Religious Influences on Understandings of Racial Inequality in the United States

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How does religion influence the way Americans understand the racial inequality that pervades our society? Only a few studies have explored this question, concentrating on how religious conservatism affects whites' views, and generating conflicting findings. Using data from a national random sample telephone survey (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2003, N *= 2081), we find that among whites, both gender and education shape the effects of religious conservatism on attitudes toward racial inequality. We show that religious subcultural effects are different for African Americans and Hispanic Americans than they are for whites. We also find that, across religious subcultures, the more religiously involved have less progressive views on racial equality than those who are less involved. We demonstrate the interaction of religious subculture, race, education, and gender in forming American's views of racial inequality and we identify other religious effects on views of racial inequality not explored in previous research. We argue that to understand how religion shapes racial attitudes we need to do more in-depth research on the religious subcultures of non-whites, expand our focus beyond conservative Protestants, take into account religious institutional factors that operate across religious subcultures, and explore the structural factors that shape the use of religious cultural tools in forming racial attitudes. Keywords: religion, conservative Christian, race, racial attitudes, racial inequality.*

African American inequality is pervasive and persistent in the United States. Compared to whites, African Americans have substantially lower incomes and less wealth, are more likely to live in severe poverty, have higher mortality and incarceration rates and lower educational attainment, and experience poorer health (Bobo and Smith 1998). A long line of research has investigated white Americans' views about the causes of racial inequality and preferences for different kinds of solutions. Recent discussions have focused on trends over time and often take a "good news, bad news" approach.

The good news is that since the 1960s, white Americans have shown a decline in traditional forms of prejudice, being less likely, for example, to believe that African Americans are biologically inferior. They are also more likely to affirm the gains of the civil rights movement, being especially likely to agree with the abstract principles of racial equality under the law, equal opportunity, and fair treatment. Whites still by and large prefer social distance from African Americans, not generally favoring intermarriage or integrated neighborhoods, but this preference for social distance has declined somewhat (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997; Bobo and Smith 1998; Krysan 2000; Schuman et al. 1997). The bad news is that white Americans are still likely to blame African Americans for inequality, focusing on explanations

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like a lack of effort and hard work or a deficiency in African American family up-bringing or culture. And they are unlikely to favor solutions that take the form of governmental intervention to "balance the scales," such as affirmative action or direct transfer of economic resources (Bobo et al. 1997; Bobo and Smith 1998; Schuman et al. 1997).

Declines in traditional measures of anti-black prejudice have led some to explain whites' racial attitudes with reference to "new" forms of racism—for example, symbolic racism (Sears 1988; Sears et al. 1997; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000). Other have identified broad moral, economic, or political values like individualism that are not fundamentally about race but which inform how whites think about inequality of opportunity and outcomes for African Americans (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000; see Krysan 2000 or Sears et al. 2000 for reviews). Religion has been identified as one source of non-racial values that shape racial attitudes; Emerson and Smith (2000) suggest that features of the white evangelical subculture like free-will individualism undermine a structural understanding of racial inequality (cf. Emerson, Smith, and Sikkink 1999).

In focusing on white religious conservatives, we believe a great deal has been left unexplained regarding the broader question of how religion shapes Americans' racial attitudes. We expand on previous research in three ways. First, we examine how aspects of structural location, specifically gender and level of education, lead to variation in how white Christian conservatives understand racial inequality; we theorize that structural location shapes how particular religious cultural tools are transposed to construct racial attitudes. Second, we expand our focus beyond white evangelicals to explore the racial attitudes of black conservative Protestants (cf. Hinojosa and Park 2004) and to compare the attitudes of white and Hispanic Catholics. Third, we explore whether there are institutional effects of religious involvement that may be common *across* religious tradition and subculture (cf. Edgell 2005; Warner 1993; Wilcox, Chaves, and Franz 2004). By taking these steps, we hope to shift the discussion of religious effects on racial attitudes away from a focus on the distinctiveness of white Christian conservatives and toward a broader consideration of how religion shapes Americans' racial attitudes.

Racial Attitudes of Christian Conservatives

The attitudes and policy preferences of religious conservatives in the United States have received a great deal of scholarly attention.[1] Recent work explores how religious conservatism provides religious cultural tools that may influence understandings of the public good more generally (Williams 1995) or views of African Americans specifically (Becker 1998; Emerson et al. 1999; Emerson and Smith 2000; Hinojosa and Park 2004).

Only a few studies have tackled the relationship between conservative religiosity and how Americans understand the causes and consequences of African American inequality, and the results are contradictory. Investigating James Davison Hunter's (1991) culture wars

1. In the 1980s and 90s, the growing organization and public presence of the Christian right in the United States prompted scholars to write about the restructuring of American religion into two camps—one liberal, one conservative (Wuthnow 1988). Hunter (1991) termed this growing divergence a "culture war" that divides Americans on socio-moral issues like the family, gender roles, and sexuality as well as economic, legal, and political issues, including understandings of race and racial inequality. However, many scholars argue that, while there is an organized Christian right political presence, America as a whole is not well characterized by the image of a monolithic Christian conservative camp or an ongoing "war" between liberals and conservatives (Davis and Robinson 1996b; Hopson and Smith 1999; Williams 1997; Woodberry and Smith 1998; Zald and McCarthy 1987). In the 1990s, survey data suggested that liberal/conservative differences were mainly to be found in party affiliation, views of abortion, and attitudes about gender roles and sexuality (DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996). Recent scholarship has turned away from culture wars questions and toward exploring the historical, cultural, and political distinctiveness of fundamentalist, evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic subcultures (Woodberry and Smith 1998), and theorizing why such subcultures thrive under conditions of late modernity (cf. Giddens 1991; Smith 1998; Woodberry and Smith 1998).

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thesis, Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson (1996a) use a scale that measured adherence to orthodox Christian beliefs to examine whether religious conservatives have distinctive understandings of African American inequality. Using 1991 General Social Survey (GSS) data, they found no evidence that Christian orthodoxy leads to more conservative understandings of African American inequality, or economic inequality more generally.

Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith (2000) analyze how white evangelicals understand the nature, sources of, and solutions to African American inequality (cf. Emerson et al. 1999). Using 1996 GSS data, they find that among whites, conservative Protestants are more likely to favor individualistic explanations for African American inequality, such as a lack of motivation and ability, and less likely to favor structural explanations like discrimination or a lack of access to education (cf. Hinojosa and Park 2004). Based on a different national survey and interviews, Emerson and Smith (2000) argue that a distinctive cultural toolkit shapes white evangelical understandings because it frames issues of race and inequality in terms of the underlying themes of freewill individualism, relationalism, and anti-structuralism (Emerson et al. 1999). These non-racial attitudes, combined with social isolation from African Americans, lead white evangelicals to resist the structural and group-based understandings of inequality that are the necessary prerequisite for structural change (cf. Krysan 2000; Sears et al. 2000). They argue that the differences they find between conservative Protestants and other white Americans are ones of degree, not kind, and conclude that evangelicals can be understood as an ideal type (or, what they call a "bell-weather" group).

Cultural Tools and Structural Location in the Formation of Racial Attitudes

Drawing on Ann Swidler (1986) and William H. Sewell (1992), Emerson and Smith (2000; cf. Emerson et al. 1999) argue that the white evangelical subculture provides the transposable cultural schema—or deep, formative beliefs and assumptions—that shape how members of this subculture view African Americans and how they explain racial inequality. We agree, but emphasize that the transposability of cultural schema is shaped by one's structural location. As Sewell (1992) argues, there is variability in how cultural schema are transposed, or how they are used outside of their originating context to frame, analyze, or explain other aspects of social life. A person's structural location influences which schema are *available* for interpreting and understanding racial inequality (or any other issue or problem), and which of the available schema are most *salient* or seem most relevant (see also Friedland and Alford 1991).

Emerson and Smith (2000) focus on the distinctiveness, unity, and coherence of the evangelical subculture (cf. Smith 1998); we examine how structural location may lead to variation in the relationship between an evangelical religious identity and attitudes toward racial inequality. We start by investigating whether two aspects of structural location identified in previous research as having a strong bearing on racial attitudes—gender and education—are associated with variation in the racial attitudes of conservative Christians.

Overall, women are more progressive than men, and women also tend to have more progressive racial attitudes, being less likely to blame African Americans for their disadvantage and more likely to favor at least some structural solutions for African American inequality (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Sears et al. 2000). We investigate how gender shapes white conservative Christians' racial attitudes. Within this religious subculture, are women more progressive than men? And do conservative Christian women have more conservative views on racial attitudes than do other women? There may be something about women's experiences, which more often center around relations of caretaking, which lead conservative Christian women to reject the individualist part of the evangelical toolkit, or to be influenced less strongly by it, when it comes to understanding African American inequality. More generally, it is

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important to forefront gender as a fundamental category of analysis in the study of religion, since we know that men and women differ not only in subjective religiosity but also their orientations toward religious institutions and authority (Becker 2000; Edgell 2005; Peek, Lowe, and Williams 1991).

Education also shapes racial attitudes, although these effects are not completely straightforward (Kleugel and Smith 1986; Krysan 2000; Sears et al. 2000). The more educated tend to support increased government spending to alleviate African American inequality, but education makes little difference in some other policy-related racial attitudes, and the more-educated are actually *less* likely to support preferential treatment of African Americans in college admissions or hiring (see Krysan 2000 for a review). Research stemming from the "new class" tradition suggests that evangelicals with more education adopt more liberal stances on a range of social attitudes, including gender roles, abortion, and civil liberties, while adopting more conservative positions on some other issues, such as sexual morality (Schmalzbauer 1993). Emerson and associates (1999; cf. Emerson and Smith 2000) note that white evangelicals have the same mean education level as do other whites, and find a generally progressive education effect, but they do not check for the way in which education and religious conservatism may interact. Among white conservative Christians, we investigate whether increasing education leads to more progressive racial attitudes. Because previous studies suggest that this may be true for some measures and not for others, we will investigate a range of racial attitude measures that capture discrete explanations for and policy solutions to African American inequality.

We also expand our analysis by examining black conservative Protestants' attitudes, treating race, like gender and education, as a fundamental aspect of social location. Victor J. Hinojosa and Jerry Z. Park (2004) find that across religious traditions, African Americans have more progressive racial attitudes than whites; this is not surprising, given the vastly different lived experiences between those at different positions in the racial hierarchy. Using the cultural tool kit perspective, they argue that experiences of inequality make African Americans generally less likely to draw upon the individualist parts of the conservative Protestant toolkit in forming racial attitudes. However, they also find that black conservative Protestants take a *less* progressive (more individualist) stand on at least one racial attitude measure. Drawing on Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya (1990), Hinojosa and Park (2004) argue that black conservative Protestant discourse emphasizes *both* the need for individual action to overcome poverty (the "survival strategy") and the need for *collective action* to change the economic playing field (the "liberation strategy") (see Freedman 1993). We investigate whether African American religious conservatives have more progressive racial attitudes than white religious conservatives on a range of racial attitude items, including items on explanations for racial inequality and items on solutions for racial inequality.

Finally, we expand the focus of our analysis beyond the effects of Christian conservatism and investigate how Catholicism and race may interact to shape understandings of racial inequality. About one quarter (25 percent) of the American population identifies as Catholic, and Catholicism is a distinctive religious tradition that provides a different tool kit (Swidler 1986) that may be drawn upon to explain racial inequality. In the United States, Catholicism is associated both with a history of helping poor immigrant groups and with the labor movement and its critique of capitalist structures and the government that supports them. This history may make Catholics more willing to attribute African American inequality to structural causes. Moreover, the sacramental nature of the Catholic tradition may foster a communalism that makes Catholics more likely to reject individualistic explanations for social inequality, and the Catholic doctrine of subsidiarity favors structural and institutional approaches to social problems (Froehle and Gautier 2000; Greeley 1989).

Hispanic Catholics may be even more sympathetic to African American inequality due to their own experiences with racism and poverty. Moreover, Hispanic Catholic ministry in the United States is often organized through diocesan-supported programs informed by a strong

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social justice perspective and staffed by Spanish-speaking priests and deacons trained in liberation theology.[2] We explore whether, among white Americans, Catholics have more progressive racial attitudes than non-Catholics. We also examine whether Hispanic Catholics have more progressive racial attitudes than white Catholics. In so doing, we extend our analysis of religious cultural tool kits while remaining sensitive to the effects of structural location by comparing and contrasting the views of white and Hispanic Catholics.

Finally, we argue that it is important to examine religious involvement effects on racial attitudes. These effects could operate in tandem with the effects of religious belief or subculture, because the most highly involved are the ones most likely to be shaped by religious discourses about race, individualism, or social justice; that is, they may be the most likely to draw upon religious cultural tools. Hinojosa and Park (2004) expected to find this kind of religious involvement effect but did not; they conclude that may be due in part to the fact that the data set they used, the 1996 GSS, contained only a church attendance item—an important, but partial, measure of religious involvement. Using a different measure of religious involvement that combines behavioral and subjective aspects of religiosity, we investigate whether the effects of involvement in a conservative religious subculture are due to the greater religious involvement such subcultures demand. This is an important consideration, since religious conservatives are more likely than others to be highly involved in a local church and to report high religious saliency (Iannaccone 1994; Roof and McKinney 1987).

We also argue that there may be effects of religious involvement that are separate from, and not reducible to, exposure to religious belief, discourse, or other religious cultural tools (Edgell 2005; Wilcox et al. 2004). For one thing, churchgoers are "joiners" and tend to have faith in the mainstream social institutions through which they acquire social capital (Wuthnow 1998); this could lead to endorsing individualistic explanations for inequality. For another, if it is true that 11 o'clock on Sunday morning is "the most segregated hour in America,"[3] then racial isolation characterizes the religious experience of most churchgoers, and churchgoing may reinforce racial isolation effects on racial attitudes. Moreover, available qualitative studies suggest that congregational discourse about race in mainstream, white religious institutions generally favors personal and individual understandings of race and systematically de-emphasizes structural discourses that might foster political activism (Becker 1998; Lichterman 2005). Regardless of religious belief or subculture, those with higher levels of religious involvement may exhibit more conservative racial attitudes, and this may be particularly true for whites.

Like Emerson and Smith (2000) we believe that religion and race intersect to form a strong white evangelical subculture that fosters attitudes about social and political issues, including race and racial inequality. But we think it is important to explore the sources of variation in racial attitudes within this subculture, and to examine how race and religion intersect differently for other Americans to form racial attitudes. Taken together, our analyses allow us to expand on previous work by identifying aspects of structural location that shape the use of religious cultural tools, by expanding our focus beyond whites and beyond religious conservatives and by examining religious institutional effects on racial attitudes.

2. For an example, see Nabhan-Warren (2005) on Mexican American Catholicism. This is also based on a background interview conducted by one of the authors with the coordinator of the archdiocesan Hispanic ministry program for a mid-sized midwestern city (12/17/2004) and on an interview with the deacon in charge of Spanish-language ministry at a urban parish in the same city (2/1/2005). Names not given due to promised anonymity; more information about the interviews and the ministry programs in question is available upon request.

3. Taken from a sermon delivered by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. at the National Cathedral, Washington, DC, on March 31, 1968 (King 1968). The best recent national data source shows that over 90 percent of congregations are at least 90 percent comprised of a single racial group (Chaves 1998; Emerson and Kim 2003).

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Data

The data used in this paper come from the American Mosaic Project (Edgell et al. 2003), a multi-year, multi-method study about the bases of solidarity and diversity in American life. In particular, this paper uses data from a random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey (N = 2,081) conducted during the fall of 2003 by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. The survey was designed to gather data on attitudes about race, religion, politics, and American identity, as well as demographic information and data on social networks. Households were randomly selected, and then respondents were randomly chosen within households. The survey, on average, took slightly more than 30 minutes to complete. African Americans and Hispanics were over sampled by directing a disproportionate number of calls to telephone exchanges with large African American or Hispanic populations, in order to provide complete data on these populations.[4]

Our response rate of 36 percent compares favorably with the response rates that most national RDD surveys currently achieve. The Council on Market and Opinion Research (CMOR), which monitors survey response rates on an on-going basis, reports that the mean response rate for RDD telephone surveys in 2003 was 10.16 percent (CMOR 2003). The RDD component of the 2002 American National Election Study (ANES), which compensated respondents, had a response rate of about 35 percent (National Election Studies 2002).[5]

The Appendix contains systematic comparisons between major national surveys on key demographic, belief, and behavioral measures in order to test for non-response bias. The results of these comparisons lead us to conclude that there is no evidence of systematic non-response bias in our sample. It is well known that men are more likely to refuse to participate in interview surveys and there is some evidence that conservative Christians are similarly likely to be non-respondents (Smith 1998). More importantly for the present study, research suggests that RDD surveys tend to produce a liberal bias, such that non-respondents tend to be less sympathetic to African Americans (Pew Research Center for People and the Press 1998). While there is no evidence of response bias among men and the highly religious in the Appendix, response bias may be present in the measures of racial attitudes used in the subsequent analyses.

Method and Dependent Variables

Because the response categories for our dependent variables are modified Likert scales, we originally considered using ordinal logistic regression. However, likelihood ratio tests (results available upon request) conducted between identically specified ordinal and dichotomous logistic regressions reveals that collapsing the response categories results in no loss of explanatory power. Therefore, bivariate or dichotomous logistic regression is used throughout the following analyses to explore the relationships between the dependent variables and religious identity, orthodoxy, and involvement.

There are two categories of dependent variables that measure distinct and important aspects of attitudes towards African Americans. All the dependent variables used in the analysis were

4. The data can be weighted to match the gender and age distribution of the United States and account for survey design characteristics, including non-response. All reported descriptive statistics use these survey weights. However, sampling weights are not used in our multivariate analyses. In order to determine if we should use survey weights, identically specified regressions were estimated, one using sampling weights, the other using unweighted data. A close examination of the estimates from both specifications indicates that our substantively important inferences do not vary when sampling weights are used. Moreover, the F tests proposed by William H. DuMouchel and Greg J. Duncan (1983), when applied to our models, reveal that the weighted and unweighted estimates to do not significantly vary.

5. Figures for the CMOR-reported mean response rate, the ANES computed rate, and the AMP response rate are identically calculated. We did not compensate respondents.

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derived from standard GSS variables. The GSS versions of these variables are dichotomous and have been used in numerous analyses of racial attitudes, including work by James R. Kluegel and Eliot Smith (1986), Lawrence Bobo and Kluegel (1993), and Howard Schuman and colleagues (1997), as well as Emerson and Smith (2000).

Explaining African American Inequality

First are a series of questions that asked respondents what they believe are important explanations for African American inequality. In all analyses, the comparison category comprises those who believe a particular explanation is not important for explaining African American disadvantage. The first two dependent variables explore explanations that focus on *white power and domination* as important explanations for African American disadvantage. Particularly, respondents were asked if they believe that prejudice and discrimination, as well as laws and social institutions, are important explanations or not for African American disadvantage. The next dependent variable is a *structuralist* explanation for African American disadvantage and asks respondents whether or not a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation for African American inequality. The final two dependent variables capture *individualistic explanations* that hold African Americans responsible for their socioeconomic position. These two items ask about poor family upbringing and a lack of effort and hard work as explanations for African American disadvantage.

Solutions for African American Inequality

The second series of dependent variables used in our analyses focuses on preferred or opposed solutions for the problem of African American disadvantage. The first question measures respondents' attitudes towards affirmative action and asks respondents whether they disagree with the idea that African Americans should be given special consideration in job hiring and school admissions. The second question probes respondents' attitudes towards governmental intervention for African American disadvantage, asking respondents whether they agree or disagree with the statement, "African Americans should get more economic assistance from the government." The final question asked respondents to consider a private solution to African American disadvantage by measuring their agreement with the idea that charities should do more to help African Americans.

While racial attitudes are complex phenomena that cannot be completely captured in quantitative analyses, we believe that our dependent variables capture distinct and concrete elements of how Americans understand African American inequality (Emerson et al. 1999; Hinojosa and Park 2004).[6] Moreover, our dependent variables include questions about solutions for this inequality not included in other work that explores religious effects. Our analysis allows us to investigate variations in views of African American inequality not captured by more general measures of closeness to or distance from African Americans. However, taken as a whole, these measures are also a good indicator of one's overall evaluation of the plight of African Americans in our society and one's assessment of both public and private responsibility for addressing this plight.

6. We investigated various strategies for combining our dependent variables, including scaling, factor analysis, and latent class analysis (results available upon request). The results of these analyses indicate that our dependent variables cannot be successfully combined using these methods, leading us to believe that these variables tap into analytically distinct, but conceptually related, attitudes towards African Americans and should be investigated as such (cf. Krysan 2000).

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Independent Variables

Descriptive statistics of the independent variables used in our analyses are presented in Table 1.[7] Age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, income, living in the South, and the population of the county the respondent lives in are all included as statistical controls. Our measures of religion include variables for religious *involvement* (religious involvement scale), religious *identity* (conservative Protestant and Catholic), and religious *belief* (orthodoxy scale). We know that real people in real social contexts often experience these discrete aspects of religion as part of a coherent whole. For these people, the different aspects of religiosity can reinforce each other in shaping views of racial inequality. Indeed, part of what is indicated by a term like "religious subculture" is the interwoven and reinforcing effects of these different aspects of religion. However, these aspects of religion—belief, identity, and involvement—are conceptually distinct. Empirically, they can have *opposed* effects on the outcomes we wish to

Table 1 • ***Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables Used In Logistic Regressions***

Independent Variables	*Description of Variable*	*Mean or Percent*[a]	*S.D.*[a]
Age	Age of respondent in years (ranges from 18 to 93)	45.91	16.56
Female	Female dummy variable (1 = female)	51%	—
Married	Respondent is married (1 = married)	47%	—
Education	Highest level of education completed by the respondent (1 = some high school or less to 6 = post graduate)	3.89	1.59
Income	Family income in 2002, before taxes (1 = less than $10,000 to 8 = over $100,000)	5.63	1.81
South	Respondent lives in the South (1 = lives in the South)	30%	—
County population	Population of the county in which the respondent lives, in 2000, in ten thousands	156.42	241.84
Religious involvement	Religious involvement scale (0 = least involved to 13 = most involved)	6.42	3.85
Orthodox	Religious orthodoxy scale (0 = least orthodox to 8 = most orthodox)	4.76	1.64
Conservative Protestant	Respondent attends or prefers a church that is part of a conservative Protestant denomination (1 = conservative Protestant)	25%	—
Catholic	Respondent attends a Catholic church or claims a religious preference for Catholicism (1 = Catholic)	23%	—
Racial heterogeneity	Measure of racial heterogeneity among the respondent's close friends (0 = no friends of another race to 1 = all or most friends of another race)	0.11	0.20
Black[b]	Respondent is African American (1 = African American)	24%	—
Hispanic[b]	Respondent is Hispanic (1 = Hispanic)	19%	—

Source: American Mosiac Project (Edgell et al. 2003)
[a]Results are for the white subsample and are weighted to match the gender by age distribution of the United States and to account for survey design characteristics, including nonresponse.
[b]Descriptive statistics are for the unweighted full sample.

7. Missing data on the independent variables was imputed using hot-deck or regression-based imputation, depending on the variable type. Imputation specifications are available upon request.

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understand, or they can combine in *different* ways for different groups of people (Davis and Robinson 1996b). Including these measures allows us to examine the discrete and combined effects of different forms of religiosity on views of inequality for different groups.

Our measure of conservative Protestant identity includes all those who attend or prefer a conservative Protestant denomination as defined by Brian Steensland and colleagues (2000). Using the standard GSS church attendance question, all those who attend more often than "never" were asked to identify the denomination of the church they most regularly attend. In addition, all respondents who did not attend church were asked their religious preference; respondents who indicated that they preferred a conservative Protestant denomination were included in this measure. We believe that the choice to attend, or a preference for, a conservative Protestant denomination is a good indicator of participation in a conservative religious subculture, and follows the lead of recent scholarship in identifying "families" of denominations that share a common culture, history, and institutional ties (Roof and McKinney 1987; Steensland et al. 2000; Wuthnow 1988).[8] In addition to conservative Protestants, we included a variable to measure the racial attitudes of those who identify as Catholic or attend a Catholic parish, because they also belong to a distinct religious "family" that shares its own unique history, culture, and attitudes about poverty and inequality (Hunt 2002).

Of course, individuals with conservative religious beliefs may be found across denominations, and so we constructed a measure of religious orthodoxy using the same three GSS items that Davis and Robinson (1996a) draw upon. These three items include a measure of the respondent's belief in the Bible as the literal word of God, a measure of how much the respondent agrees with the statement, "The course of our lives is determined by God," and how much the respondent agrees with the statement, "Society's standards of right and wrong should be based on God's laws." These three measures have an alpha reliability coefficient of .75 and create a 9-point scale.[9] These items most closely approximate Hunter's (1991) definition of the religiously orthodox.[10]

Religious conservatives, as variously measured, are generally understood to be more active than others in many forms of religious involvement, including the saliency of religion, rates of church attendance, and engaging in church activities (Iannaccone 1994; Roof and McKinney 1987). To separate out the effect of religious involvement from the content of belief and religious identity (conservative Protestant or Catholic), we constructed a religious involvement scale using the subjective importance of religion in respondents' lives, rate of church attendance, and the number of church activities, outside of attending services, in which a respondent engages.[11] Combining subjective and behavioral measures of religiosity in this manner has been used successfully in previous research to construct a robust involvement measure that is not as sensitive to concerns about over- or under-reporting that characterizes the use of church attendance measures alone (Levin, Taylor, and Chatters 1995; Myers 1996; cf. Smith 1998), and which is not as sensitive to gender differences in subjective religiosity and orientation toward religious institutions (Edgell 2005; Peek et al. 1991). These three

8. We believe this is a better strategy than including measures for denominations such as "Lutheran" or "Baptist." In earlier models, we included indicators of mainline Protestantism (all those affiliated with or preferring mainline denominations as categorized by Steensland et al. 2000), but these proved to be non-significant and so were dropped from the models presented here. Additionally, while we considered including measures of other denominational families, including liberal Protestants and those who said they had no religion, these variables were ultimately dropped from the final analyses because the effects for these measures were weak and inconsistent.

9. While we expected the orthodoxy and conservative Protestant variables to be highly collinear, multicollinearity statistics do not reveal this to be a problem in our analyses; with these terms never correlating at higher than .180 (more detailed results available upon request).

10. Davis and Robinson contend that this orthodoxy measure can accurately capture Catholic and Jewish respondents; even though not all respondents may respond to the word "Bible" (1996a:766–67).

11. The variable that measures the number of church activities, outside of attending services, in which the respondent participates includes the following activities: evangelism or outreach, service work or charity, political or social activism, religious education, and socializing.

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items have an alpha reliability coefficient of .79, indicating significant homogeneity among these factors, and produce a 14-point scale. This measure goes beyond the standard use of church attendance to measure religious involvement, which has been critiqued by some scholars as an inadequate index of involvement (Hinojosa and Park 2004).

The use of interaction terms allows us to investigate empirically how different combinations of religious identity, belief, and involvement shape respondents' views of racial inequality. We included a number of interaction terms between key religion variables in order to test if specific religious influences act together, or are analytically separable, in predicting attitudes towards African Americans. For example, our interaction terms allow us to test whether religious involvement moderates the effect of being a conservative Protestant on attitudes towards African Americans. We also tested for differential effects of religious identity, belief, and involvement among whites. We focused on gender and education effects because previous literature has revealed that these structural positions influence racial attitudes (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Krysan 2000; Sears et al. 2000). We also tested for regional and urban effects. While all two-way interaction and theoretically relevant three-way interaction terms between religion variables, and the religion and control variables, were entered into an equation in a stepwise fashion, only interaction terms that were statistically significant for a given dependent variable were retained in the final model. Also included in the analysis is a racial heterogeneity measure. This measure is included in the analyses because Emerson and Smith (2000:81–82) point to the racial isolation of white evangelicals as an important factor in explaining white racial attitudes.[12]

Results

Our analyses reveal a more complex and detailed story than the one suggested in previous research. We first describe the results for the white subsample, and then the results for the full sample, focusing on the attitudes of African Americans and Hispanics. We chose this split-sample approach because we contend that the attitudes of whites, African Americans, and Hispanics are distinct and analytically separable. Moreover, this approach allows us to address the available literature, which is almost exclusively focused on whites' views, while at the same time expanding upon it by investigating the attitudes of racial minorities. It is important to note that the results of bivariate analyses between the independent and dependent variables not presented here are generally consistent with the results of the multivariate analyses presented below, indicating a high degree of stability in our findings.

12. This measure reflects the level of racial heterogeneity in a given person's friendship circle. A given respondents friendship circle was determined by asking respondents to identify the race of up to five people to whom they have spoken to about important matters in the last sixth months. The racial heterogeneity measure was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Heterogeneity} = 1 - \sum_k \left(\frac{n_k}{N} \right)^2,$$

where N is the total number of persons in the respondents friendship circle and n_k is the number of people in racial group k. Scores range from 0 to 1, with 1 representing the highest level of heterogeneity. The racial groups used in calculating this measure are the number of white friends, the number of black friends, the number of Hispanic friends, the number of Native American friends, the number of Asian friends, and the number of "other" friends a given respondent has in their friendship circle. This method of calculation is typically considered the standard heterogeneity measure in the literature (more information about this measure can be found in Blau and Schwartz 1984). In addition to this more general racial heterogeneity measure, we initially included an African American heterogeneity measure, which captured the number of African Americans in a given persons friendship circle. However, because the range of scores on this variable is so compressed, with most respondents having very few African American friends, we could not include this measure in the final models.

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White Subsample

Explanations for Inequality. Table 2 shows the results from a series of regressions predicting the factors that whites think are important for explaining African American disadvantage. The first model examines prejudice and discrimination as an important explanation.[13] Religious involvement is significant and negatively related to this dependent variable such that each one-unit increase in religious involvement among whites, controlling for all other variables in the equation, leads to a 8 percent decrease in the odds of believing that prejudice and discrimination is an important explanation for African American disadvantage [$(e^{-.082} - 1)(100$ percent$) = -7.85\%$]. On the other hand, white Catholics are more likely than non-Catholics (and non-conservative Protestants) to believe that prejudice and discrimination is an important explanation for African American disadvantage.

The next explanation considered is that laws and social institutions may work against African Americans. In this model, religious involvement continues to be associated with decreased odds of favoring explanations that hold whites responsible for African American disadvantage, with increasing levels of religious involvement being associated with a decreased likelihood of agreeing that laws and institutions are an important explanation for African American disadvantage.

In this model, we also see a statistically significant interaction between sex and religious orthodoxy. The fact that this interaction effect is significant means that the effect of being orthodox on this dependent variable is conditional on gender; religious orthodoxy has a different effect on women than on men. The interpretation of interaction effects can be complicated and the inclusion of such terms also affects the interpretation of the main effect coefficients for the variables that comprise the interaction. For example, in this model, the main-effect coefficient of orthodoxy represents the logged odds of increasing levels of orthodoxy affecting the dependent variable when sex is zero (i.e. for men). This main effect is not significantly different from zero, indicating religious orthodoxy does not influence white men's views of the importance of laws and institutions as an explanation for African American disadvantage.

For women, the story is more complicated. The main effect of sex (1 = female) is operative only for women who report the lowest level of orthodoxy. While it is possible to calculate this main effect directly from the coefficient for sex, it is more useful to directly compare orthodox women with non-orthodox women. Orthodoxy is a scale ranging in value from 0 to 8. White women who report the highest level of orthodoxy (scoring an 8 on the orthodoxy scale) have expected odds about 62 percent *lower* than non-orthodox women of believing that laws and institutions are an important explanation for African American disadvantage [$(e^{((.119-.240)*8)} - 1) \times (100\%) = -61.86\%$, SE = .073, $p < .05$]. Thus, highly orthodox women are far more likely than non-orthodox women to discount laws and institutions as an explanation for African American inequality. On the other hand, orthodoxy has no discernable impact on the likelihood of men believing that laws and institutions are an important explanation.[14]

The next question asks respondents to evaluate the structuralist claim that a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation for African American disadvantage. Once again, those with high levels of religious involvement are less likely to favor this explanation. Increasing levels of religious involvement are associated with decreasing expected odds of believing that a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation for African American inequality.

13. In our description of this model, and for all following models, we will not detail the results for the control variables because they were included to control for standard sociodemographic positions and are generally not theoretically important to our argument.

14. For more complete discussions of interpreting interaction terms in logistic regression see Jaccard (2001) or Eliason and Massoglia (2003).

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Table 2 • ***Results from Logistic Regressions of Explanations that Whites Consider Important for Explaining African American Disadvantage***

	White Privilege				*Structural*		*Black Cultural Values*			
	Prejudice/Discrimination		*Laws and Institutions*		*Lack of Access to Good Schools/Social Connections*		*Lack of Effort and Hard Work*		*Family Upbringing*	
Independent Variables	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*
Age	.004	(.006)	.020**	(.006)	.006	(.006)	.017**	(.006)	.014	(.006)
Female	.316	(.207)	1.315*	(.583)	–.027	(.182)	–.196	(.226)	–1.250*	(.575)
Married	–.017	(.215)	–.021	(.194)	–.479**	(.186)	–.071	(.204)	–.075	(.189)
Income	–.049	(.066)	–.103	(.059)	–.078	(.057)	.003	(.063)	–.037	(.057)
Education	.073	(.072)	–.135*	(.066)	.093	(.064)	–.417***	(.075)	–.193**	(.064)
South	–.145	(.209)	–.510**	(.196)	–.263	(.186)	.055	(.202)	–.015	(.187)
County population	.000	(.001)	–.001	(.001)	.000	(.000)	.001	(.001)	.000	(.000)
Orthodox	–.052	(.077)	.119	(.093)	.129	(.070)	.175**	(.071)	–.127	(.089)
Religious involvement	–.082**	(.032)	–.086**	(.030)	–.060*	(.028)	.012	(.031)	.055	(.031)
Conservative Protestant	.062	(.252)	–.083	(.245)	–.311	(.234)	–.234	(.344)	–.085	(.235)
Catholic	.573*	(.281)	.139	(.227)	.143	(.218)	.059	(.234)	.855*	(.441)
Racial heterogeneity	.114	(.469)	.685	(.418)	.693	(.405)	.096	(.435)	.117	(.406)
Female*orthodox	—	—	–.240*	(.119)	—	—	—	—	.232*	(.116)
Female*conservative Protestant	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.183**	(.430)	—	—
Catholic*religious involvement	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.132*	(.061)
Education*orthodox (centered)	—	—	—	—	-.102**	(.040)	—	—	—	—
Constant	1.513*	(.631)	–.289	(.632)	.552	(.496)	.681	(.584)	.222	(.611)
Chi-Square	21.56*	12 *df*	53.32***	13 *df*	41.75***	13 *df*	70.12***	13 *df*	31.22***	14 *df*
Percent correctly classified	76.2		67.4		62.8		68.1		62.5	

Source: American Mosaic Project (Edgell et al. 2003)
**p* < .05 ***p* < .01 ****p* < .001 (two-tailed tests)

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In this model, we also see a statistically significant interaction term between education and religious orthodoxy.[15] Because these measures are continuous, it is difficult to compare expected odds across groups. However, by choosing education as the moderating variable, and selecting various scores that represent high, medium, and low levels of education, it is possible to calculate the differing *slopes* of religious orthodoxy at various levels of education. Using similar calculations as above, we can see that for a one standard deviation increase in education, the *slope* of the effect of religious orthodoxy on the log-odds of believing that a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation for African American disadvantage falls by .162 [(1.59)(–.102) = –.162]. Thus, at lower to average levels of education, increasing religious orthodoxy among whites *increases* the expected odds of believing that a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation; on the other hand, at higher levels of education, increasing religious orthodoxy *decreases* the expected odds of believing that this an important explanation.

The next explanation that respondents were asked to evaluate was that of a lack of effort or hard work on the part of African Americans, holding African Americans responsible for their disadvantage. Religious orthodoxy dominates here, with each one-unit increase in orthodoxy among whites bringing about an increase in the expected odds that the respondent will believe that a lack of hard work is important. Gender is an important moderator on the effect of being embedded in a conservative Protestant subculture, such that conservative Protestant women are more likely than both white conservative Protestant men and white non-conservative Protestant women to favor an explanation that places the responsibility for inequality squarely on the shoulders of African Americans.

The fifth and final explanation is that a poor upbringing in African American families is an important explanation for African American disadvantage. For this dependent variable, gender again is an important moderator for religious orthodoxy. While religious orthodoxy does not influence men's views of the importance of a poor family upbringing, it has a profound effect on women's attitudes. Each one-step increase in religious orthodoxy among women results in an increased likelihood of believing that poor upbringing in African American families is an important explanation for African American inequality.

The extent to which Catholics believe that this is an important explanation is conditioned by religious involvement, due to the presence of the significant interaction term. Catholics who report the highest level of religious involvement are *less* likely than Catholics who report the lowest level of religious involvement to believe that poor family upbringing is an important explanation for African American inequality. Again, the main effect of being Catholic is operative only for Catholics who report the lowest level of religious involvement.

Solutions for Inequality. Table 3 shows the results from the series of logistic regressions predicting whites' attitudes towards various solutions to African American inequality. The dependent variable in the first column is that African Americans should not receive special help with jobs and schools, which we believe is a good proxy for attitudes towards racially-based affirmative action. Again, the education and religious orthodoxy interaction term is a significant predictor of this dependent variable. We can see that as religious orthodoxy rises among those with the mean level of education or below, the expected odds of believing that African Americans should *not* receive special help with jobs and schools *decreases*; on the other hand, among those at high levels of education, the expected odds *increase*.

15. Because bilinear interactions frequently generate high levels of multicolinearity, both the education and orthodoxy variables were centered before computing the product term. The centered measures are used in all models that include this interaction term, in all other models, the non-centered measures are used. See Jaccard et al. (1990:30–33) for more information about this procedure.

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Table 3 • ***Results from Logistic Regressions of White's Solutions for African American Disadvantage***

	African Americans Should Not Receive Special Help with Jobs and Schools		*African Americans Should Not Get More Economic Help from the Government*		*Charities Should Do More to Help African Americans*	
Independent Variables	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*
Age	.003	(.004)	.003	(.004)	.002	(.004)
Female	–.098	(.126)	.059	(.126)	–.326*	(.131)
Married	.138	(.132)	.088	(.131)	–.319*	(.136)
Income	.087**	(.039)	.053	(.039)	.032	(.041)
Education	–.233***	(.044)	–.239***	(.044)	.175***	(.046)
South	.466***	(.129)	.332**	(.128)	–.148	(.134)
County population	.000	(.000)	.000	(.000)	.000	(.000)
Orthodox	–.014	(.044)	.056	(.043)	.008	(.047)
Religious involvement	.011	(.019)	.008	(.019)	.001	(.021)
Conservative Protestant	.221	(.160)	.434**	(.160)	–.422*	(.170)
Catholic	–.005	(.150)	.016	(.149)	–.903	(.322)
Racial heterogeneity	.538	(.287)	–.118	(.282)	.449	(.293)
Education*orthodox	.059*	(.025)	—	—	–.090***	(.026)
Catholic*religoius involvement	—	—	—	—	.105**	(.043)
Constant	–.785*	(.334)	.126	(.354)	–.369	(.348)
Chi-Square	67.77***	13 *df*	72.50***	12 *df*	78.88***	14 *df*
Percent correctly classified	61.2		62.0		66.1	

Source: American Mosaic Project (Edgell et al. 2003).
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

The next proposed solution is that African Americans should not receive more economic help from the government. Being involved in a conservative Protestant subculture is significantly and positively related to this dependent variable. Conservative Protestants are more likely than non-conservative Protestants to oppose government intervention as a solution for African American inequality. Although not included in this model, the interaction term between gender and conservative Protestant is not significant when included, indicating that there is no evidence that gender moderates the effect of religious identity for this dependent variable.

The third and final solution considered is that charities should do more to help African Americans. We included this measure as representative of how much respondents are likely to advocate private, rather than public, government-mandated solutions. Being conservative Protestant is again significantly related to this variable, with conservative Protestants being less likely than non-conservative Protestants to favor such privatized solutions. Religious involvement is again an important moderator of attitudes among Catholics, with each one step increase in religious involvement among Catholics increasing the expected odds of believing that charities should do more to help African Americans. Finally, the education and religious orthodoxy interaction term is again a significant predictor of this dependent variable, such that as religious orthodoxy rises among those at the mean level of education or below, the expected odds of believing that charities should do more to help African Americans *increases*; while, the expected odds *decrease* as religious orthodoxy increases among the highly educated.

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Full Sample

Explanations for Inequality. Table 4 shows results from the series of regressions on the full sample testing important explanations for African American disadvantage. We included these regressions in our analysis in order to assess the attitudes of different racial groups, namely African Americans and Hispanics, towards these questions. In addition to dummy variables measuring the impact of being African American or Hispanic, we also included interaction terms for African American and religious orthodoxy, and Hispanic and Catholic in order to determine the effect of religion on the attitudes of African Americans and Hispanics.[16]

African Americans and Hispanics are much more likely than others to believe that prejudice and discrimination is an important explanation for African American disadvantage. For all subsequent dependent variables, the attitudes of racial minorities are conditional on religious belief or affiliation. Increasing levels of religious orthodoxy among African Americans is associated with increased odds of believing that laws and social institutions stand in the way of equality. Hispanic Catholics also believe that laws and social institutions are a barrier to African American advancement, being more likely than non-Catholic Hispanics to believe that this is an important explanation. Compared with non-Hispanic Catholics, Hispanic Catholics are also more likely to believe that laws and institutions are an important explanation.

Examining the subsequent models, religious orthodoxy continues to be an important moderator of African American attitudes. As religious orthodoxy increases, African Americans become increasingly likely to believe that a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation for their disadvantage. However, increasing levels of religious orthodoxy among African Americans also results in increasing the expected odds of believing that a poor family upbringing is an important explanation for African American disadvantage. We discuss this finding in more detail, below.

Solutions for Inequality. Table 5 reports the results for the three solution measures described above. Religious orthodoxy among African Americans is significant and positively associated with the dependent variable that investigates attitudes towards charity, such that increasing levels of orthodoxy among African Americans is associated with an increasing likelihood of believing that charities should do more to help African Americans.

Discussion

In concentrating on the attitudes of white religious conservatives, the analysis of religious affects on racial attitudes has emphasized the uniqueness, coherence, and consistency of white evangelical subculture and how it shapes the cultural tool kit used to form racial attitudes. We find that the effects of religious conservatism on understandings of racial inequality are different for black and white Americans, vary according to how conservatism is measured, and vary within this religious subculture for men and women and for those with more or less education. We also find that white and Hispanic Catholics have distinctive views of racial inequality. By expanding our empirical focus, we have been able to document the effects of structural location on the saliency and transposability of religious cultural tools in the formation of religious attitudes, and identified three aspects of structural location—gender, education, and race—that scholars of religion and racial attitudes need to take into account in further work. Finally, we find that apart from religious belief and identity, there are effects of religious involvement that operate across all religious traditions. Religious cultural tools matter in forming racial attitudes, but it appears that there are religious-institutional effects that operate in a way that is distinct from, and not dependent upon, religious subculture.

16. Other race by religion interaction terms were tried, included black and conservative Protestant, black and Catholic, Hispanic and orthodox, and Hispanic and conservative Protestant but were not included in the final model because they were not significant and did not improve the fit of the model to the data.

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Table 4 • *Results from Full Sample Logistic Regressions of Explanations that Americans Consider Important for Explaining African American Disadvantage*

	White Privilege				*Structural*		*Black Cultural Values*			
	Prejudice/Discrimination		*Laws and Institutions*		*Lack of Access to Good Schools/ Social Connections*		*Lack of Effort and Hard Work*		*Family Upbringing*	
Independent Variables	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*
Age	.013**	(.005)	.016***	(.005)	.011**	(.004)	.004	(.005)	.012**	(.004)
Female	.108	(.147)	.282	(.149)	–.002	(.140)	–.117	(.149)	–.152	(.138)
Married	–.468***	(.154)	–.082	(.154)	–.456***	(.144)	–.078	(.156)	–.022	(.144)
Income	.015	(.043)	–.076	(.045)	–.060	(.042)	–.074	(.044)	–.107	(.041)
Education	.012	(.051)	–.135 **	(.052)	.046	(.048)	–.233***	(.051)	–.121*	(.048)
South	–.248	(.155)	–.451**	(.158)	–.228	(.146)	–.035	(.156)	–.111	(.144)
County population	.000	(.000)	.000	(.000)	.000	(.000)	.000	(.000)	.001	(.000)
Orthodox	–.122*	(.057)	–.079	(.056)	.010	(.053)	.078	(.059)	–.012	(.053)
Religious involvement	.018	(.023)	–.021	(.024)	–.052*	(.022)	.022	(.023)	.013	(.021)
Conservative Protestant	–.176	(.187)	–.093	(.197)	–.019	(.180)	.145	(.188)	.066	(.175)
Catholic	–.332	(.221)	–.066	(.211)	.082	(.201)	.046	(.228)	.093	(.200)
Racial heterogeneity	.176	(.294)	.400	(.302)	.030	(.282)	–.222	(.304)	–.328	(.280)
Black	1.848**	(.664)	.659	(.756)	–.041	(.644)	.648	(.649)	–.742	(.615)
Black*orthodox	–.031	(.119)	.311*	(.141)	.249*	(.118)	.006	(.117)	.262*	(.112)
Hispanic	.849***	(.275)	.104	(.289)	.350	(.268)	.045	(.267)	.204	(.257)
Hispanic*Catholic	–.179	(.381)	.787*	(.382)	.371	(.362)	.591	(.375)	–.072	(.353)
Constant	–.884*	(.428)	.322	(.431)	–.064	(.407)	–.440	(.437)	.155	(.402)
Chi-Square	141.69***	16 *df*	213.85***	16 *df*	108.71***	16 *df*	102.87***	16 *df*	77.85**	16 *df*
Percent correctly classified	68.9		68.6		63.7		68.8		61.2	

Source: American Mosaic Project (Edgell et al. 2003)
$^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

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Table 5 • ***Results from Full Sample Logistic Regressions of Americans' Solutions for African American Disadvantage***

	African Americans Should Not Receive Special Help with Jobs and Schools		*African Americans Should Not Get More Economic Help from the Government*		*Charities Should Do More to Help African Americans*	
Independent Variables	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*
Age	.003	(.003)	.003	(.003)	−.002	(.003)
Female	.107	(.099)	.166	(.099)	−.356***	(.098)
Married	.112	(.104)	.143	(.103)	−.248*	(.103)
Income	.079**	(.030)	.072*	(.030)	−.038	(.029)
Education	−.176***	(.035)	−.176***	(.035)	.104**	(.034)
South	.476***	(.103)	.355***	(.103)	−.222*	(.101)
County population	.000	(.000)	.000	(.000)	.000	(.000)
Orthodox	.002	(.035)	.042	(.035)	−.025	(.036)
Religious Involvement	−.008	(.015)	.009	(.015)	.016	(.015)
Conservative Protestant	.205	(.127)	.324**	(.126)	−.216	(.123)
Catholic	.093	(.139)	.059	(.139)	−.150	(.139)
Racial heterogeneity	.379	(.203)	.076	(.202)	.095	(.197)
Black	−.702	(.498)	−.667	(.486)	−.064	(.440)
Black*orthodox	−.130	(.091)	−.165	(.089)	.164*	(.080)
Hispanic	−.157	(.187)	.183	(.185)	.050	(.179)
Hispanic*Catholic	−.075	(.257)	−.121	(.256)	.123	(.253)
Constant	−.196	(.279)	−.347	(.278)	−.086	(.274)
Chi-Square	196.26***	16 *df*	233.24***	16 *df*	100.98***	16 *df*
Percent correctly classified	63.0		63.8		60.5	

Source: American Mosaic Project (Edgell et al. 2003)
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Our findings regarding the effect of gender and education on whites' racial attitudes support Charles W. Peek, George D. Lowe, and Susan L. Williams' (1991) understanding of gender as a formative aspect of structural location that shapes religious effects on social attitudes (c.f. Becker 2000; Sewell 1992). We find that non-conservative women are more sympathetic to explanations for racial inequality rooted in the bias of institutions and are less likely to blame African Americans for not working hard enough; this is what one would expect based on previous studies of racial attitudes (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Sears et al. 2000). However, religiously orthodox women are less likely to believe that racial inequality stems from biased laws and institutions and are more likely to blame African American inequality on poor upbringing in African American families. Conservative Protestant women are more likely to say that African Americans do not work hard enough. We find no such distinctive effects of religious conservatism on men's racial attitudes.

Unfortunately, our data set does not contain many items that might help us sort out these gender differences,[17] but several interpretations should be explored in future research. It is

17. For example, it does not contain items that would allow us to disentangle the underlying psychological motivations for religious involvement (intrinsic versus extrinsic) or to parse out right wing-authoritarianism from the effects of conservative beliefs *per se*. Psychologists have identified differences in both religious commitment (intrinsic versus extrinsic) and distinctive aspects of conservative religiosity (right-wing authoritarianism, fundamentalism, and orthodox beliefs) and have shown that they have varied and sometimes opposed influences on white prejudice against African Americans (Hunsberger 1995; Kirkpatrick 1993; Laythe et al. 2002; Laythe, Finkel, and Kirkpatrick 2001; McFarland 1989). The relationship between these factors is dependent upon subcultural context and the acceptability of racial or ethnic prejudice within a subculture (for a review see Laythe et al. 2002).

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conventional wisdom that women tend to be more religious than men and to take more responsibility for the religious socialization of children (Christiano 2000; Sherkat and Ellison 1999). It may be that conservative Protestant women are more thoroughly knowledgeable than men about the content of their religious beliefs and take these beliefs as more of a directive in forming their attitudes and beliefs about social issues. Conservative Protestant women are also more invested in homemaking than are other women (Sherkat 2000; Woodberry and Smith 1998). It may be that women with conservative religious beliefs are less likely to invest their identity in paid employment and a career and more likely to invest it in home- and church-related activities; in such a case, religious beliefs might have a larger impact on total worldview and understandings of broad social issues like racial differences and racial inequality. Moreover, this greater involvement in home activities may lead women with conservative religious beliefs to be particularly critical of groups who they perceive to have failed in the family domain.

Or, it may be that gender influences views of racial inequality in the same way that it has been found to influence political tolerance. Studies of willingness to deny civil liberties to a range of political out-groups on both the left and the right have found women are more reluctant than men to allow such groups to exercise their constitutional rights, differences which have been variously explained by women's moral traditionalism, their unwillingness to tolerate uncertainty, and their relative lack of political expertise and a concomitant reduced commitment to abstract democratic norms (for a review, see Golebiowska 1999). Because religious men who hold more tolerant views of racial inequality are more likely be non-cooperative in surveys, this result may also be due to sample bias. However, the analyses presented in the Appendix provide no evidence of such systematic non-response bias. Finally, it may be that religiously conservative men and women have differing views of social inequality *in general,* considering research that finds that religiously conservative men and women have differing views of gender inequality as well (Peek et al. 1991). Given the limits of our data, we can neither adjudicate between these possible explanations nor rule out other explanations. We believe it is important to investigate further how religion shapes social attitudes in distinctive ways for men and women and how this may stem from the different meaning that religion has in men's and women's lives.

We also find that religious conservatism works differently among those with different levels of education. Those with orthodox religious beliefs who report above average levels of education are less likely to believe that a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation for African American disadvantage. They are also more likely to oppose most solutions to African American inequality. On the other hand, those with orthodox religious beliefs who report average and lower levels of educational attainment are more sympathetic to the structural nature of African American disadvantage, being more likely to believe that a lack of access to good schools and social connections is an important explanation for African American disadvantage. They are also more likely to support most solutions for African American disadvantage, including racially-based affirmative action and charitable solutions.

In some ways, this finding is surprising. Generally speaking, higher levels of education lead to more progressive views, and among evangelicals, "new class" theorists have found increasing education to lead to more progressive attitudes on a range of social and policy issues (Schmalzbauer 1993). On the other hand, a recent review of research on racial policy attitudes concludes that those with more education are more supportive of some policies designed to ameliorate African American inequality and less supportive of others, and that education is unrelated to yet other racial policy attitudes (Krysan 2000).

We can point to three possible explanations to be explored in future research. One is that evangelicals with less education have a sense of sympathy for—or class-based solidarity with—African Americans. The second is that well-educated evangelicals see their educational attainment as the result of their own hard work; that is, educational success may reinforce

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evangelical individualism (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Krysan 2000). The third is that among the more-educated evangelical elite, religious conservatism coheres with an overall social and political conservatism (cf. Davis and Robinson 1996a, 1996b; Hunter 1991). After all, most of those arguing against Hunter's (1991) culture wars thesis do not dispute that liberal and conservative elites are highly polarized on a range of issues (including race); rather, they suggest that most Americans (the "vast middle") are not so polarized (see DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996). Each of these possible explanations is consonant with our theoretical approach.

We do find some effects of religious conservatism that operate in the same way for all whites. In general, those with orthodox religious beliefs are more convinced that African Americans do not work hard enough. Conservative Protestants are more likely than others to oppose government intervention to alleviate African American inequality and less likely than others to believe that charities should do more to help African Americans. This supports Emerson and Smith's (2000) argument that embeddedness in this subculture matters for all of those whose lives are encompassed by it. Our findings differ from those of Davis and Robinson (1996a). While Davis and Robinson (1996a) find that religious conservatism among whites is not related to attitudes towards African American inequality, we clearly find that it is. There could be a number of different reasons for this difference. Unlike Davis and Robinson (1996a), we use a subsample to analyze white attitudes, instead of statistical controls for minority groups. Also, Davis and Robinson (1996a) control for specific denominations, whereas we control for denominational families. This means that our reference categories are different, with Davis and Robinson (1996a) favoring a more restrictive reference category (Baptists), while we favor a more expansive reference category (non-conservative Protestants and non-Catholics).

In contrast to Emerson and Smith (2000:81–2), we do not find racial isolation effects. There is no relationship between our racial heterogeneity measure, either the racial heterogeneity measure included in the model or a more specific African American heterogeneity measure, and being a conservative Protestant, nor are interaction terms between these two measures significant when included in our models, indicating that white conservative Protestants are no more racially isolated than other whites (cf. Wuthnow 2003) and that their racial attitudes are not shaped by racial isolation.[18]

We also find that our measure of religious involvement influences views of African American inequality, and for most white Americans, these influences are conservative. Those who are highly involved in religious activities, *across* religious traditions, are less sympathetic to explanations for racial inequality that point to white privilege and domination, such as discrimination or bias in laws and institutions, and are also less likely to favor structuralist accounts such as a lack of access to good schools and jobs. Across religious traditions, and *controlling for racial isolation*, involvement in religious institutions leads to a sense that African Americans do not need much help and are largely responsible for their own unequal outcomes. It may be that churchgoers, being joiners who gain social capital through participation in a range of community organizations, tend to have a trust in society's institutions and believe that they largely work (Wuthnow 1998); this might lead to a sense that those who are left out should, perhaps, try harder. Or this finding may reflect the personalized racial discourse in mainstream white institutions (Becker 1998; Lichterman 2005).

Finally, we also explored how race and religion may intersect in forming racial attitudes for other Americans whose attitudes have received far less scholarly attention. White Catholics are more sympathetic to explanations for African American inequality that place the responsibility on whites, such as prejudice and discrimination, and with increasing religious involvement they are less likely to blame poor upbringing and more likely to believe that charities should do more to help. Hispanic Catholics are especially likely to think that biased

18. Results available upon request.

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laws and social institutions are important explanations for explaining African American inequality. This suggests that Catholicism does provide a set of religious cultural tools that favor structural and communal understandings of racial inequality and foster institutional solutions; however, more work needs to be done to explore the content of this religious tradition and link these cultural tools more directly to how individual-level interpretations of race and inequality are derived. Such an exploration, we believe, is worthwhile and overdue.

African Americans who hold orthodox religious beliefs are more sympathetic to explanations for racial inequality focused on bias in laws and social institutions, and to structural causes, such as a lack of access to good schools and social connections. They also favor private, charity-based solutions to African American inequality. However, they name poor family upbringing as an important explanation for African American disadvantage. These findings may appear contradictory, but with Hinojosa and Park (2004), we believe they are not. The black Church tradition has fostered both a discourse encouraging collective action to change structural inequality and a discourse encouraging individual responsibility for moving out of poverty (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Morris 1996). Fieldwork among African American pastors and churchgoers finds both discourse about the lack of access to good schools, good jobs, and good educations and a discourse about the crisis in the African American family.[19] It makes sense that, for the most part, African American conservative Protestants reject the individualism of the evangelical tool kit, but it also makes sense that they might view the family as crucial in the fight against poverty and inequality.

Our findings for African Americans are in direct contrast to many of our findings for white religious conservatives and to Emerson and Smith's (2000) findings for white evangelicals. They also contrast with Hinojosa and Park's (2004) finding that African American conservative Protestants are less likely to affirm structural causes of inequality. These differences may be due to different question wording on our outcome measures, to the fact that we use a different measure of religious conservatism, or that we include more controls in our analysis. We believe it is most likely due to the fact that the one structural cause of inequality for which Hinojosa and Park (2004) find this relationship is a measure of educational opportunities, which they argue was likely interpreted by African American respondents in light of the prominence of historically black colleges within this community.

Conclusion

Much of the previous literature has concentrated on the racial attitudes of white religious conservatives, and the most influential recent work has focused on the white evangelical subculture as a source of non-racial attitudes that nevertheless contribute to racialized attributions of individual blame and responsibility for African American inequality. We set out to expand on this discussion in three ways. First, we wanted to expand empirically to examine the racial attitudes non-white Americans, believing with Maria Krysan (2000) that otherwise it is far too easy for our research to contribute to a taken-for-granted primacy of white views and experiences. Second, we wanted to provide more nuance and detail to the discussion of religious subcultural effects on racial attitudes, by including a consideration of Catholicism, a religious subculture that favors communialism and a collective and institutional understanding of the moral responsibility for social action, and by examining the relationship between religious cultural tools and structural location, with a particular focus on gender, education, and race. Third, we believe it is important not only to ask what is distinctive

19. Fieldwork conducted in an African Methodist Episcopal congregation in a large midwestern city in the spring of 2005 by one of the authors and a research assistant; data collected from interviews with the pastor and 11 members, and participant observation of four small-group ministries and two Sunday worship services. Fieldwork conducted for a related project; field report available from the authors by request.

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about religious subcultures, but also to analyze how common institutional features that span religious subcultures in the United States may shape racial attitudes (see Edgell 2005; Warner 1993; Wilcox et al. 2004).

Our approach was to take advantage of a data set that has multiple measures of racial attitudes and detailed measures of religious belief, affiliation, and participation to construct an exploratory analysis designed to add complexity to our understanding of what is distinctive about the racial attitudes of the religiously conservative and to identify previously neglected religious effects on racial attitudes. Rather than a focused analysis of a single research question, our aim was to complicate what we already knew, suggesting fruitful avenues for further research, and proposing a broader analytical framework to frame future efforts.

Complicating our earlier understanding, we find that conservative Protestant effects on racial attitudes are largely explained by the content of conservative religious belief (religious orthodoxy) and high levels of religious involvement, and that they are driven largely by the effects of conservative religious beliefs on women and on the more-educated within the white evangelical community. We do not believe that white evangelicals are a bellwether group. They are distinctive, and this distinctiveness does not result from higher levels of racial isolation than experienced by other whites. This is most apparent for conservative Protestant and orthodox women who are at the opposite end of the spectrum from other women in some of their views of African Americans and African American inequality, and for the effect of education on racial attitudes for this group, which is the opposite effect than education usually has on racial—and other social—attitudes.

In thinking to the future, our findings about the effects of Catholic identity on racial attitudes suggests the need for further examination of how different religious subcultures provide the cultural tools through which Americans understand race and racial attitudes, rather than treating evangelicals as exemplary of American religiosity or social attitudes. We also propose a continued examination of the common *institutional* features of American religion that may shape racial attitudes; in particular, it seems useful to expand on qualitative accounts of how religious discourse and practice shape understandings of race more generally and how they may foster or impede social action to bridge racial and other social divides (cf. Becker 1998; Emerson and Kim 2003; Lichterman 2005).

Finally, we believe it is essential to conduct future analyses with an analytical framework that looks for religious cultural and structural effects on racial attitudes without attempting to reduce one kind of effect to another or assume that causality always works in the same direction. Our analysis suggests that religious subcultures do matter in shaping racial attitudes, and that structural location mediates these effects by shaping the salience and transposability of cultural tools. This should not be so surprising. For example, we already knew that women and men have gendered religious orientations—women are critical of religious institutions (and of institutions more generally, see Edgell 2005; Tolbert and Moen 1998), and are more heavily influenced by their own subject religiosity and beliefs in forming social attitudes (Peek et al. 1991). We laud Emerson and Smith's (2000) multi-method strategy that allowed them to both find statistically reliable relationships between conservative religiosity and racial attitudes in a national sample, while providing the qualitative data on religious discourses and individual meaning-making that allowed them to identify specific religious subcultural tools. We strongly urge the continued use of mixed methods to explore the reasons for the differences in religious effects on racial attitudes that accompany differences in structural location.

Perhaps the most interesting structural location effects we find are those that result from the historically and institutionally different roles that particular religious traditions—evangelicalism, Catholicism—have played in racial and ethnic minority communities. Interestingly, we find that being African American or Hispanic does not seem to create distinctive racial attitudes, with one exception: African Americans and Hispanics are more likely than others to believe that prejudice and discrimination is an important explanation for African American inequality.

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Rather, it is the combination of being African American and religiously orthodox or Hispanic and Catholic that really drives attitudes towards African American inequality. In a racialized social context, it makes sense that race influences the way in which religious cultural schema are developed, and how they are transposed to frame and interpret social and political issues.

This suggests that if particular religious beliefs—for example, beliefs about individualism or communalism, freewill or determinism—are racially neutral in the abstract, what they mean to real people in specific times and places is inextricably bound up in the social context and history of particular racial groups (cf. Krysan 2000). That is, if religious subcultures are shaped in the context of highly salient racial boundaries, they may in fact be about race, in a more fundamental sense, and even non-racial religious beliefs—like a belief in freewill individualism—may take on racial meanings when religious culture is part of what constructs a racial identity. In a highly racialized social context the mobilization and articulation of non-racial attitudes may have so much to do with race that calling them non-racial may obscure more than it clarifies (e.g. Kluegel and Smith 1986; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman et al. 2000; also see Krysan 2000 for reviews).

The image of a religious cultural tool kit is a useful one; we suggest that we need to give systematic attention to a wider range of religious cultural tools and to how structural location influences the use of these cultural tools in the forming of racial (and other) attitudes. We also need to pay attention to the racialized context that shapes the tools that are available within the religious tool kits of particular communities and traditions (e.g., the black Church, or Hispanic Catholicism in the United States), and that shapes the institutions through which religious culture is transmitted. In short, we need to explore how religion combines with other factors to shape how Amercians answer the questions, "Who is like me?" and "What do I owe those who are different?" Historically, religious communities have provided extensive discourse on how members of the community, and society at large, should respond to problems of inequality and the claims made by racial and ethnic others. Our research confirms that religious institutions and religious subcultures have a formative effect on how Americans understand racial inequality, but they clearly do not have the same effect on all who encounter them. In future analyses, we will explore how the intersection of religion and other aspects of social identity shapes ordinary Americans' understandings of social boundaries and the inequalities that accompany them.

Appendix: Tests for Systematic Non-Response Bias

While our response rate of 36 percent compares favorably with the response rates that most national RDD surveys currently achieve, the most important consideration in deciding on an acceptable response rate is the potential for non-response bias. The few available systematic treatments of this issue reveal few differences between higher response rate (51 to 60 percent) and lower response rate (27 to 36 percent) RDD surveys on key demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral measures when standard sampling and survey techniques are employed (CMOR 2003). Moreover, RDDs conducted with standard sampling and survey techniques yield samples not significantly different from high response rate government surveys, such as the Current Population Survey (CPS) (Keeter et al. 2000; Pew Research Center for People and the Press 2004).

To test for non-response bias, we compare our sample with the GSS (David, Smith, and Marsden 2000) and the CPS (U.S. Census Bureau 2003); the results for a selection of demographic, belief, and behavioral measures are detailed in Table A.1. This table demonstrates that our sample is similar to these other national samples. For example, about 52 percent of our sample is female, while the comparable CPS figure is 53 percent. According to the 2000 General Social Survey estimates, 24.1 percent of the nation is Catholic, while in our sample about 25 percent consider themselves Catholic. Regarding education, 23.9 percent of our sample has a college degree, while 24.3 percent of the nation has attained a college degree, according to 2002 CPS data. Importantly, these comparisons provide no evidence of high levels of non-response bias among males or conservative Christians, two populations with

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typically high rates of non-response (Smith 1998). Where there are differences in samples, our sample generally comes closer to the CPS, a much larger sample then either the GSS or the AMP. These comparisons do not show substantial differences between these surveys, leading us to conclude that there is no evidence of systematic non-response bias in the sample.

In our initial analyses, we restrict the sample used to those who identify themselves as white. This restricted sample well represents the adult non-institutionalized white population of the United States and is not significantly different from the national average on these variables, as can be seen in Table A.1. In subsequent analyses we use the unrestricted full sample in order to investigate the effect of religion on the racial attitudes of minority groups. Table A.1 demonstrates that the African American sample well represents the population of adult non-institutionalized African Americans, at least in relation to other national surveys. The Hispanic subsample could not be compared because Hispanics are not easily identified in the GSS.

Table A.1 • ***Comparisons between American Mosaic Project Sample and Other National Samples on Key Demographic, Belief, and Behavior Measures***

Measure	*AMP*	*GSS*	*CPS*
Average age (in years)	44.4	45.6	44.2
Female	51.6%	56.5%	52.6%
Married	58.9%	45.4%	58.8%
Republican	35.1%	33.7%	*NA*
Attained college degree	23.9%	15.4%	24.3%
Catholic	25.5%	24.1%	*NA*
Attends church every week	22.3%	17.8%	*NA*
Thinks the Bible is the actual word of God	32.4%	34.8%	*NA*
Whites			
Average age (in years)	45.9	46.9	46.6
Female	50.5%	55.3%	51.9%
Married	61.8%	48.7%	61.2%
Republican	39.7%	39.2%	*NA*
Attained college degree	25.2%	16.8%	27.2%
Catholic	23.8%	25.9%	*NA*
Attends church every week	23.1%	17.5%	*NA*
Thinks the Bible is the actual word of God	29.2%	31.5%	*NA*
African Americans			
Average age (in years)	40.3	43.2	42.0
Female	55.5%	64.0%	58.3%
Married	43.4%	28.2%	37.9%
Republican	14.8%	12.1%	*NA*
Attained college degree	18.9%	9.1%	17.0%
Catholic	10.5%	10.8%	*NA*
Attends church every week	17.3%	19.4%	*NA*
Thinks the Bible is the actual word of God	51.3%	52.7%	*NA*

Source: American Mosiac Project (Edgell et al. 2003); General Social Survey (Davis et al. 2000); Current Population Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2003).

Note: Hispanics are not included in this table due to data limitations in the GSS. AMP data are weighted to match the gender by age distribution of the United States and to account for survey design characteristics, including non-response.

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