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Racist or not racist? Political differences in the perception and definition of racism

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Social Ecology

by

Rebecca Hofstein Grady

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Professor Peter H. Ditto, Chair
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2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Racist or not racist? Political differences in the perception and definition of racism

By

Rebecca Hofstein Grady

Master of Arts in Social Ecology

University of California, Irvine, 2015

Professor Peter H. Ditto, Chair

"Is that racist?" While sometimes the answer may seem obvious, other times it may be more controversial. Heated debate in the U.S. about the extent that racism is still a problem may be partially due to disagreements about what counts as racism, an underexplored topic in social psychology. These two online studies asked U.S. adults to judge behaviors and scenarios on whether or not they were racist. In Study 1, I found large, significant differences between liberals and conservatives in both the number and content of behaviors judged to be racist. In Study 2, I investigated liberals and conservatives' definitions of racism, both by explicitly asking about their definitions of racism and in judging scenarios that were structured to investigate definitional differences. I found that conservatives favored individual-focused definitions and liberals leaned more towards a systemic/structural definition of racism. When judging scenarios, conservatives placed more importance on whether an act treated people differently based on race, while liberals were relatively more open to judging an act racist that affected people differently, as well as one that treated people differently. In all, liberals and conservatives do not see racism the same way, which likely makes it harder for them to understand each other's viewpoints. Further exploration of these differences may help show why what one side calls "racism" the other calls "playing the race-card."

Introduction

Was race an important factor in the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager shot by White police officer Darren Wilson? Your answer likely depends on your background and personal attitudes, including what political party you are affiliated with. In a Pew Research survey asking whether the shooting raises important issues about race (or, conversely, if race is getting too much attention), the degree of disagreement between Democrats and Republicans were larger than the differences between White and Black respondents (Pew Research Center, 2014). This divide is not unique to the Michael Brown shooting; similar disparities can be seen in events around the 2015 Baltimore riots, where political differences in whether it was the right decision to charge police officers for the death of Freddie Gray, or in whether the following unrest was caused by racial tensions (as opposed to non-racism related causes) were greater than differences between Black and White people (Pew Research Center, 2015). A cursory examination of responses to race-related controversies, both in established research polls and in partisan-leaning news media, yields reliable partisan differences in perceptions of whether racism was the root cause of the situation. For example, while many liberal-leaning news sources discuss the institutional racism behind the unrest in Baltimore (e.g., Okafor, 2015), conservative sources more often blame the individuals themselves. As one conservative opinion piece, arguing that anti-White racism is the real problem in the country, states: "That's what Baltimore and Ferguson are really about. Too many Black people define their tragic circumstances in terms of a White enemy, when they are really their own worst enemies" (Greenfield, 2015). If people do not consider societal-level racism to be a problem anymore, it follows that they would consider current racial inequalities to be caused by individual failings and thus would not consider it racism for police and other entities to respond to these actions.

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This shows how important it is to consider how people view what racism is and is not, and leads to the question: how is it that so many people see the same events and come to such different conclusions?

Sources of Disagreement on Topic of Racism

It is by now agreed upon that racism is a negative trait (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Plant & Devine, 1989), which is why the debate usually centers on whether something is racist, not whether racism is wrong. Sometimes, racism is easy to spot and agree upon, such as former NBA owner Donald Sterling telling his girlfriend that she shouldn't associate with Black people (Price, 2014). In other situations, however, there is more disagreement, such in employment discrimination cases that rest on disparate impact (i.e., workplace rules that apply to everyone but affect one racial group differently; Carle, 2011). Often, this debate divides along partisan lines, such as with Voter ID laws (Blake, 2014). Liberal news outlets will call something racist, while conservative outlets claim that liberals are playing the race card.

Social psychology has long documented how different groups may selectively perceive an event differently based on a preferred outcome. In their classic study, Hastorf and Cantril (1954) found that fans of opposing football teams saw infractions and rough play instigations differently in ways that defended their own team. Despite having watched the same game, they appeared to have "seen" different events based on their team membership. In this example, however, all viewers were presumably making judgments based on the same rules of football. In the discussion of racism, however, that may not be the case - these polarized political groups may be operating under different rules altogether. It could be that liberals have different standards for how "bad" something must be to consider it racist, or that liberals and conservatives have different definitions of racism altogether. People define racism in many

different ways (Garcia, 2001), and each may lead to a different interpretation of a particular scenario.

Although studies on racism are prolific in social psychology, this differential judgment of what constitutes of racism is not a common topic (Sommers & Norton, 2006). The research on racism in social psychology is more focused on how society leads to racism, how individuals express racial prejudice, and what the effects of this prejudice and discrimination are (Bobo and Fox, 2003). Studies may look at how pervasive prejudice can affect perceptions of behavior when done by Black person compared to a White person, or at how discrimination can manifest in participants' behavior and feelings towards Black people. In these studies though, the idea of what they are studying is generally assumed, even if not everyone would agree. For example, many studies over the years have shown that people make implicit racial judgments and that these affect behavior, but there is disagreement about whether this is a measure of personal racial bias or pervasive cultural stereotypes (Arkes & Tetlock, 2004; Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2004). Since most social psychologists are politically liberal (Duarte et al., in press), the prevailing viewpoint in research will be from a liberal perspective, and may not consider that those of a different ideology may not see racism in the same way.

Liberal/Conservative Difference in Perception

Though it has not previously been demonstrated specifically, there is support from the literature and from every day experiences to hypothesize the conservatives have a narrower view of racism than liberals. Past research has shown that those high in meritocratic beliefs are less likely to perceive racism (Knowles & Lowery, 2012); that is, they are less likely to judge the same event to be racist than those lower in meritocratic beliefs, which will therefore lead to them judging actions and events to be racist less often. Given that belief in meritocracy is associated

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with conservative ideology (Napier & Jost, 2008), it follows that conservatives would be less likely to perceive actions as racist. Other work has shown an association between scores on the Modern Racism Scale (MRS) and reduced perceptions of racism (Sommers & Norton, 2006), as well as an association between Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and reduced perception of a lack of diversity (Unzueta, Knowles, & Ho, 2012). Both MRS and SDO scores are correlated with conservative political ideology (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996), indicating that people who are more conservative may also have a narrower perception of racism. Studies have also shown that White[1] people are less likely to see racism, particularly institutional racism, than Non-Whites (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008; O'Brien et al., 2009). While the political dimension has not generally been studied in this work, and White people are present across the political spectrum, White people make up an overwhelming majority of the Republican Party, while the Democratic Party is significantly more diverse (Newport, 2013).

All of these factors lead to the first hypothesis, that greater political conservatism will be related to seeing fewer behaviors as racist (which would therefore cause them to perceive racism less often in general). Study 1 will test this hypothesis by evaluating the extent to which conservatism predicts the number of behaviors participants judge to be racist, along with other likely predictors such as race and attitudes towards Black people. Considerable research has shown a strong correlation between conservatism and negative racial attitudes (as assessed by scales that measure more subtle or symbolic forms of racism than old-fashioned traditional measures), but these studies have been critiqued as conflating racially motivated attitudes with principled conservatism that values individualism and meritocracy (see Berdein 2007, pp.8-11

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[1] This work uses White and Black people throughout, both in the text and in the research studies. Although the current samples only included analyses on U.S. participants, the data for these studies was collected from across the world, where terms like European American and African American would not necessarily apply.

for a review). One common theme in various definitions or types of racism is that they embody, in some form, negative feelings for Black people (Sears & Henry, 2002), and so this paper will use the term "negative racial attitudes" to refer to an individual's general negative feelings toward a race (usually used with anti-Black attitudes), though this is operationalized in various ways in the literature. I hypothesize that conservatism will uniquely predict a lower perception of racism when controlling for attitudes, but it is likely that attitudes alone will be a strong predictor as well.

Liberal/Conservative Differences in Definition

There are different ways that a difference in the perception of racism could come about. One possibility is that liberals have a lower threshold for "how racist" something is before they judge it to be racist in a dichotomous sense. If this were the case, then on a continuous measure liberals and conservatives would rate scenarios more similarly than when asked to make a dichotomous judgment. It is also possible that liberals and conservatives have different definitions of racism that they draw from, leading them to perceive events differently. Study 2 will investigate these possibilities by assessing judgments of racism in dichotomous and continuous ratings, as well as comparing definitions of racism between liberals and conservatives.

Racism has been defined in many different ways by prominent theorists, including as a belief, ideology, social system, behavior, or attitudes, and no single conceptualization is agreed upon (Garcia, 2001). Each definition may lead to a different interpretation of what is racist, and people may strategically use varying definitions to support their judgments of what is racist (Doane, 2006). The concept of race itself changes over time, changing with it the meaning of racial power and injustice (Omi, 2001), and a definition that fits at one point in time may not still

capture the experience of racism as society changes (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). One proposed division is that White people are more likely to view racism as individual discrimination, while Black people are more likely to view it in a sense of collective experience (Scheurich, 1993). Those with a strong sense of meritocracy, which is more a part of conservative than liberal ideology, are more comfortable with individual-level definitions of racism, for example personal prejudice, as opposed to believing racism to be a more systematic issue (Tatum, 2004). This leads to my prediction that conservatives will tend more towards an individualized definition of racism, while liberals will be relatively more likely to choose a systemic/institutional definition. For example, individualized definitions are those that center on a single person's behavior, such as treating people differently or hating people because of their race. Systemic definitions, on the other hand, will not depend on individual behavior, and will instead involve affecting people differently based on race and privileging one race over another on a societal level. This prediction fits with attribution literature showing that liberals are more likely to make situational attributions for explaining social problems such as poverty (Zucker & Weiner, 1993) and homelessness (Pellegrini, Queirolo, Monarrez, & Valenzuela, 1997), while conservatives instead see issues as a fault of individual behavior. Studies have suggested this is due to liberals' motivation to alter their initial, individual attributions and look for societal causes (Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002); with racism, liberals may be more likely than conservatives to look beyond the individual behavior and consider systematic causes at work in racial inequality.

Though studies on lay peoples' definitions of racism are sparse within the field, it is not completely unexplored (and has been explored more in sociology, e.g. Bonilla-Silva, 1997 and Doane, 2006). One relevant set of studies in social psychology asked lay people how much they

thought various behaviors done by a White person (e.g. "Laughs at another person's jokes about Black people," would indicate that person was racist (Sommers & Norton, 2006). This study found support for three factors of racist behaviors: "Discomfort/Unfamiliarity" (e,g, "Feels anxious around Blacks), "Denial of problem" (e.g. "Thinks slavery so long ago that it is unimportant to talk about), and "Overt racism" (e.g. "Discourages kids from playing with Blacks"). In these studies, higher scores on the MRS were associated with lower judgments that discomfort or denial items were racist, but there was no such association with judgments about overtly racist behaviors. As overt racism is the prototypical definition of bias (Sommers & Norton, 2006), there is less room for ambiguity where attitudes and motivations could come into play; most people–Black, White, liberal, conservative–would agree that actions such as discouraging kids to play with Black people are racist. Because of this, I predict that there will be less disagreement between liberals and conservatives when judging actions that meet the clear definition of overt discrimination on the basis of race.

In particular, this overt discrimination generally involves intentional attempts to treat one group worse than another based on race, which most people would agree is racist. The institutional/system definitions of racism allow for policies and actions to be racist even without intent or differential treatment, as the social system itself is based on racial hierarchy, and does not depend on consciously prejudiced people to perpetuate it (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). An individualized definition, on the other hand, leads to a belief that racism is a problem within certain prejudiced individuals (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, Doane 2006). This individualized definition focuses on assessing the culpability of the person committing the discriminatory act, which involves looking at the actor's intent and feelings of antipathy, rather than at the target's experience or the outcome of a policy or action (Salter & Adams, 2013). Following from my

previous hypothesis about liberal and conservative definitions, I hypothesize that conservatives will place more importance on requiring the presence of intent and individual action (i.e. a person treating people differently based on race), whereas liberals will be more likely than conservatives to still see racism without these factors present (i.e., if there is no deliberate prejudice, or if an action only affects people differently).

Summary of Hypotheses

H1: Greater conservatism will be associated with perceiving fewer actions to be racist.

H2: Liberals and conservatives will have different definitions of racism, with liberals leaning more towards structural definitions and conservatives leaning more towards individualized definitions.

H3: Liberals and conservatives will disagree less when an action matches prototypical overt discrimination; i.e., actions that would be general considered racist by almost anyone.

H4: Liberals and conservatives placing differential importance on factors such as the presences of intent and differential treatment.

Study 1 tested H1 as well as helped generate stimulus materials for Study 2, which tested H2-4.

Study 1

Methods

Sample. The survey was posted on the data collection website YourMorals.org. Users on this website create an account and then participate in any number of online surveys posted by researchers from multiple universities. Participants do not receive monetary compensation, but instead get feedback after completion about how they compare to other participants who have previously taken the same survey.

There were 784 U.S. adults who completed the survey. The mean age was 38.2 (range: 18-90), 86% of the participants were non-Hispanic White (out of the 81% who gave racial demographics), 57% were male, and 52% described themselves as liberal, 15% as conservative, and the rest as moderate, libertarian, or other. Fifty nine percent of the sample had a college degree (and another 16% were currently in college), with no differences in education level between liberals and conservatives, $\chi^2(5) = 5.829$, $p = .341$.

Procedures. After consenting to participate, respondents were shown a list of 50 behaviors related to race and asked to make a dichotomous decision about whether they thought each one was racist or not racist. All 50 items were shown on one page in a randomized order for each participant. The items were created based on news events, input from other researchers, literature review, and personal observations and experiences. Though there was no attempt at categorizing items beforehand as definitely racist or not racist, I attempted to create items that ranged from items that very few people would likely find racist (e.g. "Buying a white iPhone over a black iPhone), to those that most people would likely find racist (e.g. "Disallowing Black people from entering a store"). Most were meant to be somewhere in between those extremes such that people would have to think about to decide (e.g. "Excusing an older relative's racist comments because of their generation." I also attempted to diversify the types of items being rated, such as whether the items were about a thought or an action, or whether it was an action done by an individual or an organization. See Table 1 for full list of items.

Next, participants completed the MRS (McConahay, 1986). This widely used scale has 7 items that assess attitudes towards Black people on a 5 point scale from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree," with one item reverse-scored. These items assess modern or symbolic racism against Black people (e.g., "Black people are getting too demanding in their push for equal

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Table 1

List of all Study 1 items, sorted by most to least difference between liberals and conservatives in proportion of group who rated the item as racist

Item	Lib	Con	Difference	p-value
Enacting laws requiring a photo ID to vote.	53.7%	3.5%	50.2%	<.001
Electing mostly White politicians to top levels of government.	65.9%	20.0%	45.9%	<.001
Wearing clothing with an image of the Confederate flag.	79.9%	36.2%	43.7%	<.001
Being afraid of a Black teenager in a hoodie while walking at night.	73.4%	31.0%	42.4%	<.001
Incarcerating proportionally more Black people than White people for non-violent drug crimes.	94.4%	52.2%	42.2%	<.001
Hiring proportionally fewer Black employees to top level positions than lower level positions	77.6%	37.2%	40.4%	<.001
Having an all-White news panel discuss race issues.	71.0%	36.2%	34.7%	<.001
Prohibiting "ethnic hair" (e.g., cornrows, dreadlocks) in a dress code policy.	93.1%	63.8%	29.3%	<.001
Preferring to live in an area that does not have a majority Black population	60.2%	31.6%	28.6%	<.001
Clutching valuables more closely when passing a Black person on the street.	91.8%	63.8%	28.0%	<.001
Citing statistics that show Black people are more likely to commit crimes than White people.	42.3%	14.7%	27.7%	<.001
Believing that anyone, regardless of race, has an equal opportunity to succeed in this country.	30.4%	4.3%	26.1%	<.001
Creating a student club on a campus to study White/Caucasian history and culture.	50.4%	24.3%	26.0%	<.001
Picking Black players before White players in a basketball game.	69.8%	44.8%	25.0%	<.001
Wearing Blackface as part of a costume.	80.5%	56.1%	24.4%	<.001
Using a term that has historical roots in racism (e.g., "uppity").	59.3%	35.1%	24.2%	<.001

Consistently mispronouncing Black names (e.g., Quvenzhané).	38.8%	15.5%	23.3%	<.001
Preferring to only date members of the same race.	43.5%	20.9%	22.6%	<.001
Excusing an older relative's racist comments because they grew up in a different generation.	55.4%	33.0%	22.3%	<.001
Calling a bad area of town a ghetto.	36.9%	14.8%	22.1%	<.001
Changing a character's race from Black to White when adapting a book to a movie.	72.6%	51.3%	21.3%	<.001
Casting Black characters as villains and White characters as heroes in a movie.	78.2%	56.9%	21.3%	<.001
Referring to White athletes as "smart and hardworking" and Black athletes as "natural athletes."	92.8%	71.6%	21.3%	<.001
Scrutinizing Black shoppers more closely than White shoppers.	97.9%	76.7%	21.2%	<.001
Telling a joke that utilizes race-based stereotypes.	81.5%	60.3%	21.1%	<.001
Ignoring institutional racism because the problem is too pervasive to solve.	88.2%	68.1%	20.0%	<.001
Restricting early voting hours in areas where the majority of early votes are by Black voters.	96.2%	76.7%	19.4%	<.001
Lightening the skin of people of color in advertisements.	85.1%	66.4%	18.7%	<.001
Living in an apartment complex that avoids renting to Black families	81.5%	63.8%	17.7%	<.001
Buying a book whose author previously made racist comments	25.6%	8.6%	17.0%	<.001
Convicting a Black person and not a White person on trial for the same crime.	92.1%	75.2%	16.8%	<.001
Using dark colors to symbolize bad things in a story and light colors to symbolize positive things.	22.6%	7.0%	15.7%	<.001
Believing a Black student with a scholarship received it only due to minority status.	92.8%	79.3%	13.5%	<.001
Believing that Black skin is due to the curse of	94.6%	82.5%	12.2%	<.001

Ham in the bible.

	Lib	Con		p
Encouraging police officers to target Black people in general searches (e.g., stop-and-frisk).	98.2%	86.2%	12.0%	<.001
Wearing a Halloween mask of President Obama	13.6%	3.4%	10.1%	.002
Using the n-word in conversation.	91.6%	81.9%	9.7%	.003
Separating into same-race social groups.	53.3%	44.3%	9.0%	.090
Suspecting Black players of cheating more readily than White players.	98.2%	89.7%	8.5%	<.001
Criminalizing interracial marriages.	97.2%	88.8%	8.4%	<.001
Wearing a Ku Klux Klan uniform as a Halloween costume.	91.8%	83.6%	8.2%	.010
Designating some colleges as "historically Black colleges."	13.0%	20.9%	-7.8%	.038
Ignoring Black customers in favor of White customers in a tip-driven profession (e.g., cab driver).	96.2%	88.8%	7.4%	.002
Using slavery as a metaphor in a political analogy.	30.5%	24.3%	6.2%	.201
Routinely tipping Black servers less than White servers for the same service.	99.5%	94.8%	4.7%	<.001
Enrolling minority students in remedial classes automatically.	97.2%	93.1%	4.1%	.041
Watching a TV show with less than 10% minority characters.	7.5%	3.4%	4.0%	.124
Prescribing specific treatment based on which medications have been shown work best for difference races.	6.6%	7.8%	-1.1%	.679
Disallowing certain races from entering a store.	99.7%	99.1%	0.6%	.356
Buying a white smartphone over a black smartphone.	0.3%	0.9%	-0.6%	.360

Notes. Lib=Liberal participants, Con=Conservative participants. The *p*-values are based on z-test for proportions between two populations and have not had any correction applied for the large number of comparisons tested. Given the large number of items (50), caution should be used when interpreting *p*-values greater than .001 as a significant difference.

rights") and are distinguished from scales that assess overt, old-fashioned racism that people today are less likely to endorse. Two small changes were made to the MRS in this study. First, the original scales used the term "Blacks," but this was changed to "Black people" to match the wording used in the rest of the study. Second, the item regarding school desegregation is less topical than it once was, so this item was changed to the more currently relevant affirmative action ("Black people have more influence upon affirmative action plans than they ought to have"). Though these changes may make the MRS data in this study less comparable to other versions of the scale, it was only meant to be an internal moderator, and thus will still work for that purpose.

Finally, participants were given three optional open-ended questions: "What does racism mean to you?," "How do you decide what actions are racist?," and "What are some examples of other types of racist actions not listed in this survey?"

Participant's political ideology was collected when they created their account on the YourMorals.org website, and included a self-report scale from 1 ("very liberal") to 7 ("very conservative") and a categorical question about party affiliation. In this survey, the scale was used as the primary political orientation measure. Whenever politics was analyzed continuously in these studies, the 1-7 scale was used (some participants said "other" and were excluded from those analysis), while for any dichotomous liberal/conservative differences, those above the midpoint of 4 (i.e., responded as "slightly conservative," "conservative," or "very conservative") are categorized as conservative, and those below the midpoint of 4 (i.e., responded as "slightly liberal," "liberal," or "very liberal") as liberal (used in other studies such as Graham, Nosek, & Haidt, 2012, and Iyer, Koleva, Graham, Ditto, & Haidt, 2012). Other self-reported

demographics such as education level, age, and gender were collected at the account creation stage as well.

Results

As intended, there was a wide range of judgments on the scale, in that items ranged from almost unanimously judged as racist to almost unanimously judged as not racist, with most items in between. The two items with the smallest difference between groups were the top and bottom item for both groups on what percentage of people thought they were racist. Over 99% of both groups said "Disallowing certain races from entering a store" was racist, and less than 1% of both groups said "Buying a white smartphone over a black smartphone" was racist. The two items were the largest disagreement were "Enacting laws requiring a photo ID to vote" and "Electing mostly White politicians to top levels of government," both of which do not necessarily involve any intentional discrimination. Table 1 shows the percentage of each group judging each action as racist.

In support of the primary hypothesis (H1), greater conservativism was significantly associated with a decrease in the number of actions rated as racist ($r(532) = -.551$, $p < .001$). When splitting participants into the two political ideologies, liberals rated significantly more behaviors as racist ($M = 33.6$ [67.2% of the 50 items], $SD = 6.78$) than conservatives ($M = 23.8$ [47.6% of the 50 items], $SD = 7.98$; $t[144] = 11.23$, $p < .001$, Cohen's D = 1.39). There was no significant difference between White ($M = 30.1$, $SD = 8.34$) and non-White participants[2] ($M = 28.7$, $SD = 7.74$; $t[120] = 1.533$, $p = .123$). There was a strong negative correlation between

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[2] Due to a large majority of White participants, non-White participants were categorized as anyone who did not solely identity as non-Hispanic white, since any other division did not have adequate power. However, non-inferential inspection of the data with more appropriate racial groups did not reveal any substantial overall racial differences. Although White participants saw more items as racist than non-White on average, the regression showed White participants saw fewer items as racist when controlling for other predictors (and neither difference was statistically significant). Thus, participant race did not seem to be a significant predictor above and beyond other variables.

score on the MRS and the number of items rated as racist ($r(654) = -.694$, $p < .001$), meaning that those who scored higher on Modern Racism thought fewer items on the list were racist.

Next, a linear multiple regression was conducted with number of items rated as racist as the dependent variable. Conservatism was the main predictor of interest, while MRS score, race (coded as White or non-White), age, education, and gender served as control variables. The total linear model accounted for 48.8% of the variance in number of items rated as racist ($R^2 = .488$, $F(6,412) = 65.43$, $p < .001$). The regression showed that more conservatism, male gender, and higher MRS score each uniquely predicted rating fewer items as racist (all $ps < .001$), while age, education, and race did not (n.s.). Table 2 shows the full model with coefficients and standardized betas.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 strongly supported the hypotheses that conservatives would perceive fewer behaviors to be racist, even after controlling for negative racial attitudes, gender, age, and race. This means that while gender, race, and negative racial attitudes, may differ between liberals and conservatives, these differences are not accounting for the finding about the unique effect of conservatism. While negative racial attitudes, which were correlated with conservatism, had a stronger predictive effect on a lower perception of racism, both contributed unique variability in perceiving fewer things as racist. Gender also had a significant effect, in that men saw fewer items as racist than women, and this was not predicted. It may be that women can relate more to being discriminated against in comparing it to sexism, or that women have been socialized to showing more empathy. Additionally, men are generally higher in SDO (Pratto et al, 1994), which was one of the predictors of lower perception of racism from past research (Unzueta et al., 2012) that led to the hypothesis that conservatives would have lower

Table 2

Multiple linear regression predicting number of items rated as racist in Study 1

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
Age	-0.007	0.019	-0.014
Race (1=Non-Hispanic White, 0=Other)	-0.223	0.791	-0.010
Gender (1=Male, 0=Female)	-2.454***	0.551	-0.159
Education level	0.051	0.217	0.009
Conservatism	-0.855***	0.218	-0.174
MRS score	-5.903***	0.492	-0.536
R^2		.488	
$F(6,412)$		65.43***	

Note. MRS = Modern Racism Scale
*p < .050. **p < .010, ***p<.001

perception of racism than liberals. Men tend to be less egalitarian than women as well, above and beyond SDO, and political ideology (Pratto, Stallworth, & Sidanius, 1997). The fact that race did not have a significant effect is contradictory to what other studies have found, though the small proportion of non-White participants in the sample (and subsequent inability to divide beyond White and non-White) means this conclusion may not be reliable. However, the main focus in this study was on political, and not racial, differences. Other studies that do show racial differences may not be taking into account political differences, which as discussed previously can go along with demographic differences.

One limitation of this design was that the primary dependent measure was the number of items rated as racist. Theoretically, one group could rate the first 25 items as racist, and the other group could rate the last 25 items as racist, and a simple comparison of items would say the groups are not different. However, looking at the overall pattern of the data in Table 1 clearly shows that is not the case. Liberals more often rated actions as racist than conservatives on nearly every item, and the few where conservatives were higher were not large differences. An examination of the items that had the largest and smallest differences between conservatives and liberals is helpful in learning more about these responses and informing future topics of study.

The items with the smallest difference between groups (about banning races from entering a store or buying a white smartphone) were the ones that everyone, liberal and conservative, agreed were either racist or not racist. This is not surprising, as it is the ambiguous events that cause the most disagreement, while the truly blatant acts of racial discrimination or the obviously non-racial events do not have room for political differences to cause disagreement. While the items in Study 1 were not pre-coded or pre-tested on how discriminatory they were, banning some races from entering a store would be an example of prototypical overt

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discrimination, and supports the hypothesis that liberals and conservatives would not disagree on such a prototypically discriminatory action.

Conversely, the item with the greatest liberal-conservative difference was "Enacting laws requiring a photo ID to vote." It may be because this is an already politicized topic that has been in the media, but it is also a good example of an action that has a disparate impact on different racial groups without differential treatment. In general, the idea that voter ID laws are not racist rests on the fact that the law is the same for everyone, and almost no conservatives rated this as racist (3.5% in our sample). The case against voter ID laws is that even though both White and non-White voters are treated the same, the laws have a disproportionate impact on non-White voters, who are less likely to have the required documents despite being eligible voters. Over half of the liberal participants (53.7%) found this item racist. Other items with high disagreement can also be seen as examples of disparate impact; for example "Electing mostly White politicians to top levels of government" (as politicians of different races are under the same legal eligibility for candidacy) or "Prohibiting 'ethnic hair' (e.g., cornrows, dreadlocks) in a dress code policy" which similarly involves rules that apply to everyone but disproportionally affect one group. In Study 2, stimuli were crafted more deliberately to capture actions that demonstrated a range of prototypically in regard to overt discrimination and disparate effect.

Another area of interest identified by exploring the item differences is the possible construals of intent. Most items were written to deliberately avoid assigning intent or causation. Thus, an item like "Incarcerating proportionally more Black people than White people for non-violent drug crimes" (which had a 42.2 percentage point political difference) could be construed by some people as a fair response to a (perceived) difference in the proportion of each group that commits such crimes, while others may see it as proof that the system is unfairly structured

against one group. Other similar items like "Hiring proportionally fewer Black employees to top level positions than lower level positions" also could be construed with varying intent, as participants were not given the reason for the discrepancy, only the outcome.

An examination of the open-ended responses (out of those who chose to give one, coded by a research assistant trained by the first author and blind to hypotheses and participant demographics) about definitions of racism also gives some ideas for future exploration. In the open-ended response to what racism means, the most common across groups were some form of "treating people differently based on race" (64% of conservative respondents, 43% of liberal respondents). There were some different patterns across political groups, however. A greater proportion of conservatives (39%) than liberals (7%) referenced discrimination against Whites in their response, such as saying "Discrimination goes both ways" or writing "affirmation action" or "reverse racism" when asked to provide other examples of racist behaviors. In contrast, liberal respondents (28%) were more likely than conservatives (5%) to reference institutional or systematic racism, such as "A system of implicit and explicit social attitudes that works to systematically disadvantage members of certain races," though the majority of both groups wrote what would be considered individualized definitions (94% of conservatives and 87% of liberals[3]).

Though this examination of responses was not a primary dependent measure in this study, the themes fit with the literature and hypotheses about definitions of racism and provided materials for the next study on how people define racism. Though the majority of responses regard differential treatment, a significant number of liberal responses defined a more structural/systemic definition, while very few conservative responses did. These themes were

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[3] Percentage of each group endorsing various definitions may not add to 100% because some people wrote multiple definitions in their open-ended reply.

not used as empirical support for hypotheses, but instead used to stimulate ideas and questions for Study 2. The responses were used to generate eight possible definitions of racism for people to choose from that encapsulated the majority of responses given, and the importance of investigating factors like intent and differential treatment was reinforced.

The next study added questions about the definition of racism, as well as addressed some of the limitations from Study 1. First, Study 1 only used a dichotomous judgment of racism, and the operationalization for reduced perception of racism depended on only the total number of items rated as racist. This allowed for an exploration of wide range of scenarios, as well as an initial confirmation of substantial group differences, and results helped determine what areas to focus on for the next study. Based on the literature and on examination of the items from Study 1, the factors of intention (whether the actor meant to cause a race-dependent outcome) and outcome (whether the action caused people to be treated differently based on race or affected differentially based on race) were explored in Study 2. Study 2 will present participants with more structured and controlled scenarios, will ask for both a dichotomous judgment and a scale judgment of how racist the act was, and generalizes to non-White discrimination (as opposed to anti-Black discrimination from Study 1), which implicitly measure participants' definitions of racism based on their judgments. Furthermore, Study 2 asked explicit, multiple choice questions about people's definitions of racism (as opposed to just open-ended questions) so as to compare not only their judgments but their declared attitudes about the topic. Finally, a measure of color-blind attitudes was added in place of the MRS because of a color-blind ideology (believing that we should not focus on race at all) is associated with increased support for individualized definitions of racism (Doane, 2006).

Study 2

Methods

Sample. A new sample of 656 U.S. adults was collected using the same website and methods as the previous study. Demographics were similar to Study 1, though the sample was slightly younger: the mean age was 33 (range: 18-110[4]), 57% were male, 51% were liberal, and 15% were conservative. Forty eight percent of the sample had a college degree (and another 25% were currently in college), with no differences in education level between liberals and conservatives, $\chi^2(5) = 0.981$, $p = .964$. Because of an unforeseen change to the website structure, race information was not collected, but it was likely similar to Study 1 (i.e., overwhelmingly White) as the sample was drawn from the same population. Given the lack of racial differences found in Study 1, race was not expected be a significant predictor in this study, though it would have served as an additional demographic control variable.

Design. Participants rated a set of scenarios that differed on three dimensions: setting (four settings: a company, the justice system, a proposed law, and a police department), outcome (two types: differential treatment, or same treatment but disparate effect), and intentionality (two types: intentional or unintentional). This led to a set of 16 scenarios that had four settings and four types of discrimination per setting: unintentional disparate effect, intentional disparate effect, unintentional differential treatment, and intentional differential treatment.

The intentional effect condition was more of an "oblique" intent, meaning the actor knew the action would have this racial consequence and decided to act anyways, which is argued to be

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[4] While this seems an unlikely age, given the rarity of people reaching 110, there was nothing else in this participant's data to suggest false responses or atypical response patterns that would warrant exclusion. After this participant, the next oldest participant was age 80, followed by 12 participants in their 70s. Given the large sample, this value was not expected to affect any age-related analyses, so this participant was not removed. The only exclusions that were made (prior to reaching the final sample of 656 U.S. adults) was for not living in the U.S (157 participants), or giving the same response (e.g. 0 or blank) for every question (26 participants).

similar to direct intent in moral and legal matters (Barak, Leighton, & Flavin, 2010). In the company setting for example, scenario mentions that "The company was aware of the racial effects when they designed these standards but decided to use them anyway." It was decided in pre-testing that having someone deliberately take an action for the purpose of affecting races differently was too similar to the intentional treatment condition, as they would be essentially treating races differently if their action was chosen specifically to affect races differently. An overview is shown in Table 3, and the full set of all scenarios can be found in Appendix A. Participants were randomly assigned to read four of the 16 possible scenarios in a Latin Square design, meaning they could not repeat a setting or discrimination type more than once. For example, one person could read about police deliberately treating non-White residents worse due to overt discrimination, and a company unintentionally treating non-White applicants worse due to unconscious bias, and a justice system whose standardized laws were designed in a way that affected non-White offenders worse, and a new law that has an inadvertent and previously unknown effect on making it harder for non-White drivers to get valid licenses. A participant could not read about the new driver's license law more than once, or a scenario with unconscious bias more than once.

The dimensions of outcome and intentionality were the theoretical variables of interest, while the settings served to disguise the manipulations within participants and provide information about the generalizability of any observed effects. The four conditions could also be considered on a single dimension of how much they resembled prototypical discrimination, which is overt discrimination on the basis of race. The most prototypical is the intentional treatment condition, followed by unintentional treatment, since it still involves treating people on the basis of race. The disparate effect conditions are less prototypical, as they involve different

Table 3

Templates of the four discrimination scenarios (2 outcome type x 2 intentionality) that were applied to four settings in Study 2

	Intentional	Unintentional
Treatment	People are deliberately treating non-Whites worse based on their race (overt discrimination)	People are unintentionally treating non-Whites worse without realizing it (unconscious bias)
Effect	People are applying the same standards/practices to everyone, but they knew the outcome was worse for non-Whites when they designed them (oblique intent)	People are applying the same standards/practices to everyone, and they attempted to do this fairly, but they didn't realize non-Whites would have worse outcomes (unintentional side-effect)

Note. Participants would see each of these discrimination types once, each in a different randomized setting. For example, a participant might read out unconscious bias in a police department, and overt discrimination in the justice system, and oblique intent in a company, and an unintentional side effect of a new law.

outcomes based on race without any disparate treatment. The intentional effect would be more prototypical than the unintentional effect, within each outcome option.

Procedure. After each scenario, participants answered whether the action they read about (e.g. the hiring decision) was racist, first as a Yes/No decision and then on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 6 (completely). The questions were conceptually the same across all scenarios with only the relevant descriptors changed to match the scenario they just read, and they were in the same order for all scenarios and all participants to maintain logical coherence and consistency (See Appendix B for question wording and order). For example, in the company system setting, they were asked "Do you believe that these hiring decisions are racist," while in the justice system condition the same question was "Do you believe that these sentencing decisions are racist?"

Next, participants were asked some general multiple-choice questions about how they view racism, such as what factors are important in determining racism (e.g. intent, different treatment versus effect) and how often discrimination happens against White and non-White people in the U.S, and how they defined racism. The response options for possible definitions of racism were developed by reviewing the open-ended responses in Study 1 and creating options that captured the range of responses seen. Participants first selected which they thought was the best definition of racism, and then were asked to select any that they thought were valid definitions of racism from the same list. These options included definitions that related to prejudice, overt discrimination, systematic privilege, unconscious bias, and others that encompassed the various definitions given from open-ended responses from Study 1. See Table 4 for a list of the options, along with results for what liberals and conservatives selected as the best definition.

Table 4

Percentage of liberal and conservative participants selecting various definitions of racism.

	Best definition		Any definition	
	Con	Lib	Con	Lib
Committing a hurtful or damaging act against another person because of their race	8.1%	2.9%	86.0%	89.0%
Taking actions that disproportionally affect one race over another or others	4.7%	4.2%	39.5%	70.0%
Believing that one race is superior to another race or races	31.4%	9.9%	76.7%	89.4%
Hating a person or people because of their race	12.8%	2.6%	86.0%	89.0%
Having unconscious negative thoughts, feelings, or biases about other racial groups	2.3%	6.7%	44.2%	70.6%
Assuming negative qualities about someone because of their race	10.5%	8.7%	73.3%	88.4%
Systematically or structurally privileging one race over another or others	8.1%	44.6%	73.3%	90.6%
Treating someone different than another person because of their race	22.1%	20.5%	72.3%	79.7%

Notes. For "Best definition," participants were asked to select from one of the 8 options for which was the best definition of racism. For "Any definition," participants could select any number of the 8 definitions, as well as "Other" (which <2% of participants chose to do).

On the final page, participants completed a four-item measure of racial colorblindness (Mazzocco, Cooper, & Flint, 2012). These items assess participants' basic attitudes towards racial colorblindness, which avoids some limitations of other scales, like the MRS or other color-blindness scales that include policy questions that may confound racial attitudes and political conservatism (Mazzocco et al., 2012). The four questions were: "Nothing good will come out of continuing to focus on race," "America would be better off if we stopped placing so much importance on race," "The topic of race is something that should generally be avoided," and "Society would be better off if we all stopped talking about race." The items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate greater support for racial colorblindness and avoidance of racial topics. The scale, hereafter referred to as SRC (Support for Racial Colorblindness) had acceptable inter-item reliability (α=.85), and was less correlated with conservatism in our sample than the MRS was in study 1, though the relation was still significant ($r(442) = .543$, $p < .001$). While color-blind attitudes have theoretical relations to conservative ideology (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee & Browne, 2000), it is an ideology that crosses liberal-conservative boundaries (Carr, 1997) and is associated with factors arising from individualized concepts of racism (Doane, 2006), so it served as an appropriate theoretical control.

Hypotheses. Liberals and conservatives were expected to show differing definitions of racism, both in their judgments of the scenarios and when asked explicitly. As previously mentioned, conservatives were expected to be more likely to endorse individualized definitions of racism, while liberals would rely on a broader definition that also encompassed systemic/structural examples of racism. Based on these hypothesized differing definitions, I expected to see that judgments of how racist the scenarios were would not only have a main

effect of political ideology (in that liberals would rate actions as more racist than conservatives), but that the types of scenarios would show different levels of disagreement. A more inclusive, systemic definition of racism more easily allows for a judgment of a disparate effect to be considered racist, while a more conservative, individualized definition may require disparate treatment. Therefore I hypothesized the following with regard to the scenarios:

- Conservatives would rate every action as less racist (because unlike Study 1, we did not deliberately include items that 100% of people would agree were racist or not racist), even after controlling for color-blind attitudes.

- Everyone would rate differential treatment and intentional actions as more racist than disparate effect outcomes and unintentional actions.

- The closer the scenario is to prototypical, overt discrimination (i.e., when both groups see it as more racist), the smaller difference there will be between liberals and conservatives.

- There would be a significant interaction between outcome type and conservatism in the judgment of racism, in that difference between liberals and conservatives on judgment of racism would be greater in the disparate effect than differential treatment conditions, and greater in the unintentional than intentional conditions.

Results

  Judgments of scenarios. Percentages of each group who judged each action to be racist (in the dichotomous option) are presented in Figure 1, while the scale ratings of how racist the action was are presented in Figure 2. As discussed, the four outcome types were ranked from least to most similar to discrimination, and as expected, this matched the order of how racist each scenario was judged to be across all settings and political groups. For purposes of analysis, intentional treatment was coded as 4 (94% of liberals and 76% of conservatives thought it was
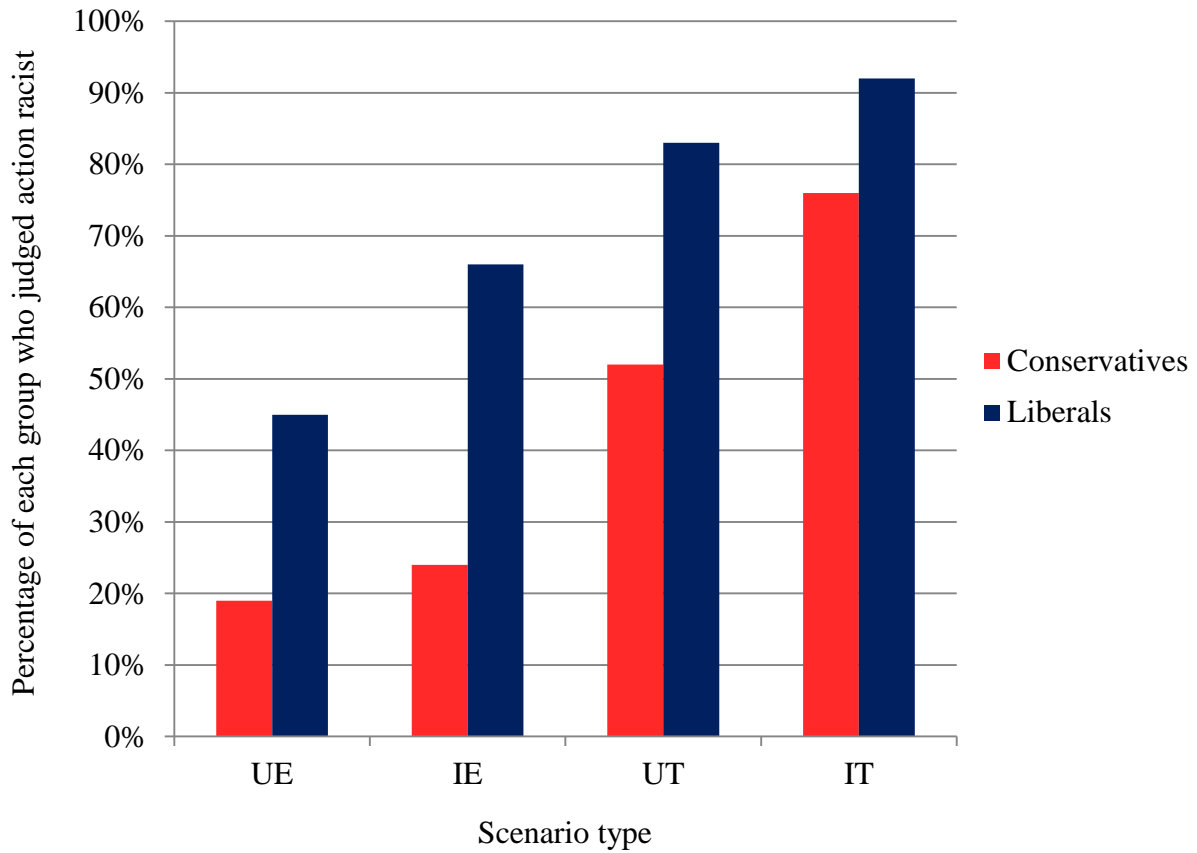
Figure 1. Percentage of liberals and conservatives rating the action in each scenario type as racist
Note. Lib=liberal participants; Con=Conservative participants; UE=Unintentional Effect;
IE=Intentional Effect; UT=Unintentional Treatment; IT=Intentional Treatment

Figure 2. Rating of how racist the action was in each scenario type by liberals and conservatives
Note. Lib=liberal participants; Con=Conservative participants; UE=Unintentional Effect;
IE=Intentional Effect; UT=Unintentional Treatment; IT=Intentional Treatment
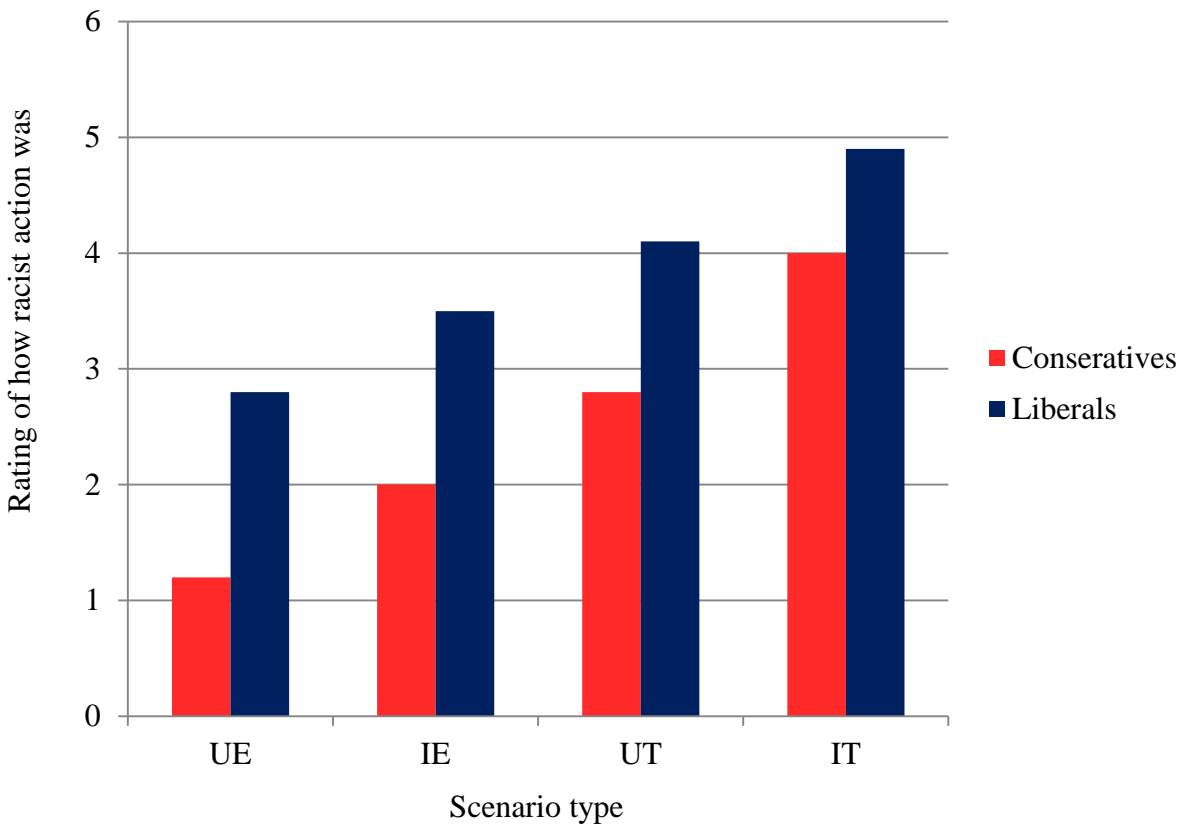
racist, collapsed across setting), unintentional treatment as 3 (82% of liberals and 52% of

conservatives), intentional effect as 2 (66% of liberals and 24% of conservatives), and

unintentionally effect as 1 (45% of liberals and 19% of conservatives).

The hypothesis that there would be less disagreement between liberals and conservatives

the more the scenario matched prototypical discrimination was tested using a linear mixed model

regression (see Table 5) with the scale judgment of how racist the scenario was as the dependent

variable and scenario type (the 1, 2, 3, 4 coding discussed above[5]), political ideology, and their

interaction entered as fixed effects. Education status, age, gender, and SRC score were also

entered into the model to serve as additional controls. Within-person and within-scenario-setting

variation was controlled for by treating them as random intercepts effects. As hypothesized, the

regression showed a significant main effect on judgments of racism for scenario type ($p < .001$),

political ideology ($p < .001$), and their interaction ($p < .010$). This means that when controlling

for political ideology, the higher level (i.e., closer to prototypical discrimination) scenarios were

judged to be more racist, and that when controlling for scenario type, liberals judged actions to

be more racist than conservatives. The negative interaction indicates that as the scenario level

moved higher, the difference between liberals and conservatives decreased. For example, on the

0-6 scale of how racist the action was, there was a difference of 1.56 between liberals and

conservatives for the unintentional disparate effect, which means liberals rated it is over twice as

racist than conservatives on average. In the most racist scenario, the difference between liberals

and conservatives was only 0.87, meaning liberals rated it is roughly 20% more racist than

conservatives (compared to almost 120% higher for the least racist scenario). Much like in Study

1, gender ($p < .050$) and attitudes ($p < .001$) were significant predictors of racism judgment

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[5] This was entered as an ordered variable and tested for linear, quadratic, and cubic effects. Because only the linear
effect was significant, and had a far greater effect than the others, the model was re-run with only the linear
component.

Table 5

Linear mixed model predicting scale judgment of how racist the action was in Study 2

Fixed Effects	Coefficient	SE	t
Age	-0.005	0.004	-1.210
Education level	-0.028	0.040	-0.703
Gender (1=Male, 0=Female)	-0.258*	0.104	-2.469
SRC score	-0.101***	0.012	-8.722
Political ideology (1=Liberal, 0=Conservative)	0.575***	0.145	3.964
Scenario type	0.881***	0.065	13.513
Scenario type x Conservatism	-2.111**	0.074	2.872
Psuedo R^2		.581	

Random Effects	Variance	SD	% of total variance
Subject	0.528	0.727	22.0%
Scenario setting	0.092	0.303	3.8%
Residual	1.777	1.333	74.2%

*p < .050. **p < .010, ***p<.001

Notes. SRC=Support for Racial Colorblindness. Scenario type was ordered from least to most similar to overt discrimination (e.g. unintentional disparate effect is 1, intentional disparate treatment is 4). Conservatism and scenario type were then centered on their scale midpoint values, 4 and 2.5, respectively. Psuedo R^2 was calculated by regressing fitted values with expected values and obtaining the R^2 for that model.

(males and those with higher SRC scores viewed scenarios as less racist), while age and education were not.

Importance of intent and differential treatment. In the section of the survey about general views of racism, participants were asked about the importance of intent and the type of discrimination. When asked if a policy or procedure can be racist, even if no one involved holds conscious racist thoughts (which mirrors the "unintentional" scenarios), 71% of conservatives and 93% of liberals said yes ($z = -5.471$, $p < .001$). When asked if a policy can be racist that treats everyone the same but ends up affecting people differently based on race (mirroring the "effect" outcome scenarios), 82% of liberals said yes, while only 35% of conservatives did ($z = -8.552$, $p < .001$). This suggests that the majority of both groups do not require conscious intent to infer racism, but that when it comes to differential treatment, the majority of conservatives think it is necessary while the majority of liberals do not.

To compare these effects with how the scenarios were judged, a new linear mixed regression was run to assess the separate predictive validity of outcome (disparate treatment or disparate impact) and intent (aware or unaware or racial effect before action). In place of the previous variable of situation type with 4 levels, two dichotomous variables of intent and outcome were added, plus their interaction[6]. The model showed significant main effects for both intention ($p < .001$) and disparate treatment (relative to disparate impact; $p < .001$), with no significant interaction between the two ($p = .616$), meaning that participants judged intentional actions to be more racist than unintentional ones, and differential treatment to be more racist than disparate effect. There was a significant interaction of outcome with political ideology ($p<.010$) in that the difference between liberals and conservatives was smaller for the differential

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[6] The model was first run with a 3-way interaction between intention, outcome, and ideology. This interaction was not significant, so the model was re-run without this 3-way term so that the 2-way interactions could be properly assessed.

treatment scenarios than it was for the disparate effect. On average, conservatives rated the disparate effect scenarios as 1.59 (out of 6, in how racist the action was) and the differential treatment scenarios as 3.14. Liberals, on the other hand, rated the disparate effect scenarios as 3.14, and the differential treatment scenarios as 4.47, a smaller increase showing that they don't consider disparate effect and differential treatment to be as different as conservatives do. There was no interaction between political ideology and intention ($p = .314$), such that the importance of intent on a racism judgment did not vary significantly based on political ideology.

Definitions of racism. The percentage of liberals and conservatives who selected each definition of racism, both when they could only select one best definition and when they could select any valid definition, is presented in Table 4. For the best definition of racism, liberals and conservatives had starkly different responses ($\chi^2[7] = 67.7, p < .001$). The plurality of liberals (44.6%) chose "Systematically or structurally privileging one race over another or others," while the next highest response, "Treating someone different than another person because of their race" had less than half as many responses (20.5%). For conservatives, the top response was "Believing that one race is superior to another or others" (31.4%), followed by treating someone differently (22.1%). Only 8.1% of conservatives selected the systematic privilege definition that was liberals' top response, and only 9.9% of liberals selected the superiority belief that was conservatives' top response. This discrepancy was shown in another of the general views items as well. When asked if it was possible for racism to exist if there were no racially prejudiced people, only 47.1% of conservatives but 79.7% of liberals said yes (liberals significantly higher, $z = -5.996, p < .001$). The idea of systemic racism does not require the presence of individually prejudiced people, while definitions based on personal beliefs and overt discrimination do, so this matches with each group's preferred definition.

When participants were given the option to select any definition they believed was valid, the responses were more similar than in choosing the best definition, though there were still some important differences. All eight given definitions were endorsed by the majority of liberal respondents as a valid definition of racism. Six of the eight definitions were also endorsed by the majority of conservative respondents, while two ("Taking actions that disproportionally affect one race over another or others" and "Having unconscious negative thoughts, feelings, or biases about other racial groups") were not, both of which tie into the important manipulations from the scenarios judged in the study. Statistically, there were no significant differences between liberals and conservatives in the odds of selecting "Hating a person or people because of their race," "Committing a hurtful or damaging act against another person because of their race," and "Treating someone different than another person because of their race" (all ps > .200 using Fisher's exact test), while for the other five definitions, liberals were more likely than conservatives to say a definition was a valid definition of racism (all ps < .010).

Discussion

As in Study 1, liberals were more likely to judge behaviors to be racist than were conservatives. This was shown in both dichotomous judgments and continuous judgments (see Figures 2-3) of the scenarios, which contradicts the possible explanation from Study 1 that liberals and conservatives judge racism similarly but have a different threshold for "how racist" an action needs to be in order to be declared racist. If the political differences from Study 1 were only due to liberals making a dichotomous judgment of racism more readily than conservatives, I would have found discrepancies in the dichotomous judgments in Study 2 but no significant differences in continuous judgments. Future studies could vary the harm caused by the action

(e.g, what was the level of inequality caused by the disparate hiring decision) to assess how important that is to liberals and conservatives in rating actions as racist.

Across all scenarios, liberals rated actions as more racist than conservatives, though the level of disagreement was not uniform across scenarios. Unlike Study 1, there were no scenarios that were meant to be definitely not racist; so the level of agreement was meant to be lowest at the top (and not also at the bottom). There was also no item that reached the >99% judgment of racism: although the intentional differential treatment based on race was the most direct example of discrimination, it was written to still be realistic (unlike the truly over racism top items from Study 1 like "disallowing certain races from entering a store).

As predicted, the more overtly racist the scenarios were judged to be by both groups, the smaller the discrepancy between liberals and conservatives became. Similarly, liberals and conservatives were farther apart when judging the disparate effect scenarios than in the differential treatment conditions. Both of these results support that hypothesis that liberals and conservatives would agree more when an action matches prototypical, overt discrimination, and disagree more when the discriminatory outcome is more subtle, for example when a policy is applied equally to all people but affects people differently based on race.

For both groups, the unintentional disparate treatment was rated as more racist than the intentional disparate effect, suggesting that differential treatment is more important to a judgment of racism than the presence of conscious intent. One reason for this may be that my "intentional" disparate effect scenario utilized the idea of oblique intent (knowing about a consequence and choosing to act anyways), rather than deliberately trying to affect groups differently. This was done to distinguish it more from the prototypical overt discrimination, intentionally treating races differently, so future studies should investigate the differences

between awareness and strict intent (i.e., being motivated to cause racial differences) in judgments of racism.

It is possible that people may think they have set rules for what they would consider racist, but react differently when confronted with it. For example, out of the participants who said unconscious bias was not a valid definition, 58% still rated the scenario as racist, perhaps recognizing the effect when confronted with it, despite not declaring it in definition. Similarly, while 82% of liberals said an act did not need to treat people differently to be racist, only 47% of those liberals who said yes to that rated the unintentional disparate impact scenario as racist, and 68% of them rated the intentional disparate impact scenario as racist. This could be due to particulars of the scenario created for the study, but also suggests the possibility of other criteria at play in these judgments other than outcome and intentionality. Future studies can investigate further this idea that people may believe in certain definitions in an abstract, but may not apply them strictly when faced with real-world scenarios.

The definitions of racism varied between liberals and conservatives, particularly when respondents were forced to select one best definition of racism. The findings met the hypothesis that conservatives would lean more towards individual-level definitions of racism (e.g. treating people differently, believing one race is superior), while liberals would lean more towards structural/systemic definitions. This was supported to a greater extent than anticipated, in that the top response from liberals was the system definition, not just somewhat higher than conservatives. Other studies have shown that White people tend more towards individual definitions (e.g. Sceurich, 1993; O'Brien et al., 2009), but they generally do not take into account or control for political ideology. My results showed strong political differences between liberal and conservative participants in this likely mostly White sample, reinforcing the need for studies

to consider political ideology in research on perceptions of racism and related concepts. In addition to the sample potentially being more liberal than other studies, the population of individuals taking surveys at YourMorals.org tends to be more academic and intellectual; anyone at the site is interested in learning more about their own morality, and the population includes more academics than the general population from which other studies may be drawn. However, education level was not a significant predictor of the judgment of racism in either study, which somewhat allays this concern. Additionally, there were no significant differences in education level between liberals and conservatives in my sample in either study (ps > .300), so any difference due to education level of the sample would not affect group comparisons.

For liberals, in both explicit questions and in scenario judgments, whether the scenario was about a differential treatment or a disparate effect did not make as great of a difference as it did for conservatives. This is an expected implication of a more individualized definition of racism held by conservative participants. Conservatives were more similar to liberals in judging racism when there was a differential treatment because that type of discrimination meets both groups' definitions. In the disparate effect scenarios, on the other hand, liberal conservative differences were greater, because these outcomes fit better with the more systemic definition favored by liberals. Intention was expected to show a similar pattern (i.e., have a stronger relation to racism judgment for conservatives than liberals) because those with a more individualized view of racism may require personal intent, but this did not come out in my results. This may again be due to the fact that the unintentional effect scenario was more strictly awareness of consequences than motivation towards racial differences, but it is also possible that intent would matter more for the judgment of whether a *person* is racist than it is to judging whether an *action* is racist, which future analyses and studies will explore.

Conclusion

In all, this work has shown the importance of political ideology in making judgments of racism, above and beyond differences in demographics and racial attitudes. Most hypotheses were supported. In both Study 1 and Study, 2, conservatism was associated with perceiving fewer things to be racist, and/or judging the same events to be less racist. This was shown both when dividing people into liberal/conservative and when treating ideology as a continuous measure. When it comes to obviously non-racial matters, such as preferring a phone in different colors, or for matters that match overt, prototypical discrimination, there is less disagreement, but for the more common, subtle actions and situations, liberals reliably perceive racism to a higher degree than conservatives.

I also found that liberals and conservatives do define racism differently, which helps explain the frequent disagreements, both in the research and in the real world. It would follow that if conservatives perceive less actions to be racist, than they would believe racism happens less often, and I found that in my study. It was not a primary dependent variable, but one of the questions about racism in Study 2 asked about how often participants believe discrimination happens against White people and non-White people (modelled after the wording in Norton & Sommers, 2011). As shown in Figure 3, conservatives believe that discrimination happens much less often than liberals, at least against non-White participants, and they saw it happening more often against White people. An individualized definition allows actions against any race to be judged as racist; for example, conservatives may see affirmative action as racist because it treats people differently based on race (though this is not the only factor; see Sidanius et al., 1996;
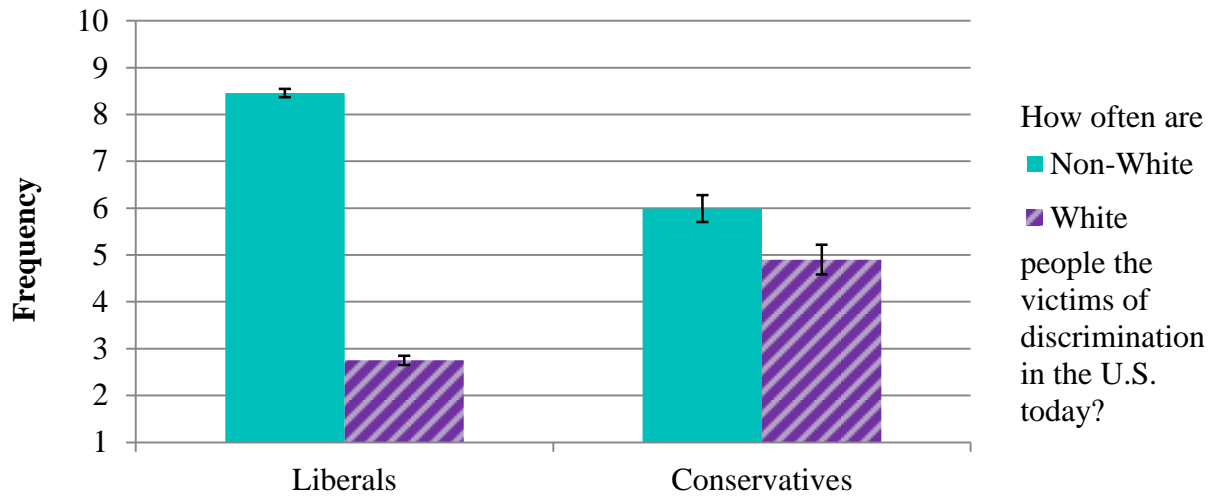
Figure 3. Liberal and conservative responses regarding the frequency of discrimination (from "not at all" to "all the time") against non-White and White people

Berdein, 2007), which could explain the higher perception of discrimination against White people. Liberals, on the other hand, were more likely to judge disparate effects (undeniably present in the U.S.) to be racist, which corresponds to seeing discrimination happening more often against non-White people. These disagreements are likely to continue without recognizing and discussing how the other side views racism. When critical terms like "racism" remain undefined, each group is free to interpret it in the way that fits their viewpoint and argument. This allows for the aforementioned situation where what liberals call racism, conservatives call playing the race card. If conservatives truly do not see an action as racist, it follows that they would call out liberals for calling something racist that they do not believe is so. At the same time, liberals will see many more things as racist, and call out conservatives for failing to see the extent that racism is still a problem today.

In a related sense, we can look at research on diversity to see similar disputes. While conceptually distinct topics, racism and diversity are integrally (and inversely) related. Like racism, diversity is a nebulous concept with no clear definition. Despite the commonness of the term, diversity does not mean the same thing to everyone. For example, experimentally manipulated motivations towards various definitions (Unzueta et al., 2012), or the race of the person who is judging the level of diversity (Bauman, Trawalta, & Unzueta, 2014), can change people's construal of acceptable diversity. Construals of diversity (i.e., whether diversity is seen as acceptable or not) can also be affected by the race of the one promoting diversity and related values. When women and minorities advocate for diversity in the workplace, they are penalized for it and judged more negatively, while calls for diversity coming from White men are viewed as more positive because of a reduced appearance of self-interest (Hekman, Yang, & Foo, 2014). Additionally, a person's race can affect what factors they look for in diversity, in that minorities

are more likely than White people to place importance on social acceptance of racial minorities, as opposed to just representation alone (Chen & Hamilton, 2015). Without a clear definition of the concept, people are free to interpret diversity in ways consistent with their own ideology and motivations, much like with racism.

In the workplace, perceptions of racism may come down to whether an action meets the criteria for employment discrimination on the basis of race. A policy can be deemed discriminatory even if it treats everyone the same, as long as it affects one group disproportionally and is not related to work function; for example, a dress code with restrictions on typical African-American hairstyles such as braids (Race/Color Discrimination, n.d.). The more difficult aspect to prove in workplace discrimination, however, is that an action was intentionally discriminating on the basis of race. In a wrongful termination case, a plaintiff would need to show not just that they were fired despite good performance, but that whatever justification the company did provide was actually just a pretext for racial discrimination (Haney and Hurtado, 1994). Clearly, the factors of intent and of differential treatment versus effect are important in these cases, and thus warrant further exploration. Politics are likely to play a role in how people interpret and view these cases in judging whether discrimination has occurred.

These studies are not the first to examine political differences in racism, though they offered a novel look into how liberals and conservatives both explicitly define racism and how they judge scenarios related to these definitions. Past work on contemporary forms of racism have looked at political differences in the sort of racial bias that people hold; liberals are more likely to have conscious, explicit egalitarian and non-prejudiced ideals while still holding unconscious negative feelings deemed aversive racism (Pearson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2009), and conservatives are more connected to symbolic racism, characterized by the belief that Black

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people no longer face discrimination and thus that persisting inequalities are due to personal failings (Sears & Henry, 2003). This literature shows how different the explicit views of racism between political parties may be, while still sharing an undercurrent of racial bias. My studies showed that liberals explicitly defined racism more broadly, and judged more scenarios to be racist as well, but did not measure their own behavior or implicit biases. Future work will look further into how often liberals and conservatives explicit definitions match on to their implicit views and interpersonal behavior.

It is clear from both the literature (e.g., Norton & Sommers, 2011, O'Brien et al., 2009) and every-day life that Americans do not perceive racism in the same way. Because of the many conceptualizations of racism, Americans may assume that others are working under the same definition, which is why they may be so incredulous when others do not perceive racism in the same event. Future studies should continue to assess the ways in which different groups define and view racism, as well as the ways people can be biased by outside factors to change their view of racism. Additionally, explorations of the process behind these different judgments would help us understand what leads to different definitions of racism, which may suggest ways to encourage agreement on what constitutes racism. Attitudes were a particularly important predictor of a lower judgment of racism; future work may look into the reasons for this strong relationship. Perhaps those with negative racial attitudes are more likely to have done something potentially racist in the past, and thus are motivated to see those actions as less racist. This work should also address the main limitation of these studies, in that the results should be replicated with a more representative sample to ensure generalizability to the general public. As discussed, any differences in the YourMorals.org sample from the general population are likely similarly different in both liberals and conservatives (e.g., both groups may be more educated than the

general population of liberals and conservatives). Because of this, the inter-group comparisons are likely to hold true, but the overall levels (e.g., how often each group believes discrimination happens in the U.S.) may be different in a more representative sample. In particular, the majority of participants on the site are non-Hispanic White, and future work focusing on the intersection of politics and race would be valuable.

In any future work, whether deliberately building on these studies or not, it is clear that political ideology is an important construct when it comes to perceptions of racism that should be explored and accounted for. Above and beyond demographics and attitudes, which play an important role and are often studied, political ideology offers perspective into how people view racism differently. Social psychology can inform why we see such partisan divides on these important, real world issues, and perhaps help suggest possible solutions. As long as we continue to disagree on what the problem (i.e., racism) really is, we will have a hard time working to combat it.

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Appendix A

Study 2 Scenarios

UE=Unintentional Disparate Effect, IE=Intentional Disparate Effect, UT=Unintentional Differential Treatment, IT=Intentional Differential Treatment

[Company UE] The hiring department at a large company has decided to use new standards to find the best applicants, including a minimum score on either the SAT or ACT. While the standards are applied the same to all applicants, it has a disproportionate effect on minorities: white applicants are significantly more likely meet these standards than non-white applicants. The policy had always been intended to be a fair and unbiased way to select only the best applicants for interview, and there was never any thought or intention to create racial differences. They were not aware of this effect when they implemented these standards.

[Company IE] The hiring department at a large company has decided to use new standards to find the best applicants, including a minimum score on either the SAT or ACT. While the standards are applied the same to all applicants, it has a disproportionate effect on minorities: white applicants are significantly more likely to pass the first set of guidelines than non-white applicants. The company was aware of the racial effects when they designed these standards but decided to use them anyway because they are still applied to the same to everyone.

[Company UT] The hiring department at a large company has decided to use new standards to find the best applicants, including a minimum score on either the SAT or ACT. The standards are applied the same to all applicants, and there are no significant differences in who passes the standard based on race. Those that meet the minimum standards are invited to interviews, and at that stage, white candidates are significantly more likely to be hired than non-white candidates. Although employees of the hiring department have no outward preference for one race, they were found to have an unconscious bias against non-white candidates that was affecting their decisions unintentionally.

[Company IT] The hiring department at a large company has decided to use new standards to find the best applicants, including a minimum score on either the SAT or ACT. The standard is applied the same to all applicants, and there are no significant differences in who passes the standard based on race. Those that meet the minimum standards are invited to interviews, and at that stage, white candidates are significantly more likely to be hired than non-white candidates. Although the people making the hiring decisions had not previously shown any history of racist comments or actions, they were found to have been intentionally and deliberately hiring more white candidates than non-white candidates with similar qualifications.

[Justice UE] The judges of the criminal justice system in a certain district decided to implement new sentencing criteria for drug-related crimes. The new sentencing decisions take into account the type of drug, the amount in possession, and other objective factors. The judges designed the new criteria to be a fair and unbiased way to sentence all offenders under the same rules. However, it was found to have a disproportionate effect on minorities; non-white offenders received significantly longer sentences than white offenders, even though everyone was sentenced under the same rules. There was never any intent to treat minorities more harshly

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when the guidelines were developed, and the judges were not aware of this effect when they developed the new criteria.

[Justice IE] The judges of the criminal justice system in a certain district decided to implement new sentencing criteria for drug-related crimes. The new sentencing decisions take into account the type of drug, the amount in possession, and other objective factors. It was found to have a disproportionate effect on minorities: non-white offenders received significantly longer sentences than white offenders, even though everyone was sentenced under the same rules. The judges knew these criteria would have this effect when the rules were designed but decided to use them anyway because they are still applied to the same to everyone.

[Justice UT] The judges of the criminal justice system in a certain district decided to implement new sentencing criteria for drug-related crimes. The new sentencing decisions take into account the type of drug and the amount in possession, as well as more subjective factors such as character. Although all the judges in the system intend to treat people fairly, it was found that non-white offenders received significantly longer sentences than white offenders. The judges had no outward preference for one race; however, they were found to have an unconscious bias against non-white offenders that was affecting their decisions unintentionally.

[Justice IT] The judges of the criminal justice system in a certain district decided to implement new sentencing criteria for drug-related crimes. The new sentencing decisions take into account the type of drug and the amount in possession, as well as more subjective factors such as character. Because of a deliberate preference from the judges against non-white offenders, it was found that non-white offenders received significantly longer sentences than white offenders. Although the judges had never shown any history of racist comments or actions, they were found to have been intentionally and deliberately giving lighter sentences to white offenders than non-white offenders for similar crimes.

[Police UE] The police department in a medium-sized city recently adopted new patrolling practices aimed at reducing crime. They have developed a new automated system that decides which areas to patrol based on a variety of pre-determined factors. While the system works the same way throughout the city, it has a disproportionate effect on minority communities: white neighborhoods are significantly less likely to be patrolled than non-white neighborhoods. The police had always been intended the system to be a fair and unbiased way to select ways to patrol without human influence, and there was never any thought or intention to create racial differences. They were not aware of this effect when they implemented the new system.

[Police IE] The police department in a medium-sized city recently adopted new patrolling practices aimed at reducing crime. They have developed a new automated system that decides which areas to patrol based on a variety of pre-determined factors. While the system works the same way throughout the city, it has a disproportionate effect on minority communities: white neighborhoods are significantly less likely to be patrolled than non-white neighborhoods. The department was aware that the new system would have this effect but decided to use it anyway because it is still applied to the same to everyone.

[Police UT] The police department in a medium-sized city recently adopted new patrolling practices aimed at reducing crime. They have developed a new system to decide which areas to patrol based on the rating of crime-potential made by police officers. The officers in charge of

determining the most important areas to patrol attempted to evaluate every neighborhood in a fair and unbiased manner. However, it was found that white neighborhoods were consistently rated as needing less patrol than non-white neighborhoods, even when previous crime rates were similar. The officers had no outward preference for one race, but they were found to have an unconscious bias that was affecting their ratings unintentionally.

[Police IT] The police department in a medium-sized city recently adopted new patrolling practices aimed at reducing crime. They have developed a new system to decide which areas to patrol based on the rating of crime-potential made by police officers. The officers in charge of determining the most important areas to patrol were supposed to evaluate every neighborhood fairly, but it was found that white neighborhoods were consistently rated as needing less patrol than non-white neighborhoods, even when previous crime rates were similar. The officers in charge had not previously shown any history of racist comments or actions. However, they were found to be intentionally and deliberately rating non-white neighborhoods as less safe.

[Law UE] A group of politicians proposed a law that would add modest new restrictions on getting a driver's license. The new law put in place a rating system for driver's education courses to decide if they meet basic requirements. Although the requirements are the same for everyone, it was found that classes attended mostly by white students were more likely to meet the requirements than those attended mostly by non-white students. The rating system had always been intended to be a fair and unbiased way to increase driver safety, and there was never any thought or intention to create racial differences in the decisions. The politicians were not aware of this issue when they proposed the law.

[Law IE] A group of politicians proposed a law that would add modest new restrictions on getting a driver's license. The new law put in place a rating system for driver's education courses to decide if they meet basic requirements. Although the requirements are the same for everyone, it was found that classes attended mostly by white students were more likely to meet the requirements than those attended mostly by non-white students. The politicians were aware that the restrictions would have this effect on rating decisions when they designed the system but decided to use it anyway because the requirements are still applied to the same to everyone.

[Law UT] A group of politicians proposed a law that would add modest new restrictions on getting a driver's license. The new law put in place a rating system for driver's education courses to decide if they meet basic requirements. The politicians attempted to evaluate every driving school fairly, but it was found that classes attended mostly by non-white students were evaluated lower than those attended by white students. The politicians have no outward preference for one race. However, they were found to have an unconscious bias against non-white candidates that was affecting their rating decisions unintentionally.

[Law IT] A group of politicians proposed a law that would add modest new restrictions on getting a driver's license. The new law put in place a rating system for driver's education courses to decide if they meet basic requirements. It was found that classes attended mostly by non-white students were evaluated lower than those attended by white students. The politicians had not previously shown any history of racist comments or actions. However, they were found to have been deliberately and intentionally rating non-white driving classes worse than white driving classes of similar quality.

Appendix B

Study 2 Questionnaires

Overview of this survey

In this survey, you will start by reading one paragraph about four different scenarios and then answering a few questions about each one, such as whether you believe the situation is racist. Each scenario is on its own page and should be evaluated independently of the others.

After you have rated each of the four scenarios, you will be given some general questions about how you see racism. Finally, on the last page you will be asked how much you agree or disagree with a series of statements about the U.S.

We anticipate that this survey will take under 10 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers to any question - we just want to know what you honestly believe. At the end of the survey, you will be able to see how some of your responses compare to others who have previously taken the survey.

Instructions: Please read the following passages and answer the questions that follow as honestly as you can. Assume everything stated in the paragraph is the truth.

Participants were randomly assigned to four scenarios, without repeating a setting or discrimination type. Their four randomly selected scenarios were then presented on separate pages in a random order. All 16 scenarios are written in Appendix A.

[Scenario 1, e.g. driver's license rating]

Do you believe that the rating decisions are racist?
- Yes   No

Would you say that the politicians behind the rating system are racist?
- Yes   No

How racist do you think the rating decisions are?
- Not at all racist   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   Completely racist

How acceptable do you think the rating decisions are?
- Not at all acceptable   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   Completely acceptable

Should the government be allowed to continue using this rating system?
- Yes   No

[Scenario 2, e.g. company hiring]

Do you believe that these hiring decisions are racist?
- Yes No

Would you say that the hiring department is racist?
- Yes No

How racist do you think these hiring decisions are?
- Not at all racist 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely racist

How acceptable do you think these hiring decisions are?
- Not at all acceptable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely acceptable

Should the company be allowed to continue with these hiring practices?
- Yes No

[Scenario 3, e.g. judge sentencing]

Do you believe that these sentencing decisions are racist?
- Yes No

Would you say that the judges in this district are racist?
- Yes No

How racist do you think these sentencing decisions are?
- Not at all racist 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely racist

How acceptable do you think these sentencing decisions are?
- Not at all acceptable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely acceptable

Should the justice system be allowed to continue with these sentencing practices?
- Yes No

[Scenario 4, e.g. police patrolling]

Do you believe that the new patrolling decisions are racist?
- Yes No

Would you say that the police department is racist?
- Yes No

How racist do you think the new patrolling decisions are?
- Not at all racist 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely racist

How acceptable do you think the new patrolling decisions are?
- Not at all acceptable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Completely acceptable

Should the police department be allowed to continue with these patrolling practices?
- Yes   No

Now we have some general questions about how you view racism. There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know what you think. If you want to explain any of your answers, you have space to at the end.

Is it possible for racism to exist even if there are no racially prejudiced people?
- Yes
- No

Can a policy or procedure be racist, even if no one involved holds conscious racist thoughts?
- Yes
- No

If a policy treats everyone the same but ends up affecting people differently based on race (where the consequences are worse for one group), can that be racist?
- Yes
- No

Which of the following do you think is the best definition of racism?
- Hating a person or people because of their race
- Committing a hurtful or damaging act against another person because of their race
- Treating someone different than another person because of their race
- Systematically or structurally privileging one race over another or others
- Taking actions that disproportionally affect one race over another or others
- Assuming negative qualities about someone because of their race
- Having unconscious negative thoughts, feelings, or biases about other racial groups
- Believing that one race is superior to another race or races.

Do you think there are multiple valid definitions of racism?
- Yes
- No

If yes, which do you think are valid definitions of racism?
- Hating a person or people because of their race
- Committing a hurtful or damaging act against another person because of their race
- Treating someone different than another person because of their race
- Systematically or structurally privileging one race over another or others
- Taking actions that disproportionally affect one race over another or others
- Assuming negative qualities about someone because of their race
- Having unconscious negative thoughts, feelings, or biases about other racial groups
- Believing that one race is superior to another race or races.
- Other:

How do you think the typical Liberal would define racism?
- Hating a person or people because of their race
- Committing a hurtful or damaging act against another person because of their race
- Treating someone different than another person because of their race
- Systematically or structurally privileging one race over another or others
- Taking actions that disproportionally affect one race over another or others
- Assuming negative qualities about someone because of their race
- Having unconscious negative thoughts, feelings, or biases about other racial groups
- Believing that one race is superior to another race or races.
- Other:

How do you think the typical Conservative would define racism?
- Hating a person or people because of their race
- Committing a hurtful or damaging act against another person because of their race
- Treating someone different than another person because of their race
- Systematically or structurally privileging one race over another or others
- Taking actions that disproportionally affect one race over another or others
- Assuming negative qualities about someone because of their race
- Having unconscious negative thoughts, feelings, or biases about other racial groups
- Believing that one race is superior to another race or races.
- Other:

How often do you think non-White people are the victims of racism in the U.S. today?
- (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (All the time)

How often do you think White people are the victims of racism in the U.S. today?
- (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (All the time)

If you wish, you may now provide your thoughts or explanations below:

Please read the following statements and rate how much you agree or disagree with them.
Scale: Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly agree

Note: The following items, randomly ordered for each participant, include both the four items from Mazzocco, Cooper, & Flint, 2012 used as the Support for Racial Colorblindness (SRC) scale in Study 2, and the Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). Due to the latter's high correlation with conservatism in this sample, and other discussed limitations, only the SRC scale (first four items) was used in analyses.

- Nothing good will come out of continuing to focus on race.
- The topic of race is something that should generally be avoided.
- Society would be better off if we all stopped talking about race.
- America would be better off if we stopped placing so much importance on race.

- It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.
- Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.
- Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.
- It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.
- Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.
- Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
- Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S.
- Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.
- Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.
- Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.
- Racism is a major problem in the U.S.
- White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
- White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.
- Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S.
- Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.
- It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.
- English should be the only official language in the U.S.
- Racism may have been a problem in the past, it is not an important problem today.
- Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.
- White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.