"Breaking Bad" in Black and White: What Ideological Deviance Can Tell Us about the Construction of "Authentic" Racial Identities

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"Breaking Bad" in Black and White: What Ideological Deviance Can Tell Us about the Construction of "Authentic" Racial Identities

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This article contributes to the study of racial-group politics by examining how Black and White Americans create authentic racial identities through the regulation of ideological adherence to color-consciousness and color-blindness, respectively. The article first theorizes about the relationship between racial ideology and racial authenticity. We then illustrate our hypotheses through an analysis of responses of Black and White racial group members to Black conservatives and White racial justice activists, whose viewpoints and agendas are read as contradictory to the broad goals of the majority of their racial counterparts. We explore, through an examination of empirical instances of chastisement, exclusion, and public de-authentication of individuals who deviate from the dominant ideology of their racial group, some of the ways Black and White Americans attempt to control in-group political behavior and to enforce indigenous standards for group-based public representation.

To determine whether an individual is a "real," "true," or authentic member of a given racial group, Americans will often look at physical attributes, gauge linguistic

abilities, and appraise cultural performativity.[1] One of the most controversial methods of racial authentication occurs through the evaluation of an individual's political leanings and political beliefs. Much ink has been spilled over the leeriness within the Black community of Republican partisanship and conservative ideology[2] and more than a few pundits and scholars have argued that African-Americans in the GOP are less Black or by some accounts, not *really* Black at all.

The academic study of this vein of racial authentication is extensive, but by no means exhaustive. For example, there is little research on how racial ideologies—specifically color-consciousness and color-blindness—signal authenticity apart from and alongside the more familiar liberal-conservative spectrum. In this article, we argue that Black and White communities respectively treat color-consciousness and color-blindness as markers of racial authenticity, and treat adherence to racial ideologies as an important component of authentic racial group membership.

We contend that one's publicly stated understandings of racism and one's preferences for its remediation are expected to typify the opinions of a majority of those with whom one shares an ascribed racial identity and, more importantly, to contribute to the group's uplift (in the case of Black Americans) or stabilization (in the case of White Americans). Someone who articulates a contrary racial ideology will often be perceived as advancing a political agenda at odds with the interests of the group and, therefore, will sometimes be viewed as a traitor. This is because the public practice of color-blindness by Black Americans and color-consciousness by White Americans can be viewed by respective members of the Black and White communities as politically undermining their racial group's interests and, subsequently, empowering their group's adversaries. Members of each racial group, therefore, will work to enforce an indigenous standard for group-based public representation and, ultimately, control in-group political behavior by chastising their racial stray. By exploring empirical cases of ideological deviance and the punitive reactions that they elicit, we will trace the ideological boundaries of acceptable Blackness and Whiteness and, also, will consider the repercussions of "breaking bad" in the inter-racial public.

Our article opens with a review of relevant literature on racial authenticity, group dynamics of representation, and racial ideology that will allow us to formulate an initial theory of racial ideology's role in the construction of authentic racial identity. We then analyze empirical examples of Black and White Americans

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1. For example, E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Devon W. Carbado and Mitu Gulati, *Acting White?: Rethinking Race in Post-Racial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

2. Kenneth W. Warren, "'As White as Anybody': Race and the Politics of Counting as Black," *New Literary History* 31: "Is There Life after Identity Politics?" (2000): 709–726; Randall Kennedy, *Sellout: The Politics of Racial Betrayal* (New York: Pantheon, 2008).

deviating from the predominant racial ideology of their ascribed racial group, and group reactions to those acts of deviance.

Our research focuses on Black conservatives and White racial justice activists. Both sets of political actors have been stigmatized within their respective racial communities because their agendas are often read as antagonistic to the broad goals of the majority of their racial counterparts, especially during the most recent period of rival racial policy alliances (1976 onward) when color-blind and color-conscious ideologies are largely found on opposite sides of the color line.[3] Black conservatives—by championing individualism, downplaying structural racism against People of Color, opposing race-specific remedies to racial inequality, and advocating free-market solutions over state intervention—diverge from the well-worn path other Blacks have travelled to secure egalitarian victories. White racial justice activists—by recognizing group-based identities, criticizing the racial supremacist ideologies and practices that buttress the dominant standing of White Americans, and supporting remedies for racial equality that target specific populations—likewise diverge from the line of reasoning that most other White Americans have adopted with respect to racism. By examining the chastisement that certain Black conservatives and White racial justice activists have received, we will be able to think more clearly about how members within each racial community create rules of racial conduct and attempt to control racial-group behavior by policing expressions of racial ideology.

Racial Authenticity, Representation, and Ideology

Writing through the prism of Black gay identities and the politics of AIDS, political scientist Cathy Cohen has examined how indigenous definitions of Blackness are "used to demarcate the boundaries of group membership" in order to "influence, shape, and lend legitimation to the political attitudes and behavior of community leaders and members."[4] Black Americans, as members of a group that has historically suffered from stereotyping and stigmatization, attempt to attenuate the damages of racism and to maximize opportunities for the group to flourish. According to Cohen, Black Americans do so by promoting racial-group identities that will "empower blackness to the outside world."[5] Cohen contends that members of the Black community "polic[e] the boundaries of what can be represented to the dominant public as 'true blackness'"[6] and contest the group

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3. Rogers M. Smith, Desmond S. King, and Philip A. Klinkner, "Challenging History: Barack Obama & American Racial Politics," *Daedalus* 140 (2011): 121–35.

4. Cathy J. Cohen, "Contested Membership: Black Gay Identities and the Politics of AIDS," in *Queer Theory/Sociology*, ed. Steven Seidman (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 362–94, at 363.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 363.

membership of those whose statements and behavior seemingly detract from the "cultural capital"[7] of the group (or particular constituencies within the group). Racial authenticity, in this sense, does not hinge upon one's typicality. It has more to do with being the kind of group member that advances the majority conception of the racial group's interests in the inter-racial public. Even if an individual is not at the vanguard of the majority's racial agenda, one can attain a sufficient degree of racial authenticity or belonging by affirming the group's political project when called upon to do so or, at the very least, remaining silent and not getting in the way.[8]

Cohen's theory about the indigenous production of authentic racial identities attempts to explain identity-making and identity-enforcing within a community that is both historically oppressed and numerically disadvantaged within a (quasi-) democratic republic. We contend that the presentation of consensus around racial group interests in the inter-racial public is also a concern for dominant group members. Although White Americans at the moment are still a numerical majority, their privileged standing is threatened by egalitarian policies and practices that protect the well-being of, redistribute resources to, and increase opportunities of upward mobility for non-Whites. Whites who feel insecure about their own group's standing, therefore, can also create authentic White racial identities and regulate the behavior of their group's members for the purposes of cultivating or presenting an intra-racial consensus that is favorable to Whites (or particular constituencies within the group).

Where Cohen demonstrates a fruitful theorization about contested group membership by focusing on the management of intersectional social identities for public consumption, we intend to show that one of the most significant ways Black and White Americans determine authentic racial group membership is by assessing whether an individual's ideology supports or undermines the predominant interests and agendas expressed by fellow racial group members in the media, public opinion polls, voting booths, and daily conversation. By "ideology" we mean "a world view readily found in the population, including sets of ideas and values that cohere, that are used publicly to justify political stances, and that shape and are shaped by society."[9] In the most basic sense, ideology helps people orient themselves in society, helps people assess social conditions, and helps generate plans for changing or preserving those conditions.[10]

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7. *Ibid.*, 365.

8. We recognize that authenticity is a flexible concept. There is no hard and fast line that defines *who* is authentic. Moreover, the boundaries of authenticity can and do change due to a variety of circumstances. For more on changing notions of authentic identities, see Randall Kennedy, "The Fallacy of Toure's Post-Blackness Theory," *The Root*, August 11, 2011.

9. Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 4.

10. Terence Ball and Richard Dagger, *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal,* 8th edn. (London: Pearson, 2011).

Racial ideologies, more specifically, help us think about how our racial identity situates us in relation to others; help us think about how enabling, debilitating, and ultimately consequential our identity is; and give us ideas about how best to live in a racially diverse society.

Color-consciousness and color-blindness, in particular, are two competing racial ideologies that help answer important questions, such as whether racism and racial identity significantly determine differential life outcomes, and whether Americans should explicitly consider race in the distribution of opportunities and resources. People who subscribe to a color-conscious ideology believe that race is an important organizing principle in the social and political landscape and that racism largely benefits those ascribed as White. They further believe that racially differential treatment is practiced both deliberately and unintentionally through a myriad of relationships and institutions. According to those who subscribe to color-conscious ideology, differential treatment produces varied life chances and outcomes for people across racial groups. Racial identity shapes relationships, obstacles, and opportunities. When, therefore, color-conscious people call for greater equality, they prescribe remedies that target populations with particular racial identities (because they believe those groups may be in need of a type of assistance or protection that other groups do not need).[11]

Those who subscribe to color-blind ideology tend to think that civil-rights legislation and the recently and widely embraced norm of racial equality have leveled out the racial terrain. Now that de jure discrimination, for the most part, is deemed unconstitutional, those with a color-blind perspective primarily understand differential life outcomes between White people and People of Color as being attributed to individuals' successes or failures. From their point of view, racism now occurs episodically. It is typically manifested through isolated and explicit acts of intentional bigotry, and is understood as a type of deviant behavior that people of any racial identity can partake in. According to those who subscribe to color-blind ideology, racial equality is best pursued by treating everybody the same, and the suggestion that individuals have different needs on the basis of their racial identity is nefarious and counter-productive. In order to abolish racism, color-blind people believe both racial identification and racial analysis must be abandoned.[12]

Adherents of both ideological positions can be found today in all racial communities in the United States. However, decades of public-opinion research suggest that the proportion of believers varies greatly from one side of the color line to the other. For years, the divide in White and Black opinions has produced some

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11. J. Skelly Wright, "Color-Blind Theories and Color-Conscious Remedies," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 47 (Winter 1980): 213–45, at 221.

12. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Color-Blind Dreams and Racial Nightmares: Reconfiguring Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era," in *Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script and Spectacle in the O.J. Simpson Trial*, ed. Toni Morrison and Claudia Brodsky LaCour (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997): 97–168, at 103.

of the greatest group-based gaps in American political attitudes. Although this divide is evident on a variety of political issues, it is especially pronounced on questions that are explicitly about race.[13] For example, Black and White Americans tend to hold strikingly different views about the extent of racial discrimination today and about the policies that the nation should adopt to remedy racial inequality. Numerous studies show that the vast majority of Blacks believe that racial discrimination against their racial group and other minorities remains a problem in the United States. A smaller majority of Blacks support color-conscious policies to remedy the persistence of inequality.[14] Most Whites, in contrast, do not perceive the extensive racial inequality that Black Americans see. And because most White Americans perceive the racial landscape as largely egalitarian and fair, they stridently oppose measures that treat people differently on the basis of their racial identity.[15]

We believe that when a majority of the members of any racial group holds a coherent set of perspectives, ideas, and interests, members of that group often will perceive those ideologies as normative and authentically indicative of the group's political outlook, concerns, and intentions. Members of the "in-group" will then attempt to regulate the presentation of the group's views in the inter-racial public, where claims and agendas must be justified.

Cohen's understanding of "consensus issues" can help one theorize about how elites and ordinary people alike imagine a shared perspective and agenda among their racial counterparts and, then, use adherence to racially privileged ideologies as a litmus test of racial authenticity, or acceptability, in both Black *and* White communities. For Cohen, a consensus issue "tap[s] into a racial group framework, initiating feelings of linked fate and the perception of advancing

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13. For example, James R. Kluegel and Eliot R. Smith, *Beliefs About Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought to Be* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine De Gruyter, 1986); Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided By Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Donald R. Kinder and Nicholas Winter, "Exploring the Racial Divide: Blacks, Whites, and Opinion on National Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (April 2001): 439–56; Vincent L. Hutchings, "Change or More of the Same?: Evaluating Racial Attitudes in the Obama Era," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73 (2009): 917–42.

14. Michael C. Dawson, "Racial Tragedies, Political Hope, and the Tasks of American Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (September 2012): 669–73; David C. Wilson, David W. Moore, Patrick F. McKay, and Derek R. Avery, "Affirmative Action Programs for Women and Minorities: Expressed Support Affected by Question Order," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 72 (Fall 2008): 514–22; Linda Lopez and Adrian D. Pantoja, "Beyond Black and White: General Support for Race-Conscious Policies among African Americans, Latinos, Asian American and Whites," *Political Research Quarterly* 57 (December 2004): 633–42.

15. Tehama Lopez Bunyasi, "Color-Cognizance and Color-Blindness in White America: Perceptions of Whiteness and their Potential to Predict Racial Policy Attitudes at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century," *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* (forthcoming, Spring 2015); Steven A. Tuch and Michael Hughes, "Whites' Racial Policy Attitudes in the Twenty-First Century: The Continuing Significance of Racial Resentment," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 634 (March 2011): 134–52.

the interests of the entire [racial] community."[16] We believe that Cohen's understanding of "owned" issues[17] extends to an "owned" racial ideology, whereby a certain set of ideas, evaluations, and agendas are perceived as advancing the interests of the racial group. Uniform ideological expression in the interracial public is important for elites and ordinary people because it aids interested racial group members in validating their own epistemic authority about the state of race relations. It also provides a basis on which to mobilize in-group members—for example, to get out the vote or to put their feet on the street and protest.

In addition to politically galvanizing in-group members, privileged ideologies fulfill other functions for racial groups, such as framing the group's responsibility for racial inequality. A color-conscious ideology lays a large part of the blame on White supremacist practices that discriminate against People of Color and privilege White people. A color-blind ideology explains inequality by pointing to individuals in communities of Color who do not try hard enough and who fail to break free from an anachronistic sense of victimhood. If it is true that we are living in an era dominated by the norm of racial equality, as political scientist Tali Mendelberg suggests,[18] then we should consider how profoundly stigmatizing it is for particular groups to be held accountable for pervasive racial inequalities, and we should think about the consequences that may befall those labeled as undeserving of aid and opportunities. In other words, rewards clearly follow from one's ability to influence the inter-racial public about the merits of one's preferred racial ideology. Where so much is at stake, each racial group has incentives to marshal racial peers to either advocate or acquiesce to the group's privileged ideology.

In general, individuals who espouse the political vision that is publicly expressed by most members of their racial group will be perceived as authentic group members who represent their group's best interest. When individuals ideologically depart from the political preferences of the majority of their racial group, they potentially weaken the credibility of the group's claims and agenda, and undermine the racial group's perceived unity in the inter-racial public space. In-group members, in response to acts of ideological deviance, will question the authenticity of the individual's group-based identity, and will assess the connection between the individual's self-interests and the interests of the majority of the racial group. Sometimes, in-group members will express feelings of betrayal and will chastise, exclude, and de-authenticate the ideological

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16. Cathy J. Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 11.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Tali Mendelberg, *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

deviant. The in-group members thereby articulate which politics are safe and acceptable for people like them, and divulge unwritten rules of what it means to be a "real," loyal member of the group.

The relationship between racial authenticity and how one thinks about race is explored extensively in newspapers, books, academic journals, and the blogosphere. Most discussions focus on the phenomenon of Blackness and the experiences of Black people. According to Professor of Law and of African and African-American Studies Kimberly Jade Norwood, the constraints on individual thought are so pervasive in the Black community that she felt compelled to name it: *Blackthink*. According to Norwood, those under the control of *Blackthink* "[assume and demand] that all Black people think a certain way" because "'real' Black people hold certain views."[19] While observers differ in the details of their descriptions of the thinking of Black Americans, most agree that authentic Blackness includes a decidedly "anti-conservative bent,"[20] and that indigenous race authenticators—also known as the Soul Patrol—will attack those Black people who "deviate from the liberal Democratic mold."[21]

We concur that Black conservatives who publicly identify with the Republican Party are often depicted by the Black mainstream (and also by the non-Black Left, as Norwood suggests) as being beyond the scope of acceptable Blackness. However, we maintain that undergirding this partisan definition of authenticity is a more general expectation that Black people adhere to a racial ideology that "sees" or takes race into account, and treats race as an important organizing principle that can inform policies of racial group uplift.

Conversely, White people have their own inverse measures of racial authenticity that are related to a racial ideology. That is to say, White Americans believe that "true," loyal, non-problematic White people de-emphasize structural racism and downplay racial identity in favor of individualism. Recalling his own experiences as a White man scorned by many members of his racial community for his antiracist commentary, Tim Wise concludes,

> over the course of USAmerican history, whites have been expected to fall in line, to accept the contours of racism, to remain quiet in the face of Indian genocide, the enslavement of Africans, the conquest of half of Mexico, and any number of racist depravities meted out against people of color … To speak

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19. Kimberly Jade Norwood, "The Virulence of *Blackthink* and How Its Threat of Ostracism Shackles Those Deemed Not Black Enough," *Kentucky Law Journal* 93 (2004–2005): 143–98, at 147.

20. Jacquelyn L. Bridgeman, "Defining Ourselves for Ourselves," *Seton Hall Law Review* 35 (2005): 1261–80, at 1266.

21. John Blake, "Running Afoul of the Soul Patrol." *Chicago Tribune*, 6 April 1992.

against the prerogatives of whiteness, or merely to break the silence about white racism, is, at some level, to engage in "race treason."[22]

Within the White community, it may be reasonable or even laudable to criticize individual White persons for their bigotry and acts of discrimination, but it is far less acceptable to declare the entire White population as collectively accountable for widespread racial inequality. Color-conscious Whites who draw attention to institutionally embedded racist practices that give White people an upper hand are seen as threats to their group's racial standing.

It should be noted that the act Wise describes as treason in the White community would likely be esteemed in the Black community. By juxtaposing in-group censure of color-consciousness within the White community against in-group censure of color-blindness within the Black community, we intend to illuminate the role of ideology in the production of authentic racial identities, and to suggest that racial belonging is deeply attached to what one believes about race. We thus accept the latent invitation inscribed in Norwood's epigraph to consider the possibility that in multiple racial communities, racial ideology is normatively bound to racial identity:

Nowadays, if you know the color of somebody's skin, you know what the person values (or should value), what causes the person supports (or should support), and how he or she thinks (or should think). Skin color, it seems, is a perfectly acceptable proxy for lots of other things—but principally for holding, or being willing to espouse, the right views.[23]

These "right views," we argue, include how one thinks about race, racism, and remedies for racial inequality. And, we aver that what is understood as "right" differs on each side of the color line.

Methodology

We assess our thoughts about the role of ideology in the construction of racial identities that are considered authentic through a combination of different types of data and methods of interpretation. We examine racial (de)authentication in the Black community through discourse analysis of statements by Black elites who publicly evaluate well-known Black Republicans in books, articles, major newspapers, and online magazines from the 1980s to today. We look at public discussions of Tim Scott, Clarence Thomas, and Colin Powell because their similarities to and differences from

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22. Tim Wise, *Speaking Treason Fluently: Anti-Racist Reflections from an Angry White Male* (Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press, 2008), 4.

23. Norwood, "The Virulence of *Blackthink*," 143.

one another help explain the degree to which they fall inside or outside the boundaries of acceptable Blackness.

Our analysis of racial (de)authentication in the White community comes from a set of in-depth interviews with non-elite Whites who participated in race-conscious socio-political activity. We focus on autobiographical stories that the interviewees told about their own intra-racial experiences with ideological policing. Between January of 2007 and May of 2008, Tehama Lopez Bunyasi conducted twenty-four in-depth interviews with White racial justice activists in California and New York. She located interviewees by (1) contacting racial justice organizations and asking to speak with either White members or White people who had participated in the organizations' events, (2) meeting White Americans at race-conscious events, and (3) through personal referrals from people she met through methods (1) and (2). She found racial justice organizations through Internet searches and by using key search terms like "racial justice" and "White anti-racist." She did this in conjunction with names of cities and states to help direct the search per region. The interviews were semi-structured. The standardized interview guide contained questions about the subject's upbringing, social networks, understanding of White racial identity, conceptions of racial discrimination and racial privilege, anti-racist activity, and social-policy preferences.

In these interviews, seven participants spoke at length about being disciplined by other White people because of their color-conscious ideas, political speech, or public activity. All seven described instances where personal acquaintances, friends, or family members rebuked or estranged themselves from the inter-viewee. Two of the seven interviewees described being reproached by people they had never met before. Two of the interviewees recounted being explicitly labeled "race traitors"; in one case, an interviewee was labeled by personal acquaintances, and in the other case, the interviewee was labeled by people he did not know. The analysis that follows will highlight a combination of stories from three people that reflect a range of in-group reactions, including regulation, exclusion, and public racial de-authentication at the hands of intimates and/or strangers.

The two types of data and methods are not presented as equivalent. Our treatment of disciplinary reactions to ideological deviance within the Black community explores hyper-visible processes of authentic identity-making among notable Black public figures. The elites whose words are being considered are credentialing individuals at a distance and via the media. They are not reacting to a targeted individual in person—an individual with whom they may or may not be personally acquainted. Our study of in-group disciplining within the White community focuses on far less public processes of determining authentic racial identities. Here, intra-racial policing occurs on a directly personal level, and it is described by the targeted individuals.

By pairing analysis of elites in the media with non-elites "on the ground," we intend to convey some of the processes by which adherence to particular racial ideologies is used to determine authentic racial identities and to shape the boundaries of acceptable group membership. These processes, we argue, occur within multiple racial communities and at various levels of political influence.

"Breaking Bad" in the Black Community: Policing Black Conservatives Who Deviate from Color-Consciousness

At the South Carolina Tea Party Convention in early January of 2013, Tim Scott, the nation's newest member of the United States Senate, received a "hero's welcome" from the largely White audience. Speaking in Myrtle Beach, Scott—the first African-American to be appointed to the Senate in a Deep South state since Reconstruction—declared the date a momentous occasion. "I have the privilege," Scott offered (with an "impish grin") of "speaking to both the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and the Tea Party in the same day … I love civil rights … I just want civil rights for everybody."[24] The conservative darling continued his speech by offering "sound bites" in which he proclaimed support for "free markets and traditional values, and opposition to all tax increases." Covering the event, the conservative *National Review* reported that Scott "bonded" with the room and relayed the message: "I know you're not racist, your positions are valid, and it's the other side that plays favorites."[25]

Scott's keenness to cast himself as an individual comfortable with both the legacy of civil rights and conservatism was not unusual. History and contemporary politics are peppered with accounts of Black conservatives whose rhetoric attempts to reconcile these two positions. However, many—if not all—of these efforts have been greeted with vigorous criticisms from Black liberals. In Scott's case, the NAACP repeatedly distanced itself from the politician. In an appearance on *CNN*, Ben Jealous explained the NAACP's reaction by pointing to Scott's repeated "F" rating during his tenure in the House. "We have Republicans who believe in civil rights," the NAACP president remarked. "Unfortunately he is not one of them … You know for us it's always about what's in folks' hearts."[26]

Jealous was far from alone in his criticism of the Black senator. Political scientist Adolph Reed, Jr., in a scathing *New York Times* opinion piece, argued that Scott's

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24. John Fund, "In Tim Scott's Wake," *National Review Online*, 14 January 2013, *www.nationalreview. com/articles/337581/tim-scott-s-wake-john-fund?pg=1*, accessed on November 15, 2013.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Black Youth Project, "Ben Jealous Calls Out Sen. Tim Scott on His Horrible Record on Civil Rights," *Black Youth Project*, 7 January 2013, *www.blackyouthproject.com/2013/01/ben-jealous-calls-out-sen-tim-scott-and-his-horrible-record-on-civil-rights*, accessed on November 15, 2013.

election "obscure[d] the fact that modern black Republicans have been more tokens than signs of progress." In the December 2012 article, Reed suggested that Scott's political presence was made plausible by

> Whites who are inclined to vote Republican but don't want to have to think of themselves, or be thought of by others, as racist … Just as white Southern Democrats once used cynical manipulations—poll taxes, grandfather clauses, literacy tests—to get around the 15th Amendment, so modern-day Republicans have deployed blacks to undermine black interests, as when President Ronald Reagan named Samuel R. Pierce Jr. to weaken the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Clarence M. Pendleton to weaken the Commission on Civil Rights and Clarence Thomas to enervate the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.[27]

The public statements by Jealous and Reed share an assumption: the ideas advanced by Scott and other Black conservatives are detrimental and dangerous to African Americans.

According to prominent Black liberals, Black conservatism poses multiple dangers to African Americans. Political scientists Robert Smith and Hanes Walton Jr., describe the ideology as an attack on liberalism and on an interventionist role for the federal government. In addition, Smith and Walton Jr. suggest that most Blacks view the brand of Black conservatism ushered in by the Reagan era as generally racist because it "delegitimize[s] the black quest for racial and social justice through recurrent attacks on affirmative action, the welfare state, and the … Great Society programs of the 1960s"[28] that redistributed resources to the nation's most disenfranchised peoples. Smith and Walton Jr. further contend that Black liberals are disturbed by Black conservatism mostly because it threatens a group-based uplift agenda. Black conservatism changes the policy debate surrounding the Black poor from "an emphasis on the responsibilities of government" to address structural racism "to a focus on the shortcomings of blacks."[29] In short, many Black liberals see Black conservatism as a corrupt ideology that is "hostile to social change"—in particular, "state-initiated" change.[30] This ideological orientation rankles Black liberals because they find it paradoxical that, as Smith and Walton Jr. put it, African Americans would champion a belief system that "would be virtually impossible for blacks, given their history and condition, to embrace."[31]

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27. Adolph Reed, Jr., "The Puzzle of Black Republicans," *New York Times*, 18 December 2012.
28. Robert C. Smith and Hanes Walton, Jr., "U-Turn: Martin Kilson and Black Conservatism," *Transition* 62 (1993): 209–16, at 209.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 211.
31. *Ibid.*

This apparent inconsistency generates much consternation among Black liberals, who find Black conservatives' emphasis on the "individual," along with color-blind rhetoric both perplexing and disconcerting. For example, in a 1986 article, "Unmasking the Black Conservatives," philosopher Cornel West expressed disbelief over Black conservatives' rejection of race-based collective solutions, and implied that it is tantamount to racial betrayal:

> They all support the basic policies of the Reagan administration, including the major foreign policies, the opposition to affirmative action, the efforts to abolish or lower the adult minimum wage, the proposals for enterprise zones in the inner cities, and the vast cutbacks in social programs for the poor …. Black conservatism is unacceptable …. They view [Black inequality] in strictly individualistic terms and ignore the historical background and social context of the current crisis.[32]

For West, Black conservatives are especially treacherous because they are "aware of the irony of their position" and know that their own "upward social mobility" was made possible by the race-conscious, collective struggle of "those in the civil rights movement and the more radical black activists they now scorn."[33]

Given these views, it is unsurprising that Black conservatives are often identified as racial sellouts by Black liberal critics, who struggle to understand how a Black person could so fully reject that to which he or she should have a racial commitment. Here, we borrow the words of Professor of Law Randall Kennedy, who defines a sellout as one who "betrays something which she is said to owe allegiance. When used in a racial context … 'sellout' is a disparaging term that refers to blacks who knowingly or with gross negligence act against the interest of blacks as a whole." A sellout, Kennedy notes, is generally seen as "worse than an enemy" because the "enemy is socially distant," whereas the sellout is a "member of the family … who is trusted because of his perceived membership in a given group— trusted until he shows his 'true colors,' by which time he has often done harm to those who viewed him as a kinsman or fellow citizen."[34]

Black liberals not only view Black conservatives as disloyal, they also see Black conservatives as sycophants for mainstream conservatives and as demonstrating an overwhelming need to gain the respect of their White peers to the detriment of their Black brethren.[35] This image of a racial Janus underlies Black liberals' critique of Black conservatives. As Kennedy argues, "blacks fear that whites will favor and corrupt acquiescent Negroes who, from positions of privilege, will neglect struggles

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32. Cornel West, "Unmasking the Black Conservatives," *Christian Century*, 16–23 July 1986, *www. religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1046*, accessed on November 15, 2013.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Kennedy, *Sellout*, 4–5.

35. West, "Unmasking the Black Conservatives."

for group elevation. [They] fear that whites will promote black … defectors who sap solidarity and discourage effective strategies for resisting subordination."[36]

In this line of reasoning, a color-conscious political orientation is of key importance to Black critics of Black conservatism. Black liberals are calling for adherence to an imprecise agenda of group-based racial uplift and are accusing Black conservatives of abandoning that commitment. As Reed put it in his *Times* op-ed, Black conservative Republicans "will not gain significant black support unless they take policy positions that advance black interests. No number of Tim Scotts—or other cynical tokens—will change that."[37] But, what exactly characterizes "policy positions that advance black interests"? One reader, Kenneth Simon of Philadelphia, pondered this question and wrote a response to Reed:

> I wholeheartedly reject the notion that to advance the cause of the black community one *must* accept and adhere to Democratic policies. I am young, black and happen to be right of center. Republicans do not need to fundamentally change their approach to policies like government spending and taxes to be palatable to minorities. The party's real problem has been too many disparaging, dismissive comments that serve no purpose but to divide. But Professor Reed's essay is part of our nation's larger problem of needlessly demonizing those with whom we disagree.[38]

Simon's statement is partly problematic because it assumes that Reed has an affinity for the Democratic Party and its policies. In fact, the reverse is true. Both Reed and West have been highly critical of the Democratic Party and its version of modern liberalism.[39] Nonetheless, Simon's statement does important work in that it correctly suggests that racial-group loyalty is not tied to any one political party. In this sense, Simon, Reed, and West share a tenuous connection. All three agree that the Black community need not "accept and adhere to Democratic policies," even though the three disagree on the best path for African Americans to take.[40]

Political scientist Michael Dawson has argued that "black ideological conflict occurs precisely over what constitutes the best political path for the race."[41] He maintains that while African Americans have pushed against "the traditional boundaries of mainstream American liberalism" throughout history, they have occasionally pushed forward "decidedly antiliberal" ideologies (some of which "have enjoyed significant mass support").[42] In other words, loyalty to the race is

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36. Kennedy, *Sellout*, 3.
37. Reed, "The Puzzle of Black Republicans."
38. Kenneth Simon, "Letter to the Editor," *The New York Times,* December 27, 2012.
39. See, for example, Adolph Reed, Jr., "Nothing Left: The Long, Slow Surrender of American Liberals," *Harper's Magazine* (March 2014).
40. Simon, "Letter," *The New York Times*, December 2012.
41. Dawson, *Black Visions*, 11.
42. *Ibid.*, 13.

exhibited not by support for progressive agendas. Within Black communities, "contrary views on gay rights, environmental policy, abortion, tax policy, foreign affairs, or church-state relations are acceptable."[43] According to Kennedy, the "litmus test" for racial loyalty in the African American community is support for affirmative action. "To be against affirmative action is tantamount to being antiblack," he proposes, "Contrary opinion on affirmative action is unacceptable."[44]

We contend that even though support for affirmative action is a critical indicator of color-consciousness, racial allegiance is not determined by one's position on a single race-conscious policy. Instead, racial loyalty is premised upon support for color-consciousness more generally. Color-consciousness involves the viewing of racism as a system of ideologies and practices that privilege White Americans at the expense of People of Color. Under conditions of racism, group-based identities remain salient because people's life chances are informed by their ascribed racial-group membership. Consequently, race-targeted remedies are appropriate means for achieving more equitable outcomes.

The racial ideology we call "color-consciousness" predates, includes, and extends beyond the policy of affirmative action. Tenets of this racial ideology have been instrumental to many Black resistance movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and arguably will continue to be important in the twenty-first century even if affirmative action continues to be slowly eviscerated by the Supreme Court.

Kennedy has proposed in an article for *The Root* that there should be certain consequences for Black people who expressly undermine group struggle. For example, "an African American who expresses racial hatred for blacks … or who joins a legitimate black-uplift organization for the purpose of crippling it," should be "shunned as forcefully as possible in order to punish them, render them ineffective and dissuade others from following a similar course." He contends that shunning is the only possible strategy to address the existence of a figure like Clarence Thomas, "a man whose very name has become synonymous with selling out." Kennedy concludes:

> Blacks should ostracize Thomas as a persona non grata. Despite his parentage, physiognomy and racial self-identification, he ought to be put outside of respectful affiliation with black folk because of his indifference or hostility to their collective condition.[45]

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43. Kennedy, *Sellout*, 94.
44. *Ibid*.
45. Kennedy, "Toure," *Root* (August 2011). For more examples of a similar sentiment, see Michael Ondaatje, *Black Conservative Intellectuals in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), introduction.

Kennedy's proposal taps into an understanding of Black conservatism that many African Americans share, regardless of their diversity of political beliefs. Many African Americans simply do not trust certain Black people because of their specific political agendas. Clarence Thomas, for instance, is widely viewed as insincere, dangerous, and hostile to African Americans. His affiliation with the GOP only intensifies the community's mistrust of his motives. A 2012 NAACP poll of Black voters found that more than three-fourths of the respondents believed that the GOP either was indifferent to issues of civil rights or was simply saying "what minorities want to hear." Fourteen percent of the respondents, nonetheless, stated that they would support a Republican candidate if he or she demonstrated a strong commitment to civil rights and equality that included support for jobs, anti-poverty programs, healthcare reform, affirmative action, affordable housing, immigration reform and the reduction of mass incarceration.[46]

So what type of Black Republican would most African Americans be willing to support? Certainly *not* a Clarence Thomas-type, who rebukes the consideration of race when interpreting the U.S. Constitution and whose initiatives have erased gains in the aforementioned areas of civil rights. A Black conservative who "opposes" civil rights and generally ignores the social conditions that necessitate such rights is seen, loosely, as a traitor. In contrast, a Black member of the GOP who supports at least *some* of these issues is seen as a loyal member of the Black community, despite his or her partisan affiliation.

Indeed, certain Black Republicans,[47] such as Colin Powell, are popular within the African-American community because they staunchly support color-conscious policies, despite the increasingly hostile efforts by conservatives to dismantle such programs. For example, when Powell declared his strong support for affirmative action at the 1996 Republican National Convention (RNC), he held a 69 percent favorability score among African Americans.[48] Two years after Powell spoke at the 2000 RNC and challenged his party to make "real" and "sustained" outreach efforts to racial minorities,[49] the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that his popularity had risen to 73 percent.[50] The former Secretary of State continued to enjoy a good reputation within the Black community well into the

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46. Benjamin Todd Jealous, "NAACP Chief: A GOP Path to Black Votes," *CNN*, April 24, 2013; Benjamin Todd Jealous, Silas Lee, and Matt A. Barreto, "NAACP Battleground Poll: 2012 African American Election Eve Poll," NAACP, *www.naacp.3cdn.net/193d69817d2aeeffc0_xnm6bc42h.pdf*, accessed on August 15, 2014.

47. Leah Wright Rigueur, *The Loneliness of the Black Conservative: Pragmatic Politics and the Pursuit of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

48. See Donald R. Kinder and Corrine M. McConnaughy, "Military Triumph, Racial Transcendence, and Colin Powell," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 70 (Summer 2006): 139–65, at 143.

49. See ABC News, "Transcript of Colin Powell's Speech," July 31, 2000, *www.abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=123273&page=1&singlePage=true*, accessed on December 24, 2014.

50. See Clarence Page, "We Reserve the Right to be Complicated," *Chicago Tribune*, November 3, 2002.

Obama administration because Powell's race-conscious sensibilities seemed as pronounced as ever. In 2013, he publicly rebuked Republican politicians and pundits for their racially tone-deaf political language,[51] reminded the mainstream press that "racial bias [still] exists in certain parts of our country," and expressed disappointment over the proliferation of voter identification laws that, by his account, make it harder for African Americans and Latinos to exercise the franchise.[52] Given his advocacy of color-conscious principles in the inter-racial public for nearly two decades, there is little wonder why this Black Republican's name is regularly batted about when African Americans ponder the next lineup of agreeable presidential candidates.

Part of the struggle many Black Americans have with their country's political milieu is that they believe their understanding of the problem of racial inequality is not shared by White Americans. Although the views of Blacks are diverse and *far* from monolithic, there's a general frustration not only with Whites who adopt a color-blind ideology, but also with other African Americans who adopt a political lens that appears to echo uncritically the tenets of White privilege. Our research suggests that the reverse is true as well. Among White Americans, there's a general bewilderment about White racial justice activists who adopt an ideological lens that is completely at odds with the White population's understanding of race and racial issues.[53]

"Breaking Bad" in the White Community: Policing White Racial Justice Activists Who Deviate from Color-Blindness

Casey is a 26-year-old employee of a non-profit organization and a co-creator of a workshop that introduces White youth to major concepts of racism and anti-racist resistance. Since her graduation from college, where she often participated in dialogues about White privilege, Casey has become increasingly attentive to matters of race. At her regular job, she is surrounded by colleagues and clients of Color and is often the only White person in the office. When she leaves her job to facilitate the workshop, she enters a starkly different context: she leads an all-White team working with White youth around matters of race.

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51. See Jason Howerton, "Colin Powell Reveals Why He Voted for Obama Twice in Contentious Interview with Bill O'Reilly," *The Blaze*, January 29, 2013, *www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/01/29/colin-powell-reveals-why-he-voted-for-obama-twice-in-contentious-interview-with-bill-oreilly/*, accessed on December 24, 2014.

52. See "Face the Nation transcripts August 25, 2013: Powell, Lewis, McCaul, and Reed," *www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-transcripts-august-25-2013-powell-lewis-mccaul-and-reed/*, accessed on December 24, 2014.

53. See Robert P. Jones, "Self-Segregation: Why It's So Hard for Whites to Understand Ferguson," *The Atlantic*, August 21, 2014, *www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/08/self-segregation-why-its-hard-for-whites-to-understand-ferguson/378928/*, accessed on August 22, 2014.

In these settings, the achievement of greater racial equity and awareness is the central goal for those assembled. Race talk is normative, and reflection upon her own racial identity is a personal and pedagogical practice. In other arenas of her life, however, color-conscious conversations and discussion of White privilege are discouraged and regulated.

After completing her studies at the university, Casey returned to her hometown, and reconnected with her longtime friends from middle school and high school. She was eager to talk with them about the hot topics at the university, such as structural racism and cultural appropriation, but she soon learned that many of her old schoolmates "don't think or talk or want to [talk] about [race] in the same way." A number of her White friends explicitly expressed their disinterest in having a dialogue with her about race. Some attempted to silence her by saying something to the effect of "Casey, shut the fuck up already." Beyond derision, some of her old friends even laid down official rules of engagement for Casey. She relays, "I've actually been told that my politics aren't welcome in my friends' houses. I'm totally welcome, but my politics aren't."

To belong to her various communities, Casey must navigate different behavioral norms. At work, surrounded by People of Color, her attunement to racial dynamics and her ability to communicate about circumstances that are punctuated with racial meaning benefit her. At her youth-based workshop, she and other like-minded Whites adults make a concerted effort to create a safe, but challenging space for White people to explore racism with one another because they believe such opportunities are far too rare. But, when it comes to bonding with those she has known longest, Casey must do an about-face and check her color-consciousness at the door in order to make others feel comfortable and secure in their own homes. Her racial ideology is at odds with their worldview, and her proclivity to talk about White privilege crosses the line of what they consider acceptable behavior. Even though the decision to comply is hers to make, her long-time friendships are now structured by an ideologically grounded ultimatum that could leave her severed from her past.

Shoshanna, a 28-year-old teaching and performing artist, is originally from a large city in the Deep South. As a young adult, she transferred from her Southern state university to a large university in New York City. At that time, the police officers indicted for the 1999 killing of unarmed Guinean-immigrant Amadou Diallo were acquitted on all charges. In a moment of grief and collective disappointment, Shoshanna joined a group of people gathering outside of Diallo's apartment building where he was struck and killed by 19 of the 41 fired bullets. Some of the mourners quietly kept vigil. Shoshanna joined a more vocal group that marched around the neighborhood. The marchers were "doing and saying and being in ways that were perceived as antagonistic toward the cops," who after the verdict also had assembled near the apartment building. The protestors,

understanding Diallo's death within a broader historical context of police brutality against Men of Color, cast the police department as racist. The crowd was indignant. Shoshanna and many other strident protestors were arrested and held in jail for over twenty-four hours. The generally tense and hostile interactions between the police and the detained Men of Color seemed both expected and familiar. But, the treatment that Shoshanna received while behind bars was markedly different. She shared that "there was a way in which certain cops were just really, really harsh, really hateful towards me because there was this sort of betrayal that I had committed in some way, particularly the White cops." She remembers them as looking at her with confusion and implicitly asking, "Why's a pretty little girl like you mixed up in something like this?" She believes that they expected White women to hold color-blind beliefs and to see police as honorable professionals who, in the course of defending the interest and the safety of the public, made a single and regrettable mistake when killing this unarmed Black man. Her anger towards the New York Police Department and her condemnation of the criminal justice system contradicted the officers' expectations. She had violated their trust in her assumed color-blindness. They therefore treated her with particular harshness.

The expectation of color-blindness from fellow White people is a matter of stereotyping. More importantly, it is an investment in an acceptable way of thinking and acting. Color-blind ideology is "owned" by White people because it is their predominant way of understanding America's racial environment and, furthermore, because color-blind interpretations often benefit White people with respect to issues of racial inequality and discrimination. For example, a color-blind reading of this particular tragedy would emphasize individuals, the expressed intentions of each officer, and the particularity of the event. It would deemphasize the group-based racial identities of the actors and the larger historical context in which they acted. According to a color-blind reading, Diallo was killed because he failed to follow orders and then was mistaken for reaching for a gun when he pulled out his wallet. A color-conscious examination of the same event might contend that even before guns were drawn, Diallo had been subjected to gross racial profiling. The officers cast suspicions upon him even though he had a right to stand on the stoop of his residence. A color-conscious account might also argue that the excessive amount of shooting illustrates the exorbitant license police officers have to control and punish resistant Black bodies. The color-conscious analyst connects Diallo's death to an egregious legacy of discrimination against and intimidation of darker-skinned people, while the color-blind analyst laments the unfortunate end to an otherwise rational series of decisions by four of New York's finest.

Shoshanna encountered a more painful response to her deviation from color-blind ideology when she spent Thanksgiving with an aunt and uncle who lived in

Massachusetts. While in the area, Shoshanna decided to participate in the National Day of Mourning near Plymouth Rock, which commemorates the genocide and current struggles of Native peoples. Shoshanna's aunt found out that her niece had attended the event, expressed strong disapproval, and kicked Shoshanna out of the house. Shoshanna was forced to seek shelter with a friend in a nearby town. Her relatives' subscription to color-blindness had made it possible for them to give thanks as part of a nation without giving second thought to the atrocities that had been committed in the name of nation-building. Shoshanna's words and actions offended the racial sensibilities of her two relatives, and in response, they elected to exclude her from holiday gatherings because of her "bad" behavior.

Sean, a 33-year-old staff person at a racial justice organization, shared a story from his days as a teenage community-college student in Southern California. At the time of his enrollment, the student population at his school was roughly half White and half People of Color, with a large proportion of students of Mexican descent. The governor of California at that time, Pete Wilson, proposed a series of budget cuts that threatened to raise the tuition at public institutions of higher education. Many students were concerned about their future access to college education, and a multiracial coalition of student groups formed and organized rallies and other political actions to counter the impending fee hikes. The campaign—whose leaders were mainly members of MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlan, a Chicano nationalist group), the Black Student Union, and a group of White anarchists to which Sean belonged—enjoyed wide support on campus. At the time, many of the leaders were either enrolled in or had previously taken the one Chicano Studies class, the one African American Studies class, and the one Indigenous Studies class that the school offered.

Although the organizers of the campaign originally formed the coalition to fight a tuition increase, the leaders also became critical of what their tuition was buying them. In particular, they grew more unsatisfied with the availability of classes that spoke to the histories and current conditions of People of Color. Over the summertime, a small group from MEChA and a few of the White anarchists decided to hold a reading group to discuss Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States*. They were moved by the retelling of American history from the perspective of the marginalized. At the end of the summer, they concluded that their coalition should shift its focus from the cost of their education, to the kind of education students were receiving. This small number of Chicano nationalists and White anarchists decided to fight for Ethnic Studies and Women Studies, and also to call for a Chicano Studies program (because nearly a third of the student body was Latino).

When the new school year commenced, Sean and his coalition campaigned for more classes that explored the contributions and experiences of women of all racial backgrounds and of racial minorities, in general. According to Sean, many

White members of the administration and the student body were perplexed: why was this coalition no longer primarily protesting fee hikes? The student newspaper, which once had lauded the coalition for its efforts in tackling the seemingly race-neutral issue of tuition costs, now turned on the coalition and described MEChA as a hate group because one of the speakers at a Chicano Studies rally had decried "the White racist history of this country." White students began writing letters to the paper in which they stated that they felt targeted for being White, and that the members of MEChA hated White people.

According to Sean, the coalition's revised agenda faced additional resistance because a statewide campaign against undocumented immigration was gaining momentum. In his opinion, the changing political climate directly affected the community college. The student newspaper published political advertisements that tied the cause of tuition hikes to the alleged drain on state funds by "illegal aliens." As the anti-immigrant rhetoric in California heated up, Mexicans, their descendants, and those who looked Mexican found themselves increasingly at the center of state budgetary debates. In this climate, the community-college coalition moved forward and planned a rally in support of Chicano Studies on campus.

On the day of the rally, Sean walked to the protest with one of his White friends to join approximately thirty people from MEChA who were already picketing in circular formation. When Sean and his friend arrived, they saw what appeared to be hundreds of White students surrounding the picketers and yelling hostile and nativist remarks like, "Fuck you!" and "Go Home!" Sean had never seen firsthand such a display of racial tension. His friend looked at Sean nervously and told him, "I don't want to go." Sean was scared, too, but he felt that he had to follow through with his commitment to his friends and to the cause around which their friendship had been built. With his mind made up, he walked into the circle and started picketing. Almost immediately, he heard White students yelling at him, "What are you doing?! What color's your skin?! What side are you on?!" Members of the White community were denouncing him in front of the inter-racial public for acting out-of-line. By tying skin color to political agendas, the accusers were declaring that being White in that moment meant advancing a set of race-neutral interests (tuition costs) that clearly benefitted White people materially. The political climate had caused the extension of social services to undocumented immigrants (many who entered the country through the Mexican-United States border) to be equated with material losses for the White, unquestionably-American population. In that climate, Sean's advocacy for classes that recognized the experiences of Chicanos, their relationship to immigration, and their spectrum of inclusion and exclusion in the American fabric was interpreted as a contradiction to what many Whites believed were his natural interests as a White person.

While one group of White onlookers asked, "What side are you on?," Sean could hear other White students shouting, "Race traitor!!" He was accused of being a race traitor not because he stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Mexican American students. When he worked in solidarity with Brown and Black people in the springtime, the school's White students had backed him. He was accused of racial treason because he abandoned a political agenda that corresponded to a color-blind ideology and had redirected his energies toward supporting a curriculum that would empower counter-narratives about American history that recognized White racism. Color-blind Whites saw this campaign for curriculum reform as offensive and detrimental to their interests. To borrow the words of Professor of Sociology Amanda Lewis,

> Color-blind ideology presumes or asserts a race-neutral social context (e.g., race does not matter here). It stigmatizes attempts to raise questions about redressing racial inequality in daily life through accusations such as "playing the race card" or "identity politics," which imply that someone is trying to bring race in where it does not belong.[54]

Discourse about tuition had been relatively race-neutral and timely given the larger budgetary debates around the state. Advocacy for Ethnic Studies, on the other hand, "did not belong" on the student agenda because (1) most White students did not think that their social studies and humanities curriculum was biased to begin with, and (2) it rechanneled resources from an agenda that materially benefited White students and that they, therefore, thought to be more important.

Sean's White schoolmates likely felt that he, by taking White racism to task, was trying to hold White people accountable for racial oppression. Being implicated for perpetuating racial inequality, even partly, is a profoundly stigmatizing experience for White people in the post-Civil Rights era. Instead of confronting the sullied meaning of a culpable and inherited White racial identity, many White people find it more prudent to distance themselves from accusations of racism. However, when Sean worked alongside Chicano peers who felt racially margin-alized by the school's curriculum and joined the racially explicit chorus, he drew unflattering attention to White people and the structural forms of White racism that they benefit from, and thereby violated the unspoken expectation and agreement among White Americans to invisibilize their shared racial identity. By marking him as a racial traitor, the Whites who denounced him ironically betrayed their own group-based interests that lay beneath the surface of a stigma-evasive, color-blind public persona. They thereby dissolved the race-blind pretense and managed the stigma by invalidating the racial stray.

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54. Amanda E. Lewis, *Race in the Schoolyard: Negotiating the Color Line in Classrooms and Communities* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 800–801.

Discussion

In this article, we illustrate how members of racial groups treat adherence to racial ideologies as an important element of racial belonging. We contend that majorities of Black and White people subscribe, respectively, to notions of color-consciousness and color-blindness, and use these racial ideologies in the formation of their political opinions and policy preferences. Although ancestry, phenotype, and self-identification are often considered the primary components of racial classification, Black and White people further substantiate their belonging to their ascribed racial group by adhering to "owned" racial ideologies. By publicly endorsing, or at least acquiescing to, the racial ideology that is held by a majority of a racial group, a person establishes that she or he is an authentic member of that group and is loyal to its interests.

The normativity of color-consciousness within the Black community and of color-blindness within the White community becomes especially visible when purported members of the group deviate from their presumed racial thought and action. Black Americans who de-emphasize the racial group as an organizing principle, who denounce attempts to take account of structural obstacles to upward mobility, and who advocate neoliberal solutions over state intervention to address racial inequality become susceptible to ideological policing by their racial group. White Americans become vulnerable to ideological regulation by their racial group when they frame racism as systemic rather than episodic, criticize the racial supremacist ideologies and practices that create racial privileges for White Americans, and advocate remedies for racial inequality that implicate groups rather than individuals. In both cases, the impetus for policing ideological adherence and for maintaining ideological acquiescence arises from desires (1) to cultivate credibility around the claims of a majority of the respective racial group regarding the causes of racial inequality, and (2) to advance an agenda for racial group uplift or stabilization in the inter-racial public space where political visions compete for support and attention.

Color-consciousness in the Black community and color-blindness in the White community are pervasive. But, recent scholarship in political science suggests that a shift in ideological trends may be underfoot. Lester Spence, for example, contends that a neoliberalization of Black politics is taking hold in arenas of education, religion, and public health.[55] Other researchers believe that cohort change and a rise of multiracialism are reshaping the racial landscape. Jennifer Hochschild, Vesla Weaver, and Traci Burch find that, in comparison to older members of their racial group, Black members of the Millennial generation are

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55. Lester K. Spence, "The Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 14 (2013): 139–59.

more likely to attribute economic inequality to Blacks' own failings, while White members of the same generation are less likely than their elders to fault poor Blacks.[56] While differences of opinion are growing within races, the boundaries between racial groups are becoming murkier as more people procreate across the color line and raise children who adopt and play with multiracial identities. Increased ideological diversity within racial groups, and a refiguring of imagined racial boundaries, may evoke a shared panic in coming years around matters of belonging and loyalty in the Black and White communities. It is therefore conceivable that interested racial-group members will further infuse their political discourse with the rhetoric of racial authenticity as they struggle to create consensus (or the appearance of consensus) and shape the future of national politics.

If we are to outgrow racial essentialism and have more nuanced dialogues about race at the local and national level, we must continue to develop a more robust vocabulary around and about identity, ideology, and belonging. As we head towards a more complicated political landscape in the twenty-first century, political actors will do well to become more precise about naming their allegiances and agendas, to exercise more savvy when identifying those who are likeminded and adversarial, and to become more cautious about conflating skin color with ideology.

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56. Jennifer L. Hochschild, Vesla M. Weaver, and Traci R. Burch, *Creating a New Racial Order: How Immigration, Multiracialism, Genomics, and the Young Can Remake Race in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 125. For more on the individualist attitudes of Black Millenials, see Candis Watts Smith, "Shifting from Structural to Individual Attributions of Black Disadvantage: Age, Period, and Cohort Effects on Black Explanations of Racial Disparities," *Journal of Black Studies* 45 (2014): 432–52.