalism promotes" the greater good of the group." One's political interests are focused on a social group rather than directed towards personal objects or interests. One seeks to maximize the social group interests and responsibilities over individual concerns (Boykin 1983; Boykin et al. 1987).

2. Traditionalism is conceptualized as beliefs and efforts centered around maintaining tradition and conventional norms related to gender roles, sexuality, family structures, religion, and social-behavioral expectations.

3. Hierarchism cultural feature seeks to promote respect for those in authoritative or high-level positions, the social order and encourage stiff punishment for behavioral deviance.

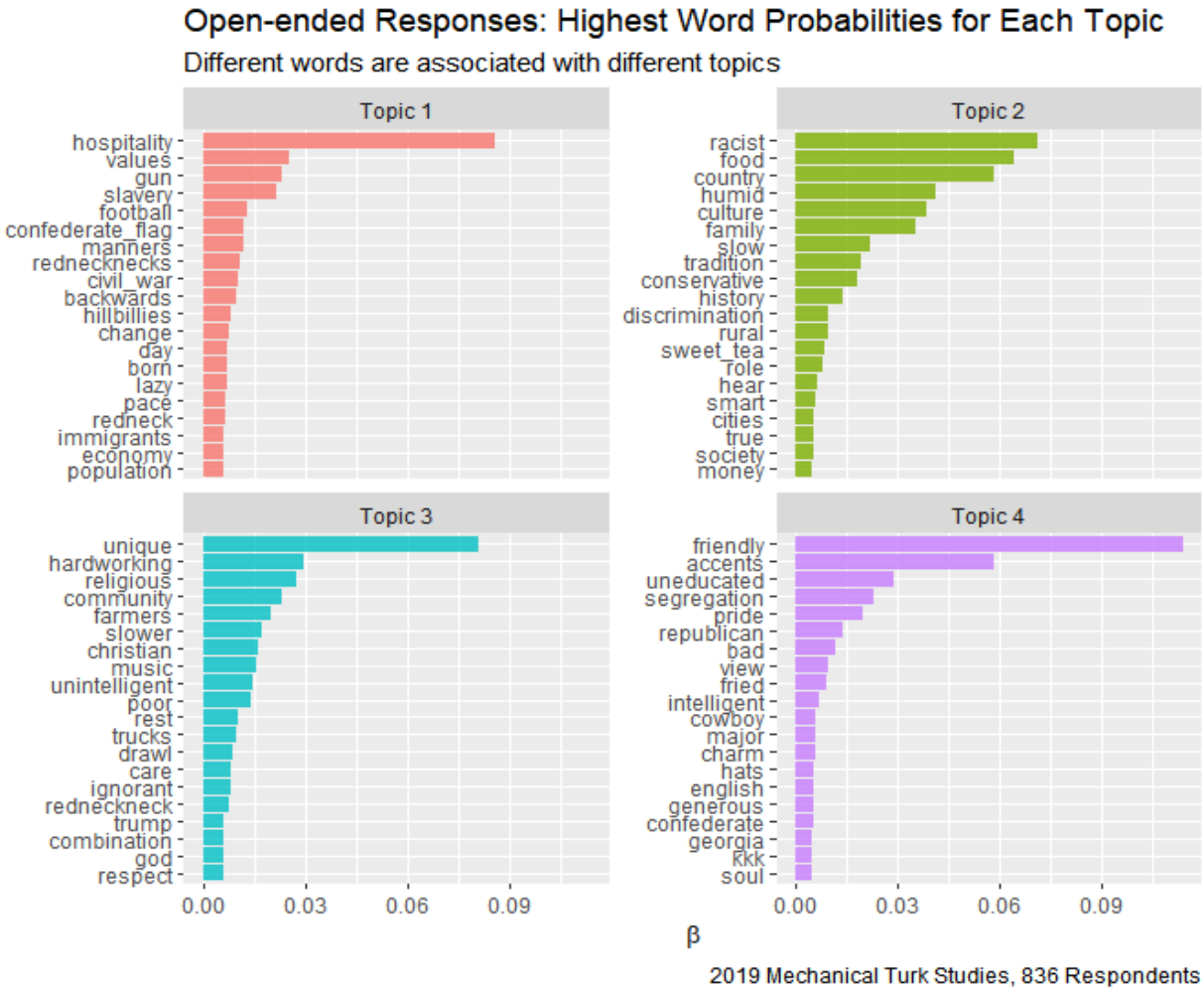


Figure 4.5: Structural Topic Model Using Qualitative Data



Figure 4.6: Word Cloud from Qualitative Data

4.13 Qualitative Examples

Black Opened-Responses

"When I think of South it's larger population of African Americans or people from the Caribbean islands. As much as any other people, Southerners have a very well-developed culture and have great ocean views, the sunshine states. People in the South are well mannered because they were raised that way. We are raised to help each other. We are nicer and more respectful than other people in other places too. People go to church and love football." – Black, South

"Not too much other than Sweet tea and somewhat thick accents. I hold no grudge towards the South, more so towards the black people who are satisfied with being mediocre. Throughout history white people dominated, through war and attrition. After they conquered people, the greatest op they committed was convincing minorities that violence is not the answer, after literally controlling societies using it. It is the minorities fault for falling for it." – Black, Non-South

White Opened-Responses

"I think of people who drink sweet tea and say y'all. We are very polite and giving. More religious and more conservative. It's generally hot and humid most of the year. We are not all rednecks waving a confederate flag. We are all the same people regardless of our race or color - were human being and everybody deserve the respect. Yea there are racists here and we get a bad rep because of it. But there a racists everywhere especially the big cities of the North." – White, South

"Mostly racist whites and poor blacks. I think of Jim Crow sharecroppers and slavery - think of my own family that was born and raised in the South who was racist and filled with evil hateful men and women. I have read about the many blacks that have been murdered. It is Devil's Punch Bowl there where many freed slaves were held in an area and thousands died.

It is still segregated to this day. – White, Non-South

4.14 Discussion

Again, I agree with the argument that the meaning people give to groups and social identity, not just its existence, determines the political consequences. In the same vein, I argue that the substantive meaning ascribed to Southern identity determines its political consequences. I contend that the subjective elements defining Southern identity align with Southern culture's three perceived elements: communalism, traditionalism, and hierarchism. Thus, I suspect that Southern identifiers will, on average, hold racial and social predispositions and policy preferences aligned with these cultural elements. Specifically, Black, and White Southern identifiers will be more inclined to adopt more group-centric racial attitudes and policy preferences – reflecting the communalistic nature of Southern culture. Moreover, they will be more likely to adopt more conservative attitudes regarding social p

Policies and cultural issues reflecting Southern culture's traditionalistic and hierarchal nature. Given the perceived cultural norms and values associated with the South, I theorize that Southern identity will translate into political beliefs and attitudes that are aligned with communalism, hierarchism, and traditionalism. The values and norms are perceived to promote a contradictory world view, making it important to adopt attitudes that reinforce support for one's racial group and Southern cultural features. Additionally, the values and norms are perceived to promote a conflicting world view that makes it important to support policies that benefits one's racial group and protect Southern cultural features. I have empirical expectations regarding the political consequences of Southern identity in three public opinion domains: race, social issues, and economic policies. In each domain, I explore the political impact of Southern identity on individual's predispositions and policy preferences.

CHAPTER 5

Who are Southern Identifiers?

An extensive amount of evidence illustrates that group identity, in general, is meaningful for how Americans think about politics, policy, and political candidates (Jardina 2015; Dawson 1994). Regarding place-based group identities, we know that citizens' levels of American identity impact how they view political issues such as immigration, military affairs, foreign policy, and intergroup relations among ethnic groups (Munis 2020; Citrin, Wong & Duff). Moreover, comparative politics literature speaks to the critical need to understand how other place-based identities such as regional and sub-national identities impact domestic political matters within countries and possible conflict between various racial and ethnic groups. For instance, researchers found that persistent political movement from the rise of sub-national identities in India is a significant driver of support for succession and communalism amongst some ethnic groups(Sybbis, Martin & Centeno 2017; Singh 2015). This rise in sub-nationalism threatened the nation's unity (Sybbis, Martin & Centeno 2017; Singh 2015).

However, the literature attempting to understand how sub-national identities in American politics is scarce. The extant interdisciplinary research demonstrates the important role identity plays in how Americans, individuals, and groups develop beliefs and behaviors. For instance, the American South is a region that is historically, culturally, racially, ethnically, and politically distinguishable due to shared values and norms amongst the states across time. The South is a region that all resisted abolishing slavery and went to the extent to succeed from

the Union and wage war to protect values and norms they claimed represented their culture. Moreover, even after losing the war, the region remains persistent in preserving confederate values and norms via formal and informal challenges.

Additionally, the region has the highest percentage of African Americans, which over time, has created a situation that has led to undemocratic practices, racial terrorism, racial inequality, and stifling economic progress. Lastly, the region's homogenous religious practices, food preferences, and leisure activities have also made the region a unique territory. These features speak to the importance of understanding Southern identity and other U.S sub-national identities and how these place-based group identities may impact how citizens think about politics and their political choices.

5.1 The Importance of Southern Identity

Although political scientists have long accepted the notion that residing in the South cultivates distinct belief and behavioral orientations among many American's residing in the state, little attention has been devoted to understanding the political implications of social identification with the region. As it relates to the importance of Southern identity for shaping the political beliefs of White Americans in the region, we know that they are more likely to identify as racially conservative and support the Republican party than non-southern White voters. White Southerners are associated with traits such as solid red, racially conservative, White supremacy, and Republican party dominance (Cobb 2005). Although these traits accurately describe White voters' historical political conditions, we know little about variation in political beliefs and behaviors amongst Whites in the region who hold strong psychological identifications and those who do not. Moreover, recent events (i.e., the Charleston Massacre, Charlottesville Riot, the Capitol Hill Insurrection) and various other racially charged events occurring during the Obama and Trump presidencies had questioned the meaning and sym-

bolism of the former Confederate Battle flag when Southern states succeeded from the Union. Many Southern Whites have argued that the flag represents the heritage of their ancestors. More surprisingly, however, is the fact that many non-southern-born or residing Whites, both politicians and individual citizens, also hold positive infinity to the flag and region. Thus, the measurement of Southern identity proposed here allows us to understand how non-southern Whites, with no historical, familial, or residential affiliation to the region, think of the area, the issue of the Confederate flag, and whether they identify with the region. Essentially, is the South glamorized and symbolic of an ideology or way of life that non-southern Whites, with no element of affiliation, psychologically and politically attach themselves to? These questions will be answered later in the dissertation.

Concerning the political importance of Southern identity for Black Americans, the measurement uncovers intra-group variation in public opinion and attitudes that has been previously unnoticed in political science literature. We know that Black Americans share high group identity and consciousness levels and are more likely to support Democratic presidential candidates – regardless of region of residence or psychological affiliation with the place. Contrarily, there is little focus variation in Black political behavior concerning how voters evaluate political candidates during Democratic Party primaries. For instance, we know that nearly 60 percent of Black Americans live in Southern states, and over 30percent of democratic party presidential primary delegates come from those states. In presidential primaries, obtaining the Southern Black vote (and Southern White vote in Republican primaries and general) is vital. Thus, the measurement allows us to investigate whether Blacks hold different beliefs about political candidates depended on Southern attachment, which helps us better understand electoral outcomes in democratic party elections at the state and local level. Finally, this measurement illuminates the opinion and attitudinal dimensions where Black and White Southern identifiers may or may not share similar ideological affinities – and it shares light on

the counterintuitive ways racial groups in the region arrive at political beliefs and decisions.

5.2 Southern Identifiers Across Race and Geography

To understand who identifies as a "Southerner" and how identification with the social group may vary across race and region, I ask a series of questions gauging respondents' beliefs about the region. First, I begin with explicit identification with the social category "Southerner." Figure 5.1 shows the percent of responses to the item explicitly asking whether one identifies as a Southerner. These results demonstrate that when a national sample of Black and White Americans are asked whether they think of themselves as "Southerners," Blacks Americans are significantly ($p < 0.05$) more likely to identify as Southerners than White Americans explicitly. Notice that 44 percent of Blacks reported that they identified as a Southerner, compared to only 31 percent of Whites reported that they identified as a Southerner.

Next, I examine whether there was regional variation in explicit identification as a Southerner across the region and racial groups. The findings demonstrate no significant difference in the proportion of Blacks in the South who identify as a "Southerner" and the percent of Whites in the region who identify as such.

Figure 5.2 shows that percent of Black who lives in the South considered themselves Southerners compared to only 21 percent of Blacks living in other regions. For White residents in the region, 70 percent considered themselves Southerners, and only 14 percent of Whites in other regions considered themselves Southerners. These findings make a new contribution to earlier work in political science and sociology and popular cultural narratives about residents of the South. For instance, historians investigating Southern culture and residents in the early 20th century argued that the Southerner identity should only be applied to Whites. It was inappropriate to suggest that Blacks living in the region would want to be identified as such. More recently, when discussions about Southerners are at the forefront in national media, the

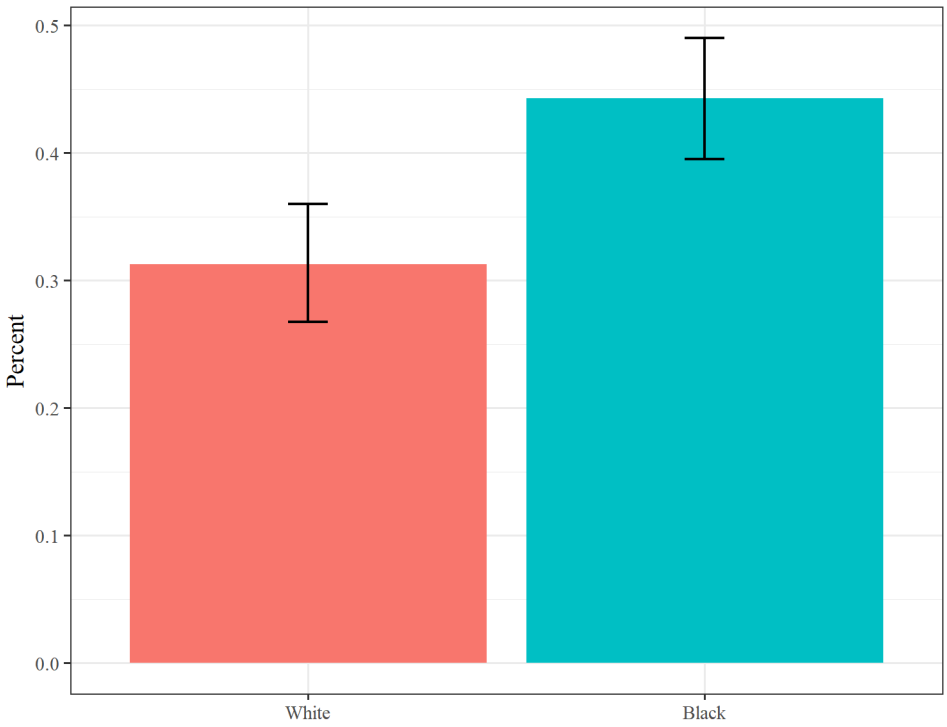


Figure 5.1: Explicit Southern Identity Across Race

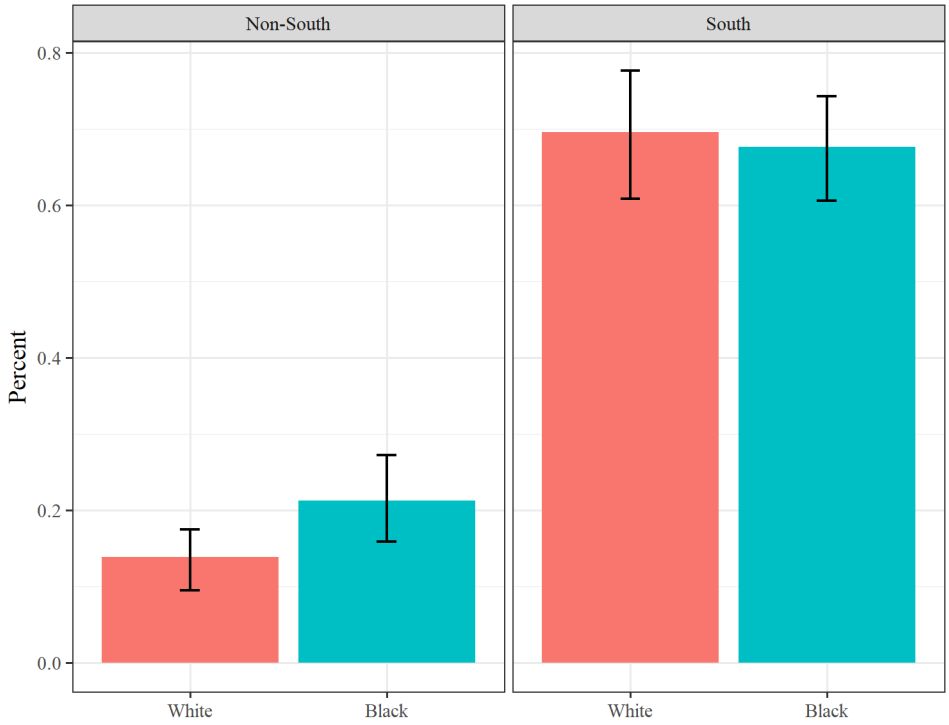


Figure 5.2: Explicit Southerner Category Across Region and Race

category is often synonymous with White Southerners – and Black Southerners are often excluded from the categories. These findings illustrate that social category is equally applicable for Black Americans in the region for White Americans.

The explicit identification findings provide us new insight that a good proportion of Americans living in the region, regardless of race, labels themselves to be Southerners. However, these results can be a byproduct of the minimum group's paradigm. Studies exploring the minimal-group phenomenon illustrate that the mere act of categorizing individuals into groups can be sufficient to make them think of themselves and others in terms of group membership instead of as separate individuals. Qualitative data collected for this dissertation suggest that some consider themselves a "Southerner" based on being aware that they reside in the South. Since this is the case, explicit identification does not measure social identification.

Moreover, any other single item measure not designed to capture attachment to place and positive affect for place falls short of capturing the critical components of social identity theory: social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. Therefore, a multidimensional measurement of positive psychological attachment and affect to regions provides the psychological and social characteristics of identifying "Southerner." Moreover, know that the strength of one's identification with a social group often distinguishes ingroup members in terms of public opinion and policy preferences. Thus, the Southern identity measurement here captures variation in the strength of one's identity across race and region and will allow us to see how identity impacts political attitudes and preferences.

5.3 Southern Identity Across Race

Now, I turn focus to the multidimensional Southern identity scale. 5.3 shows the distribution for the Southern identity scale across racial groups. In terms of the mean score of Southern identity scale across racial groups, the results demonstrate no significant difference in group

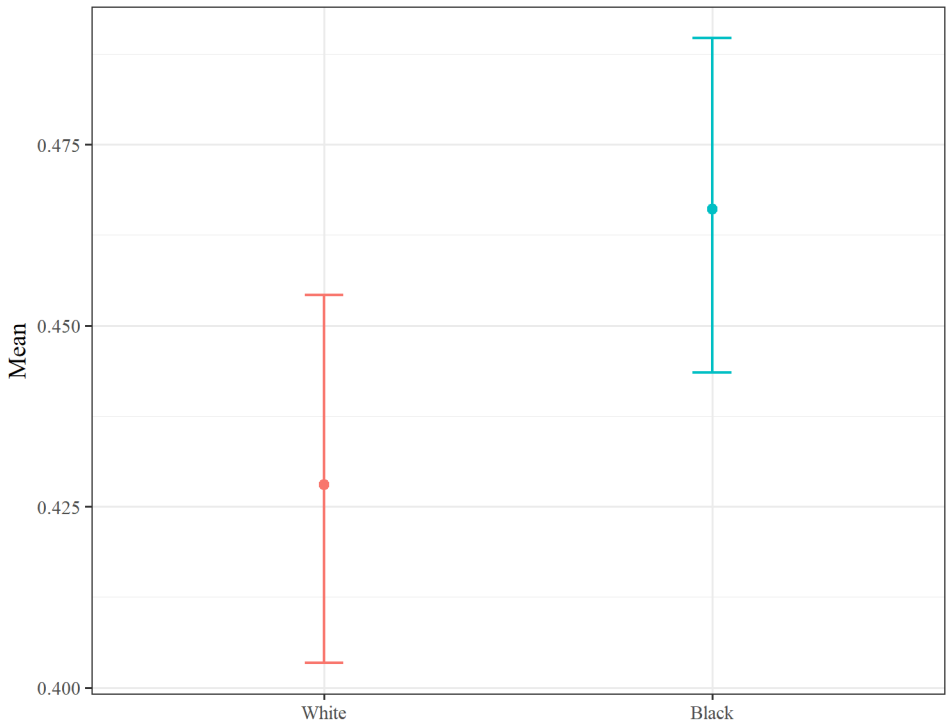


Figure 5.3: Southern Identity Scale Across Race

means. I find that the group means for Blacks is .46 on the 0-1 scale, and for Whites, it is .43. For some, this finding may be a bit counterintuitive given the historical narratives defining the South via the lens of White Southerners. However, the results make logical sense given the geographic origins of White Americans and Black Americans. For instance, nearly 60 percent of Black Americans are resident in Southern states as of 2020. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of Black Americans living outside the South can trace their post-enslavement ancestry back to Southern states, given that many non-southern Blacks ended up in their respective regions due to the Great Migration of their family members during the 20th century. More importantly, because Black Americans did not have the privilege of awareness of their African nationality, the South is "the Motherland away from the Motherland," as one of my non-southern interview participants described.

As for a majority of White Americans, they have no residential connection to the South. When the earliest European migrants came to American, they freely migrated to various locations throughout the United States and did not have strong ties to one specific region. However, due to chain migration and other push and pull factors, White Americans from different European nationalities and ethnic groups cluster in various regions. To sum it up, White Americans do not hold an involuntarily psychological or residential connection to the South. Their residential histories and migration legacies in the U.S are diverse. Therefore, it makes sense that, on average, Black Americans will have a high Southern identity score than White Americans.

5.4 Southern identity Across Race and Region

Given that individuals identify with many different groups and sometimes have varying perceived distinctiveness and importance levels, I suspect that Americans living in the South across racial groups will score higher on Southern identity. We can assume that those living in the South will be more likely to be exposed to its cultural features and be more aware of

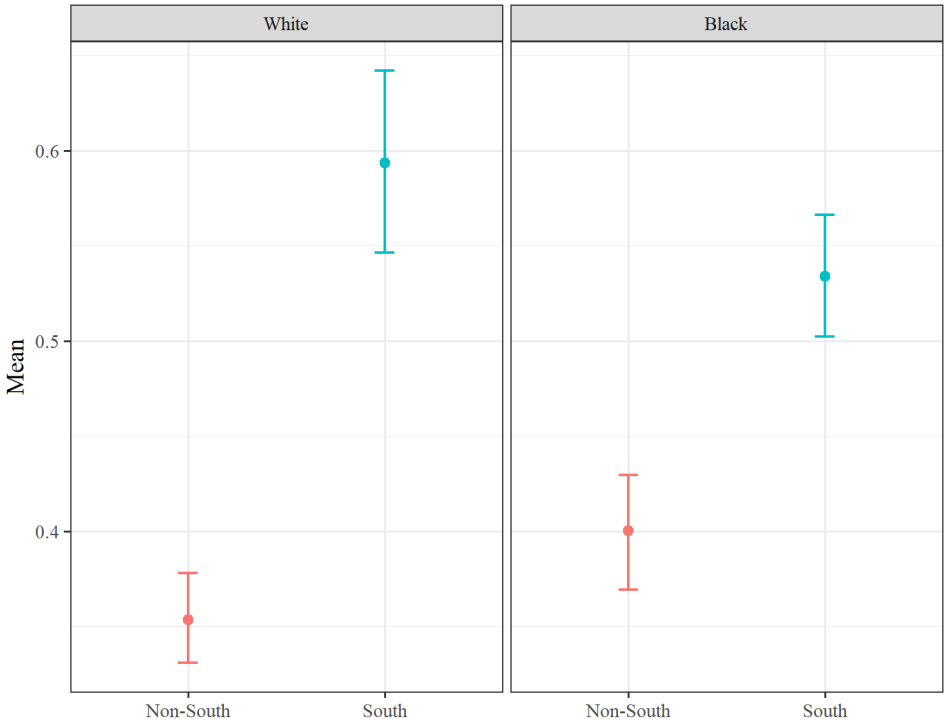


Figure 5.4: Southern Identity Scale Across Region and Race

its cultural narratives. Moreover, we can assume that residency and exposure to the South allow individuals to experience the culture and evaluate the regions' distinct qualities to decide whether one is a member of the group.

I look at the distribution of Southern identity across race and region as outlined in Figure 5.4. For Black Southerners, the mean is .53 and .40 for Black non-southerners. For White Southerners, the mean is .59, and the mean is .35 for White non-southerners. Figure 6.4 demonstrates that Southern Blacks and Southern Whites score significantly higher on the scale compared to their non-southern racial group counterparts. Moreover, I find no significant difference in the mean score of Southern identity for Southern Blacks and Southern Whites. This finding may be surprising given the assumption that being a Southerner is only applicable to Whites with the region. However, again, this finding speaks to the exclusion of Black Americans in media depictions and narratives about the South and the importance of understanding how the region shapes Black Americans and how Black Americans have shaped the region.

5.5 Southern Identity across Race and Gender

Additionally, I explore whether there are gender differences in Southern identity. I find no differences in Southern identification for men and women. However, I do find racial differences within gender groups.

As you can see in Figure 5.5, Black women score higher on Southern identity scale compared to White women while there is no difference between Black men and White men. Specifically, for all women, the mean is .43, and the mean is .47 for all men. For both Black and White men, the mean is identical (.47.) For Black women, the mean is .46, and it is .39 for White women.

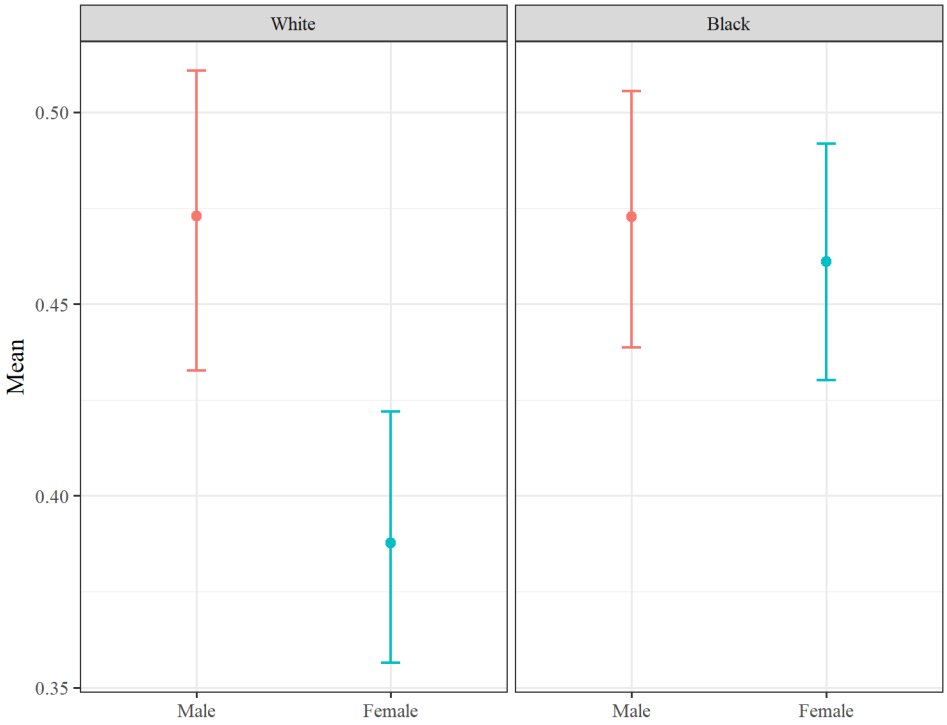


Figure 5.5: Southern Identity Scale Across Race and Gender

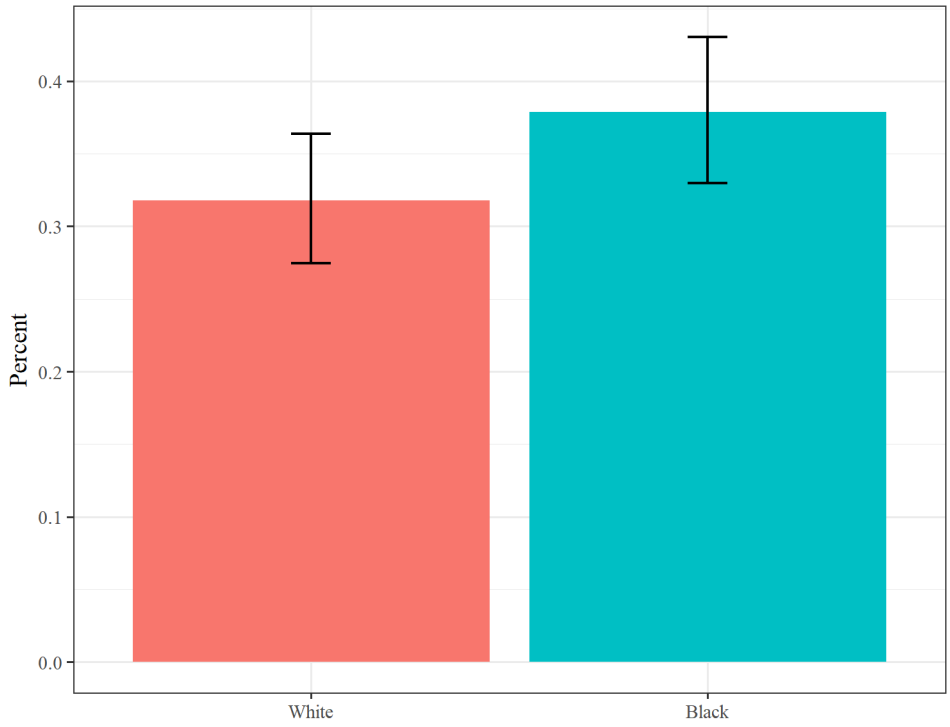


Figure 5.6: High Southern Identity Across Race

5.6 High Southern Identity across Race

Next, I discuss the percentage of high and low Southern identifiers, which is outlined in Figure 5.6. High Southern identity is defined as having a score above the Southern identity mean for all groups (.44) on the 0-1 scale.

Looking at the total percentage of Southern identifiers in the sample was around 35 percent. The results demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of White Americans living in the South scored high on the Southern identity scale, and a majority of Black Americans in the South scored lower on the scale. However, looking across racial groups only, I find that 39 percent of Black Americans scored high on Southern identity than 32 percent of White Americans, which is not significantly different from the percentage of Black high identifiers.

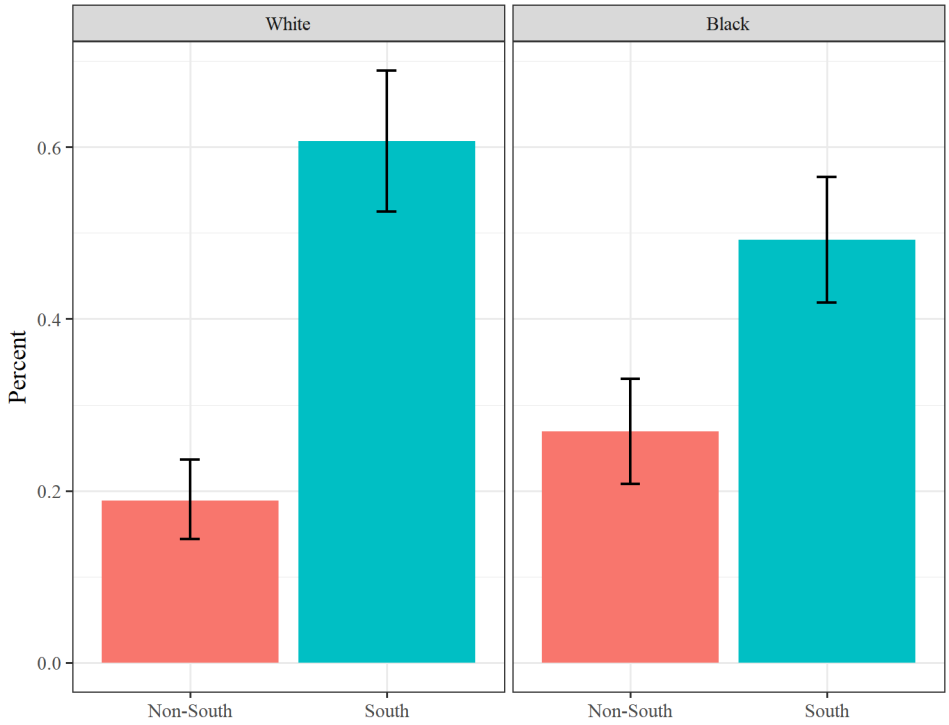


Figure 5.7: High Southern Identity Across Race and Region

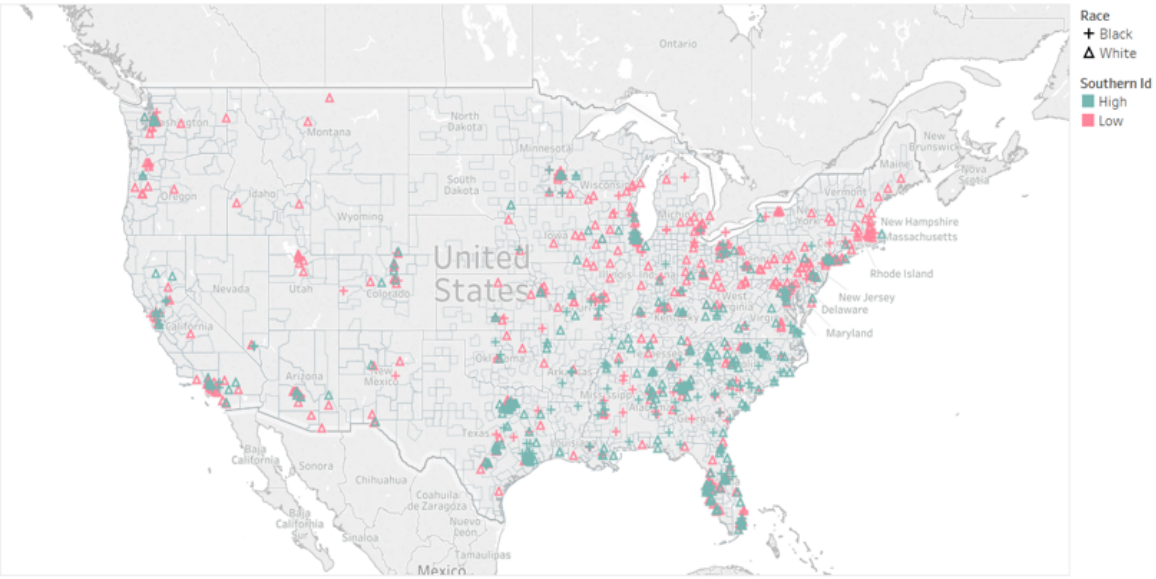


Figure 5.8: Mapping Southern Identity Across the U.S

5.7 High Southern Identity across Race and Region

Concerning regional variation, I find that 49 percent of Blacks in the South scored significantly high on the scale than 27 percent of Black in non-south regions (Figure: 5.7). For Whites in the South, 61 percent scored high on the scale compared to 19 percent of White non-south region – which is a significant difference. In Figure 6.8, I map respondents across racial groups based on high or low Southern identifiers. From the observation, you can notice a trend of high Southern identifiers in the Midwest region, the second-highest Southern identifying region. For Blacks and some White Midwestern residents, this lingering Southern identity could perhaps be residuals of the migration of Blacks and Whites outside of the South into the Midwestern states.

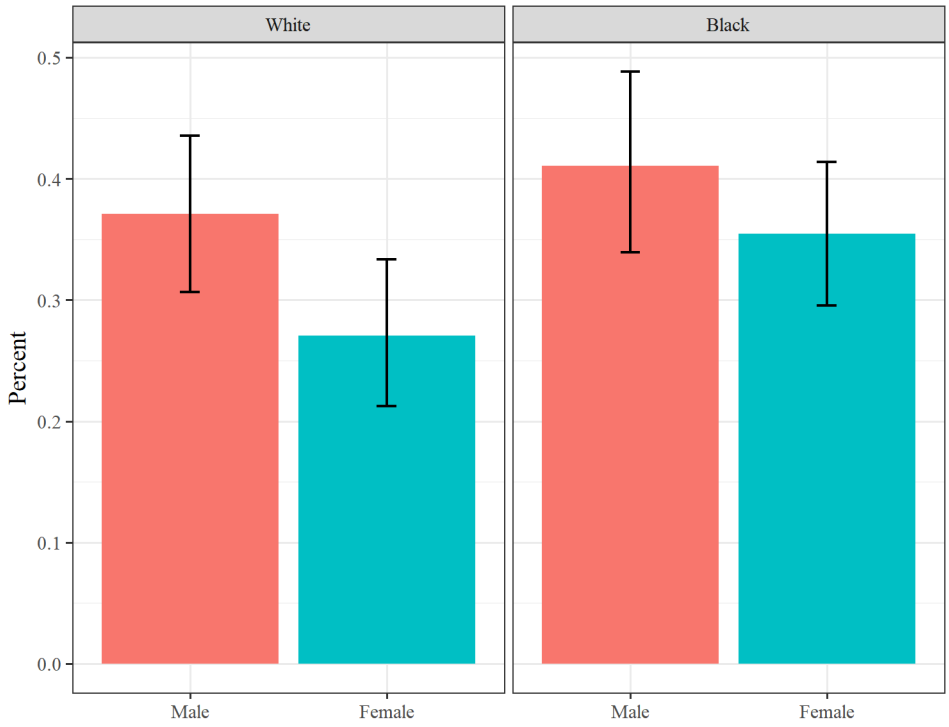


Figure 5.9: High Southern Identity Across Race and Gender

5.8 High Southern Identity Across Gender

For all women, 31 percent score high compared to 39 percent for all men. Moreover, 41 percent of Black men scored high compared to 37 percent of White men. Roughly 36 percent of Black women and 27percent of White women scored high on the scale (Figure 6.8).

5.9 Other Demographics Differences

In terms of other demographic differences between high and low Southern identifiers, I find that Black high identifiers are, on average, three years younger than lower identifiers. Although the difference in age amongst low and high identifiers is not significant, it is aligned with work in sociology and history that suggests that Southern identity began to manifest as a

more explicit identification amongst Black Americans over the past 50 years. Thus, we could assume that older African Americans would be less likely to identify as Southerners. Moreover, I find that, on average, high Southern identifiers are more educated than low Southern identifiers but make less income. I find no differences in education, age, or income between low and high identifiers for White Americans.

5.10 Discriminant Validity of Southern Identity

I argued in Chapter 4 that Southern Identity is an independent identity based on high psychological attachment and affect for the American South. If Southern Identity is a separate and distinct construct, it should not be interchangeable with other relevant political predispositions or identities. Given the centrality of group considerations to my theory of Southern identity, one could wonder how Southern identity differs from other essential group identities such as racial, national, religious, and partisan identity. To see whether this important prediction bears out, I examine the correlation between Southern Identity and several social and political predispositions using my 2020 YouGov survey.

I begin with the most central and significant political predisposition— partisanship. Political scientists have long recognized party identification as a persistent and important political identity for most Americans. Because party identification plays an important role in informing Americans' political preferences, it will be included as a control variable in all public opinion analyses throughout this dissertation. Concerning partisan identity, I do not expect Southern identity to have similar effects on partisanship across race. Blacks and White Southern identifiers should hold different party identities due to historical evidence demonstrating that political parties vary regarding the issues and interests that seek to address that harm or benefit different racial groups (Schickler 2018). However, in a hypothetical political election without a partisan cue, but cue's for the Southern sub-national identity, I expect Southern identifiers

Variables	Blacks	South Blacks	Whites	South Whites
Southern Identity	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
American Identity	0.26	0.32	0.40	0.41
Racial Resentment	0.26	0.26	0.47	0.46
Racial Importance	0.09	0.13	0.28	0.27
Linked Fate	0.04	0.05	0.40	0.14
Born Again	0.17	0.13	0.13	0.41
Religious Importance	0.14	0.13	0.38	0.36
Education	0.12	0.09	0.15	0.15
Income	-0.04	0.07	-0.03	-0.03
Age	0.09	0.04	-0.03	-0.18
Part Identification	0.01	-0.07	0.35	0.35
Female	-0.02	-0.05	0.35	-0.15
Authoritarianism	0.12	0.14	-0.17	0.32

Table 5.1: Correlations: Southern Identity & Relevant Measurements

across race to hold similar candidate preferences if one hypothetical candidate has a Southern identity, one has a non-southern sub-national identity, and the other has simply an American identity. Moreover, in national party primaries, I expect Southern identifiers to support candidates who hold Southern identities or Southern affiliations.

Is Southern Identity just another manifestation of Republican or Democratic identity? As Table 6.1 reveals, partisanship and Southern Identity are not strongly correlated with Blacks or Whites. To be sure, Southern Identity is positively correlated and significantly for Republican identification for White Americans (Table 6.1). The correlation coefficient, however, hovers around .26 for Whites. By these measures, then, partisanship and Southern identity are highly distinct for both racial groups. Accordingly, it is essential to know that Southern Identity's role in informing political preferences is independent of partisanship.

Next, I explore the relationship between Southern Identity and ideological identification? Americans describe themselves in these terms, and these identifications are politically meaningful. For example, conservatives tend to favor the lassifare economic, regulatory policies,

are more concerned with national security, and adopt more racially conservative attitudes. Liberals favor social welfare policies and equality. However, concerning ideology for Black Americans, recent work also suggests ideology manifests differently for Black Americans depending on the salience of policies (Philpot 2017). Other work suggests that the ideological label takes on a different meaning for Black Americans due to cultural and contextual interpretations (Jefferson 2020). Regardless, it is critical to determine whether ideology and Southern identity are distinct concepts for each racial group.

Previous works demonstrate that Whites living in the South are more conservative than Whites living in other regions. So given that a majority of Southern identifying Whites live in the South and we know they are already conservative, maybe Southern identity is capturing conservative ideology for Whites. As for Blacks, recent work suggests that Black Americans living in the South are more traditional and conservative than Blacks living in other regions (Sullivan 2018). Perhaps, Southern Identity is simply another expression of an individual's ideology. Table 6.1 shows the correlation between political ideology and Southern Identity. Southern identity is positively and significantly correlated with identifying as a conservative for White Americans, although the correlation is somewhat modest (.35). Moreover, the correlation (.07) is weak for Black Americans. Thus, it is safe to say that Southern identity is distinct from conservative identity for Black and White Americans.

In addition, I also investigated whether Southern Identity is strongly associated with higher levels of religiosity. Southern cultural narratives include various information painting the South as highly religious since Americans in the South, across racial groups, are more likely to participate in religious activities and identify with Protestant Christian denominations compared to Americans in other parts of the country. We know that highly religious individuals tend to hold distinct and conservative political attitudes regarding social policies. Perhaps, Southern identity is simply another manifestation of the religious nature of the South. We can

see from Table 6.1 that the relationship between the two constructs is not decisive for both groups. Southern Identity and identifying as a "born again Christian" is positive but weakly correlated for Black Americans (.16). For White Americans, the correlation is positive and modestly correlated (.41). You can see the correlation results in Table 6.1. Again, we find that Southern identity is a distinct concept.

Following, I focus on whether Southern identity was distinct from racial identity. Perhaps Southern identity is significantly correlated with racial identity given the region's history of anti-blackness and culture of racial division, which is well described in narratives about the region. Some suggests that identifying as a Southerner is an implicit White supremacist identity, and identifying as White concerns maintaining White Americans' position of power (Cobb 2005; Cash 1945). Thus, perhaps Southern identity and White identity are similar concepts for White Americans. Black Americans have suggested that the region represents Black solidarity given the high concentrations in the region, so that Southern identity may be a variation of Black identity. However, I argue that Southern identity is unique from this group identity because it encapsulates a generalized cultural view that seeks to promote the critical role that all groups should play in advancing the interests of group members, rather than just one's group. Yes, I argue that Southern identity should lead to higher support for group members and policies that maximize their racial group interests, which works the same for racial identity. However, I argue that Southern identifiers should believe that all racial groups should play an important role and have a strong obligation to support actions and policies that benefit most group members – opposed to individual interests. Nevertheless, I argue that racial identity and Southern identity are distinct concepts for Black and White Americans. As the results in Table 6.1 reveal, Southern Identity is weakly correlated with racial identity for Black (.10) and White Americans (.27).

Finally, is Southern identity simply an expression of American identity? Southern states

are, in fact, in a part of the United States of America, so maybe the concept is capturing affect and attachment for the country and not just the sub-nation territory. It would make sense that Southern identity would be positively correlated with American identity, given that what it means to be a Southerner or even a New Englander is under the national umbrella of what it means to be an American. As shown in Table 6.1, the bivariate analyses confirm that Southern and American identities are not the same. Southern Identity is also positively and significantly correlated with American identity for both Blacks (.27) and Whites (.41). The results are outlined in Table 6.1. The highest correlation coefficients of all analyses are for Southern identity and American identity for both racial groups. However, the correlation is not so strong as to conclude that these measures capture the same underlying construct.

5.11 Discussion

In this chapter, I illustrated support for my measurement hypotheses. The central argument of this dissertation is that a politically potent sub-national identity (e.g., Southern identity) has developed amongst many Americans. The findings show that Southern identity can be empirically measured by capturing how positive affection and psychological attachment an individual possesses towards the region. Furthermore, the results illustrate that Southern identity is multidimensional and can be measured using six survey items. Moreover, I show that identity is not just socially meaningful for White Americans, and it is also socially significant for Black Americans. I also demonstrated that Southern identity is a distinct concept – not strongly correlated with other political identities. Lastly, this dissertation begins to identify how some underlying cultural beliefs are perhaps geographically sorted due to sub-national identities – and this phenomenon crosses racial boundaries.

This work contributes to various sub-fields within American politics literature: This dissertation proposes and empirically tests a novel and dynamic measurement of Southern identity

that is valid and reliable. The measurement addresses the limitations of the crude South residency variable that is typically included in public opinion models. This dissertation elucidates novel findings of the vital role place-based identities and perceived place-based culture play in influencing American political behavior.

Although the geographic focus in this study is the American South, I expect that multiple sub-national identities exist in the U.S. However, I suspect the other identities to translate into different political beliefs compared to the Southern identity. For example, I suspect that the Midwestern identity is associated with similar political attitudes the Southern identity given possible Southern cultural diffusion resulting from the migration of Southern Blacks and Southern Whites to the Midwestern states during the late 19th century and early-mid-20th century (McGregor 2005). However, I do not expect Mid-westerners and Southerners to be politically identical in every dimension. However, I expect Midwestern culture and southern culture to be perceived differently by Americans. Furthermore, I expect Pacific/West and the Northeast/New England identities to be striking distinct from the South given perceived cultural differences. Nevertheless, the theory and measurement of sub-national identity can be a valuable framework to investigate the political implications of other sub-national identities within the United States and other countries.

CHAPTER 6

Public Opinion Implications of Southern Identity

The primary argument presented here is that the subjective elements defining Southern identity align with Southern culture's three perceived elements: communalism, traditionalism, and hierarchism. Thus, I suspect that Southern identifiers will, on average, hold racial and social predispositions and policy preferences aligned with these cultural elements. Specifically, Black, and White Southern identifiers will be more inclined to adopt more group-centric racial attitudes and policy preferences – reflecting the communalistic nature of Southern culture. Moreover, they will be more likely to adopt more conservative attitudes regarding social policies and cultural issues reflecting Southern culture's traditionalistic and hierarchal nature. Given the perceived cultural norms and values associated with the South, I theorize that Southern identity will translate into political beliefs and attitudes that are aligned with communalism, hierarchism, and traditionalism. The values and norms are perceived to promote a contradictory world view, making it important to adopt attitudes that reinforce support for one's racial group and Southern cultural features. Additionally, the values and norms are perceived to promote a conflicting world view that makes it important to support policies that benefits one's racial group and protect Southern cultural features. I have empirical expectations regarding the political consequences of Southern identity in three public opinion domains: race, social issues, and economic policies. In each domain, I explore the political

impact of Southern identity on individual's predispositions and policy preferences.

6.1 Race Domain: Public Opinion Hypotheses

This dissertation's race domain public opinion expectations are in conversation with literature on social group identity, political attitudes, and policy preferences. The analysis aims to explore the nuance and complexities of the interaction between race and Southern identity – and illustrate how these identities influence racial attitudes about preferences in complicated ways. Moreover, this analysis seeks to understand whether Southern identity is associated with negative racial attitudes and policy preferences given previous findings in the literature relating to racial conservatism and Southern residency for White Americans. Unlike previous literature, there is no expectation that Southern identity is associated with higher levels of anti-blackness and racial conservatism for White Americans. Anti-blackness and racial animus are not categorized as a perceived Southern cultural feature because the qualitative data suggests that many Americans perceived racial conservatism as an American cultural feature. However, many other Americans perceived racism as an American cultural feature. Thus, there is no expected difference in anti-blackness and racial animus amongst White Americans who score high on Southern identity.

Racial conservatism is an expectation that Southern identity is associated with racial beliefs and preferences that reflect and reinforce the region's perceived communalistic nature. These perceived communalistic features include increased support of collectivist efforts to improve their group's status and support policies that benefit the individual's racial group. These hypotheses are inextricably connected in terms of the overlap between communalism and racial conservatism. Thus, the investigation will require analyzing various measurements of racial animus, racial conservatism, and anti-blackness. In particular, the racial predispositions that are of focus in this dissertation are racial resentment, Black nationalism, and group conscious-

ness. Moreover, the policies that I focus upon are affirmative action, reparations, and removal of the confederate flag. Finally, I focus on these policies and predispositions across racial groups. Given previous literature against this analysis, I justify exploring these attitudinal measurements across racial groups in the following discussion.

Hypothesis 1: *On average, there should be no difference in the level of racial animus or opposition to racialized policies between low Southern identifiers and high Southern identifiers.*

- Null Hypotheses: Southern identity is associated with higher levels of anti-blackness.

Hypothesis 2: *On average, high Southern identifiers should express higher levels of support for racial group mobilization and coordination.*

- Null Hypothesis: Southern identity is not associated with group-centric beliefs and preferences rooted in the communalistic nature of the region.

Hypothesis 3: *On average, high Southern identifiers should express higher levels of support for policies that preference one's racial group.*

- Null Hypothesis: Southern identity is not associated with group-centric beliefs and preferences rooted in the communalistic nature of the region.

6.2 Race Domain Variables

Predisposition 1: Racial Resentment Scale

The racial resentment scale included four survey items designed to measure a new strain of racism amongst White Americans. The measurement combines conservatism and beliefs that African Americans violate the Protestant work ethic (Kinder & Sanders 1996.) However, the scale faces several limitations that serve my efforts to test my communalism and racial animus hypotheses. First, several question-wording issues are present in the items (Wilson & Davis 2011). Two of the questions, I argue, could be interpreted via the lens of pure group responsibility and collectivism (i.e., communalism) given the centrality of group behavior in

the questions and the role of group centrism plays in the formation of American political behavior (Kinder & Sanders 1981; Campbell et al. 1961). Secondly, the questions combine conservatism and racial animus, two distinct concepts, which allow me to determine whether there are similar patterns in effect for the individual items across racial groups (Feldman & Huddy 2006.) Third, it is cautioned not to focus on racial resentment amongst Black Americans because the questions may be interpreted differently and hold different meanings across race (Burge & Kam 2018; Perez 2014.) Despite whether the cognitive phenomenon that the scale seeks to capture should be labeled as "racial resentment," I contend that the diversity of the questions allows me to directly test whether Black and White's Southern identities are more likely to hold similar group-centric predispositions.

Predisposition 2: Black Nationalism Scale

The Black nationalism scale consists of four survey items measuring whether Black Americans should adopt collective strategies to improve the group's status (Gurin, Hatcher, and Jackson 1989.) The Black nationalism literature argues that the measurement captures both positive and negative orientations towards American democracy. On the one hand, Black nationalism promotes a sense of group identity, human rights and commonality, legitimacy of group culture and history, and defends the group against injustices and the failure of existing institutions (Price 2014; Smith 1991.) However, on the other hand, the idea of Black nationalism breeds group conflict and intolerance (Davis & Price 2001; Brass 1991.) For this dissertation, this Black nationalism scale seeks to falsify my communalism hypothesis that Southern identity influences Americans across race in a similar way to adopt group-centric and collectivist attitudes and preferences. Moreover, the scale allows me to determine whether Southern identity distinguishes White identifiers from Black identifiers in terms of attitudes toward Black nationalism. Given that the nationalism scale is related to Black Americans, will White Southern identifiers hold higher levels of anti-communalistic attitudes than low

identifiers due to anti-blackness?

Predisposition 2: Group Consciousness

This item asks all respondents whether Black Americans should work together to improve the status of their group. It also asks all respondents whether White Americans should work together to improve the status of their group. Usually, respondents are not asked questions about the group responsibilities of other racial groups. However, I ask these questions to create a generalized measurement of group consciousness to understand whether members believe all groups, including their group, should improve their status. Thus, the group consciousness item included in the analysis in an average of two questions. The first question asks about Blacks working to improve their group status. The second question asks about Whites working to improve their group status.

Racial Policy 1: Support for Confederate

This single item captures attitudes towards a symbol central to what is perceived as Southern heritage by some White Southern residents (Reed 1986; Reingold & Wilke 1998.) Here, the dependent variable should capture differences amongst Southern identifiers across race, given the historical meaning of slavery, the Civil War, and the symbolism evoked from the Confederate flag. Although there should be racial differences in the direction of the attitudes about the flag, the difference should align with communalism. Black Southern identifiers should not be more supportive of the flag than their low-identifying counterparts due to communalistic predispositions that seek to benefit the group. Moreover, Southern White identifiers should be more supportive of the flag given the perceived positive meaning for their racial group (Strother et al. 2017; Cooper & Knotts 2014; Rheingold & Wilke 1998.)

Racial Policy 2: Reparations

This question discusses whether Black Americans should receive cash payments due to slavery and systemic racism. Given the centrality of the Black American racial group and

perceived benefits to the group, Black Southern identifiers should be more supportive of reparations. On the other hand, there should be no difference in support amongst Whites regards of Southern identity.

Racial Policy 3: Affirmative Action

This question is a slightly modified version of the American National Election Study question on affirmative action in the workplace. Like the reparations question, given the perceived benefits to the Black racial group, Black Southern identifiers should be more supportive of affirmative action. On the other hand, there should be no difference in support amongst Whites regards of Southern identity.

6.3 Social Domain: Public Opinion Hypotheses

The analysis explores the nuance and complexities of the interaction between attitudes about social issues and Southern identity and illustrates how these identities shape support or opposition for various policies. Moreover, this analysis seeks to understand whether Southern identity is associated with more conservative social attitudes and policy preferences given previous findings in the literature relating to social conservatism and Southern residency. There is no expectation or previous evidence that suggests that Southern identity is associated with higher levels of social conservatism for Black Americans, although assumed. Many Americans perceived social conservatism as an exclusive Southern cultural feature. Thus, I expect that Americans who score high on Southern identity are more likely to adopt socially conservative beliefs.

Specifically, I suspect that Southern Blacks and Whites will adopt more conservative attitudes regarding social policies and cultural issues, reflecting Southern culture's perceived traditionalistic and hierarchal nature. The norms and values in the South are believed to be oriented towards maintaining the status quo coupled with aristocracy, patriarchal, and re-

spectability conceptions of society. The values and norms are perceived to promote limited government and yet limited personal and religious freedom. Moreover, the region is associated with the limited government but respect and support for higher authorities, the necessity of order, punitive measures for disrespect and disobedience, gender, sexuality inequality, etc. Thus, identification as a Southerner should, to some extent, translate to conservative sociopolitical views reflecting the groups' perceived cultural norms and values. Moreover, given that social issues disproportionately impact other social groups and increases the salience of other social identities, Southern identity becomes obsolete if the salience of competing for social identities is more salient of being a southerner. Essentially, Southern identity will become politically relevant on social issues if one's identification with being a Southerner is stronger than identifying with other social groups. Below I discuss the variable used to explore my social domain hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: On average, Southern identifiers should hold attitudes promoting limited changes relating to widely persistent social, behavioral, and public norms.

Hypothesis 2: On average, Southern identifiers should hold more conservative preferences for policies that promoting shifts in the status quo relating to social, behavioral, and public norms.

6.4 Social Domain Variables

Predisposition 1: Gender Roles

This question asks respondents how much they agree or disagree with the belief that families would benefit if men worked and women stayed home to fulfill domestic duties. I include this question because it measures one's orientation to antiquated notions of gender responsibilities. We could assume that if one agrees to such a notion, they hold more traditionalistic beliefs regarding gender equality. Thus, I expect that Southern identifiers across racial groups

would hold more traditionalistic and conservative gender beliefs.

Predisposition 1: Authoritarianism

These sets of questions are designed to measure respondents' support for obedience to authority over personal freedoms. The questions achieve this goal by asking respondents about child-rearing beliefs. Previous work demonstrates that authoritarianism is associated with a variety of conservative beliefs. Moreover, it is related to hierarchical beliefs on how groups and people are ranked in society. Moreover, it is about who should govern and how one is punished when they disobey authorities. I suspect that Southern identifiers will score higher on this predisposition.

Predisposition 1: Cultural Shifts

This question explores whether the influx of new immigrants and ethnic groups harms American culture. This question measures support for traditional cultural norms and values and resistance to change, and Southern identifiers should be more conservative on this question.

Policy 1: Capital Punishment

This item asks respondents how strongly they support or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. This item can capture the traditionalistic and hierarchical orientations that are theorized to be reflected in Southern culture. This item seeks to understand whether the punitive and cultural honor tradition translates into policy preferences.

Policy 2: Prayer

These questions ask respondents how strongly they support or oppose allowing organized prayer in public schools. In addition, this item seeks to measure whether high identifiers' orientation towards tradition and religious bias translates into a policy that reflects their cultural norms.

Policy 3: Abortion

These questions ask respondents about their views toward abortion policies. Respondents can either say that they believe abortion should never be allowed. Respondents can also indicate that they believe abortion should be allowed only if rape, incest, or a woman's life is in danger. Finally, respondents can indicate that they believe abortion is a matter of personal choice. This item measures whether high identifier orientation towards tradition and religious bias translate into a cultural norms policy.

6.5 Economic Domain Hypotheses

In terms of economic interests, I suspect that Southern identifiers across race will be more likely to support economic policies that reflect Southern culture's communalistic, traditional, and hierarchical nature. For instance, if an economic policy is explicitly designed to impact one's racial group, Southern identifiers will be more likely to support the policy. Moreover, suppose the policy is designed to maintain the status quo on issues central to Southern cultural marker. In that case, Southern identifiers should be supporting the policy and oppose policies that call for shifts in the culture. Again, given that social and economic issues disproportionately impact other social groups and increases the salience of other social identities, the impact of Southern identity is weakened if the salience of competing for social identities is more salient of being a Southerner. Essentially, Southern identity will become politically relevant on social issues if one's identification with being a Southerner is stronger than identifying with other social groups. Below, I lay out more specific expectations relating to Southern identity and individual's race, social and economic policies, and predispositions.

Hypothesis 1: On average, Southern identifiers should be more likely to hold economic attitudes that seek to benefit their group.

Hypothesis 2: On average, Southern identifiers should hold more negative attitudes about opposing racial groups when economic resources are salient.

Hypothesis 3: On average, Southern identifiers should be more supportive of policies that seek to benefit one's, racial group.

Hypothesis 4: On average, Southern identifiers should be more likely to oppose policies that benefit opposing racial groups when economic resources are salient.

Hypothesis 5: On average, Southern identifiers should hold economic attitudes that seek to protect, support, or promote Southern cultural features.

Hypothesis 6: On average, Southern identifiers should be more supportive of policies that financially support protecting and promoting southern cultural marker entities.

6.6 Economic Domain Variables

Predisposition 1: Immigration Level Take Jobs This question asks how likely current immigration levels will take jobs away from people already in the U.S. Given the communalistic predisposition reflected in Southern identity, this item indicates whether group preference leads to policy outcomes that may cause group economic threat(Carter 2020).

Predisposition 2: Government Assistance v. Group Responsibility To test this relationship, I ask whether Blacks should help themselves or rely on the government. This question is used to measure the self-help component of Black nationalism. Moreover, this question, like Black nationalism, is usually administered to Black respondents. However, I administered this question to all respondents as a rough proxy to measure group responsibility. In future studies, I will include measures designed to capture communalism versus individualism.

Policy 1: Border Security This item asks whether there should be more or less government spending on Border security.

Policy 2: Military This item asks whether there should be more or less government spending on Border military operations.

Policy 3: Welfare These questions ask respondents to indicate whether there should be

more or less government spending on the SNAPS social welfare policy.

6.7 Data & Methods

After analyzing the two on-line convenience samples to construct a measurement of Southern identity, I am administered the third survey via YouGov. The goal of this study was to investigate whether the M-Turk measurement and opinion findings would replicate using a larger, more diverse, and quasi-nationally representative sample of Black and White Americans. The YouGov survey included 400 Black and 400 White respondents. I performed multivariate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses to test these claims to explore the relationship between Southern identity and racial attitudes. The control variables in all models were: education, income, party identification, ideology, religious importance, biblical literalism, sex, racial identity, American identity, marital status, and age. The measurement findings relating to the validity and reliability of the 6-item scale determined in the previous M-Turk findings did replicate in the You Gov survey. Thus, the primary independent variable in the analyses is the 6-item Southern identity scale. Moreover, I run all models using the region variable to illustrate that the South dummy variable is insufficient in capturing geographic variation in public opinion.

6.8 Race Domain Findings

Table 6.1 displays the results from my multivariate regression analyses exploring the relationship between Southern Identity and Blacks and White's racial predispositions. In terms of the analysis where the full racial resentment scale represents the outcome variable, I find a significant positive association for Southern identity among both Blacks ($p < 0.01$) and Whites ($p < 0.01$). Both Black and White Southern identifiers held more" racially resentful" beliefs,

Table 6.1: OLS Regression: Southern Identity and Racial Predispositions

	Dependent variable:					
	Racial Resentment Scale		Black Nationalism		Group Conciousness	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Southern Identity	0.239***	0.181***	0.364***	0.221***	0.099*	0.105*
	(0.050)	(0.057)	(0.052)	(0.046)	(0.051)	(0.059)
South Resident	−0.030	−0.007	−0.004	−0.034	0.0003	0.025
	(0.022)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.028)
American Identity	0.160***	0.204***	−0.134***	−0.049	0.084**	0.099**
	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.034)	(0.040)	(0.044)
Religious	−0.019	0.041	0.014	−0.010	0.132***	0.037
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.027)	(0.033)	(0.034)
Linked Fate	−0.300***	0.048	0.087**	0.140***	0.070*	0.128***
	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.037)	(0.040)
Education	−0.017**	−0.027***	−0.013	−0.002	−0.009	0.0003
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Ideology	0.019***	0.059***	−0.005	0.002	−0.006	0.013**
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Party Identification	−0.0001	−0.004	−0.006*	−0.002	0.002	−0.009**
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Income	−0.025	−0.035	−0.014	−0.014	−0.058***	−0.020
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.024)
Observations	379	389	379	389	379	390
R^2	0.311	0.516	0.211	0.156	0.131	0.166
Adjusted R^2	0.292	0.504	0.190	0.134	0.107	0.144

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

all else equals. However, when looking at the items individually, the results require more nuanced theoretical explanations and analyses. The racial resentment scale combines individualism with the belief that African Americans violate the Protestant work ethic, making the scale more challenging to interpret with clarity (Feldman & Huddy 2006).

Given the scale limitations, I argue that two of the questions, group responsibility and group-centered actions, may tap communalistic predispositions, and the other two questions capture racial animus. For instance, I only find significant positive associations for Southern identity on the two racial resentment items relating to opinions about group efforts to overcome barriers. Furthermore, I find no association between Southern identity and the other two racial resentment items that discuss deservingness and whether slavery has persistently shaped Black Americans – which could be thought of as explicit racial animus beliefs. These results are consistent with my hypotheses that Southern identity should be significantly associated with group-centric and collectivist beliefs. The results are outlined in Table 7.1. Moreover, I also find s upport f or m y h ypotheses r elating t o r acial a nimus – m eaning W hite h igh Southern identifiers and low Southern identifiers essentially hold similar levels of racial animus, all else equal.

Regarding my group centrism and collectivism hypotheses, I find that Black and White's Southern identifiers were significantly $p < 0.05$ more supportive of Black nationalism. I also find that Black and White Southern identifiers, on average, scored higher on group conscious-ness, although the effect did not meet the significance threshold. Overall, these findings sug-gest that psychological identification with the American South perhaps indicates that some Americans hold more predispositions and policy preferences rooted in the perceived commu-nalistic nature of the South.

Table 7.2 also displays the results from my multivariate regression analyses exploring the relationship between Southern Identity and Blacks and White's racial policy preferences. Con-

cerning support for racial policies, the findings speak to more nuanced investigations of substrates of racial attitudes across race and region. As expected, I find no association with Southern identity and support for removing the Confederate flag amongst Black Americans. However, Southern identity is significantly ($p < 0.01$) and negatively associated with removing the Confederate flag among Whites. This finding is expected given previous literature discussing the perceived symbolic association of the Confederate flag and Southern White heritage. I find no relationship between Southern identity and support for reparations amongst Whites as it relates to reparations. White Americans share similar levels of support for reparations regardless of identification to the American South. Concerning Black Americans, I find that Southern identifiers are more supportive of reparations ($p < 0.05$), all else equal.

Concerning support of affirmative action, I find that Black Southern identifiers are significantly ($p < 0.05$) more likely to support these racialized policies – consistent with my expectations. However, surprisingly, given previous literature, I find that White Southern identifiers were significantly ($p < 0.05$) more supportive of affirmative action in the workplace, all else equal. Again, this result was not consistent with my expectations. The results are outlined in Table 6.2. I employ several robustness checks, and the result still holds. This result calls for the need for additional investigations that are not a part of this paper. Overall, these findings suggest that psychological identification with the American South perhaps leads to more communalistic predispositions and policy preferences regarding race and calls for more nuanced investigations to understanding the complexity of racial perspectives across racial groups and regions in the United States.

6.9 Social Domain Findings

Table 7.3 displays the results from my multivariate regression analyses exploring the relationship between Southern Identity and Blacks and White's social predispositions. First, I find

Table 6.2: OLS Regression: Southern Identity and Racial Policies

	Dependent variable:					
	Support Affirm Act		Support Reparations		Remove Confed. Flag	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Southern Identity	0.149**	0.171**	0.130**	0.016	−0.051	−0.274***
	(0.074)	(0.078)	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.077)
South Resident	−0.020	−0.084**	−0.031	0.010	0.001	0.072**
	(0.032)	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.036)
American Identity	−0.054	−0.140**	−0.138**	−0.239***	0.057	−0.206***
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.053)	(0.049)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Religious	0.049	−0.017	0.091**	−0.039	0.008	−0.059
	(0.047)	(0.045)	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.046)	(0.045)
Linked Fate	0.267***	−0.004	0.332***	0.092**	0.276***	0.073
	(0.054)	(0.053)	(0.050)	(0.045)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Education	−0.002	0.004	−0.002	−0.001	0.024**	0.030***
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Ideology	−0.013	−0.050***	−0.023***	−0.056***	−0.028***	−0.068***
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Party Identification	−0.004	0.002	−0.001	0.002	0.001	0.012**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Income	−0.051	0.008	0.002	0.069**	−0.045	0.069**
	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.032)	(0.031)
Female	0.0003	0.003***	0.0004	0.004***	−0.001	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Age	−0.060	−6.259***	−0.347	−7.566***	2.538	−3.515*
	(1.974)	(1.796)	(1.845)	(1.543)	(1.967)	(1.797)
Observations	379	388	380	390	376	389
R^2	0.098	0.223	0.172	0.416	0.141	0.462
Adjusted R^2	0.074	0.202	0.150	0.401	0.117	0.447

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

a significant positive association between support for the allowance of prayer in school and Southern identity among both Blacks (p 0.01) and Whites ($p < 0.01$). Both Black and White Southern identifiers held beliefs that allow organized religious activities in public schools, all else equals. This result supports my hypothesis, given the traditionalist nature of Southern culture.

Second, table 6.3 displays results relating to the traditionalism hypothesis. On average, I find that Black and White's Southern identifiers were significantly ($p < 0.05$) more supportive men working and women fulfilling domestic roles to benefit the family. Again, my hypotheses are supported by the findings. Traditionalism promotes antiquated gender norms, and the results here suggest that both Black and White Southern identifiers are more likely to hold such attitudes.

Additionally, I investigate the relationship between Southern identity and authoritarianism. In Table 6.3, you will find results relating to the authoritarianism hypothesis. On average, I find that Black and White's Southern identifiers were significantly ($p < 0.05$) more authori-tarian. They were more likely to share beliefs that children should be more respectful and obedient than free-willed. Overall, these findings suggest that psychological identification with the American South perhaps indicates that some Americans hold more conservative pre-dispositions and policy preferences rooted in the perceived communistic nature of the South.

Now, I turn to results exploring the relationship between Southern identity and social policies. Table 7.4 displays results relating to the social policies analyzed in this study. On average, I find that Black and White's Southern identifiers were significantly ($p <0.01$) more supportive of capital punishment. Again, my hypotheses are supported by the findings. Southern culture's traditionalism and hierarchical components promote old social norms, law and order, and strict punitive measures for any deviance or disobedience. Additionally, Table 6.4 also displays results relating to findings exploring the relationship between Southern identity

Table 6.3: OLS Regression: Southern Identity and Social Predispositions

	Dependent variable:					
	Gender Roles		Authoritarianism		Traditionalism	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
siscale_	0.258***	0.221***	0.054*	0.043	0.458***	0.268***
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.066)	(0.073)
south	−0.010	−0.050*	−0.005	0.010	−0.039	−0.051
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.034)
americanid_	−0.065	0.013	−0.020	0.027	0.071	0.161***
	(0.045)	(0.042)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.052)	(0.054)
religimport_	0.032	0.132***	0.072***	0.075***	−0.015	0.023
	(0.037)	(0.034)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.042)	(0.043)
linkedf_	0.047	0.084**	0.051**	−0.023	−0.094*	0.065
	(0.042)	(0.039)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.048)	(0.050)
edu	−0.0001	−0.014*	−0.017***	−0.006	−0.046***	−0.036***
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.011)	(0.010)
ideology	−0.009	0.009	0.006	0.015***	0.007	0.033**
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.015)
pid	0.015*	0.013**	0.005	0.004	0.032***	0.026***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.009)	(0.008)
income	0.0004	0.004	0.0005	0.0003	−0.002	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)
female	−0.043*	−0.054**	0.004	0.006	0.058**	0.039
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.029)	(0.029)
age	−0.001	−0.003***	−0.002***	−0.0002	0.001	0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.0004)	(0.0003)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	2.819*	5.725***	3.932***	1.111*	−2.376	−6.733***
	(1.551)	(1.310)	(0.748)	(0.665)	(1.784)	(1.674)
Observations	379	387	376	388	380	389
R^2	0.091	0.309	0.168	0.273	0.261	0.331
Adjusted R^2	0.064	0.289	0.143	0.252	0.239	0.311

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

and support for abortion. On average, I find that Black and White's Southern identifiers are less significantly ($p < 0.01$) supportive of women's ability to make unrestricted decisions re-garding abortion procedures. As stated before, this finding reflects the traditionalist nature of Southern culture as it relates to gender. Finally, I look at the relationship between Southern identity and support for prayer in school. To no surprised, given the traditionalistic nature of Southern culture, I find support for my hypotheses. On average, I find that both Black and White Southern identifiers are significantly ($p < 0.01$) more supportive of prayer in school, all else equal. Overall, these findings suggest that psychological identification with the American South perhaps indicates that some Americans hold more conservative social predispositions and policy preferences rooted in the perceived traditionalistic nature of the South.

Table 6.4: OLS Regression: Southern Identity and Social Policy Items

	Dependent variable:					
	Abortion		Capital Punish		Prayer	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Southern Identity	-0.354^{***}	-0.247^{***}	0.267^{***}	0.297^{***}	0.279^{***}	0.276^{***}
	(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.078)	(0.071)	(0.068)	(0.063)
South	0.021	0.038	-0.010	-0.039	0.058^{*}	-0.011
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.030)	(0.029)
American Identity	0.099	0.007	0.272^{***}	0.290^{***}	0.013	0.248^{***}
	(0.063)	(0.056)	(0.062)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.047)
Relig. Importance	-0.152^{***}	-0.333^{***}	-0.018	-0.023	0.387^{***}	0.380^{***}
	(0.051)	(0.045)	(0.050)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.037)
Linked Fate	0.001	-0.008	-0.135^{**}	-0.022	-0.036	0.032
	(0.058)	(0.051)	(0.057)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.043)
Education	0.003	-0.004	-0.007	-0.023^{**}	-0.007	-0.027^{***}
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.009)
Ideology	-0.018	-0.028^{*}	-0.017	0.066^{***}	0.015	0.047^{***}
	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.013)
Party	-0.063^{***}	-0.041^{***}	0.019^{*}	0.020^{**}	0.003	0.015^{**}
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Income	0.006	-0.004	0.001	0.002	0.004	-0.003
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Female	0.005	0.059^{*}	0.012	-0.005	0.017	-0.017
	(0.035)	(0.030)	(0.035)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.025)
Age	0.0003	-0.002^{**}	0.003^{**}	0.001	-0.0001	0.002^{**}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	0.500	4.913^{***}	-4.828^{**}	-1.902	0.459	-3.223^{**}
	(2.145)	(1.728)	(2.117)	(1.646)	(1.840)	(1.441)
Observations	377	388	374	388	380	388
R^2	0.220	0.436	0.145	0.433	0.284	0.634
Adjusted R^2	0.196	0.420	0.119	0.417	0.262	0.623

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

6.10 Economic Domain Findings

Regarding the economic predispositions examined in this dissertation, I find much support for my group competition hypotheses. However, I must say the economic findings, just like the social and racial domain findings, are ambivalent, reflecting Southern culture's ambivalent nature. I first look at predispositions. The results for these findings are outlined in Table 7.6. I find that both Black and White Southern identifies, on average, are significantly ($p < 0.01$) more likely to think that an increase in immigration results in fewer jobs being available for American citizens. The result supports my hypothesis. I suspect that Southern identifiers across racial groups perceive the increase in immigration as harmful to the economic status of their racial group. Therefore, Southern identifiers are more likely not to support the policy to protect the economic opportunities for group members and decrease group threat (Bobo & Hutchings 1996).

Next, I find that Black and White Southern identifiers are significantly ($p<0.01$) more likely to think that Blacks should work to help themselves and not solely rely on the government (Table 6.6). This finding supports my hypothesis that Southern identifiers have believed that the group has a responsibility to help the group. However, for White Americans, this finding could perhaps reflect racial animus as well. Thus, in future studies, I will include questions about Whites helping themselves instead of government assistance.

In terms of the relationship between Southern identity and economic policies, I focus solely on spending policies, and the results are outlined in Table 6.6. Here, I find that Southern identifiers across race significantly support the government spending more on border security. I suspect that the perceived economic threat of immigration partly plays a role in this finding. Moreover, given the social predisposition findings, negative beliefs that immigrants harm U.S culture likely also impact this finding. On immigration questions, this is where we see the clearest shared beliefs between Black and White Southern identifiers. Future work will inves-

Table 6.6: OLS Regression: Southern Identity and Economic Predispositions

	Dependent variable:			
	Immigrants Take Jobs		Black Help Themselves	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Southern Identity	0.495***	0.348***	0.211***	0.210***
	(0.074)	(0.070)	(0.074)	(0.075)
South	−0.067**	−0.002	−0.029	−0.002
	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.036)
American Identity	0.158***	0.193***	0.030	0.030
	(0.058)	(0.053)	(0.058)	(0.055)
Relig. Import	−0.013	0.072*	0.044	0.032
	(0.048)	(0.042)	(0.047)	(0.044)
Linked Fate	0.004	0.174***	−0.075	0.180***
	(0.054)	(0.048)	(0.054)	(0.051)
Education	−0.030**	−0.021**	0.019	0.001
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Party	0.026***	0.027***	0.006	0.050***
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Income	0.001	−0.002	0.011**	−0.001
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Female	0.009	0.024	−0.065**	−0.097***
	(0.033)	(0.028)	(0.032)	(0.030)
Age	0.001	−0.001	0.002**	−0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	−1.703	0.931	−3.805*	4.093**
	(2.005)	(1.622)	(2.004)	(1.739)
Observations	378	389	379	390
R^2	0.222	0.461	0.083	0.290
Adjusted R^2	0.198	0.445	0.058	0.271
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

tigate the relationship between Southern identity and attitudes towards new immigrant groups, especially since the rural South is becoming a haven for immigrant groups (Cater 2020). Given the number of low-wage workers and factory workers currently residing in the rural South and the influx of new immigrants and migrant workers, it is essential to understand the cultural and racial dynamics that immigrants may encounter and whether it leads to assimilation or "southern socialization."

The following policy of focus is spending on the military. The results are outlined in Table 6.7. Here I find that Southern identifiers across racial groups are more supportive of spending on military operations. This finding perhaps reflects the hierarchal and traditionalistic nature of the South. Southern identifiers support spending on the military because the military is used to protect and promote specific values, maintain law and order, and act punitive measures when countries, groups, or individuals violate laws, norms, or disrupt order.

Moreover, this result may also reflect that the vast number of military bases throughout Southern states are cultural markers in the region. Given this, Southerners are possibly more likely to have relatives serving in the military. Thus, they are more supportive of spending on defense operations due to cultural, residential, and familial ties to the military.

Lastly, I focus on the relationship between Southern identity and support for spending on social safety net policies. The policy of analysis here is broadly welfare benefits. The results are outlined in Table 6.7. My hypothesis for this policy is that there should be an effect on Southern identity across racial groups. Across racial groups, I find that Blacks were significantly more ($p<0.05$) supportive of spending on Welfare, all else equal. In regards to White respondents, in support of my hypothesis, I no relationship between Southern identity and support for spending on Welfare, all else equal. I should note that Contrarily to my hypothe-sis, however, I find that Black Southern identifiers are significantly ($p<0.01$) more supportive of spending on Welfare. This may be a byproduct of racial stereotypes associated with Wel-

Table 6.7: OLS Regression: Southern Identity and Economic Policies

	Dependent variable:					
	Millitary		Border Security		Welfar	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
siscale_	0.288***	0.360***	0.293***	0.320***	0.210***	−0.026
	(0.066)	(0.060)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.066)	(0.065)
south	0.020	−0.070**	−0.077***	−0.009	−0.011	−0.007
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.031)
americanid_	0.304***	0.314***	0.209***	0.314***	−0.152***	−0.086*
	(0.052)	(0.045)	(0.050)	(0.046)	(0.051)	(0.049)
religimport_	0.118***	0.058	0.081**	0.126***	0.046	−0.016
	(0.042)	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.039)
linkedf_	−0.070	−0.014	−0.097**	−0.022	0.241***	−0.007
	(0.049)	(0.041)	(0.046)	(0.042)	(0.048)	(0.044)
edu	−0.019*	−0.003	−0.004	−0.003	0.007	−0.001
	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)
ideology	−0.001	0.033***	−0.018*	0.015	−0.021**	−0.053***
	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.013)
pid	0.007	0.017**	0.030***	0.032***	−0.005	−0.049***
	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
income	−0.002	−0.003	−0.001	0.001	−0.008*	−0.012***
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
female	−0.005	0.023	−0.036	−0.033	−0.012	−0.009
	(0.029)	(0.024)	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.026)
age	−0.0001	−0.001	−0.0005	−0.001	−0.001	0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	0.437	1.700	1.211	1.974	3.229*	−3.774**
	(1.792)	(1.387)	(1.711)	(1.415)	(1.755)	(1.502)
Observations	378	388	378	388	377	387
R^2	0.240	0.500	0.201	0.542	0.142	0.420
Adjusted R^2	0.217	0.485	0.176	0.528	0.116	0.403

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

fare policies (Gilliam 1999). Although White Americans make up the majority recipients of welfare benefits, many Americans believe that Black Americans are the primary recipients of Welfare policies such as Subsidized Nutrition Assistance Program SNAP benefits (e.g., food stamps). This results from media framing and politicians associating the policies with Black women over the last 40 years. This likely began with Ronald Reagan and his usage of the term ”Welfare Queen” when referring to a Black woman. Thus, it is possible that Blacks and Whites also share this association. Therefore, as it relates to my economic hypothesis, if Black Southern identifiers perceive that the policy benefits their group, they should be more supportive of the policy. The communalistic component of Southern identity should lead Blacks to support policies that benefit their racial group. As it relates to White Americans, given that Welfare policies are not explicitly associated with supporting Americans, my hypothesis expects that Southern identity should not impact. Although Welfare is sometimes associated with White rural Southerners, it is not a broad stereotype that impacts the racial group. The findings presented here reflect Southern identity's complicated and complex nature and how it potentially translates into economic policy support.

6.11 Discussion

This public opinion finding presented here suggests that Southern identity is an influential but omitted factor in the study of American political behavior. The central argument of this dissertation is that a politically potent sub-national identity (e.g., Southern identity) has developed amongst many Americans. Furthermore, Southern identity can be empirically measured by capturing how much positive affection and psychological attachment an individual possesses towards the region. Moreover, Southern identity equips an individual with a unique worldview that influences how individuals think about government and politics.

The results in this study are generally consistent with my claim that Southern identity is

associated with distinct attitudes and preferences reflective of the nature of the Southern culture amongst Blacks and Whites. I contend that the relationship between Southern identity for Black and Whites and their racial attitudes about policy preferences complicates conventional theories relating to racial identity, political geography, and racial attitudes in many ways. First, this dissertation illustrates that Southern identity is not just politically meaningful for White Americans but also politically meaningful for Black Americans. Moreover, it provides insight into variations in attitudes and strategies Black Americans have adopted to overcome racial inequality and dismantle racism. This work also challenges existing theories positing that White Southerners and the American South are exceptional concerning racial inequality, animus, and bias against Black Americans. Lastly, this dissertation begins to identify how some underlying cultural beliefs are perhaps geographically sorted due to sub-national identities – and this phenomenon crosses racial boundaries.

This work also contributes to various sub-fields within American politics literature: This dissertation proposes and empirically tests a novel and dynamic measurement of Southern identity that is valid and reliable. The measurement addresses the limitations of the crude South residency variable that is typically included in public opinion models. This study also demonstrates that Southern identity is an overlooked factor shaping the public opinion of Black Americans. The Southern identity scale is dynamic and better captures the cognitive relationship individuals hold with the American South. This dissertation elucidates novel findings that speak to the vital role place-based identities and perceived place-based culture create variation in American political behavior.

CHAPTER 7

The Future of Southern Identity

Although political scientists assume that living in American South carries information about distinct cultural socialization and place-based identity, there have been no previous efforts to precisely measure Southern identity across race. Except for a few studies, little work has been done to understand its impact on political behavior across racial groups. There are at least two explanations for this oversight. First, political scientists often use the ”South dummy” variable was to capture this phenomenon solely among White Americans. The usage of the dummy partly results from the lack of Southern identity measurements on any political science national survey (Valentino and Sears 2005; White 2014). However, the ”South dummy” variable is not a measurement of Southern identity; it is simply an indicator of residency. Using the dummy variable assumes that the length of residency and place-based positive effect are constant amongst all residents. Moreover, using the ”dumb” variable assumes that cultural socialization in all states in the region is homogeneous (Cooper & Knotts 2014). These assumptions and the fact that a dummy variable carries little information reflect the need for a novel Southern identity measurement. Secondly, research on the politics of the South and public opinion in the region has a narrow theoretical focus. Studies exploring the relationship between Southern identity and Black political behavior are largely missing in political science literature. This is the case for several reasons: 1) researchers assume Black political thought is homogeneous because of their overwhelming support for Democratic presidential candidates,

2) a theoretical assumption that being ”Black” and a ”Southerner” is politically incompatible. This dissertation argued that place-based sub-national identity (e.g., Southern identity) is an influential but understudied factor in shaping the political beliefs of Black and White Americans. Thus, in this dissertation, I create a new and direct measurement of Southern identity to examine how place-based attachment and affect are associated with policy preferences, political attitudes, and evaluations of political candidates.

My theory of Southern identity has three main components: Southern identity is largely understudied in political science but may have significant implications for political behavior. Southern identity is politically salient and has implications for Blacks, Whites, and other racial minorities. Political candidates' levels of expressed attachment and affect for the South will shape how they are evaluated by voters across races when randomly priming voters' Southern identity.

Although the distinctiveness of the South has been primarily investigated across the social sciences, few studies directly measure Southern identity and examine how it shapes American political behavior across races. For example, nearly all studies exploring how Southern context shapes political behavior use Southern residency as a rough proxy for Southern socialization. Given the stratified clustering sampling techniques employed in most nationally representative surveys, the regional samples are not geographically representative. Respondents are collected in a few states, and the residency variable does not capture the length of residency of respondents, nor does it capture attachment or affect for the place. What is the residency variable designed to measure? Political scientists often assume that Southern residency socialization makes a difference in shaping public opinion. However, the measurements designed to capture such phenomenon lacks construct validity. Moreover, to the extent that researchers have found that Southern residency affects political behavior, I argue that the residency variable underestimates the effect sizes. Therefore, in this dissertation, I construct a

direct measurement of Southern identity and explore its relationship with Black and White Americans' attitudes and preferences.

I define Southern identity as a place-based social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986) that is developed from having high levels of psychological attachment and positive affect with the American South. As it relates to place-based social identities, members of the group must self-identify as members of the social group. They also must possess some positive effect towards other members of the in-group and a level of hostility towards out-groups, and assign subjective beliefs about the social group and place that differs from what is assigned to the out-group. In terms of Southern identity, I conducted multiple interviews of Black voters across the region to gather sentiments about the South and understand Southern identity's psychological substrates.

Drawing from quantitative and qualitative evidence, I illustrate that (a) Southern identity is politically meaningful among many Whites and Black Americans and (b) Southern identity has a unique effect on Americans' political attitudes and preferences across race. This is the foundation for my dissertation work. It involves original data collection efforts to enrich our understanding of Southern identity with a nationally representative Black and White Americans sample. First, I collected various qualitative data, including interviews, open-ended surveys, newspaper data, and social media data to motivate my theory of Southern identity. Next, using three original surveys, I construct a novel scale of Southern identity that is reliable and distinct from relevant concepts. I then present results from examining public opinion and the new Southern identity scale, which convenient sample results replicated using a nationally representative survey.

My research demonstrates that Southern identification is associated with conservative political attitudes amongst Blacks and Whites and seeks to explain these differences: How do the political legacy of the South shape Black and White Americans' views about the region

and its residents? How does the level of identification and positive affect for the South manifest into differing political perspectives among Blacks and Whites across the region? Are high Southern-identifying Blacks more politically conservative than low Southern-identifying Blacks – the same as we might hypothesize for Whites? Preliminary evidence illustrates that Black political behavior may be more nuanced than previously explored. At least in some cases, I find that Black Southern-identifiers hold more conservative racial attitudes and social issues than low-identifiers, as is the case for White Americans. Given the persistent demographic shifts in the United States, perceptions of cultural threat among some Americans, and increased geographic sorting in partisanship and voting, research focusing on American political behavior and political geography is insufficient without investigating the sociological and psychological causes and political effects of place-based affect and identification. I contend that there are several place-based identities present among American voters across races and regions. However, my dissertation is the first attempt to qualitatively and empirically investigate the political consequences of place-based identification with the American South. This work will serve as a scientific model to measure other place-based sub-national identities in the U.S.

7.1 Political Importance of Narratives

Given the distinct political legacy of the American South in comparison to the rest of the country, I argue that the American South is not just simply a place or location. For some Americans, ”the South” is a political ideal often associated with persistent cultural norms and a way of life (Cobb 2005; Reed 1982; Elazar 1972; Reed 1971; Cash 1941; Key 1942). Moreover, social scientists have even asserted that a place-based sub-national identity (e.g., Southern identity) is developed amongst many Americans who reside within the region and have internalized its cultural norms (Cooper & Knotts 2017; Cobb 2005; Reed 1982). The earliest scholars in-

vestigating Southern identity posited theories that proclaimed that Whites were the only race that glamorized the South. Any argument involving Black Americans craving to identify as Southerners was utterly outrageous (Ellison 1965; Cash 1941). Following the Civil Rights Movement, however, sociologists and historians documenting the evolution of the South argued that Blacks who did not migrate out of the South very well understood themselves as "Southerners" with a heavy influence on the region's culture and as much stake in the region as White Southerners (Cobb 2005; Applebon 1994; Reed & Black 1983).

As it relates to Southern identity and racial dynamics, scholars have noted, on the one hand, that racial conservatism amongst Whites in the South has historically been explicit and intentional (Acharya et al. 2018; Key 1949). Despite intentional efforts to subjugate Blacks in the region, scholars contend that Blacks' relative political and economic gains due to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement changed how they perceived the South, race, and politics (Cobb 2005). For instance, Southern states have large numbers of Black political, educational, and religious institutions. The South has the highest concentration of Black voters, the highest numbers of Blacks elected officials, high Blacks voter turnout rates. Moreover, the region has the highest Black homeownership, employment, and entrepreneurship rates in the country. As a result of these gains, recent work by Sullivan et al. (2018) illustrates that Black Southern residents are more patriotic and authoritarian than their non-southern counterparts because they are more supportive of the American political system. Moreover, Stewart (2018) finds that Southern Blacks are more likely to perceive more racial progress than Blacks in the Midwest and other parts of the country. Thus, I argue that Southern identity amongst Blacks emerged amongst Blacks post-civil rights movement and is politically salient, as it is for Whites.

Based on the qualitative evidence from interviewing Black Americans in different regions, I offer several theoretical arguments about the psychological underpinnings of Southern attachment and affect. First, I theorize that Southern identity is psychologically rooted in solid

preferences for the expressive religious (e.g., Protestant Christian) cultural norms more explicitly present in the South than the rest of the United States. This is not surprising given that Black Americans are the most religious racial group in the country. The South is widely considered to be the "Bible-belt" because of the large number of churches per capital in the region and frequent church attendance amongst its Black and White residents. Many of the interviewees associated the South with strong Christian values and social conservatism. Secondly, I contend that Southern identity is psychologically rooted in beliefs that parts of the region are better suited for Black Americans to succeed because of the large concentrations of Blacks institutions and voters. For example, Stewart (2018) finds that Black Southern residents were more likely to adopt racial progress beliefs than Black residents in other regions.

Moreover, according to a *Forbes Magazine* 2018 study, eight of the top ten cities where African Americans are doing the best economically are located in Southern states. The author writes, "One of the great ironies of our time is that the best opportunities for African-Americans now lie in the South, from which so many fled throughout much of the 20th century." In the past few decades, many good jobs have moved South and Blacks, like many whites and Hispanics, have followed." In addition, exploring the pull factors of the "Reverse Great Migration" of non-southern Blacks back to the South, Pendergrass (2013) found that Blacks who migrated to the South after living in the non-south believed their experiences with racism and discrimination did not differ much by region. They believed that the South afforded a better quality of living and economic opportunities. Thus, I theorize that Blacks with a high level of Southern identity will do so because of their positive evaluations of the region's religious norms and racial dynamics. I expect that positive beliefs about the South will translate to conservative political attitudes for Blacks and Whites.

Furthermore, I theorize that negative beliefs about the South will be associated with less conservative political beliefs. I argue that Americans who hold negative beliefs about the

South do so because they reject the religious, racial, and cultural dynamics of the South. For some South residents with low Southern identity, it is possible that they have had negative personal experiences within the region, and it shapes their views of the region. Others may feel more attached to other regions due to residency outside of the South. Additionally, non-southerners may hold more negative beliefs about the region because the region's information to evaluate the region regarding the region is related to the pre-Civil Rights South and persistent political culture associated with the region.

7.2 Contribution

This dissertation demonstrates that Southern identity is a widely recognized identity that is socially and politically significant for Blacks, as it is for Whites. Investigating Southern identity amongst Black Americans will better understand Black political heterogeneity and the politics of place. This work also has implications for racial groups beyond Blacks and Whites, though it focuses on these racial groups as the first stage. Indeed, examining Southern identity among the rapidly increasing Latino population in the region would provide fruitful insight into the geography of Latino politics. Along with the theoretical innovations, qualitative and quantitative research components can easily be adapted for future research endeavors exploring place-based identities in other parts of the United States. Additionally, this dissertation will provide a novel dataset to social scientists and richer theory building to the identity politics literature and political psychology and behavior literature more broadly. Finally, the study of place-based attachments will add nuance to literature from political psychology, geography, race, and representation.

Southern identity research improves our understanding of how place-based attachment drives public opinion, political behavior, and political outcomes. First, this dissertation will enable us to understand better and predict the political behavior of Black voters across ge-

ography. Secondly, this dissertation will allow us to predict the constraints and opportunities for Southern-identifying candidates vying for political offices in state and national elections. Finally, this research shed light on obstacles faced and support received by candidates who send political cues via Southern cultural features relating to accents, dialects, and mannerisms during elections. For example, qualitative data suggest that Southern residents across races and parties face negative stereotypes such as "sounding uneducated, talking slow, and being backward." Thus, examining the political implications of Southern identity will help predict how political candidates across race and party are evaluated due to place-based identification. Additionally, this work has a general impact on how Southern-born Americans are evaluated in other performance and intelligence-based settings such as seeking employment or college enrollment.

Ultimately, the most significant contribution of this dissertation is the development of a novel scale of southern identity, which this dissertation applies to reveal that Black and White southerners alike profess a sense of communal regional kinship that influences conceptions of self and policy preferences—not unlike politically salient social identities such as race or partisanship. Political scientists have long understood the South as distinct, as evidenced by political models deriving from national datasets consistently include a control variable to denote whether or not respondents live in this region. However, this work argued investigated the South is different and whether a cross-racial social identity existed relating to the region. Thus, the goal of this dissertation was to investigate how and why identification with place, not just southern residence, constitutes a distinct force shaping the political beliefs of Black and White southerners.

Consequently, this work treads vital new ground in advancing our understanding of why politics in the South an altogether different beast is. Southern identity promotes strong intragroup ties and greater group solidarity among Black and White individuals. Accordingly,

southern identity shapes people's stances on racialized issue areas in systematic—albeit sometimes counterintuitive—ways. By conceptualizing and operationalizing southern identity as a salient and constraining social identity, this work astutely uncovers possibilities for this identity marker to be a facilitator of or a cudgel against interracial cooperation and perceptions of interest convergence. It also offers a definitive account of why and how the South is different—by engendering many residents with a sense of regional consciousness that informs how they engage with politics.

Appendix

2021 YouGov Survey Questionnaire

birthyr In what year were you born?

gender Are you male or female?
1. Male
2. Female

race What racial or ethnic group best describes you?
1. White 2. Black 3. Hispanic/Latino 4. Asian 5. Native American 8. Middle Eastern 6. Mixed Race 7. Other

educ What is the highest level of education you have completed? 1. No high school degree 2. High school graduate 3. Some college, but no degree (yet) 4. 2-year college degree 5. 4-year college degree 6. Postgraduate degree

marstat What is your marital status? 1. Married, living with spouse 2. Separated 3. Divorced 4. Widowed 5. Single, never married 6. Domestic partnership

employ Which of the following best describes your current employment status? 1. Working full time now 2. Working part time now 3. Temporarily laid off 4. Unemployed 5. Retired 6. Permanently disabled 7. Taking care of home or family 8. Student 9. Other

inputstate What is your State of Residence?

pid3 Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a...? 1. Democrat 2. Republican 3. Independent 4. Other 5. Not sure

pid7 1. Strong Democrat 2. Not very strong Democrat 3. Lean Democrat 4. Independent 5. Lean Republican 6. Not very strong Democrat 7. Strong Republican 8. Not sure

votereg Are you registered to vote? 1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know

ideo5 In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint? 1. Very liberal Liberal 3. Moderate 4. Conservative 5. Very conservative 6. Not sure
2.
newsint Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested.

Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs... 1. Most of the time 2. Some of the time 3. Only now and then 4. Hardly at all 7. Don't know

religpew What is your present religion, if any? 1. Protestant 2. Roman Catholic 3. Mormon 4. Eastern or Greek Orthodox 5. Jewish 6. Muslim 7. Buddhist 8. Hindu 9. Atheist 10. Agnostic 11. Nothing in particular 12. Something else

bornagain Would you describe yourself as a "born-again", or evangelical Christian, or not? 1. Yes 2. No

rligimp How important is religion in your life? 1. Very important 2. Somewhat important 3. Not too important 4. Not at all important

churatd Aside from wedding and funerals, how often do you attend religious services? 1. More than once a week 2. Once a week 3. Once or twice a month 4. A few times a year 5. Seldom 6. Never 7. Don't know

pewprayer People practice their religion in different ways. Outside of attending religious services, how often do you pray? 1. Several times a day 2. Once a day 3. A few times a week 4. Once a week 5. A few times a month 6. Seldom 7. Never 8. Don't know

II. Southern Identity Questions

intro Many researchers have different views regarding what states should be included in the Southern region. However, for the purposes of this study, the states that are highlighted in blue in the photo below are classified as the American South region. The states are Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, and Virginia. Moreover, in American popular culture there has always been a lot of talk about "Southerners." Southerners are typically considered to be Americans who are either born, raised, or currently live in the Southern region.

The following questions will ask you about your views regarding the South and Southerners.

southcom How much do you feel you have in common with people from the U.S South?
o A great deal (1) o A lot (.75) o A moderate amount (.5) o A little (.25) o Nothing at all (0)

sid Do you identify as a "Southerner"? o Yes (1) o No (0)

southimport How important is being a Southerner to your identity? o Extremely important (1) o Very important (.75) o Moderately important (.5) o Slightly important (.25) o Not at all

important (0)

southconnect Whenever you speak about Southerners, how often do you say “we” instead of “they”? o Always (1) o Most of the time (.75) o About half of the time (.5) o Sometimes (.25) o Never (0)

southlive How strongly would you prefer or oppose living in the South compared to any other U.S region?
o Strongly prefer (1) o Somewhat prefer (.75) o Neither prefer or oppose (.5) o Somewhat oppose (.25) o Strongly oppose (0)

southbest How much better or worse do you think other parts of the country would be if they were more like the South?
o Much better (1) o Somewhat better (.75) o About the same (.5) o Somewhat worse (.25) o Much worse (0)

southpraise When people praise the South, how does that make you feel? o Extremely good (1) o Somewhat good (.75) o Neither good nor bad (.5) o Somewhat bad (.25) o Extremely bad (0)

southinsult If people criticize the South, how likely is it that the criticism would feel like a personal insult to you? o Extremely likely (1) o Somewhat likely (.75) o Neither likely nor unlikely (.5) o Somewhat unlikely (.25) o Extremely unlikely (0)

ssmar Next, we have several more questions regarding matters facing the U.S today. Please answer each question.
Which comes closest to your view regarding same-sex marriage? o Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry. (1) o Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry. (.5) o There should be no legal recognition of a gay or lesbian couple’s relationship. (0)

abort Which comes closest to your view regarding abortion laws? o Abortion should never be permitted. (0) o Abortion should be permitted only in cases of rape, incest, or woman’s life is in danger. (.5) o Abortion is a matter of personal choice. (1)

prayer How strongly do you support or oppose allowing organized prayer in public school? o Strongly support (1) o Somewhat support (.75) o Neither support nor oppose (.5) o Somewhat oppose (.25) o Strongly oppose (0)

cappun How strongly do you support or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder? o Strongly support (1) o Somewhat support (.75) o Neither support nor oppose (.5) o Somewhat oppose (.25) o Strongly oppose (0)

gunctrl Do you think the federal government should make it more difficult for people to buy a gun than it is now, make it easier for people to buy a gun, or keep these rules about the same as they are now? o Much more difficult (1) o Somewhat more difficult (.75) o Keep the rules the same (.5) o Somewhat more easier (.25) o Much more easier (0)

immlevel How likely is it that recent immigration levels will take jobs away from people already in the U.S? o Extremely likely (1) o Very likely (.75) o Moderately likely (.5) o Slightly unlikely (.25) o Not likely at all (0)

manwrk How much better or worse do you think it is for the family as a whole if the man works outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family? o Much better (1) o Somewhat better (.75) o Makes no difference (.5) o Somewhat worse (.25) o Much worse (0)

autho2 Do you think it is better for a child to be obedience or self-reliance? obedience (1) o Self-reliance (0)

spend For the next question, please say whether there should be more or less government spending in each of the following areas.

Much more now (1) Somewhat more now (.75) The same as now (.5) Somewhat less now (.25) Much less now (0)
Military operations (spendmil) Welfare benefits (spendwf) Border security (spendimm) Health-care (spendhc) Fighting Crime (spendfs) Education ($\text{spend}_1 1$)

resent1 Now, we're going to show you several statements. After each one, we would like you to tell us if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?

"Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors."
o Agree strongly (1) o Agree somewhat (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Disagree somewhat (.25) o Disagree strongly (0)

resent2 "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class."
o Agree strongly (1) o Agree somewhat (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Disagree somewhat (.25) o Disagree strongly (0)

resent3 "Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve."
o Agree strongly (1) o Agree somewhat (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Disagree somewhat (.25) o Disagree strongly (0)

resent4 ”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.”

o Agree strongly (1) o Agree somewhat (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Disagree somewhat (.25) o Disagree strongly (0)

blackinflu Would you say that Blacks have too much influence in American politics, just about the right amount of influence in American politics, or too little influence in American politics? o Too much influence (1) o Just about the right amount of influence (.5) o Too little influence (0)

blackcand For the next few questions, please tell us if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

”Blacks should always vote for Black candidates when they run.” o Strongly agree (1) o Somewhat agree (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Somewhat disagree (.25) o Strongly disagree (0)

blacknation ”Blacks people should create their own separate nation.” o Strongly agree (1) o Somewhat agree (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Somewhat disagree (.25) o Strongly disagree (0)

blackself ”Blacks people should rely on themselves and not the government.” o Strongly agree (1) o Somewhat agree (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Somewhat disagree (.25) o Strongly disagree (0)

blackcon ”It is important for Black people to work together to improve the position of their racial group.” o Agree strongly (1) o Agree somewhat (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Disagree somewhat (.25) o Disagree strongly (0)

uscult ”American culture is generally harmed by immigrants.” o Agree strongly (1) o Agree somewhat (.75) o Neither agree nor disagree (.5) o Disagree somewhat (.25) o Disagree strongly (0)

blackaffirm Some people say that because of past discrimination, Blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of Blacks is wrong because it gives Blacks advantages they haven’t earned.

We are interested in your opinion. How strongly do you favor or oppose preferential hiring and promotion of Blacks? o Strongly favor (1) o Somewhat favor (.75) o Neither favor nor oppose (.5) o Somewhat oppose (.25) o Strongly oppose (0)

discrimgroups How much discrimination is there in the United States today against Black Americans?
o A great deal (6) o A lot (2) o A moderate amount (3) o A little (4) o None at all (5)

poltreat In general, do the police treat Whites better than Blacks, treat both groups the same, or treat Blacks better than Whites? o Treat Whites better (1) o Treat both groups the same (.5) o Treat Blacks better (0)

linkedf Next, please answer the following questions pertaining to views about your personal identity.

How much do you think that what happens generally to [race] people in this country will affect what happens in your life? o A lot (1) o Some (.66) o Not very much (.33) o Not at all (0)

raceimport How important is being [race] to your identity? o Extremely important (1) o Very important (.75) o Moderately important (.5) o A little important (.25) o Not at all important (0)

americaid How important is being American to your identity? o Extremely important (1) o Very important (.75) o Moderately important (.5) o A little important (.25) o Not at all important (0)

volunteer The following questions will ask about your political activity. Have you ever volunteered for a political party or campaign?
o Yes (1) o No (0)

localtrust How often can you trust your local government in your city or town to do what is right? o Always (1) o Most of the time (.75) o About half of the time (.5) o Some of the time (.25) o Never (0)

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