Intensity of Ethnic White Identity and Out-Group Harm:

The Impact on Communities

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Growing social justice movements led by ethnic minorities in the US, like the Movement for Black Lives, and the increasing vocalization and media attention given to white supremacist groups have brought conversations about race and society to the forefront in the US. People on both the left and the right accuse people on the other end of the spectrum of being racist (Ingraham n.d.; Mathis-Lilley and Mathis-Lilley 2017). Terms like "racial justice," "white privilege," and "white supremacy" often evoke strong, emotional reactions from white Americans across the political spectrum. In general, white Americans remain uncomfortable with confronting the ways in which they continue to benefit from slavery and the genocidal policies against people of color in our country's past and to perpetuate white supremacy through "silent racism" (Trepagnier 2001).

A Pew Research Center Poll from 2014 found that political polarization in the US goes beyond politics and affects the types of places and communities liberals and conservatives wish to live in. While people across the political spectrum valued access to quality education, outdoor spaces, and being near their family members, liberals were more likely to want to live in diverse cities. Conservatives were more likely to want to live in more homogeneous rural areas. People who were consistently liberal or consistently conservative were more likely to want to live in places where people had similar political beliefs to their own (Pew Research Center et al. 2014). Commentary on the 2016 US election has also consistently raised the specter of polarization in the rural, urban divide with white people tending to be more conservative and rural and a mix of races and ethnicities composing the liberal, urban demographic (Bacon Jr 2016). At a time when localities have to compete globally for economic investment opportunities to help provide for the needs of their residents, research has shown that cooperating with other local and regional

governments is one way to become more economically competitive (Lombard and Morris 2010). The desire among white Americans to become more insular and the tendency towards ethnocentrism may undermine localities' ability to build community in order to adapt to and address the changes in society and the workplace brought on by technology and globalization.

As white Americans continue to hold the majority of positions of power within business and government, it is important to ask how their in-group favoritism and ethnocentrism relates to or potentially undermines the development of community within localities. To answer this question, an understanding of in-group/out-group behavior, ethnocentrism, the construction of whiteness, and how to define community is needed. Understanding these concepts allows for analysis of whether white ethnocentrism is likely to undermine community development.

First, I will focus on a common way to define community, which is as a place, set of shared ideas or values, a network of social ties, and a collective framework. Within this definition of community, I will reference aspects of in-group/out-group behavior and ethnocentrism that provide background on a theory about whether ethnocentrism and in-group favoritism undermines community as defined. The second half of the paper outlines an experiment used to test hypotheses drawn from my theory. I conclude by pointing out that understanding how ethnocentrism affects support for public policy at various levels can help guide policy makers and implementers as they work to build more resilient communities that have more positive outcomes for all residents.

Defining Community

When one thinks of "my community," images of a physical space or specific territory filled with fellow community members come to mind. It may be the town of one's childhood, the

neighborhood one resides in now, or even the site of the last gathering where the community members met. As Suzanne Keller (2003, 6) writes, "Community as captured, delimited space shapes the scale of the collective life and the patterns of life created therein." Although some suggest that territory is not essential to a community, the reality is that the majority of people live and experience much of their lives within a given locality (Wilkinson 1991). Facets of modern life, like digital social networks, have provided platforms through which people from disparate locations can interact, but evidence suggests that resilient communities, strong in trust, are formed by person-to-person interaction at the local level (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 9).

Communities are also defined by the shared ideas and values of its members as well as the members' social networks. Shared values could be in the form of shared reciprocity or moral sentiments that help build an identity and understanding of what defines a particular community (Keller 2003, 6–7). Having shared values allows members within a community to more easily build trust with one another. Such interactions are defined as "bonding social capital." Social capital is understood as "norms of reciprocity, mutual assistance, and trustworthiness" (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 2). Bonding social capital happens through interactions among people who are similar in important ways and its focus is on the internal well-being of the group (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 2).

Community members, of course, each have their own social networks as well. They typically interact with people outside of their locality and many of those people are different from them and from their community in crucial aspects. These acquaintances may have different ethnic backgrounds, practice different religions, or come from different countries. Interactions between a member of an in-group with people from out-groups are defined as "bridging social

capital" and such interactions are often motivated by shared goals or a common enterprise (Keller 2003, 7; Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 2). Bridging social capital is critical for a strong, resilient social network in an inclusive society (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 3). While bonding social capital is essential to community identity, communities are weaker when they lack the ability to interact with and create relationships of mutual respect and trust with people who are different. They are less resilient to change and less able to resolve hostilities between their own community and other communities.

Finally, community requires a collective framework or local society, which provides environments and opportunities for members to interact in. Within a local society, community members can help meet their needs through interactions with one another. They can express their ideas and values and work together to create common goals (Wilkinson 1991). Local institutions of government, business, faith-based organizations, and non-profits are included in this collective framework and often facilitate environments within which individuals interact (Keller 2003, 7; Wilkinson 1991).

There are also prerequisites to the formation of community. The development of community relies on individuals' abilities to meet their most basic needs, like food, water, breathable air, and rest. If those basic needs are not met for individuals within a territory, then the development of community cannot happen (Wilkinson 1991).

Community and In-Group/Out-Group Behavior

Hostility or Self-Esteem as Catalysts

The territorial requirement of community in this definition is one way in which in-group/ out-group behavior could be sparked. In realistic group conflict theory, for example, in-groups who perceive out-groups to be competing with them for local resources can create a sense of out-

group hostility and result in intergroup conflict (Sherif 1961, 210). Such conflict could help communities define their shared sense of values. In-group members, for example, could champion their own behaviors or characteristics that differentiate them from the out-group. Demeaning or demonizing the behavior or people in the out-group can help define the in-group identity and also reiterate their values. This conflict, however, would undermine their perceived need and ability to engage in diverse interactions required for bridging social capital. Competition and a perception among white people that non-white people may have beneficial access to such desirable resources is clearly evident in the case of college admissions (Long 2015). White people have long cited the application of affirmative action policies in the workplace and educational institutions as instances in which they perceive discrimination against white people (Gonyea 2017). College admissions, in particular, may be seen as a local, community issue because most colleges and universities receive public funding and draw largely from local student populations. Such competition between an ethnic white group with out-groups in a locality would make it difficult to build community among the white people feeling discriminated against and the non-white people who may benefit from this policy aimed at promoting racial equity.

In terms of building social capital and norms of reciprocity, "organizing some people in and others out… can sometimes have negative effects on the "outsiders" (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 3). Realistic group conflict theory supports this as explained above. If groups are competing for limited, desirable resources, conflict and violence can occur as a result (Sherif 1961, 210). Other theories, such as social identity theory and optimal distinctiveness theory, also provide evidence of negative outcomes for out-group members even when there is not overt

hostility towards the out-group. Social identity theory posits that humans naturally seek membership in a group in order to gain greater self-esteem and that there need not exist explicit competition between groups for in-group favoritism to arise. Simple categorization of people into groups can trigger in-group favoritism even without structures of conflict involved (Tafjel and Turner 1979).

Experiments exploring the minimal group paradigm within social identity theory provide evidence that when individuals are assigned even a minimal group status they will still favor their in-group when they are asked to allocate rewards to others. Minimal groups in one experiment were randomly assigned on the basis of an arbitrary task that held no obvious benefits for belonging to one group or the other. They had the option of allocating a series of reward to two anonymous individuals. Subjects did not have a previous relationship with each other and they did not know the specific identities of the individuals they could allocate rewards to. The only information they had about the individuals was what group they belonged to and, because they knew which group they themselves belonged to, that was the only possible association they could have with the individuals they were allocating rewards to. Even under these conditions of minimal group identity, subjects showed in-group favoritism. They gave more rewards to people in the same group as them. The authors theorized that they were motivated to favor their own group because by elevating the status of others in their group, they were simultaneously enhancing their own self-esteem through their membership to that group. Even though they personally were not receiving the rewards directly, they were motivated to favor their own in-group because they would receive indirect benefits if their in-group were to be perceived as successful or more successful (Turner, Brown, and Tajfel 1979).

Given the history of race and race relations in the US, it would be difficult to argue that any American would not meet this very minimal definition of group membership based on their ethnic identity. The government places value on racial identity as evidenced by the racial categorization question on US Census forms. Society places emphasis on racial identity by racializing such things as beauty (Tate 2007). Given the pervasive discourse on racial identity in the US, ethnic group identity likely exceeds the arbitrary, largely meaningless minimal group standards defined by this experiment in nearly every case, and, therefore, would trigger in-group ethnic favoritism in most cases.

Filling the Gaps of Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory also seems to be consistent with human nature in that we typically want groups (or communities) that we are members of to succeed because we are perceived to be more successful just by being a member of that group. It does, however, leave some big holes in our understanding of intergroup behavior. Fortunately, more contemporary research on social identity provides a more rounded context. There are three specific features of these other in-group theories that are essential to understanding intergroup behavior that can be applied to certain in-group tendencies of communities: 1) in-group favoritism is rooted primarily in an evolutionary human need for security, not just a desire for enhanced self-regard (Brewer 2007); 2) discrimination helps maintain intergroup distinctiveness and is not necessarily correlated to hostility (Brewer 1999, 2007); 3) while bestowing positive rewards on the in-group seems natural, people are less willing to disproportionately allocate negative outcomes on out-groups (Mummendey et al. 1992).

The evolution of human species offers an important explanation for what motivates in-group favoritism. Rather than self-esteem triggering in-group favoritism as outlined by social identity theory, the human need to organize in-groups for security offers a compelling alternative. Essential tasks, like finding or growing food and organizing defense from predators, were more efficient and more effective for early humans when done as part of a group. Additionally, social groups were able to build collective knowledge and diversify roles within the group that helped them better adapt to different environments. Because this dependence on others was essential to survival, basic human characteristics like cognition and emotion that supported social group organization also evolved in a way that supported the group structure and enabled humans to survive (Brewer 2007). In the context of in-group favoritism in modern American communities, this is important because if favoritism is rooted in the fundamental need for security, not the desire for greater self-esteem or merely because of the perceived competition for scarce resources, the way to frame policies or goals in order to build bridging social capital must be approached with this in mind. This also offers an explanation for why bridging social capital is harder to create than bonding social capital. As positive interactions among diverse groups are becoming more and more essential to democratic stability and community resilience, understanding the drivers of the divisions between such groups is important for community leaders working to bridge those divides (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 279 ,282).

Also, this theory is consistent with the definition of community outlined previously. Security is a lower level need in Maslow's hierarchy, just above food, water, rest, and breathable air. If individuals must have their security ensured before they can move on to the business of social interaction and engaging in work towards collective goals, then it makes sense that when

individuals feel a need for more security, it triggers in-group favoritism, which emphasizes interactions that promote bonding social capital. Such a need would discourage openness and willingness to engage in the building of social capital across differences that may threaten in-group cohesion.

Optimal distinctiveness theory also offers an important way to understand discrimination among groups. This theory states that individuals have opposing desires to be individual while at the same time wanting to be included in a group. At the extremes, being completely unique and individual leads to social isolation and stigma while being completely assimilated provides no opportunity for self-definition. In social environments, we strive to balance our individuality with our conformity (Brewer 1991). There is evidence that this plays out in reality as white people are simultaneously able to claim a general "European-American" ethnic identity and a specific ancestral ethnic identity within the European-American context, like that of German-American, when it is desirable or convenient (Waters 1990, 147). This will be discussed in more detail below. Optimal distinctiveness is also important at the group level. If groups become too inclusive and in-group members can no longer see what makes their in-group distinctive, then they will often splinter away from the larger, inclusive group in order to position themselves as more unique from other groups (Brewer 1991). This information allows greater insight into the potential reasons for dissatisfaction within inclusive communities. If members of a community do not feel like their community is distinct or united by shared ideas and values as described above, then community no longer exists.

According to optimal distinctiveness theory, "discrimination between in-group and out-groups is a matter of relative favoritism toward the in-group and the absence of equivalent

favoritism toward out-groups. Within this framework, out-groups can be viewed with indifference, sympathy, even admiration, as long as intergroup distinctiveness is maintained" (Brewer 1999). From this perspective, it seems reasonable that communities would tend towards in-group favoritism and may see societal policies or norms as discriminating against their own community since it is a natural function of in-group/out-group behavior. The theory also provides an explanation for why members of a community made up of all or majority white members, for instance, who favor their in-group do not see themselves as racist because favoring the in-group does not require hostility or negative attitudes towards out-groups (Brewer 1991). White people who favor their in-group, therefore, may not understand how policies that also favor their in-group are hostile towards out-groups because they do not feel that is the intention or they simply may not be alert to out-group discrimination in the way that they are inherently predisposed to recognize discrimination against their in-group.

Further evidence that in-group favoritism is not essentially linked to out-group hostility or negativity can be found in experiments that test in-group favoritism when subjects are tasked with allocating undesirable items rather than desirable items. In their study that demonstrated social identity theory is inconsistent when subjects are asked to allocate undesirable tasks rather than positive rewards, Amelie Mummendey and their co-authors (1992) provide a more holistic understanding of intergroup behavior. As discussed above, when subjects were allocating desirable rewards, in-group favoritism was rampant (Tajfel 1974). When subjects of a minimal group experiment were instructed to allocate undesirable tasks, however, in-group favoritism was eliminated and a more equal distribution of these tasks were allocated (Mummendey et al. 1992). When white Americans espouse support for policies that are framed in a way that would lead to

positive outcomes for white people or majority white communities, then, they may (knowingly or not) be ignorant of the negative effects those policies have on members of out-groups, such as black Americans or Hispanic/Latinx Americans. Reframing policies in ways that explain those negative effects may then alter white Americans' support for these policies.

Community and Ethnocentrism

Understanding what motivates or limits in-group favoritism through these theories, empowers us to seek ways to apply that knowledge to the development of community in the US. When ethnicity becomes a salient shared feature or a specific ethnic heritage becomes important to a community, a tendency towards ethnocentrism can begin to infiltrate the community identity. An excellent framework on ethnocentrism that builds off of social identity theory and optimal distinctiveness theory is laid out in *Us Against Them*. This text bases the definition of ethnocentrism on William Sumner's assertion that ethnocentrism is the assumption that a given in-group's way of doing things is superior to other groups' methods. Ethnocentrism is "a mental habit. It is a predisposition to divide the world into in-groups and out-groups. It is a readiness to reduce society to… us *versus* them" (Kinder and Kam 2010). The ethnocentric framework laid out in the book is broad, clearly organized, and aims to reveal the ways in which ethnocentrism is expressed politically in the US. It suggests that ethnocentrism is not a monolithic behavior that individuals either exhibit or do not. Rather people vary in their degree of ethnocentric behaviors and attitudes. It is a normal way to organize the social world and is not inherently malevolent. *Us Against Them* recognizes that ethnocentrism is motivated by both the human need for security and the desire for greater self-esteem (Kinder and Kam 2010).

Ethnicity can provide a shared identity around which community could be built. If ethnocentrism is a natural habit of humans borne out of the need for security and a way to distinguish oneself from others to gain greater self-confidence, building a community around ethnic identity could offer a greater sense of security and a greater sense of well-being and self-esteem. Shared ethnic identity alone, however, does not automatically create a community. This type of social identity must also have a shared sense of belonging, experience, or future through which individuals adhering to that identity can interact around in order to become a community (Keller 2003, 266–68).

Since degrees of ethnocentrism vary among people, communities defined by a high level of ethnocentrism would tend to threaten the cohesion of modern communities since they tend to be less ethnically homogeneous than in the past (Kinder and Kam 2010). Viewing the world from an extremely ethnocentric lens would limit an individual's ability to build meaningful relationships across difference and thereby limit their ability to facilitate the bridging of their social capital. Such ethnocentrism has ripped entire countries apart in genocidal conflicts, such as in Rwanda. Ethnocentrism of Western Europeans who identified as white and saw their whiteness as a mark of superiority led to genocide against indigenous people, slavery, Jim Crow, and other types of discrimination and violence that continue to today in the US. This discrimination can be seen in structures of racism and white supremacy that have been built into our legal and educational systems (Alexander 2012; Bonilla-Silva 2013, 35, 42–53).

Constructing Whiteness

To understand how Americans who identify as ethnically white and have greater ethnocentric tendencies affect community, we must understand how whiteness has been

constructed in the US. Whiteness "is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege" (Frankenberg 1993, 1). It provides white people with a context through which they see themselves, others, and society and it is cultural practices that often are the default or are seen as neutral (Frankenberg 1993; Kinder and Kam 2010). Whiteness is the privilege that white people can see racism as a form of politics and not part of their daily lived experience. Many white people have a greater understanding that racial oppression shapes the lives of non-white people than they do of understanding that racial privilege shapes their own lives (Frankenberg 1993).

Whiteness has been constructed overtime through colonialism and segregation. Claiming that practices or beliefs of contemporary members of ethnic minority groups are not valid or are less authentic than that of their ancestors who truly represent the "authentic culture" of Latinx or indigenous Americans undermines their modern cultural practices (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Frankenberg 1993). This is part of the white colonial mindset, which placed white supremacy at its heart. Whiteness also is constructed through the mapping of racial social geography seen in racially segregated neighborhoods or schools (Coates 2017; Frankenberg 1993). It is in the creation and maintenance of areas that are off limits to non-white people whether that be within public office, positions within a business, or in entire communities (Bonilla-Silva 2013, 36, 38, 55; Loewen 2005).

Whiteness is perpetuated by white people adhering to the norms of whiteness and rejecting or being fearful of others who do not adhere to those norms. People of color may be perceived as more violent, less civilized, and fundamentally other based simply on the clothes they wear, their presence in certain areas, or their expressions of joy or anger (Bonilla-Silva 2013, 49; Frankenberg 1993; Jung 2015). Whiteness is enshrined in the criminal justice system

that systematically privileges white defendants over non-white defendants or victims and in the education system in which the quality gap between white students and non-white students persists (Alexander 2012; Bonilla-Silva 2013, 35, 47; Jung 2015).

Whiteness means that the choice of where to live, which friends you have, or what job you have is not limited by your ethnicity. It also means that racial discrimination will not be a facet of your daily life in the US (Waters 1990, 147). What this makes clear is that people of color, especially black people, are limited by their ethnicity in those ways. In fact, whiteness has long been defined in opposition to blackness. This facet has allowed it to be dynamic and to redefine who is included in the white ethnic group over time (Warren and Twine 1997). By the 1980s and 1990s, for example, the transformation of ethnicity among white Americans with European heritage was complete. While various European ethnicities, like Italian, German, or Polish, were an important part of society in the past, by this time, a trend towards a new, broader ethnic European-American identity had been secured (Alba 1990). Historically, German-Americans and Italian-Americans were seen as culturally and ethnically distinct. In modern times, however, these groups can claim an over-arching "European-American" ethnic identity which grants whiteness to all individuals who can claim it (Alba 1990).

Even groups like the Irish had once been highly stigmatized and even considered "black." As newer immigrants from Eastern Europe began to arrive in the early 1900s, however, the Irish became more accepted by white American society. They were seen as more culturally similar to "whites" than these new arrivals whose languages and cultures were seen as even more exotic. As this shift occurred, the Irish were able to position themselves in contrast to the newer

immigrants and, as always, to African-Americans to move into the "white" ethnic category in the US (Alba 1990).

Evidence of this new, broader ethnic identity is found in the results of a 1990 survey of 524 subjects from the Capital Region of New York. This region was composed of a heterogeneous population of white Americans with European ancestry, especially that of English, German, Irish, French, Italian, Scot, Dutch, and Polish. The findings indicate that as the social mobility and intermarriage among Americans of differing European ancestry increased and distinct ethnic identity became less socially prominent, a new ethnic identity, that of European-American, began to take hold. This more general ethnic identity allowed white people to consciously choose when and whether to make their specific ancestral identity, as a Polish-American, for example, an important facet of their identity. Intermarriage of white Americans with different European ancestry also resulted in children and grandchildren being able to claim multiple European ethnic identities and, thereby, having the flexibility to apply those diverse heritages to make their own characteristics more authentic (Alba 1990). One person, for example, may claim their love of opera or Italian cuisine is authentic because a grandparent was Italian. That same person may feel a more authentic connection with a St. Patrick's Day celebration because another grandparent was Irish. In this way, white Americans became able to embrace the facets of different European ethnic identities that they favored. They could put on or take off the mantle of ethnicity in a way that their ancestors were not able to do and which Hispanics/Latinxes and non-white people are still unable to do in the US (Alba 1990).

This concept of choosing when and which ethnic identities white people are able to use or their ability to claim a general "European American" identity provides them with a greater ability

to live out the optimal distinctiveness theory described above. Based on 1980 census data, the desire to be part of a community while at the same time desiring to be uniquely individual is what drives white people to claim an ethnic identity even though the distinction among various white ethnic identities based on European ancestry is no longer prominent (Waters 1990, 147, 150). This is the optimal distinctiveness theory playing out in real life.

Symbolic ethnicity among white Americans may also persist because it allows them to construct a narrative of discrimination about their own families and ancestors that allows them to reject their own complicity in historic discrimination against people of color. The impact is that because white people experience their own ethnicity as symbolic and can choose which ancestral ethnicities to embrace, they are less able to empathize with the lived (non-voluntary) ethnic experiences of people of color who cannot simply choose their ethnicity or when to apply their ethnicity. The ethnicities of people of color are imposed on them and have very real social and political consequences, like what jobs they can access, who they can marry, and how much education they can attain (Waters 1990, 147). US society has been stratified along ethnic lines since its inception. As policy makers and community developers work to reduce that stratification and improve outcomes for all, understanding how ethnically white Americans perceive policies and how they behave in relation to their ethnocentrism could be a key factor in policy development.

Hypotheses

Researchers have shown that group identity and cues given by the media and politicians related to the tension between in-groups and out-groups can manipulate the ways that individuals evaluate policies (Edelman 2013; Kinder and Kam 2010; Winter 2008, 2–3). By using racial

frames and language to link policies that are not explicitly racialized to an individual's racial biases, political elites can influence and direct the way that individual evaluates those policies. Such frames help build support or opposition for certain policies that individuals may not be very familiar with and may otherwise be ambivalent about (Winter 2008, 7). Given that people tend to show in-group favoritism even in minimal circumstances (Kinder and Kam 2010; Turner, Brown, and Tajfel 1979) and that whiteness is an unavoidable part of white Americans' experience and identity (Frankenberg 1993), it follows that white Americans would naturally support programs that benefit their ethnic in-group.

> Hypothesis 1a:
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> Americans who identify as white will show in-group favoritism by indicating greater support for policies that are framed in a way that show disproportional benefit to white people.

Additionally, because people who strongly identify themselves as part of an in-group are motivated to enhance the success of that group (Brewer 2007), it follows that those who see their ethnicity as a salient feature of their identity will provide even higher support than others in their ethnic group for programs that benefit their ethnic group.

> Hypothesis 1b:
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> As white subjects' ranks on the Ethnic Identity Scale increase, the level of in-group favoritism they show for programs that benefit white people will increase.

In general, people are less likely to disproportionately allocate negative tasks to out-groups (Mummendey et al. 1992) so it seems probable that when the same policy (as in Hypotheses 1a and 1b) is framed as harming out-groups as well as disproportionately benefiting

the in-group, then support for such a policy will diminish among white people who see their ethnicity as less important. Although among white subjects who see their ethnicity as important to their identity, in-group favoritism may increase based on realistic conflict theory's assertion that competition for resources triggers out-group hostility (Sherif 1961, 210).

> Hypothesis 2a:
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> In-group favoritism of white subjects who rank low on the Ethnic Identity Scale will diminish when the same policy is framed in a way that shows harm towards non-white or Hispanic/Latinx out-groups.
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> Hypothesis 2b:
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> In-group favoritism of white subjects who rank high on the Ethnic Identity Scale will remain the same or increase when the same policy is framed in a way that shows harm towards non-white or Hispanic/Latinx out-groups.

To test these hypotheses, I will collect data using a survey-based experiment that will provide quantitative data for difference of means testing and OLS regressions across groups.

Experimental Design

I conducted a survey-based experiment to collect data on individuals to test my hypotheses. The test subjects were 189 undergraduate students drawn from courses in the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University. Participating students received course credit for their participation. The experimental manipulation was implemented through Qualtrics software. Instructors sent students a link to the survey and students were able to complete the survey at their leisure on any computer with internet access within the seven days that the survey was open.

Because being ethnically white is an independent variable in each of my hypotheses, participants self-reported their ethnic identity as part of the demographic section of the survey. The focus of the analysis is on respondents who self-identify as white, non-Hispanic Americans. Inherent in this choice is the assumption that in-group favoritism of non-white and Hispanic/Latinx people will not be triggered by policies that benefit white people as will be described to Treatment Group 1 and Treatment Group 2. International students who identify as white may also not have the same associations with their whiteness as Americans do, especially if they are from more racially or ethnically homogeneous nations so their responses were not included in the analysis. When limiting my observations in this way, my data provided 123 responses.

Because respondents were randomly assigned to the control or treatment groups, individual demographic trends should not play a role in influencing the dependent variable because each respondent has an equal chance of being placed in any of the groups. Please see the chart below, which shows the demographics among the randomly assigned groups. The groups are fairly balanced on all demographics with the exception of ideology. This is likely due to the smaller sample size of 123. If more responses had been gathered, this discrepancy would have likely been resolved. Additionally, convenience samples of undergraduate students tend to be over represented by women and liberals, so these discrepancies in the totals could be a result of this common bias (Kam, Wilking, and Zechmeister 2007, 427). Fortunately, because all participants were randomly assigned and had an equal chance of being placed into any of the groups, these discrepancies should not exert significant bias in the results.

Table 1.
Demographics of Survey Respondents

	Control	Treatment Group 1	Treatment Group 2	Total
Female	37%	34%	29%	55%
Male	33%	31%	36%	45%
Republican	37%	30%	33%	37%
Independent	23%	38%	38%	11%
Democrat	36%	31%	33%	45%
Unsure/Other	33%	44%	22%	7%
Conservative	44%	17%	39%	34%
Moderate	17%	58%	25%	20%
Liberal	39%	30%	31%	44%
Unsure	0%	66%	33%	2%

An independent variable in Hypotheses 1b, 2a, and 2b is importance of white ethnicity to an individual's identity. To gauge the strength of whiteness of the respondent's identity and their affinity for their ethnic in-group, respondents answered questions from the Ethnic Identity Scale. The scale is composed of 20 questions with responses based on a five-point Likert-type scale (Valk and Karu 2001). The complete battery of questions can be found in the Appendix. I expect that the higher white respondents rate on this scale, the more likely they will be to favor programs that disproportionately favor white people. To analyze Hypothesis 1b, I created an additive variable of the Ethnic Identity Scale questions where lower numbers represented weaker importance of ethnic identity and higher numbers represented stronger importance of ethnic identity. I also created a dichotomous variable split at the mean of ethnic identity score where respondents who were at or below the mean were coded as zero and those above the mean were coded as one for intense ethnic identitification. This dichotomous variable allowed me to assess Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

To construct the dependent variable, subjects were asked to self-report their level of support for a program that they had read about in a short paragraph. For the experimental manipulation, the respondents were randomly assigned into three groups, Treatment Group 1, Treatment Group 2, and control. Each group read a slightly different prompt, which is described more fully in the next section. Each participant was then asked to indicate on an ordinal, five-point scale how much they favored continuing the program. This variable was coded one to five where one represented strong opposition and five represented strong favor. After the multiple choice question, they were asked to write a short description of the policy and their level of support for it. In this way, I was able to check whether the subjects actually read the prompt or simply selected a random answer.

For the policy focus of the community development program I selected one that is not controversial nor one that is well known with most people having a predetermined opinion about it. I chose an economic policy implemented by a city government to increase jobs because the concept is easily accessible and does not require extensive description or understanding of the details to form an opinion. Access to high-wage jobs is a popular topic in media and politics today. It is also an issue that undergraduate students should feel a personal connection to since they will be seeking such jobs when they complete their degrees. These facets eliminated the need to describe the utility of such programs as it should be intuitively understood what the benefits of high-wage work are for individuals and a community within our society.

Experimental Manipulations Indicated in Italics and Brackets

The city of Springview is a town of 90,000 residents. The median age is 27 and the town has a poverty rate of 18%. The population is 55% percent female and 45% male. White residents

make up 60% of the population, followed by black residents at 30%, and all other ethnicities at

10%. The Springview city council has long championed programs that increase access to jobs

for their residents. Two years ago, the city council implemented a pilot program that aimed to

increase the number of high-wage jobs in their city. They funded the program from the part of

the city budget used to attract new businesses or expand existing businesses. A recent assessment

report found that the first two years had been very successful. The program had achieved its 5%

growth target for high-wage jobs. [Groups 1 & 2: with 90% of those jobs going to white

residents.] [Group 2: The program did have the unintended consequence of increasing

unemployment among the city's black residents because funding for programs that had supported

minority job training and entrepreneurship decreased in order to provide funds for the new

program.]

Based on what you've read about Springview's high-wage jobs pilot program, please indicate

how much you would favor the city council continuing this program if you were a resident of

this community.

     1. Strongly Oppose
     2. Oppose
     3. Neither Favor nor Oppose
     4. Favor
     5. Strongly Favor

In a couple sentences, please describe the outcome of the high-wage jobs pilot program in

Springview that you read about earlier and whether you support continuing the program.

(minimum 300 characters)

Results

This design allowed me to test the hypotheses by running difference of means tests and OLS regressions across the different groups. Hypothesis 1a asserted that white people would show in-group favoritism by showing higher support for the program if it was framed in a way that disproportionately benefited their ethnic group. This was assessed by considering the extent to which the mean value of support for continuing the program in Treatment Group 1 differed compared to the control group mean. In this hypothesis, the independent variables, white ethnic identity and programs that disproportionately benefit white people, were triggered by the fact that the subject self-identified as white and that the reading prompt describes that the program states that 90% of the benefits of the program went to white people even though white people made up less than 90% of the city. I, therefore, anticipated that subjects in Treatment Group 1 would express higher levels of favoritism to the program than the control group.

As the results in Table 2 indicate, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean level of support for the program between Treatment Group 1 and the control group. The null hypothesis could, therefore, not be rejected. This means that among this sample, white people did not show in-group favoritism at a statistically significant rate when the program was framed as disproportionately benefiting white people compared to when there was no detail about any specific group that benefited. These results could show that in-group favoritism simply was not triggered by the vignette or that the control group assumed that white people were most benefiting from the successful program even though it was not specifically stated. It could also be the case that the extreme nature of the ethnic inequity in the program outcome implied in the Treatment Group 1 vignette triggered a sense of unfairness or "white guilt" among some respondents that over powered the tendency towards in-group favoritism.

Table 2
Difference of Means Among Control and Treatment Groups for Policy Support

Control Group Mean	3.442
Treatment 1 Group Mean	3.250
Difference Treatment 1 vs. Control	-0.192

Note: Policy support was measured on a 5-point scale where 1 was strongly oppose and 5 was strongly favor. +: $p<0.10$; *: $p<0.05$; **: $p<0.01$

Hypothesis 1b was evaluated by looking at the relationship between scores on the Ethnic Identity Scale and level of support for continuing the program in Treatment Group 1 compared to Treatment Group 2 since only respondents in these categories were given a policy frame that showed that white people disproportionately benefited from the program. This frame should trigger in-group favoritism among the respondents. Based on this hypothesis, I expected that as Ethnic Identity Scale scores increased, the level of support for continuing the program would also increase. The additive ethnic identity scale score was used as the independent variable, which provided a continuous scale by which to assess the relationship.

As the data in Table 3 indicate, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. There was not a statistically significant relationship between the ethnic identity scores of respondents in the two treatment groups and their support for continuing the program. In the bivariate model, considering only support for continuing the program and the ethnic identity score, the ethnic identity score was approaching significance. Because of the slight unbalance of moderates and conservatives among the treatment groups as noted above, I also ran a multivariate model including ideology. As expected, this imbalance among the groups was not dire enough to make ideology a significant variable influencing the ethnic identity score in the treatment groups, but including it in the model did decrease the level of significance of the ethnic identity score. These

results mean that among this sample, there was not a statistically significant relationship between the strength of a respondent's ethnic identity and that person's level of support for continuing the jobs program.

Table 3
Ethnic Identity Scale Score Predicting Support for Program Continuation

	Bivariate Model	Multivariate Model
Ethnic Identity Scale Score	1.435+ (0.819)	1.247 (1.037)
Ideology	-	0.081 (0.515)
Constant	2.484	2.535
R^2	0.046	0.039
N	80	79

Note: Cell values are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. DV is coded as individuals level of support for continuing the jobs program. +: $p<0.10$; *: $p<0.05$; **: $p<0.01$. Ideology was included in the second model because of the distribution of conservatives and moderates across groups was not quite balanced.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b were assessed by considering the extent to which support for continuing the jobs program differed between respondents with high ethnic identity scores and those with low ethnic identity scores. Specifically, respondents in treatment Group 2 were compared to respondents in the control group. The independent variables in these hypotheses, importance of ethnic white identity and programs that harm an ethnic out-group, should have been triggered by the subject's self-reported white, non-Hispanic/Latinx ethnic identity and by the program description that states that the program harms black people. For Hypothesis 2a, I expected that respondents in Treatment Group 2 who have at or below mean Ethnic Identity Scale scores would show lower levels of favoritism for continuing the program than the control group. For hypothesis 2b, I expected that respondents in Treatment Group 2 who scored above

the mean on the Ethnic Identity Scale scores would show higher levels of favoritism for continuing the program than the control group.

Table 4 shows the results of the regression for these hypotheses. In this model, the control group was used as the reference group. Respondents in Treatment Group 2 who had low ethnic identity scores reported statistically significantly lower levels of support for continuing the jobs program compared with the control group. This indicates that we can reject the null hypothesis for Hypothesis 2a. Respondents whose ethnic identity scores suggested low salience of ethnicity to their identity who read the program framed as disproportionately benefiting white people and harming black people, were statistically less likely to support continuing the program.

When considering respondents in Treatment Group 2 with high ethnic identity scores, the picture is less clear. The results show that Treatment Group 2 respondents with high ethnic identity scores rated higher levels of support for continuing the jobs program compared to the control group, but the p-value was only approaching significance at 0.059. Although close to the 0.05 threshold, this means that we cannot reject the null hypothesis for Hypothesis 2b. Among this sample, respondents who reported high salience of ethnicity to their identity were not statistically more likely to support continuing the program. Collecting more data could help better determine whether the relationship highlighted in Hypothesis 2b is statistically significant or not.

Table 4
High and Low Ethnic Identity Scale Scores Predicting Support for Program Continuation

Ethnic Identity Score	-0.306 (0.235)
Treatment 1	-0.256 (0.216)
Treatment 2	-0.778** (0.238)
Treatment 1 x Ethnic Identity Score	0.106 (0.421)
Treatment 2 x Ethnic Identity Score	0.759+ (0.397)
Constant	3.556
R^2	0.086
N	123

Note: Cell values are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. DV is coded as individuals level of support for continuing the job program. +: $p<0.10$; *: $p<0.05$; **: $p<0.01$.

Discussion

The surprising part of these results is that this sample did not show statistically significant rates of in-group favoritism. This tendency has been studied extensively in various fields since Tajfel's first study in the 1970s. Given the established nature of in-group favoritism among the social sciences, it does not seem likely that this study has revealed that this theory is unfounded. Rather, the null results in the present case could mean that the difference in the vignettes for the control group and Treatment Group 1 were not sensitive or specific enough to pick up this tendency. Those in the control group, for example, may have assumed that white people benefited disproportionately from the successful jobs program because they were the majority in the community and because our society historically and to today largely structures public programs in a way that disproportionately benefit white people (Coates 2017, 186). An

improvement would be to state in the control group vignette that the community is 50% white and 50% black and that the benefits of the program were shared equally among those groups.

An alternative explanation for why I could not reject the null hypothesis for Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 2b is that I did not gauge baseline support for government programs that increase the number of high-wage jobs. From a strictly rational perspective, I had assumed that subjects would be more supportive of programs that had positive outcomes. Respondents, however, could have had a negative affiliation with jobs programs or government spending on jobs programs because of ideology or personal experiences. Given the relatively small sample size, if several respondents were opposed to such programs regardless of the vignette they received, they could skew the results. Outside of collecting more data in order to ensure that this feature would be balanced among the randomly assigned groups, an improvement would be to include such a question well before the manipulation to ensure that respondents with such a tendency were evenly dispersed among the groups.

Embedding this study into part of a larger survey could also greatly enhance the reliability of the results. Because the survey only included a demographic battery, the Ethnic Identity Scale battery, and the manipulation with associated questions, respondents may have been triggered to think more about the consistency of their answers across the Ethnic Identity Scale and the manipulation questions. If the survey had been part of a larger study where the respondents were asking questions about a variety of subjects and scenarios, they would be less likely to have been primed by the Ethnic Identity Questions. An alternative improvement would have been to embed distraction questions into the survey so that the point of the study did not seem to be so focused on ethnicity.

Having potentially primed respondents on ethnicity is a weakness of the current study because respondents may have felt social desirability bias and, therefore, responded in a way that they believed others would favor. Depending on their perceptions of what would be favorable, that could have triggered a feeling of "white guilt." Although the responses were anonymous, such a sense of guilt by respondents could have still made them respond in a way they felt was politically correct rather than indicating their own personal feeling about continuing the program. If the questions from the Ethnic Identity Scale primed them to think more specifically about their own whiteness, this could have been compounded.

In fact, the reason that the only hypothesis that the data showed evidence to support was Hypothesis 2a, may provide support to such an argument. Hypothesis 2a asserted that respondents that had low ethnic identity scores would show lower support for continuing the program when it was framed to harm the out-group, black people in the community. Respondents with low ethnic identity scores may have been feeling a sense of white guilt when responding to the questions asking specifically about their beliefs about ethnicity. Such respondents would have likely continued to feel that guilt if they read the prompts in Treatment Group 1 which described disproportionate benefit going to white people, or in Treatment Group 2, which on top of those benefits also described black people as being harmed.

Hypothesis 2a was largely based on the study by Mummendey et al. (1992) that showed people with minimal group association were less likely to disproportionately allocate negative tasks to out-group members. This is consistent with white guilt. Perhaps a general sense of guilt is one of the underlying reasons why respondents in that study behaved in a more egalitarian manner. Additionally, it seems likely that white Americans see their own ethnic identity as more

than a "minimal group" characteristic. Having a deeper group association, such as that of race or ethnicity in American society, would likely affect behavior involving allocation of negative outcomes differently than a minimal group association. More research in this area would be needed to make a more informed conclusion.

Although there are limitations to the current study, the findings suggest a need for more research into support for programs and policies that have negative externalities to ethnic out-groups. Future studies may assess whether the trends from this study hold across different regions in the US. They may also look at whether there is a difference in the ethnic out-group selected in the experimental manipulation. Perhaps a group that is less stigmatized by white Americans, like Asian Americans, would trigger a different level of support among white respondents than a manipulation that states harm to black or Latinx people. Studying how ethnocentrism of non-white Americans relates to their policy support for programs framed as benefiting or harming various in-groups and out-groups could also increase our understanding of the best way to increase support for various policies among non-white Americans. There will also be a need for future research on whether the ethnic identity of policy makers influences their policy decisions in the same way that an average person's ethnicity influences their policy preferences. Do policy makers' greater engagement with politics and civic society generally have a different effect on the way their ethnocentrism influences their policy preferences for example? These and other important questions can build off of the insights and conclusions established by these findings. Such answers will offer information that can guide policy makers at multiple levels who are interested in eliminating structures of white supremacy and building more resilient communities.

Conclusion

Although progress has been made in some aspects of racial inequality in the US since the Civil Rights Movement, we are far from living in a post-racial society. There are policies at all levels of government that inherently work to ensure racial disparities persist. Eighty percent of the 2017-2018 US Congress is white even though white people make up only 62% of the US population (Bialik and Krogstad 2017) In 2015, which provides the most recent data, 82% of state legislators were white (National Conference of State Legislatures 2016). In the 2016 General Election, 69% of eligible voters were white while 71% of actual voters were white (CNN n.d.; Krogstad 2016). Given these facts, white people remain disproportionately represented in the electorate and in positions of political power. Because humans naturally have a tendency towards ethnocentrism and ethnic in-group favoritism (Brewer 2007; Kinder and Kam 2010), understanding how their ethnicity affects how likely they are to support different policies could be crucial if society truly wants to achieve the equitable society that our national myths purport.

Overall, though, if policy makers and social justice advocates want to better understand how they can frame policies to gain more support among white Americans, knowing whether Americans are less likely to favor programs that harm minorities would be important as they create education and awareness campaigns. Typically, public discussions around racism, white supremacy, and ethnocentrism have been framed as a morality issue. My finding for Hypothesis 2a indicates that the discussion could be framed around the less contentious issue of community vitality in order to gain more support from white communities members who see ethnicity as a low salience feature of their identity. Offering a different lens by which to view ethnocentrism

could offer new opportunities to advance racial equity across the US. Additionally, because the data do not indicate that such framing triggered higher levels of support among white Americans who see ethnicity as highly salient feature of their identity, there may not be a significant fear of causing greater out-group hostility with such a frame.

Additionally, because white voters make up the majority of the electorate, using strategies that undermine their natural tendencies towards white favoritism could help build more consensus for policies that lead to more equitable outcomes across ethnicity. This is also true at the local level where populations of given localities are majority white. In order to develop community in multiracial, multiethnic localities, city leaders and community developers may see better outcomes when they encourage or incentivize their residents to create bridging social capital across ethnic and racial differences within their communities. They should also consider how they could shape different policies in order to inhibit ethnocentric tendencies not only of their residents but also of the bodies that write and implement their public policies.

Appendix

Ethnic Identity Scale
Please indicate if how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. In the next 20 questions, ethnicity refers to the general ethnic category of Americans, such as black, white, Latinx, indigenous, etc...
 (0 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)

Ethnic Pride and Belonging Questions
2 I am proud of my ethnic group membership.
3 Being conscious of my ethnic background increases my
6 I respect the traditions of my ethnic group.
7 I am greatly interested in the history of my ethnic group.
9 I feel a strong inner connection with my ethnic group.
11 I enjoy taking part in events of my ethnic group.
12 I am conscious of my ethnic background and of what it means to me.
14 I feel good about my ethnic background.
16 Knowing the history of my ethnic group teaches me to value and understand my fellow ethnic group members and also myself better.
18 I take pride in achievements of my fellow ethnic group members.

Ethnic Differentiation Questions
1 It is important for me which ethnic group a person belongs to.
4 Ethnic background does not matter in choosing a spouse. (r)
5 It is nicer to commune with somebody from my own ethnic
8 Ethnicity should not play any role in evaluating a person. (r)
10 All my close friends belong to the same ethnic group as I do.
13 I do not find a person's ethnic background important. (r)
15 It would be neither easier nor harder for me to live with a person from an ethnic group other than my own. (r)
17 There are several foreigners among my close friends. (r)
19 Spouses/partners should belong to the same ethnic group.
20 I like to get to know people from other ethnic groups. (r)
(r) denotes reversed items.

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