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Predicting Perceived Immigrant Threat to National Identity Based on Christian Nationalism, White Racial Centrality, and Social Dominance Orientation

Anna Caroline Kinney
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Anna Caroline Kinney

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Review Committee

Dr. Hedy Dexter, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty

Dr. John Agnew, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2026

Abstract

Predicting Perceived Immigrant Threat to National Identity Based on Christian
Nationalism, White Racial Centrality, and Social Dominance Orientation

by

Anna Caroline Kinney

MSFP, Walden University, 2018

BS, Francis Marion University, 2015

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

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Abstract

Immigrants remain frequent targets of anti-immigrant hate speech, often amplified by right-wing media. Demographic factors such as Christian nationalism (i.e., the desire to preserve Christian symbols, beliefs, and policies preserved as the established religion of the United States), White racial centrality (i.e., an automatic association between the self and the White ingroup), and social dominance orientation (i.e., support for group-based hierarchies and inequality) significantly shape perceptions of immigrants as a threat to national identity. Although prior research has examined these factors independently, their relative importance in predicting perceived immigrant threat remains limited. Informed by intergroup threat theory, this quantitative study determined the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity. Online surveys were administered via SurveyMonkey to White, English-speaking American citizens aged 18 and older residing in the United States. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed significant positive relationships between each predictor (i.e., Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation) and perceived immigrant threat to national identity. These results suggested that higher levels of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation predicted higher levels of perceived immigrant threat to national identity. The findings have implications for positive social change by providing insight into the influences of perceived immigrant threat to national identity, which can inform campaigns to neutralize racist fearmongering and policy decisions that support a more inclusive vision of American national identity.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Jess, whose intelligence, insight, eloquence, quick wit, and selflessness far surpass my own. Thank you for making my dream your dream, and for wanting for me what I could not always want for myself. Everything I do, I do with you in mind, encouraged by your belief in me. Your compassion, conviction, emotional fortitude, and unwavering commitment to doing what is right have shaped me in ways both profound and enduring. You have been my refuge: the stillness within the chaos, the steadiness when I am depleted, the place I return to be restored. You are my sanctuary. Now, it is time for your dream to become our dream. It is your turn. I love you infinitely.

This dissertation is also dedicated to immigrants who built America through physical infrastructure, economic growth, scientific innovation, democratic ideals, and cultural identity. It honors enslaved Africans whose stolen labor in tobacco and cotton fields enriched a nation that denied them freedom; Chinese laborers who laid rail across mountains and deserts; Jewish immigrants who built the garment and textile industries; Mexican immigrants whose labor sustained agriculture; and Irish, German, and countless others who carved canals and built the nation's infrastructure. It honors generations who worked, created, and dreamed by opening small businesses, advancing science and medicine, serving in every major U.S. war, and stitching their art, food, music, languages, and traditions into the fabric of American life. This work also honors immigrants who continue to believe in the American dream when that promise feels fragile. To those who pursue opportunity, freedom, and belonging despite exclusion and uncertainty, your

resilience sustains the ideals this nation claims to stand for. Through unyielding hope, often amid exploitation and denied belonging, immigrants did not simply help build America or continue to sustain it today, they are America, and they have always belonged.

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To my parents, Richard and Emma Kinney, thank you for fostering my curiosity, love of learning, and respect for education. You raised me to be kind to others, animals, and myself. You taught me to value cultural diversity and its contributions to the country we share. Most importantly, you taught me to confront wrongdoing, whether enacted by individuals or systems that reinforce inequality, grounded in the belief that everyone deserves dignity. I hope this work meaningfully reflects that foundational belief.

To my sisters, Dr. Erin Burt, the Intellectual, and Megan Tillery, the Visionary, thank you for your grace during the dissertation process, even when it limited my availability. I am grateful to have such hilarious, honest, brilliant, and warm soulmates. I've loved you all my life.

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mutually exclusive. Your time and expertise are invaluable, and I am deeply appreciative of both. Throughout this entire process, you have been my North Star, and working under your mentorship has been both a privilege and a defining part of my development as a scholar, and, unexpectedly, as a person.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Immigration has become one of the most polarizing political issues, fueled in part by rhetoric portraying immigrants as a threat to American (i.e., White Christian) national identity. For example, during a political rally in December 2023, President Donald Trump referenced language attributed to Adolf Hitler, claiming that “immigrants are poisoning the blood of our country” (Rosen et al., 2023). Research shows that White Christian patriots are especially anti-immigrant, fearing loss of racial majority status (Reyna et al., 2022). This perceived threat to national identity intensified with the 2017 executive orders restricting entry from Muslim-majority countries and the “zero-tolerance” family-separation policy at the southern border (Garand & Magaña, 2020). Media narratives of an immigrant “invasion” reinforce far-right beliefs that newcomers are freeloaders, erode political representation, and hoard jobs and resources, justifying exclusion and deportation (Fernandes et al., 2022). Christian nationalism further predicts anti-immigrant stereotypes, support for mass deportations, and overt dehumanization (Al-Kire et al., 2022; Arnsdorf et al., 2024). Framing themselves as “true” Americans, many White Christians view immigration in racial nostalgia terms (i.e., longing for the “good old days” when social hierarchies were unchallenged), inextricably intertwined with White nationalism (Reyna et al., 2022).

While prior studies have examined Christian nationalism as it relates to American national identity (Al-Kire et al., 2022) and have separately explored the links between racial centrality, social dominance orientation, and perceived immigrant threat (Al-Kire et al., 2022; Reyna et al., 2022), no research has yet assessed the relative importance of

Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity. The findings of this study offer new insights into the influence of Whiteness and Christianity on perceptions of immigrants as a threat to national identity. These insights can inform policymakers and community leaders with messaging strategies, campaigns designed to counter racist fear-based narratives and promote engagement across cultural and religious differences.

In this chapter, I provide the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, and theoretical framework of the study. This will be followed by the nature of the study, relevant definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background

Previous research explored how race, religion, and national identity interact to influence perceptions of immigrants as threats. Reyna et al. (2022) found that racial nostalgia (i.e., longing for a time when White dominance was unchallenged) was positively associated with feelings of threat and loss. This emotional reaction reinforced extreme racial ideologies and legitimized White nationalism as a form of patriotism, illustrating how White privilege supports opposition to immigration. Similarly, Al-Kire et al. (2022) demonstrated that Christian nationalism is strongly linked to anti-immigrant stereotypes, support for exclusionary policies, and the dehumanization of immigrants, emphasizing the powerful role of religious identity in fostering xenophobic attitudes. Fernandes et al. (2022) conducted a study where individuals aligned with far-right politics justified opposition to immigrants by portraying them as threats to cultural

dominance and resources, positioning immigration as an “invasion” that justifies social exclusion. Garand and Magaña (2022) showed that a strong American national identity increased perceptions of immigrant threat and influenced voter behavior during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Thompson (2022) found that ethnonationalism (i.e., the idea that a country should be made up of people from one ethnic group and that this group has a special claim to the nation’s identity, leadership, and territory) among White Americans correlated with support for restrictive immigration policies, reinforcing the idea that racially defined conceptions of nation membership promote exclusion.

Religious ideology continues to play a central role in influencing attitudes toward immigrants. Stroope et al. (2021) found that Christian nationalism predicted negative views of undocumented Mexican immigrants regardless of an individual’s overall religiosity, communicating a consistent intolerance across levels of religious engagement. Perry and Schleifer (2023) similarly found that White Christian nationalists tended to endorse blind patriotism, believing Americans should support their country without question. Curran et al. (2023) contributed to this research, finding that higher awareness of White privilege was associated with lower prejudice and stronger antiracist attitudes. Conversely, parental intergroup anxiety was linked to increased racist attitudes in their children, suggesting that racial ideologies are transmitted through family socialization. Zhirkov (2021) added that individuals high in social dominance orientation tended to show more negative affect toward immigrant groups perceived as lower in social status, reinforcing hierarchical distinctions and group-based bias.

Previous studies have found that Christian nationalism (Al-Kire et al., 2022), racial centrality, and social dominance orientation have independently been associated with perceived threat to national identity (Al-Kire et al., 2022; Reyna et al., 2022); however, no study has yet examined the relative importance of these factors in predicting perceived threat to national identity. Findings of this current study can be used to inform public service announcements, political campaigns, blogs, and other widely accessed sources of information both on and offline to mitigate hatred, fear, and aggression toward the increasing influx of immigrant populations to the United States.

Problem Statement

The perceived threat that immigrants pose to America's national identity has become part of conspiracy mills (Garand & Magaña, 2022). Due to the continual resurfacing media coverage that emphasizes immigrant "invasion," Americans who subscribe to far-right politics view immigrants as freeloaders in their country, are apprehensive of losing majority representation in their country, and feel they must compete with immigrants for jobs, health, and security resources, all of which has been used to justify their social exclusion and their deportation (Fernandes et al., 2022). While studies on immigrants' threat to national identity are limited, American citizens who embrace a strong American identity believe immigrants bring disease and anti-American values that threaten Americans' safety and traditional way of life (Garand & Magaña, 2022).

Prior studies show that Christian nationalism significantly predicted anti-immigrant stereotypes and support for immigrant deportation (Al-Kire et al., 2022),

further finding that racial centrality fuels fears of cultural displacement (Reyna et al., 2022). Social dominance orientation has been found to encourage exclusionary views of immigrants (Al-Kire et al., 2022). However, no study has determined the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity. This current study addresses this gap.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional, nonexperimental, correlational study was to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism (IV), White racial centrality (IV), and social dominance orientation (IV) in predicting immigrant threat to national identity (DV). The results of this study provide insight into the influence of race, national identity, and religion on the beliefs about threats to national identity posed by immigrants, insights that can inform messaging campaigns to neutralize racist fearmongering.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses were addressed in this study.

Research Question 1: To what extent is Christian nationalism, as measured by the Christian Nationalism Scale, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

H_0 1: Christian nationalism does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

H_1 1: Christian nationalism does significantly perceived threat to national identity.

Research Question 2: To what extent is White racial centrality, as measured by the Racial Centrality Measure, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

H_02 : White racial centrality does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

H_12 : White racial centrality does significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

Research Question 3: To what extent is social dominance orientation, as measured by the Social Dominance Orientation Scale, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

H_03 : Social dominance orientation does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

H_13 : Social dominance orientation does significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

Theoretical Framework

The current study was informed by intergroup threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009), which holds that prejudice and discrimination against a low-power group is motivated by threats to the higher-power group (e.g., White, Christian men), as high-power groups feel that their power or status is being threatened by outgroups trying to gain equality.

Intergroup threat theory proposes two different categories of threat: *Realistic threat* refers to concerns about physical harm (i.e., ingroup perceives the outgroup as a safety threat) and/or a loss of resources (i.e., the outgroup will drain government assistance through

welfare programs and limit financial aid for ingroup members; Fernandes et al., 2022; Stephan et al., 2009). *Symbolic threat* is concerned with challenges to the ingroup's values and worldview (e.g., the outgroup will threaten the unchallenged dominance and cultural values of the ingroup; Blascovick et al., 2018; Reyna et al., 2022; Stephan et al., 2009). Intergroup threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009) explains how ingroup members may marginalize and discriminate against outgroup members, believing they pose a threat to their cultural status and political influence. This framework is particularly relevant for understanding how White Americans feel threatened by the influx of immigrants who, with their different values, beliefs, and customs, pose a threat to White, Christian American national identity. In Chapter 2, intergroup threat theory will be discussed in greater detail.

Nature of the Study

In the current study, I utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional, nonexperimental, correlational, survey design, best suited to examine relationships among variables, in this case, the relative importance of Christian nationalism (IV), White racial centrality (IV), and social dominance orientation (IV) in predicting immigrant threat to national identity (DV). Data was collected from White English-speaking adults, aged 18 and older, American citizens residing in the United States. Participants were recruited by SurveyMonkey, who also administered the survey. Data analysis was conducted using hierarchical multiple regression to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting immigrant threat to national identity.

Definitions

Christian nationalism: The desire to see Christian symbols, beliefs, and policies preserved as the established religion of the United States (Baker et al., 2020).

Ingroup members: White, Christian men (Stephan et al., 2009).

Outgroup members: Immigrants (Stephan et al., 2009).

Racial nostalgia: Longing for a racist/sexist past when White males dominated American culture and had unchallenged status (Reyna et al., 2022).

Realistic threat: The perception that an outgroup poses harm to the ingroup's physical safety, political status, resources, or long-term viability, which can lead to prejudice and resistance (Stephan et al., 2009).

Social dominance orientation: A measure of support for inequality between social groups that plays a central role in intergroup attitudes and policy preferences (Ho et al., 2015).

Symbolic threat: The perception that an outgroup is threatening the ingroup's traditions, values, and norms, which triggers the ingroup's defensive or exclusionary responses (Stephan et al., 2009).

White racial centrality: White identification is conceptualized as an automatic association between the self and the White ingroup (Knowles & Peng, 2005).

Assumptions

I assumed that participants would provide truthful responses to survey questions and that anonymity would mitigate social desirability bias (i.e., the tendency of individuals to underreport socially undesirable or unpopular behaviors and attitudes) by

reducing the pressure to conform to social expectations or alter responses to gain approval. It was also assumed that the selected survey instruments were appropriate to measure the constructs of interest. Additionally, it was assumed that all surveys would be completed in compliance with instructions. I assumed that participants would have met all inclusion criteria, as there was no way to verify this. I also assumed that intergroup threat theory was best suited to inform the current study.

Scope and Delimitations

The aim of this research was to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting immigrant threat to national identity. Participants were limited to White English-speaking American citizens residing in the United States, aged 18 years and older, recruited using the online survey platform, SurveyMonkey. The current study was restricted to White Christian Americans, as the nation's historically dominant majority, and who the current scholarly literature suggests are most likely to perceive immigrant threat to their national identity. Individuals from other countries were excluded, as the perceived immigrant threat pertains uniquely to White Christian Americans. Intergroup threat theory was selected, as it offers a comprehensive explanation of how and why White Christian American nationalists feel threatened by immigrants taking up residence in the United States. Contact theory was an alternative choice but does not offer a comprehensive analysis of the problem of interest.

Limitations

Convenience sampling limited the representativeness of the sample and the generalization of the findings to the broader population. Participants may have been reluctant to disclose what they believe may be perceived as racist attitudes toward immigrants. Self-report surveys are also vulnerable to social desirability bias, as participants may respond in ways that reflect socially acceptable views rather than their true beliefs (Stuart & Grimes, 2009). To mitigate this potential limitation, participants were reminded that all data would be collected anonymously.

Significance

This study was significant in that immigration has been one of the most divisive political issues in recent years, given the inflammatory rhetoric related to the character, customs, and intentions of immigrants. Studies have found that White Christian patriots are more likely to express anti-immigrant attitudes and support anti-immigrant policies, as they fear their loss of majority status and social dominance (Reyna et al., 2022). The findings of this study may be used to provide insight into who and why some American citizens are motivated to disparage and remove what they perceive threatens a true American identity to which they feel entitled. These insights can be used to inform political campaigns and pro-immigrant policies.

Summary

Immigration remains among the most divisive political issues in the United States, fueled by rhetoric portraying newcomers as a threat to the nation's identity. Previous research shows that White Christian patriots harbor stronger anti-immigrant attitudes and

fear the loss of their racial majority status. Informed by intergroup threat theory, I utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional, nonexperimental, correlational survey design to collect data from participants recruited through an online survey platform, to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived threat to national identity. These insights may be used to inform messaging strategies useful for developing political campaigns with the potential to counter racist fear-based, xenophobic narratives.

Chapter 2 details the literature search strategy, the theoretical framework (i.e., intergroup threat theory), and an exhaustive review of the literature related to key variables (i.e., Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, social dominance orientation, and perceived threat to national identity), concluding with a summary.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In recent years, immigration has been one of the most divisive political topics, given the inflammatory rhetoric related to the threat to national American/Racial centrality posed by immigrants. Notably, at a December 2023 rally, President Donald Trump stated that “immigrants are poisoning the blood of our country” (Rosen et al., 2023). According to research that has been conducted, White Christian patriots are more likely to be anti-immigrant, as they fear becoming the minority in America (Reyna et al., 2022). Garand and Magaña (2020) found there is a growing perceived threat immigrants pose to America’s national identity, resulting in Presidential Executive Orders (13769, 1/27/17; 13780, 3/6/17) banning U.S. entry for immigrant populations (e.g., Muslims) designated as foreign terrorist threats and President Trump’s zero tolerance, separating children from parents by the U.S. Border Patrol at the U.S.-Mexico border, respectively. Due to the persistent media coverage that perpetuates the immigrant “invasion” narrative, Americans who subscribe to far-right politics (a) view immigrants as freeloaders in their country, (b) are apprehensive of losing majority representation, and (c) feel they must compete with immigrants for jobs and health and security resources, all of which has been used to justify their social exclusion and deportation (Fernandes et al., 2022).

Political affiliation coupled with religiousness have been found to influence attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies; in particular, studies have found that Christian nationalism is significantly and positively related to anti-immigrant stereotypes, anti-immigrant policies (e.g., Trump’s massive militaristic deportation plan; Arnsdorf et al., 2024), and dehumanization of immigrants (Al-Kire et al., 2022).

Believing they are entitled to unearned privilege as “true” Americans, White, Christian Americans perceive immigrants as a threat to their national identity, a threat that is expressed as racial nostalgia (i.e., longing for a racist/sexist past when White males dominated American culture and had unchallenged status) and its affiliation with White nationalism, which they claim are expressions of patriotism (Reyna et al., 2022). While studies have addressed Christian nationalism as it relates to national identity (Al-Kire et al., 2022), and both White racial centrality (Reyna et al., 2022) and social dominance orientation (Al-Kire et al., 2022) as they relate to immigrant threat (Al-Kire et al., 2022), no study has yet investigated the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity.

Relevance of the Problem

Immigrants continue to be targets of anti-immigrant, hate rhetoric, promulgated primarily by right-wing media outlets. Studies have found that Christian nationalism, often encouraged and revered in right-wing media, is a significant disseminator of anti-immigrant stereotypes, dehumanization, prejudice, and support for anti-immigrant policies (Al-Kire et al., 2022). Studies have documented an association between White nationalism and racial nostalgia, where White nationalists express a desire for the return to a 1950s America (Reyna et al., 2022). Associated with racist and sexist attitudes, nostalgic sentiments can intensify prejudice by perpetuating the belief that quality of life was better when U.S. society was organized hierarchically and dominant White males enjoyed an unchallenged privileged status (Goidel et al., 2024).

National nostalgia (i.e., movement to “make America great again” [MAGA]) has been documented among racially prejudiced Americans who support President Trump; they are also most likely to perceive outgroup (i.e., immigrant) threat (Behler et al., 2021). White Americans who were highly White-identified were found to be more concerned about their shrinking status and decreasing influence are also the strongest supporters of Trump and his anti-immigrant policies (Blascovick et al., 2018). Studies have found associations between the recent influx of racially diverse groups and anti-immigrant attitudes, especially among those whose Whiteness is central to their identity; those who strongly identified as White, resent the anticipated cultural changes, increasing their MAGA support and anti-immigrant attitudes (Earle & Hodson, 2022). Americans who strongly identify as both Christian and White are likely to agree that citizens should offer their unwavering support of their country, even when it is wrong (Perry & Schleifer, 2023). The effects of American/White racial centrality and immigrant threat perceptions share a reciprocal relationship, whereby immigrant threat perceptions are enhanced in individuals who foster a strong American identity, and those with an American/White racial centrality are more susceptible to perceiving immigrants as a threat (Garand et al., 2020). While studies have examined the influence of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and authoritarianism on anti-immigrant bias, to date, no studies have investigated the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism (IV), White racial centrality (IV), and social dominance orientation (IV) in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity (DV). The results of this study can provide insight into the influence of race, national identity, and religion on the perceived immigrant threat to national identity, insights that can inform messaging campaigns to neutralize racist fearmongering. This chapter will present the literature research strategy, theoretical foundation (i.e., intergroup threat theory), and literature review related to key variables (i.e., Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, social dominance orientation, predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity), concluding with a summary.

Literature Search Strategy

The peer-reviewed articles used in this study were accessed using the Walden University library. Databases employed include APA Psycnet, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and ProQuest. Keywords used for the literature search included combinations of the following terms: *racial nostalgia*, *immigrant threat*, *Christian nationalism*, *racial centrality*, *threats to national identity*, *hatred of immigrants*, *distain for immigrants*, *xenophobia*, *White patriotism*, *immigrant invasion*, *White America*, *preserving White America*, and *support for political violence*. Most of the studies used were from 2021 to 2023, except for the seminal theoretical source dated 2009.

Theoretical Foundation

Intergroup Threat Theory

Intergroup threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009) holds that prejudice and discrimination against a low-power group is motivated by threats to the higher-power group (e.g., White, Christian men), as high-power groups feel that their power or status is being threatened by outgroups trying to gain equality. With origins in social psychology, intergroup threat theory is based on two different categories of threat: The *realistic threat* refers to concerns about physical harm (i.e., ingroup perceives the outgroup as a safety threat) and/or a loss of resources (i.e., the outgroup will drain government assistance through welfare programs and limit financial aid for ingroup members; Fernandes et al., 2022; Stephan et al., 2009). The *symbolic threat* refers to concerns about the validity and integrity of the ingroup's values and worldview (e.g., the outgroup will threaten the unchallenged dominance and cultural values of the ingroup; Blascovick et al., 2018; Reyna et al., 2022; Stephan et al., 2009). At its most rudimentary, intergroup threat theory holds that threats perceived by ingroup members (e.g., White, Christian men) can lead to consequences for outgroup members (e.g., immigrants, people of color), where the dominant group circulates slurs and stereotypes to degrade and dehumanize them (Stephan et al., 2009). For example, White Americans who perceive threats to their racial centrality and majority representation insist that immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border are "marauding hordes" intending upheaval and harm to White Americans. Intergroup threat theory functions through two main pathways: antecedents of threat and consequences of threat.

Antecedents of Threat and Consequences of Threat

It is theorized that low-power groups are more likely to experience threats from higher-power groups, as they are at the mercy of those with free rein to quash challenges to their authority (Stephan et al., 2009). Groups most prone to perceiving intergroup threats believe they have a long history of conflict with one another (e.g., Whites and people of color). Prior or longstanding relations between two groups that have been characterized as conflicted can trigger high levels of perceived mutual threat. Groups are especially likely to perceive one another as threatening when they believe their cultural values (e.g., egalitarian vs. hierarchical) and characteristics (e.g., physical, psychological abilities/choices) differ from those of an outgroup.

Group status and size factor into a group's ability to deny another group's reach for equality by controlling limited valued resources (e.g., high-paying jobs, higher-status positions); reflecting a zero-sum mentality, White men feel that minorities unfairly gain power and authority from affirmative action policies, outgroup gains that are perceived as loss of power by the ingroup (Stephan et al., 2009). Group status and size are also associated with the ability of an ingroup to inflict harm on the outgroup as a whole. For example, in response to perceived dangers posed by Muslims, President Trump issued Executive Order 13769 banning Muslims from entry the United States (1/27/17), and more recently, Trump promised the biggest deportation of migrants in history should he be reelected in 2024 (Ainsley et al., 2024). A high-status group may prefer that a lower-status group forsake its cultural customs and values and assimilate into the higher-status group; this may threaten the dominant group as the lower-status group may not want to

relinquish their beliefs and assume the values of the higher-status group. Ingroup members who have had contact with outgroups (e.g., Americans who have traveled to different countries or have worked with immigrants) are less inclined to perceive outgroup threat, as outgroup contact increases familiarity and the opportunity to discover shared similarities. Conversely, ingroup members with little or no outgroup contact are more susceptible to threat perceptions. For example, White politically conservative Americans whose racial centrality is perceived as central to the privilege they enjoy, might perceive threat from immigrants seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border on grounds that immigrants will hijack resources reserved only for “real Americans.”

Cognitive responses among the dominant group to minority group threats include intensified slurs, hatred, and dehumanization of the outgroup (Stephen et al., 2009). This can be observed among some White male Americans who claim that the influx of minorities accompanied by their respective cultural customs and norms, threatens their racial centrality and the American “way of life.” Minority immigrants are stereotyped variously as “terrorists” (i.e., Middle East) or “rapists” and “murderers” (i.e., Latin America), stereotypes that degrade and dehumanize. Cognitive biases in intergroup perceptions may also be triggered or amplified by threats to the ingroup by members of an outgroup. For example, positive outgroup achievements (e.g., promotions awarded to lower-level employees) are attributed to situational factors (e.g., diversity quotas, social media justice), whereas negative outgroup actions (e.g., poor performance) are attributed to member characteristics (e.g., incompetence, laziness). Communication and memory biases are likely to be amplified by threat, such that people provide more abstract

descriptions of the outgroup than ingroup behaviors and are more likely to make misanthropic (pessimistic, distrustful, cynical) memory errors. Threats may also contribute to an increase in stereotype disconfirmation biases, whereby outgroup stereotypes are thought to be more difficult to disconfirm than ingroup stereotypes (e.g., doubling down on pejorative characterizations of immigrants, reinforcing rather than dispelling them).

Emotional responses by the dominant group to perceived threats by outgroups are likely to be dire and include fear, anxiety, anger, and resentment (Stephan et al., 2009). For example, when passed over for job promotions and/or college admissions, White males have expressed anger and resentment toward minorities and females, attributing their successes to quotas and demands for diversity. In response, the Supreme Court gutted affirmative action, effectively ending race-conscious college admissions (Totenberg, 2023). Perceived threats to the ingroup may undermine emotional empathy for outgroup members, while increasing for ingroup members (Stephan et al., 2009). The relationship between this threat and lack of empathy for the outgroup is corroborated by a set of studies showing that threats to a group's status led to ingroup group members feeling pleasure at the suffering of an outgroup (i.e., *schadenfreude*). Studies have shown that perceived threats to the ingroup's property and economic resources induce self-reported anger, as evidenced by the deployment of National Guard troops to quash Black Lives Matter protests (Chavez, 2021).

Behavioral responses to threat range from withdrawal, submission, and negotiation to aggression (direct or displaced), discrimination, lying, cheating, stealing,

harassment, retaliation, sabotage, protests, and other forms of open intergroup conflict; for example, men who perceive a threat to their masculine identity are likely to sexually harass the offending female (Stephan et al., 2009). Threats from outgroups may lead to more negative reactions to defectors or deviants within the ingroup, as well as a greater policing of intergroup boundaries. For example, endorsing the “Big Lie” (i.e., Trump won the 2020 election) became a litmus test for Republican legislators; those like Liz Cheney who refused, lost primary reelections to Trump loyalists in 2022 (Allen & Gomez, 2022).

Previous Applications of Intergroup Threat Theory in Similar Studies

In recent years, research has examined the influence of intergroup threat among racial groups but has not studied its role in adversarial political parties. To address that, Lin and Haridakis (2022) examined the relationship between political identity (i.e., Republican or Democrat) and outgroup partisan media (i.e., quantity and perceived quality) use on intergroup attitudes (i.e., intergroup bias and unwillingness to compromise their beliefs with the opposing party). Partisan media provides news and opinions that convey viewpoints favoring a certain political party, either a liberal or conservative perspective of the news. For example, *MSNBC* tends to provide a Democratic/politically liberal outlook that attracts Democratic and/or liberal viewers, whereas *Fox News* tends to provide a Republican/conservative perspective that attracts Republican and/or conservative viewers. News consumers tend to prefer only news outlets that offer their partisan point of view, contributing to the extreme polarization currently observed in the United States (Levendusky, 2013). The authors also asked if

perceived *realistic* or *symbolic* interparty threats would mediate the relationship between political identity and intergroup attitudes.

During the 2018 U.S. mid-term election, a sample of 485 participants 18 years and older (Democrats = 241, Republicans = 244), fairly equally across all U.S. regions, completed Greene's Index of Party Identification (1999), a 12-item scale to measure perceptions of symbolic threats from the opposing party and a 10-item scale to measure perceived realistic threats posed by the opposing political party (Lin & Haridakis, 2022), Turner and Crisp's Attitude Thermometer (2010) measured intergroup bias, rating their agreement (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*) on statements referring to whether the outgroup media was pleasant, trustworthy, or biased against Republicans/Democrats and their frequency of consuming Democratic or Republican news outlets (*MSNBC* or *Fox News*, respectively), listening to political talk shows that supported either the Democratic or Republican viewpoints, and reading online news sites that tend to support Democratic or Republican viewpoints).

As hypothesized, results found that political identity positively predicted intergroup bias and unwillingness to compromise, while outgroup media exposure negatively predicted these attitudes. These results suggest that exposure to outgroup media (i.e., quantity and perceived quality) has the potential to mitigate the negative influence of political identity on attitudes toward political adversaries and increase adversaries' willingness to comprise. Results further showed that perceived realistic threats (i.e., perceived harm to the ingroup by the outgroup) but not perceived symbolic threats posed by the opposing party, partially mediated the positive relationship between

participants' political identity and intergroup bias. Further, perceived symbolic threat (i.e., threats to an ingroup's value systems and worldview) did not significantly influence the relationship between the quantity and perceived quality of outgroup media contact.

Intergroup threat theory may also explain how support for right-wing ideology is influenced by the perception of threat from immigrants. To test that, Nshom (2021) investigated the relation between types of intergroup threat (i.e., realistic or symbolic) and support for the right-wing ideology in Finland, hypothesizing that perceived immigrant threat will support for right-wing beliefs. Participants included 604 Finns aged between 18 and 81. Specifically for this study, an author-constructed self-report survey measured political orientation, symbolic threat, and realistic threat: Participants were asked to indicate their *political orientation* on a scale from 1-10 (e.g., 1 = *extremely left* and 10 = *extremely right*). To measure *realistic threat*, participants indicated agreement with statements (e.g., "Due to the presence of immigrants, Finland has become insecure") on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). To measure *symbolic threat*, participants indicated agreement with statements (e.g., "Finnish norms and values are threatened because there are too many immigrants in Finland") also on a scale of 1-5. As predicted, results indicated that support for right-wing beliefs was positively related to perceived immigrant threat. However, when examined independently, results found a positive relation only between support for right-wing beliefs and symbolic threat, not realistic threat. These results are relevant to the proposed study, as I will be identifying factors related to perceived immigrant threat in the United States.

With the potential to offer insight into the current Jewish/Palestinian Israeli crisis, Rozmann and Yehuda (2023) used intergroup threat theory to examine the relationship among *perceived Israeli-Arab threat*, *frustration leading to aggression*, and *intergroup violence justification* among Israeli-Jewish participants ($N = 236$). The authors hypothesized that perceived Palestinian-Israeli threat among Jewish Israelis would be positively related to justification of violence and, further, that frustration leading to aggression would significantly positively predict violence justification. Participants completed an online questionnaire that measured perceived realistic threats using a 5-point Likert scale (Stephan et al., 1999), perceived symbolic threat using a 7-point Likert scale (Stephan et al., 1998), intergroup violence justification (1-5 Likert-type scale – not at all to very justified), and, also on a 5-point Likert scale, perception that frustration led to aggression (Farago et al., 2019). The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between perceived realistic threat and justification of intergroup violence, but the relation between frustration leading to aggression and intergroup violence justification was not significant. With clear relevance to the proposed study, these findings offer insights into the influence of perceived *realistic* threat and justification of violence.

While a series of studies have examined the impact violent acts of terrorism have on political attitudes (e.g., Godefroidt, 2023), none has investigated its influence on threat perceptions and opinion on policy. To address this gap, Snider et al. (2024) examined the influence of exposure to terrorism (i.e., more intensive or less intensive) on the relationship between threat perceptions (i.e., *realistic* or *symbolic*) and attitudes toward

immigration policies among 646 Jewish-Israeli citizens. The authors hypothesized that higher levels of exposure to terrorism (based on proximity to rocket fire) would predict support for exclusionary policies; further, perceived threats posed by Palestinian-Israeli citizens will moderate the relationship between exposure to terrorism and support for exclusionary asylum policies. Participants completed a 5-point author-constructed questionnaire that measured attitudes toward immigration policies, threat perception associated with Palestinian-Israelis, experience with terrorist events that resulted in life or economic loss, political ideology (e.g., 1 = leftist to 5 = rightist), and exposure to terror attacks (e.g., high or low). Significant and positive direct effects were found for relationships between exposure to terrorism and perceived threat from Palestinian-Israelis and between Palestinian-Israelis and asylum-policy attitudes; however, Jewish-Israelis supported exclusionary asylum policies only when close proximity to Palestinian-Israeli attacks increased perceived threat.

Prejudice toward Muslims has a long history in the United States, increasing significantly since 9/11/2001 (Snider et al., 2024). Intergroup threat theory has been used to explain the relationship between Islamophobia and perceived threat, but only correlationally and with no specific focus on its underlying motivations. One such factor may be prejudice held by one religious group toward another religious group. To test that experimentally, Pal and Wellman (2022) examined the factors that influence U. S. Christians' preconceptions of Muslims and the relationship between religious fundamentalism (i.e., an individual's belief that their religion is the true religion and must be practiced) and perceived threats (i.e., *realistic* or *symbolic*). The authors hypothesized

that negative attitudes toward Muslims will increase with exposure to a news article about realistic or symbolic threat compared to an impartial news article.

Additionally, it was hypothesized that religious fundamentalism will be positively associated with Islamophobia when realistic threat is a primary concern. A sample of 267 self-identified Christians in the United States were randomly exposed to a news article that inspired either a realistic threat, symbolic threat, or no threat from Muslims (control group). Participants then completed the 16-item Attitudes towards Muslims Scale to assess Islamophobia (Lee et al., 2013) and the 12-item Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale to assess to what extent the individual believes religion holds “an innate truth” (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). Each scale ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. As hypothesized, results found that religious fundamentalism positively predicted Islamophobia and was strongest among participants who read a news article evoking a realistic threat from Muslims. These results are consistent with intergroup threat theory, whereby religious fundamentalism and perceived threat contribute to Christian Americans’ prejudiced attitudes.

Social scientists have long been interested in the relationship between media consumption and intergroup emotions evoked by the media content (e.g., Figueroa-Caballero et al., 2024). Informed by intergroup threat theory, Atwell-Seate et al. (2018) examined the association between media consumption (i.e., television) and negative intergroup emotions (i.e., anxiety and anger) toward Blacks, Latinos, and Asians. Additionally, the authors examined media use influence on intergroup emotions indirectly via threat perceptions. In this two-study survey design, the authors

hypothesized that overall daily television consumption will be positively associated with anxiety and anger towards these minority groups (Study 1), that daily television consumption will *directly affect* perceived threat of Asians, Blacks, and Latinos, and *indirectly* evoke anger toward these three racial groups through perceived threat (Study 2).

In Study 1, the sample consisted of 254 mostly White American students (75.6%) who completed an anonymous online survey that measured their overall television consumption, using an 8-point Likert scale (Nabi, 2009), anxiety and anger toward minorities using a 7-point Likert scale (Ramasubramanian, 2010), and intergroup contact with racial minorities (i.e., Blacks, Latinos, and Asians) using a 4-point Likert-type scale (Mastro et al., 2007). Results indicated that daily television consumption was positively related to anxiety, but not anger, toward Blacks (i.e., for participants who were not Black). Results further revealed that daily television consumption was positively associated with both anxiety and anger toward Latinos (for participants who were not Latino), and toward Asians (for participants who were not Asian).

In Study 2, the authors hypothesized that daily television consumption will directly affect perceived threat of racial minorities (i.e., Blacks, Asians, and Latinos) and that perceived threat will mediate relationships between television consumption and both anger and anxiety towards racial minorities (Blacks, Asians, and Latinos). Mostly White (73.1%) U. S. citizens, 18+ years old ($N = 403$), completed an anonymous online questionnaire that measured their overall television consumption using an 8-point Likert scale (Nabi, 2009), feelings of perceived threat, using one item adapted from Mackie et

al. (2000), anxiety and anger toward minorities, using prejudicial feelings items adapted from Ramasubramanian (2010). Results found that media consumption indirectly affected both anger and anxiety toward Blacks and Latinos, but not Asians, through threat perceptions.

Justification for Applying Intergroup Threat Theory

The aim of this study is to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived threat immigrants pose to national identity. Intergroup threat theory offers insight into how the perception of immigrant threat might motivate socially dominant White Christian nationalists to protect Christian, White, conservative American identity.

Intergroup threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009) outlines how ingroup members may marginalize and discriminate against outgroup members due to a perceived threat to their cultural status and political influence. A person's level of perceived threat from an outgroup motivates Christian nationalists to protect their Christian, White, socially dominant identity. Therefore, intergroup threat theory is a relevant foundation for this study.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables

Christian Nationalism

Previous studies have found links between Biblicist Christianity, religiosity, conservative political identity (e.g., "Human evolution is a myth because God created man and woman") and rejection of scientific authority (Lowe et al., 2022; Perry et al., 2021). Adding to this body of research, Baker et al. (2020) determined if Christian

nationalism (i.e., the desire to see Christian symbols, beliefs, and policies preserved as the established religion of the United States) is the mechanism that drives attitudes toward science over and above conservative political ideology and religiosity, that Christian nationalism is the link between politics, religion, and views of science. The authors hypothesized that Christian nationalism will significantly positively predict rejection of scientific authors, controlling for related factors found previously, including frequency of religious practice (Evans, 2013), biblical literalism (Baker, 2013; Ellison & Musick, 1995), and political views (Gauchat, 2012). The authors further hypothesized that Christian nationalism will be the strongest predictor of rejection of scientific authority (e.g., refusing to have a medically necessary abortion even though it would preserve the mother's life) and rejection of issues of moral authority (e.g., teaching evolution in public schools).

Recruited by Gallop, 1,648 participants completed the 2007 Baylor Religion Survey (Finke & Polson, 2007), which measures Americans' religious beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes toward science and religion. Participants indicated agreement with statements, e.g., "We rely too much on science and not enough on faith," "America is a Christian nation, our laws should be based on Christian beliefs," "Only Christians are real Americans," and "The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation." As predicted, results indicated that support for Christian nationalist beliefs was positively related to resistance to scientific authority and the rejection of issues of moral authority. Importantly, religiosity, literalist Bible views, and political conservatism all indirectly influenced rejection of scientific authority, due, primarily, to their strong

correlations with Christian nationalism as the key to connecting religion and politics to views of scientific authority.

To better understand how Christian nationalists interpret the perceived threat minorities pose to their cultural and racial majority (i.e., Whites are becoming outnumbered racially and culturally due to a decline in fertility and America's relaxed immigration laws), Perry et al. (2022) examined nationalist pronatalism (i.e., promoting fertility among White Christians to strengthen the nation and avoid a national decline), embraced by the political and cultural right, as an attempt to maintain the racial and cultural majority. The argument holds that White Christian males, who believe they are under threat, would be more supportive of nationalist pronatalism, that increasing births among "the right people" would prevent ethnic and cultural changes that challenge White, male, Christian dominance. The authors further argued that a pronatalist ideology centered on American births is linked to the belief that members of the dominant cultural group (i.e., Whites, Christians, men) are being oppressed compared to racial and religious minorities) and that to elevate the status of White Christian nationalists, American identity, consistent with traditional Christian/patriarchal beliefs and culture, should be institutionalized. The authors hypothesized that Christian nationalism would be related to nationalist pronatalist ideology, and that this association will be especially prevalent among men compared to women, due to its patriarchal influence.

Developed by Perry et al. (2022), 1,047 Americans completed the Public Discourse and Ethics Survey used to assess Christian nationalism, patriarchal attitudes, nationalist pronatalist ideology, and perceptions of discrimination. Participants were

asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements pertaining to *nationalist pronatalism* (e.g., “Our declining fertility rate should alarm us as a nation”) on a scale of 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). To measure *Christian nationalism ideology*, the Christian Nationalism Scale (e.g., “The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation”; Whitehead & Perry, 2020) also on a scale of 0-4. Participants indicated their level of agreement with statements about *patriarchal attitudes* (e.g., “It is more important for a wife to help her husband’s career than to have one herself”), and to indicate opinions on *discrimination against majority group members*, participants selected the subgroup believed to experience the most discrimination (e.g., Whites, Blacks, immigrants, Christians, Muslims, women, men, gays and lesbians). Participants also indicated their *party identification* (i.e., Republican, Democrat, Independent, Other/Not Sure), *political ideology* (i.e., Liberal, Moderate, Conservative, Very Conservative, Not Sure Ideology), and *religious tradition* (i.e., Evangelical Protestant, Liberal Protestant, Catholic, Other Christian, Other Religion, Seculars). Sociodemographic controls (e.g., race, gender, marital status, household income, and education) were also reported.

The results indicated that Christian nationalist ideology was a significant predictor of support for nationalist pronatalism, second to patriarchal attitudes. This association was particularly strong among men and almost nonexistent among Black individuals. Additionally, the belief that Whites or Christians experience “the most discrimination” compared to other minority groups also predicted support for nationalist pronatalism. Therefore, contemporary support for pronatalist ideology focused on American births is

rooted not only in attitudes that marginalize women but also in an ethno-racially specific ideology that advocates for the United States to mirror and institutionalize traditionalist Christian values and the perception that Christians and Whites are being persecuted.

Among White Christian Americans who feel that their cultural and racial representation is diminishing, Christian nationalists have engaged in both activism and legislation to ensure that American history is taught through a patriotic lens, free of any discussion of racism (Perry & Schleifer, 2023). This approach reinforces popular national myths, promotes American exceptionalism, and excludes historical facts that portray Whites negatively (Braunstein, 2021). In their 2023 study, Perry et al. argued that Christian nationalism combines mythologies that whitewash America's history with authoritarian tendencies, aiming to enforce "patriotic" content in public schools. The authors hypothesized that (a) Christian nationalism would predict support for mandatory patriotic education in public schools, (b) the link between Christian nationalism and support for such education would be stronger among White Americans than among racial minorities, and (c) this link would be stronger for those on the ideological and political left compared to their conservative counterparts. The authors tested these hypotheses with data from the 2022 National Addiction and Social Attitudes Survey designed by the authors and completed by 2,805 American participants. To measure *Americans'* views about mandatory patriotic education in public schools, participants indicated agreement with statements (e.g., "We should require public school teachers to teach history in a way that promotes patriotism") on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). To assess *Christian nationalism*, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with

statements (e.g., America holds a special place in God’s plan”) on a scale of 0 (*strongly* disagree) to 4 (*strongly* agree). The participants indicated their political party (i.e., Republican, Democrat, Independent, Other), ideological identity (1=very liberal to 5=very conservative), how often participants viewed politics in the news (i.e., most of the time, sometimes, now and then, hardly at all, and don’t know), religious tradition (i.e., Protestant, liberal Protestant, Catholic, Other Religion, Atheist, Agnostic, and Nothing in Particular). Additionally, participants indicated their religious commitment by reporting their religious service attendance (i.e., 1 = never to 6 = several times a week), prayer (1 = never to 7 = several times a day), and religious importance (1 = not at all important to 4 = very important).

The findings from this study indicated that Christian nationalism was the strongest predictor of Americans endorsing the mandatory teaching of history that promotes patriotism. This association was consistent across racial groups, though it varied by partisanship and ideological identity for Whites. Specifically, Christian nationalism aligns Whites on the ideological and political left with their conservative counterparts, who are already more likely to support mandatory patriotic education. These results offer important context for the continuous debates over public school curriculum and the role of education in protecting social privilege, further perpetuating Christian nationalist ideology.

While racial demographic shifts have illustrated how majority-group members (i.e., White males) experience status threat when reminded of their decreasing representation (e.g., Bai & Federico, 2021), there has been significantly less attention

paid to the status threat American Christians experience due to their gradual decline. To better understand the perceived threat U.S. Christians feel from shifts in the religious population composition over time, Al-Kire et al. (2021) investigated whether this shift triggered concerns about religious freedoms, contributing to a rise in Christian nationalist beliefs (i.e., the United States laws should reflect only conservative Christian views of marriage, gender roles, and family life). In this two-part study, the authors hypothesized that highlighting religious demographic changes would positively predict a heightened sense of religious threat among Christian Americans and stronger Christian nationalist beliefs. The authors further predicted that self-reported perceptions of religious threat would be positively associated with Christian nationalism, increased conservatism, and greater support for President Trump.

In Study 1, 425 mostly White (77.9%) self-identified U.S. Christians were randomly assigned to either a treatment group, where they read a news article that projected a U.S. Christian minority within the next 15 years (Pew Research Center, 2019) or a control group who read a news article projecting a suburban American minority within the next 15 years (Craig & Richeson, 2014). Study 2 recruited 341 mostly White (71.3%) Christian Americans randomly assigned to read either an article about shifting religious demographics in the U.S. or about changing residential trends in the United States.

Participants in both studies completed a two-item measure of *religious threat*, rating their agreement with “My religious freedom is often under attack” and “Religion is under attack in the U.S.” Six items measured *Christian nationalism*, e.g., “The federal

government should declare the United States a Christian Nation” and “The federal government should advocate Christian values.” Additionally, participants indicated their *political conservatism* on a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very conservative*) and, finally, their support for Republican incumbent President Trump in the 2020 election on a scale ranging from 0 (*not at all likely*) to 100 (*highly likely*). As hypothesized, results revealed that participants who read about changing religious demographics expressed higher levels of both religious threat and Christian nationalism compared to the control group. Also supporting the authors’ hypotheses, participants who perceived greater religious threat reported both higher political conservatism and support for conservative politicians. The results highlight how the rapid changes in America’s religious composition can create a sense of threat for Christians and how this perceived threat might impact their political behavior.

In recent years, immigration has been one of the most divisive issues in American politics and has often been the focus of researchers who have investigated factors that influence attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies, e.g., political ideology and religiousness (Hout & Maggio, 2021). However, none has investigated the role of Christian nationalism in relation to perceived threat from and attitudes towards immigrants in America. To address this gap, Al-Kire et al. (2022) examined the potential for Christian nationalist ideology (i.e., belief that America is a Christian nation) to predict negative attitudes toward immigrants (e.g., “Non-Christian immigrants could dilute or compromise the country’s Christian identity and values”). In this four-part study, the authors hypothesized that: (a) Christian nationalism would be positively associated with

anti-immigration prejudice and support for anti-immigration policies, (b) Christian nationalism would be positively associated with stereotypes of immigrants as threatening, and (c) perceived immigrant threat would moderate the relationship between Christian nationalism and anti-immigrant attitudes.

In Study 1, mostly Christian (72.9%) Americans ($N=2,607$) indicated their Christian nationalist views by choosing one of four statements: “America has always been and is currently a Christian nation”; “America was a Christian nation in the past, but now not”; “America has never been a Christian nation”; or “Don’t know/refuse” (Whitehead & Perry, 2020). To measure religiosity, participants reported their frequency of attending religious services on a 6-item Likert-like scale (1 (*more than once a week*) to 6 (*never*)). Participants rated their political ideology on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*very conservative*) to 5 (*very liberal*). Negative immigrant stereotype endorsement was assessed with a 4-option Likert-type response to: “How well do you think the following describes immigrants coming into the U.S. today?” (1 (*very well*) to 4 (*not at all well*)). Finally, participants’ attitude toward immigration policy was measured with a single item that asked: “Do you favor or oppose the following: “Building a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico” (1 (*strongly favor*) to 4 (*strongly oppose*)). Results indicated that Christian nationalism was positively associated with greater immigrant stereotype endorsement and support for anti-immigrant policy.

In Study 2, a sample of 1,452 mostly Christian (69.5%) Americans completed a 6-item measure of Christian nationalism (e.g., “The federal government should declare the United States a Christian Nation”; Davis, 2018; McDaniel et al., 2011; Whitehead &

Perry, 2015), followed by a 2-item endorsement of negative immigrant stereotypes scale (e.g., “Refugees from the Middle East pose a terrorist threat to the United States”), a one-item measure of religious fundamentalism (i.e., “The Bible means exactly what it says. It should be taken literally, word-for-word on all subjects”; Brandt & van Tongeren, 2017), one-item measure of political ideology scale (i.e., “How would you describe yourself politically?”), and one-item question to assess religiosity “How religious do you consider yourself to be?” from (1 (*not religious*) to 4 (*very religious*), 5 (*not sure*)). As hypothesized, results indicated that Christian nationalism predicted greater negative stereotypes toward Mexican immigrants and Muslim refugees.

In Study 3, a sample of 425 Christian Americans completed the same 8-item scale used in Study 2 to measure Christian nationalism, an 8-item scale to measure *nationalism* (e.g., “Generally, the more influence America has on other nations, the better off they are”; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), 16-item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (e.g., “In getting what you want, sometimes it is necessary to use force against other groups”; Pratto et al., 1994), 12-item Religious Fundamentalism Scale (e.g., “God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally follow”; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004), a single item measure of *religiosity* (i.e., “How interested are you in religion?”), two subscales from the Classical and Modern Racial Prejudice Scale (e.g., “Immigrants are generally not very intelligent” and “Special programs are needed to create jobs for immigrants”; Akrami et al., 2000), and a feeling thermometer to measure attitudes toward immigrants (from 0 to 100). Results supported the authors’ hypotheses in that Christian nationalism was positively associated with

greater prejudice toward immigrants across three different measures: social dominance orientation, political ideology, and nationalism.

In Study 4, Al-Kire et al. (2022) investigated the strength of anti-immigrant attitudes by testing associations between Christian nationalism and both dehumanization (i.e., extreme form of immigrant prejudice) and support for anti-immigrant policy (DACA, 2012 and Zero Tolerance for Offenses, 2018). The authors hypothesized that Christian nationalism would predict both dehumanization of immigrants and support for exclusionary immigration policy and that perceived immigrant threat would mediate these relationships. A sample of 183 Americans completed the Ascent of (Hu)man Dehumanization Scale (Kteily et al., 2015) on a sliding scale from 0 (*ape*) to 100 (*human*), Realistic and Symbolic Immigrant Threat Scale (e.g., “Immigration has increased the tax burdens on Americans”; Stephan et al., 1999), a single-item measure of general religiosity (e.g., “How religious do you consider yourself to be?”), political ideology from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very conservative*), agreement with three policies on a 7-point scale: DACA, separating immigrant families entering the U.S. illegally, and separating immigrant families seeking asylum. Christian nationalism was measured with the same scale reported in Study 2, and the same measure of religious fundamentalism from Study 3 was used. The findings supported the authors’ hypotheses that Christian nationalism was positively associated with dehumanization attitudes toward immigrants and stronger support of anti-immigrant policies, both mediated by immigrant threat (i.e., realistic and symbolic).

White Racial Centrality

In recent years, racial identity among children of color has been heavily researched (e.g., Matthews et al., 2020), however, there has been a lack of racial identity research conducted with White youth. To address this, Moffitt et al. (2022) implemented Helms' White Racial Identity Development model (1984, 1990, 2020) to understand White racial identity narratives and examine changing trends in White youths' racial identity as they age. Helms' 2-phase White Racial Identity Development model (Helms, 2020) is comprised of six stages: *contact* (i.e., lack of racial awareness), *disintegration* (i.e., awareness of racial issues and the internal conflicts associated with that awareness), *reintegration* (i.e., rejection of racial awareness and conform to a comfortable identity), *pseudo-independence* (i.e., educating oneself about racial issues), *immersion* (i.e., becoming involved in racial issues in order to seek change), and *autonomy* (i.e., secure and confident nonracist racial centrality). The first three stages (contact, disintegration, and reintegration) comprise Phase 1 (i.e., attitudes and behaviors that justify norms of racial inequity) of the model, while the last three stages (pseudo-independence, immersion, and autonomy) make up Phase 2 (i.e., challenging the normalization and participation in the racist status quo). The authors hypothesized a higher endorsement of Phase 1 than Phase 2 schemas. A sample of 37 (ages 8-14; 43% female) White American elementary and middle school students completed interviews regarding their racial identification and racial awareness, and awareness of the implications that racial identity has for their position in the world. Participants selected picture cards that best reflected their intersectional social designations (i.e., White/Asian/Black, boy/girl, son/daughter,

student/professional; Byrd, 2012; Williams et al., 2020). Additionally, participants ranked the perceived importance of each racial identity to them, discussed their selections, and explained their related experiences. These students also answered questions about intersectional identities (e.g., “How important is being a White boy to you?”, “How might things be different if you were a Black girl?”, “How might things be different if you were a Black boy?”).

While results indicated that participants viewed their Whiteness as unimportant, the older participants displayed a greater resistance to racist attitudes compared to the younger participants. Additionally, the results suggested that White youth use strategies to distance themselves from and minimize their Whiteness, suggesting that they are aware of the significant societal advantage that their Whiteness affords them. The authors further indicated that racial identity development for many White individuals can stagnate in early adolescence, limiting their ability to engage with and critically reflect on their racial identity. These findings are significant to the proposed study, as they indicated awareness of privilege that Whites have by virtue of their Whiteness and the unfair advantage Whites have compared to their minority counterparts.

To better understand how Whites interpret racial and class meaning, Muniz and Marshall (2022) explored White racial identity development among incarcerated White youth (i.e., how their Whiteness is experienced, negotiated, and confronted), while in an environment wherein they are not only confined, but in which they are the racial minority. A sample of White youth ($N = 10$) ages 13-17, incarcerated at a juvenile detention center in Midwestern America were interviewed about their experiences in

public and alternative schools, disciplinary action taken by the school district, involvement with law enforcement and juvenile justice department, and their experience in confinement at the juvenile detention center. Participants attended focus groups where they answered questions related to race and racism, their school experiences, and challenges they were experiencing. Additionally, the authors observed and documented participants' activities, social interactions, and behaviors they exhibited, with whom and when.

The data analysis process included open-coding, content-log development, and memo writing, whereby the authors reviewed the interview transcripts and developed content logs that depicted the crucial components of each interview. The findings indicated that White youth used their (a) preconceived ideas about race (i.e., White superiority), (b) racial centrality, and (c) the assumption that detention centers are predominantly populated by minorities to understand and navigate their way through incarceration. Participants felt that (a) social exclusion from their White race due to their low-income status, as they associated low-income status areas (i.e., slums, ghetto) with Blacks and Latinos. Additionally, participants reported that living in underserved Black and Latino communities where, as racial minorities, they felt racially excluded. This positioning reflects an interplay of identity, where their personal struggles led them to align more closely with marginalized groups and feelings of abnormality (i.e., excluded from both White and minority groups). This suggested that their understanding of race is influenced not just by societal norms, but also by individual experiences, which may complicate traditional beliefs of racial centrality (e.g., White kids are not jailed, people of

color are the ones who get jailed) and highlight the nuances of racial and social belonging (i.e., being poor is associated with minorities not whites, which results in a lack of a sense of belonging for Whites who grow up in Black and Latino neighborhoods because they are poor). Relevant to the proposed study, these findings suggested that the learned belief in White racial superiority is “the default normal” (Muniz & Marshall, 2022).

The role of racial identity (i.e., Whiteness is central to their self-concept) in predicting White Americans’ ideology (i.e., political beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors) inspired Bai (2022) to determine if the influence of racial centrality politics is based on the candidates’ beliefs or race. In this four-study survey design, the author hypothesized that (a) White Americans who have a strong racial identity or support racial centrality politics will be positively associated with supporting conservative politicians, (b) irrespective of the politicians’ race, and that (c) this association is explained by White Americans’ ideology. For example, a White American with a strong racial identity is positively associated with conservative politicians and negatively associated with liberal politicians.

In Study 1, the sample consisted of 782 White Americans who completed measures racial centrality politics (e.g., “If my racial/ethnic group had a major say in the world, the world would be a much better place”; De Zavala et al., 2009) and feeling thermometers for four politicians whose race and political beliefs differed (i.e., Barack Obama/Black liberal, Ben Carson/Black conservative, Joe Biden/White liberal, and Donald Trump/White conservative. Additionally, the participants measured their own ideology using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very*

conservative). As hypothesized, the results revealed that politicians' ideology and race influence the effect of racial centrality politics and that effect is moderated by the participants' own ideology.

In Studies 2a and 2b, the author hypothesized that White Americans who support racial centrality politics will be positively associated with supporting conservative politicians irrespective of the politicians' race. In Study 2a, 725 White Americans were recruited by the online platform Mturk, while Study 2b obtained 549 White Americans from a competing platform, Lucid. In both studies, racial centrality (which is defined as "the degree to which one's self-identity merges with group representations of Whiteness") was measured by Luhtanen and Crocker's 4-item scale in which participants rated statements involving racial centrality that ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* (1992). In Study 2a, participants were asked to review the male politician in this study whose political ideology and race were withheld. In Study 2b, participants were presented with a similar politician, except the gender and party affiliation of the politician were unknown. Participants were asked to rate the politicians in both studies, using a feeling thermometer and reporting the likelihood of voting for each candidate. Additionally, the participants measured their own ideology with one item, "How would you describe your ideological preference in general?" As hypothesized, the results for Study 2 found that racial centrality politics positively predicted support for conservative politicians irrespective of the politicians' race, suggesting that political identity, rather than race, determined candidate preferences among White American participants.

However, hypothesis 2 was not supported in this study, as the effect of racial centrality on politician evaluation was not significantly different, irrespective of politicians' race.

In Study 3, the author investigated the influence of White Americans' racial identity centrality and their preferences for identity politics on perceptions of real politicians. A sample of 875 White Americans answered two questions: "How important is being White to your identity?" and "How important is it that Whites work together to change laws that are unfair to Whites, respectively, on scales ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*extremely important*). Participants evaluated politicians with a feeling thermometer (0 = *very cold or unfavorable feeling*, 100 = *very warm or favorable feeling*) for Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Donald Trump and their perceived politician ideology on a one-item Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *very liberal* to 7 = *very conservative*. With the same one-item used in Studies 1 and 2, participants indicated their own ideology. The findings revealed that interactions between racial centrality and perceived ideology and interactions between racial centrality politics and perceived ideology are significant and positive (i.e., White Americans who have a strong racial identity or support racial centrality politics will likely support conservative politicians), supporting hypotheses 1 and 3. As predicted, results indicated that racial centrality and racial centrality politics were positively related to support for politicians perceived as conservative but negatively related to politicians perceived as liberal.

The racial composition of the two U.S. political parties is disproportionately White but is significantly more racially diverse in the Democratic party, prompting White Democrats, perceiving a threat to their status within the party, to support political policies

aligned with their racial centrality and, therefore, influence intraparty behavior and party dynamics. In this four-part study, Perez et al. (2022) hypothesized that the perceived threat from racially diverse Democrats within the Democratic Party, may prompt White Democrats to protect their White intraparty status, while White Republicans might not experience the same level of defensiveness, given the more consolidated intraparty influence of White Republicans. In the wake of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, with its focus on immigration, Study 1 asked if political opinions on immigration differed between White Democratic and Republican party members and if those differences were attributed to racial centrality or partisan identity. The authors hypothesized that White Democrats were more opposed to immigration than White Republicans motivated more by racial centrality than partisan identity. Using data from the 2016 American National Election Study, 2,565 White Americans indicated the centrality of their racial centrality by answering "How important is being White to your identity?" (Leach et al., 2008), and partisan identity was measured with a 7-point scale (1 = *strong Republican*, 4 = Independent, 7 = strong Democrat). To assess political opinions on immigration, participants responded to a series of statements and/or questions: "Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the U.S. to live should be increased, decreased, or kept the same as it is now?"; "Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose building a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico?"; "Some people have proposed that the U.S. Constitution should be changed so that children of unauthorized immigrants do not automatically get citizenship if they are born in this country"; and "What should happen to immigrants who

were brought to the U.S. illegally as children and have lived here for at least 10 years and graduated from high school here?”

The results of Study 1 supported the authors' hypothesis that racial centrality was positively associated with opposition to immigration among White Democrats, even as they are less likely to oppose immigration legislation. These results indicated that White Democrats perceived a threat to their position within their more racially diverse party (compared to the Republican party), prompting them to support legislation aligned with their racial centrality in an effort to protect their status, influence, and racial majority. As a result, this fear of losing racial representation within the Democratic party influenced intraparty behavior and professional dynamics among White Democrats.

To examine racialized partisans under a Democratic President, Study 2 used data collected in the 2012 American National Election Study, during President Barack Obama's second presidential term. Participants were 3,037 White Americans who completed the same measures used in Study 1. Results found that racial centrality was positively associated with White Democrats' opposition to immigration, supporting the authors' hypothesis that White Democrats, whose party is more racially diverse, will exhibit more defensive racial attitudes when perceiving a threat to their racial identity.

In Studies 3 and 4, the authors hypothesized that emphasizing the cultural (i.e., Latinos' use of the Spanish language) and economic consequences (i.e., Latinos' participation in labor markets) of Latino immigrants in the United States would (a) increase the emphasis on racial centrality (i.e., to preserve the cultural and economic dominance of Whites in America), (b) decrease intraparty unity on racial issues (i.e.,

division among the Democrats regarding racial legislation), (c) decrease support for immigration, (d) increase support for English-only policy, and (e) increase support for legacy college admissions (i.e., the practice giving preference to applicants with family alumni). A sample of 400 White American Democrats (Study 3) and 400 White American Republicans (Study 4) were assigned to one of four groups (*control, relaxation, cultural threat, or economic threat*). Participants completed surveys that measured their racial centrality, partisan identity, sense of commonality with specific racial groups, policy proposals related to immigration, English-only policy, and legacy college admissions, all using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). As predicted, the results indicated that racial centrality mediated the relationship between racial threat and attitudes toward racial policies among White Democrats, such that racial identity, not partisan identity, influenced the relationship between perceived racial threats and responses to race-related policies. This suggests that feelings of threat can lead to their increased awareness of their own racial centrality, which then affects their opinions on policies.

As to the racial identity experienced by Black-White individuals, Roberts et al. (2022) investigated individuals' understanding of what it means to be both Black and White (i.e., *mixed-race* vs. *completely* White or *completely* Black), and whether essentialism (i.e., the belief that race is defined by characteristics that determine a person's racial identity) is positively associated (i.e., Black-White persons are a mixture of their parents' races) or negatively associated (i.e., Black-White individuals are completely Black and completely White and can identify with either depending on the

context; fluid race) with conceptions of what it means to be Black-White. In this four-part study, the authors hypothesized that: (a) Black-White individuals would conceptualize Black-racial centrality as most accurately represented by mixed concept (i.e., Black-racial centrality is fully integrated and are neither completely Black nor completely White) and least accurately represented as fragmented concept (i.e., Black-White individuals identify as having a Black side and a White side; Study 1), (b) essentialism is positively associated with the concept that Black-White individuals are a mixture of Black and White (Studies 2 & 3), and that (c) essentialism would influence conceptualizations held by participants about Black-White individuals (Study 4).

In Study 1, 143 Black-White Americans who self-identified as multiracial ($n = 96$), Black and White ($n = 31$), Black, multiracial and White ($n = 7$), mixed ($n = 5$), and Black and multiracial ($n = 4$). These participants were asked how they classified Black-White individuals (i.e., Black, White, or Black and White). Those who answered “Black” or “White” were instructed to proceed to the fourth and final question of the study. Those who answered “Black and White” were asked to rate each concept (i.e., mixed, fragmented, dual, or protean/fluid) on how accurately each represents participants’ idea of what it means to be Black and White on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all well* to 7 = *extremely well*). Participants were then asked to choose which concept they thought most accurately portrays what they think it means to be Black and White and to explain why. Results indicated that the mixed concept was most representative and fragmented concept (i.e., Black-White individuals identify as having a Black side and a White side) was least representative. Consistent with racial essentialism, results revealed that Black-White

individuals most often conceptualize Black-White persons as Black and White as opposed to completely Black or completely White.

In Study 2, a sample of 151 monoracial Americans ($n = 139$ European Ancestry/White; $n = 12$ African Ancestry/Black) completed a 22-item measure of racial essentialism (e.g., “Racial groups are determined primarily by biology”; Williams & Eberhardt, 2008), followed by an 8-item social dominance orientation scale (e.g., “An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on bottom”; Ho et al., 2015), a 2-item feeling thermometer to measure racial prejudice (e.g., How warm are your feelings toward Blacks/Whites), and a 14-item measure of cognitive closure (e.g., “In case of uncertainty, I prefer to make an immediate decision, whatever it may be”; Pierro & Kruglanski, 2005). The findings supported the authors’ hypothesis that essentialism was positively associated with concepts rated most representative (i.e., mixed concept) and least representative (i.e., fragmented concept) of Black-White individuals, suggesting that essentialism predicted how participants conceptualized Black-White persons beyond just Black and White.

In Study 3, the authors’ sought to duplicate Study 2 with a more diverse sample, as the Study 2 sample was mostly White. Participants were 374 monoracial Americans ($n = 185$ Black; $n = 189$ White) who completed the same instruments in Studies 1 and 2 that measured social dominance orientation, racial prejudice, need for cognitive closure, and political attitudes were measured. Study 3 results were consistent with Study 2, demonstrating again that essentialism is positively associated with participants’ support for the *mixed* concept (i.e., fully integrated, neither completely Black nor completely

White) of Black-racial centrality as most representative and *fragmented* (i.e., Black-White individuals identify as having a Black side and a White side) as least representative of Black-White individuals.

In Study 4, 563 monoracial Americans ($n = 245$ Black; $n = 318$ White) were assigned to one of three conditions: essentialism, constructivism, and control. Participants assigned to the essentialism condition ($n = 187$) read a fictional article about the genetic underpinnings of race, the constructivism condition ($n = 167$) read a fictional article claiming that, according to scientists, race has no genetic basis, the control condition ($n = 209$) read an article about the invention of the Ferris wheel. All participants completed the same instruments used in Studies 1, 2, and 3. Results were consistent with Studies 2 and 3, indicating that racial essentialism was positively associated with the conception of Black-White individuals as fully integrated, neither completely Black nor completely White.

While race has been a central topic in the political sphere, political rhetoric and its influence on Americans' political trust has been a concern for the American public, most notably in recent presidential terms (e.g., Crowder-Meyer & Ferrin, 2021); however, the influence it has on ethnic minorities is not known. To address this gap, Bech (2021) examined the influence of political rhetoric focused on ethnic and religious minorities (i.e., Latino, Muslims) on political trust among Latino and White Americans. In this two-study survey design, the author hypothesized that (a) politicians would increase trust in themselves and political institutions when speaking positively about a group, causing a corresponding decrease when speaking negatively about a specific group, (b) political

rhetoric that targets a specific group affects the political trust of that targeted group as opposed to non-targeted groups, (c) the more a person identifies with a group, the more likely they are to react negatively or positively in response to political speech concerning their group, and (d) White people who identify strongly with their racial centrality are likely to respond more negatively to positive rhetoric concerning ethnic minorities, and more positively to negative rhetoric.

Study 1 recruited a sample of 3,029 White ($n = 1519$) and “Latino, Hispanic, or Spanish” ($n = 1510$) Americans and 804 White ($n = 349$) and “Latino, Hispanic, or Spanish” ($n = 382$) Americans were recruited for Study 2. In both studies, participants were assigned to either a control group or to one of the treatment groups, where they were presented with a fictitious news article containing quotes made by a fictional congressman speaking positively or negatively about a specific minority group. In Study 1, the quotes were targeting both Latinos and Muslims, while the quotes in Study 2 were positive, negative, and mixed quotes targeting Latinos. Participants were asked how satisfied they were after reading the article and asked to write a summary about the opinions presented in the article. The participants were asked to rate how negative or positive the rhetoric of the politician in the news article, using a 10-point scale ranging from -10 (*Very negative*) to +10 (*Very positive*). Four items assessed both trust in political leaders and institutions and trust in the specific politician, respectively (e.g., “When American political leaders speak on television or in the newspapers, they usually tell the truth”, and “To what extent do you think the person quoted in the article you read will do his best to help people in his community?”).

The results indicated that while negative rhetoric about Latinos negatively affected their trust in their political institutions, positive rhetoric did not have a corresponding effect. Furthermore, Whites and Latinos reported a greater trust in politicians who speak positively about minority groups, which was positively associated with their willingness to vote for a politician who does so.

Social Dominance Orientation

Previous research has linked social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism (i.e., a personality and ideological orientation characterized by a tendency to favor traditional values, social hierarchies, and authoritarian leadership) to various forms of prejudice; however, few studies have examined how these personality traits and ideological factors interact to shape attitudes toward race and gender. To that end, Wedell and Bravo (2021) examined the extent to which social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism interact to predict various social attitudes (i.e., modern racism, modern sexism, and traditional gender role beliefs), as well as feelings toward racial/ethnic minorities, women, and other socially stigmatized groups in a cross-sectional survey study. The authors hypothesized that social dominance orientation would be positively related to attitudes toward marginalized groups (e.g., modern racism, attitudes toward women, Black people, Latinos, documented immigrants, and unemployed people) and would independently relate to attitudes toward men. They further hypothesized that right-wing authoritarianism would independently predict attitudes toward perceived dangerous groups (e.g., drug dealers and undocumented immigrants) and that social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism would

interact synergistically to shape attitudes toward dissident groups (e.g., traditional sexism, modern sexism) and feelings toward feminists and atheists.

U.S. college students ($N = 1,244$) completed the 14-item Social Dominance Orientation scale (e.g., “Inferior groups should stay in their place”; Pratto et al., 1994), the 22-item Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (e.g., “Our country desperately needs a mighty leader who will do what has to be done to destroy radical new ways and sinfulness that are ruining us”; Altemeyer, 2006), the Modern Racism Scale (e.g., “It is easy to understand the anger of Black people in America”; McConahay, 1986), Attitudes toward Women Scale (e.g., “Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers”; Whatley, 2008), Modern Sexism Scale (e.g., “Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States”; Swim et al., 1995), and feeling thermometers to assess participants’ feelings of coldness and warmth toward a variety of groups (e.g., Black people, Latinos, men, women, documented immigrants, undocumented immigrants) that ranged from 0 (*cold*) to 100 (*warm*). Results indicated that social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism interacted to positively predict modern racism and modern sexism. Furthermore, social dominance orientation was linked to negative *attitudes* toward Black people, Latinos, both documented and undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, and feminists and with negative *feelings* toward undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, feminists, drug dealers, and atheists.

Attempting to identify factors that incline individuals to stigmatize marginalized groups, Smith and Stathi (2022) determined if individual differences in belief in a just

world and social dominance orientation influence the relationship between the amount and quality of contact with homeless individuals and the level of stigmatization they experience. Additionally, the authors predicted that these factors would hinder the positive effects of social contact by promoting social inequality, which in turn legitimizes the struggles of the homeless.

The authors tested these hypotheses with data obtained from 187 American participants having completed the 16-item Social Dominance Orientation scale (e.g., “If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems”; Pratto et al., 1994), six items adapted from the Belief in a Just World Scale (e.g., “I am confident that justice always prevails over injustice”; Lipkus, 1991), Voci and Hewstone’s (2003) quality and quantity of contact with homeless people scale, where participants indicated their frequency of contact and agreement with statements about how pleasant, collaborative, and superficial their interactions with the homeless were and, finally, the Crisp et al. (2005) stigmatization scale assessed participant agreement with statements (e.g., “Homeless people are a danger to others”) on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Results indicated that belief in a just world and social dominance orientation were positively associated with stigmatization, whereas both the quantity and quality of contact were negatively associated with stigmatization. Social dominance orientation was found to influence the relationship between the amount of contact and stigmatization, such that participants with low to moderate social dominance orientation scores reported increased contact with the homeless and reduced levels of stigmatization.

Renström (2024) examined factors with the potential to predict misogynistic attitudes, focusing on characteristics associated with incels. This term “incel” stands for “involuntarily celibate” and refers to frustrated heterosexual men, often White Americans, who blame women and society for their inability to form romantic or sexual relationships. The author identified factors such as entitlement (“a stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others”), social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and the impact of being single among American men as key contributors. The authors proposed two hypotheses: (a) entitlement and social dominance orientation would independently predict misogynistic attitudes, even when controlling for right-wing authoritarianism and (b) relationship status would moderate the influence of entitlement and social dominance orientation on misogynistic attitudes, with the effects being stronger for single men compared to those in relationships.

The authors tested these hypotheses using data from 302 American, heterosexual male participants, who completed several scales: the 10-item Misogyny Scale (e.g., “I feel uncomfortable when a woman dominates the conversation”; Rottweiler and Gill, 2020), nine items adapted from the Entitlement Scale (e.g., “I honestly feel I’m just more deserving than others”; Campbell et al., 2004), four items adapted from the Social Dominance Orientation scale (e.g., “Superior groups should dominate inferior groups”, Pratto et al., 1994), and the 6-item Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (e.g., “The facts on crime and the recent public disorders show we have to crack down harder on troublemakers, if we are going to preserve law and order”; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2018). Participants rated their agreement with these statements on a scale from 1 (*strongly*

disagree) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Relationship status was assessed by the question “What is your current relationship status?” (i.e., single, dating, married, other, or prefer not to say).

The results indicated that all three predictors, together with being single (compared to being in a relationship), were significant predictors of misogynistic attitudes.

Additionally, the impact of social dominance orientation was influenced by relationship status, with single individuals high in social dominance orientation exhibiting the highest levels of misogyny.

To understand why certain individuals may oppose or fail to protect democratic institutions, even when they are under threat, Serek and Muzik (2021) examined the influence of right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation on attitudes toward protecting democracy. The researchers hypothesized that individuals with higher levels of right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation would be less supportive of democratic values, as they often prioritize hierarchy over equality and democratic principles. The authors tested these hypotheses using data collected from 220 Czech participants who completed the 12-item Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (e.g., “Obedience and respect for authority are the most important values children should learn”; Funke, 2005), the 16-item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (e.g., “Some groups of people must be kept in their place”; Ho et al., 2015), a six-item measure of distrust in politicians (e.g., “People like me have no opportunity to influence decisions of our government”), and a five-item trade-off (i.e., the psychological and social compromises individuals make when balancing competing values or motivations) survey that assessed participants' attitudes toward statements related to the protection of

democratic principles (e.g., "Buying and selling of electoral votes"; Tetlock, 2000).

Participants selected from a range of possible answers, including: "should be permitted by law," "morally acceptable," "upsetting," "saddening," "revealing something about the character of those involved," "preferred only by callous individuals," and "potentially acceptable under certain circumstances." Additionally, participants indicated their reactions to various scenarios (e.g., "Would you feel uneasy if your friends began to defend the tradeoff") on a scale of 1 (*definitely no*) to 5 (*definitely yes*). As predicted, results indicated that right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation were negatively associated with support of democratic principles, and distrust in politicians was positively associated with right-wing authoritarianism. These findings suggest that individuals inclined toward right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation hold attitudes inconsistent with democratic ideals, highlighting the importance of addressing these orientations in efforts to strengthen democratic engagement and resistance to anti-democratic practices.

The divide between traditional liberals and conservatives related to COVID-19 is well documented (Kerr et al., 2021). To advance this research, Peng (2022) examined the influence of social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and libertarianism (i.e., a political philosophy that values personal sovereignty, limited government, and free markets) on individuals' reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and how these beliefs contributed to the political divide related to the pandemic. The author hypothesized that liberals (i.e., value social equality, progressive taxation, universal healthcare) and Democrats (i.e., a member of the Democratic party) will be more concerned about the

COVID pandemic and show more support for government measures to reduce COVID-19 than conservatives (i.e., a person who holds traditional values) and Republicans (i.e., a member of the Republican party); that social dominance orientation will be negatively related to concern for COVID and support for government measures, and that right-wing authoritarianism will be negatively related to concern about COVID and support for government measures.

Study 1 tested these hypotheses using data from 482 American participants who completed the eight-item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (e.g., "An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom"; Ho et al., 2015), the 18-item Authoritarianism Conservatism-Traditionalism Scale (e.g., "The facts on crime and the recent public disorders show we have to crack down harder on troublemakers if we are going to preserve law and order"; Duckitt et al., 2010), six items measuring communitarianism-individualism (e.g., "The government interferes far too much in our everyday lives"; Kahan et al., 2012), and five items measuring free market ideology (e.g., "An economic system based on free markets unrestrained by government interference automatically works best to meet human needs"; Heath & Gifford, 2006; Malin et al., 2017). *Concern for COVID* was assessed using two five-point Likert scales (i.e., "How risky is the COVID-19 pandemic for society as a whole?" and "How worried are you about the COVID-19 pandemic?"), *support for government policies* to curb COVID-19 (e.g., "Require people to wear a mask or face covering in public"), *trust in science* was assessed with two five-point scales, measuring participants' confidence in the scientific community and perception of science's effect on society (1 = *extremely negative*, 5 =

extremely positive). Additionally, participants reported their political orientation on a scale from 1 (*extremely liberal*) to 7 (*extremely conservative*), indicated their party identity (*Democrat, Republican, Independent, or other*), and rated themselves on a partisan scale from 1 (*strong Democrat*) to 7 (*strong Republican*).

Study 2, tested the same hypotheses using data from 7,449 eligible American voters, who completed several scales: *Anti-egalitarianism* (e.g., “This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are”), to measure *libertarianism*, participants agreed with either “The less government the better” or “There are more things government should be doing”), *moral traditionalism* (e.g., “The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes” and “This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties”), and two items measured *support for strict government measures* “How quickly did the federal government respond?” (much too quick, much too slow) and “How strict were the limits placed on public activity?” (far too strict, not nearly strict enough). Lastly, participants indicated their feelings toward scientists using a feeling thermometer on a scale from 0 to 100. The results showed that social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and libertarianism were significant ideological factors associated with greater dismissal of COVID-19 and less support for government measures. In contrast, trust in science was positively linked to concern about COVID-19 and greater acceptance of government measures, confirming all three hypotheses. Additionally, the findings indicated that right-wing authoritarian was negatively related to both concern about COVID-19 and support for government actions.

Nicol and Toth-Kiraly (2024) examined relationships among rape myth acceptance, ambivalent sexism, social dominance orientation, and right-wing authoritarianism across both gay and heterosexual individuals to identify differences and/or similarities between gay and straight men and women. The authors hypothesized that social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism would have direct positive effects on rape myth acceptance and ambivalent sexism (e.g., hostile sexism or benevolent sexism) would serve as an indirect factor in these relationships. Specifically, they predicted that benevolent (i.e., seemingly well-intentioned attitudes towards females that reinforce traditional gender roles and maintain male dominance) and hostile sexism (i.e., negative attitudes toward individuals who fail to conform to traditional gender roles), whether directed toward women or men, would influence the relationship between social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and rape myth acceptance.

Participants were 1,102 American participants (294 straight women, 282 gay women, 293 straight men, and 234 gay men) who completed the eight-item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (e.g., “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups”; Ho et al., 2015), six-item Authoritarianism, Conservatism, and Traditionalism Scale (e.g., “What our country needs most is discipline, with everyone following our leaders in unity”; Bixumic & Duckitt, 2018), 12-item Ambivalent Sexism toward Women Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Rollero et al., 2014), six-item Hostile Sexism scale (e.g., “Women seek to gain power by getting control over men”), six-item Benevolent Sexism scale (e.g., Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess”). Additionally, participants completed the 12-item Ambivalent Sexism toward Men Inventory (Glick &

Fiske, 1999; Rollero et al., 2014), 6-item Hostile Sexism scale (e.g., “Men act like babies when they are sick”), six-item Benevolent Scale (e.g., “Men are mainly useful to provide financial security for women”), and the 22-item Rape Myth Acceptance Toward Women (e.g., “If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get in trouble”; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). All instruments used 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

The findings indicated that both social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism were positively related to higher acceptance of rape myths. Furthermore, both hostile and benevolent sexism toward women and men were associated with increased levels of social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and rape myth acceptance. These findings suggested that different forms of sexism play a role in shaping these beliefs. While the overall patterns were similar for both gay and heterosexual individuals, the strength of these associations differed between the two groups. Gay individuals showed weaker links between authoritarian beliefs and rape myth acceptance due to lower sexism levels, while heterosexual men exhibited a stronger connection among sexism, right-wing authoritarianism, and rape myths, suggesting that these beliefs reinforce each other. In conclusion, the study suggested that these factors influence rape myth acceptance in comparable ways across various sexual orientations.

Perceived Immigrant Threat to National Identity

Informed by intergroup threat theory (i.e., “the perception or belief that members of one group pose a danger or threat to the interests, values, or well-being of another group”), Guillermo et al. (2021) investigated the extent to which perceptions of symbolic

and realistic threats explained agreement with policies that limit Mexican immigration (e.g., Zero Tolerance Policy, 2018) through detention and deportation, support for punitive policies toward Mexican immigrants (i.e., deportation and detention, family separation, border wall construction), and/or willingness to provide basic resources (e.g., food, water) to both documented and undocumented Mexican immigrants. The authors hypothesized that (a) undocumented Mexican immigrants will be seen as more symbolically and realistically threatening than their documented counterparts, (b) intergroup threat would be a predictor of reluctance to offer basic resources to Mexican immigrants in detention centers and support for policies that limited Mexican immigration, (c) the relation between intergroup threat and policy attitudes will be stronger when threatened by undocumented vs documented immigrants, and (d) social dominance orientation and political conservatism would be positively related, while intergroup contact would be negatively related to punitive attitudes toward resources in detention centers and immigration policy.

Recruited by Amazon Mechanical Turk, 191 American participants completed the intergroup threat survey (Stephan et al., 1999), which measured *symbolic threat* through participants' agreement with seven statements (e.g., "Documented/Undocumented Mexican immigration is undermining American culture" and "Documented/Undocumented Mexican immigrant should not have to accept American ways") and *realistic threat* through participants' agreement with eight statements (e.g., "Documented/Undocumented Mexican immigrants get more from this country than they contribute" and "Documented/Undocumented Mexican immigration has increased the tax

burden on Americans”), *resources in detention centers* was assessed with the authors’ six-item scale that asked participants to evaluate the extent to which they thought Mexican immigrants should be granted access to resources in detention centers (e.g., “food and drinking water” and “toilets and sinks”), and the immigration policy measure (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017), gauged participants’ agreement with six proposals, e.g., “The U.S. should restrict visas to Mexicans.” Additionally, participants completed the 16-item Social Dominance Orientation scale (e.g., “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups,” and “Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place”; Pratto et al., 1994). The authors used Alvarez and Miller (2017) single item measure to *assess political attitudes* (“How would you describe your political attitudes?”) from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very conservative*) and to assess their *intergroup contact*, participants were asked to estimate the percentage of their family members and friends who are Mexican immigrants from 0% to 100%.

The findings indicated that undocumented immigrants were perceived as a greater realistic threat compared to their documented counterparts. Perceived symbolic threat predicted reluctance to provide basic resources in detention centers, while greater realistic threat predicted greater reluctance to offer these resources to Mexican immigrants. Additionally, symbolic threat was positively related to more punitive policy attitudes, as was realistic threat with support for restrictive policies.

To identify factors with the potential to activate perceptions of immigrant threat, Alves et al. (2024) determined if self-uncertainty, social identity, and attitudes toward immigrants triggered perceived threats from immigrants and refugee groups, which in

turn influences support for nationalist views (i.e., belief in national superiority, backing anti-immigration policies, and intentions to vote for anti-immigration parties). In this two-part study, the authors hypothesized that uncertainty would positively predict both types of threat (i.e., realistic and symbolic), which are expected to positively predict nationalist attitudes.

In Study 1, the authors tested these hypotheses using data from 169 Portuguese citizens between the ages of 18 to 65 years old, who completed the 15-item Realistic and Symbolic Threat Scales (e.g., “Immigrants get more from this country than they contribute” and “Immigration is undermining the Portuguese culture”; Stephan et al., 1999), the 5-item Belief in National Superiority used in the International Social Survey Programme (e.g., “Generally speaking, Portugal is a better country than most other countries”; ISSP Research Group, 2015), *support for anti-immigration laws* were measured by the extent to which participants agreed with each of six items (e.g., “There should be a stronger control of immigration into Portugal”), and *uncertainty* was assessed by how much they agreed that they felt “uncertainty” and “fear” when thinking about the entry of immigrants to Portugal. Participants rated their agreement with these statements on a scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*).

In Study 2, participants totaling 309 Portuguese citizens between the ages of 18 and 72 years old were randomly assigned to one of two *uncertainty* conditions: High ($n = 164$) and Low ($n = 145$). Participants were presented with a fictional article detailing fake results from a report suggesting that the Portuguese population held either an “ambiguous and uninformed” or a “firm and educated” stance on the costs and benefits of

immigration. The article was followed by three fabricated testimonies from Portuguese citizens, each reinforcing the perceived uncertainty in the population. These testimonies either reflected general ignorance and ambiguous views or displayed a well-informed and clear opinion on immigration as a social issue. To further reinforce the manipulation, participants were then asked to reflect on and write down “the three things about immigration” that made them “feel uncertain” (high uncertainty condition) or “feel certain” (low uncertainty condition) “about themselves and their future.” The authors then assessed Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Belief in National Superiority, and Support for Anti-Immigration Laws using scales identical to those in Study 1. Participants’ Voting Intention was also measured (e.g., “How willing are you to vote for a party that opposes inclusive policies for immigrants?”) on a scale from 1 = “*Not at all*” to 7 = “*Very much*.”

Results from both studies indicated that when individuals feel uncertain about immigration, they perceive immigrants as a threat to their nation’s resources and believe that they deserve less access to these resources. This perceived threat strengthened their belief in the superiority of their ingroup nation, increased support for laws that restrict immigration, and boosted their willingness to vote for anti-immigration political parties.

To gain a deeper understanding of how perceptions of economic, cultural, and social threats shape American attitudes toward both documented and undocumented immigrants, Qi and Garand (2024) examined this with a particular focus on differences in views between legal (documented) and illegal (undocumented) immigrants. The study also investigated the role of national identity in shaping these attitudes, specifically how

individuals' beliefs about what it means to be American (i.e., American *exclusion vs pride*), affect their opinions on immigration policy and the treatment of immigrants. The authors hypothesized that perceptions of immigrant threat and American exclusion (i.e., limits placed on who can be considered American) will have a negative effect on evaluations of both documented and undocumented immigrants, though the effect for undocumented immigrants will be stronger than for documented immigrants and American pride will negatively affect evaluations of undocumented but not documented immigrants.

The authors used data from the 2016-2017 Voter Study Group surveys, which included a survey experiment where participants were randomly assigned to either documented or undocumented immigrant treatments. The original national survey ($N = 45,000$) was conducted by the Cooperative Campaigns Analysis Project (CCAP) in December 2011, with a follow-up interview in 2012. In 2016, 11,168 were selected from the 2012 CCAP survey for a third interview and a fourth was conducted with 5,000 in 2017. The sample for this study included those who completed both the 2016 and 2017 survey waves. The participants were asked one of the following two questions: “Do you think illegal immigrants make a contribution to American society or are a drain?” ($n = 2,814$), and “Do you think immigrants legally residing in the U.S. make a contribution to American society or are a drain?” ($n = 2,791$). Participants completed a 4-item scale dealing with possible threats posed by immigrants in the areas of cultural life, national security, crime, and the economy (e.g., “Would you say that the United States’ cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other

countries?”), using a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (*immigration makes things worse*) to 9 (*immigration makes things better*); the American pride scale (e.g., “I would rather be a citizen of America than any other country”), using a four-point scale, ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*); the American exclusion scale (e.g., “Some people say that the following things are important for being truly American. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is as being America?”), using a four-point scale ranging from 0 (*not at all important*) to 3 (*very important*). Additionally, control variables included political attitudes variables (i.e., partisan identification and liberal-conservative ideology) and demographic and socioeconomic variables (i.e., education, family income, gender, racial and ethnic self-identifications, age, and church attendance).

Findings indicated significant negative associations between immigrant threat perceptions and Americans' support for both immigrant groups, with effects stronger for undocumented immigrants. Additionally, while American exclusion negatively influenced attitudes toward both groups, American pride reduced support only for undocumented immigrants.

Perceived immigrant threat to one's national identity has prompted populist right-wing political parties to mobilize voters against immigration. To that end, populists use *collective nostalgia* to remind voters of their shared longing for the “good old days” when everything seemed to make sense (Hochschild, 2018). While it is not yet known if nostalgia for a past group identity motivates or hinders voters to take collective action against immigration, Smeekes et al. (2023) investigated the triggers of collective

nostalgia (e.g., historical events and group experiences) to determine voters' willingness to participate in collective efforts like social movements or political activism. The authors hypothesized that collective nostalgia for the nation's past is triggered by perceived collective discontinuity, which then fosters intentions for collective action aimed to protect the national ingroup and limit the presence of immigrant outgroups.

Participants ($N = 1,489$) were native Dutch citizens who completed the seven-item Southampton Nostalgia Scale (e.g., "How important is nostalgia for you?" and "Generally speaking how often do you bring to mind nostalgic experiences?"; Sedikides et al., 2015), *collective discontinuity* was measured by the extent to which participants agreed with each of three items (e.g., "Dutch identity is no longer what it used to be in the past"), *collective nostalgia* was assessed by the extent to which participants favored the way things used to be with each of four items (e.g., "Nostalgic about the way Dutch people were in the past"; Cheung et al., 2017), *ingroup protection* was measured by the participants' willingness to engage in four actions to protect traditional Dutch customs (e.g., "Send an email of protest to the government", Gorska et al., 2020; Van Zomeren et al., 2004), and *outgroup rejection* was assessed with the *ingroup protection* measure, but participants indicated their willingness to limit immigrants to the Netherlands, using the same scale of 1 (*very unwilling*), 7 (*very willing*).

As predicted, the findings indicated that individuals who experienced higher collective discontinuity showed an increase in collective nostalgia, also reporting increased collective action intentions to protect the national ingroup continuity and limit the presence of immigrant outgroups. These results suggested that collective nostalgia

can strengthen group solidarity and a desire to preserve traditional group values, which may fuel exclusionary attitudes and behaviors toward outgroup members.

People tend to consume news media (e.g., TV news, social media sites, newspapers) that align with and reinforce their particular point of view (Sunstein, 2009). To determine if the tendency toward *selective exposure* to news foregrounding a threatened sense of national identity contributes to affective polarization (i.e., animus between groups with opposing views), among immigration opponents. To that end, Wojcieszak and Garrett (2018) hypothesized that immigration opponents, where national identity is made salient, will report increased affective polarization, stronger ingroup favoritism, and decreased sense of shared identity with undocumented immigrants. The authors further hypothesized that among individuals who oppose immigration, a focus on national identity will indirectly increase affective polarization by exposing them to articles critical of undocumented immigrants.

Study 1 randomly assigned 218 American participants to one of two conditions, either a national identity prime (experimental condition) or a neutral prime (control). Those in the experimental condition were asked to ponder what it means to be an American and to write about “one essential quality that you share with other Americans, something that unites us as a people,” while those in the control group were not given a writing assignment. Following this priming assignment, participants were presented with a selection of mock news articles, both pro- and anti-immigrant, specifically undocumented immigrants. The authors then noted which articles the participants chose to read. Participants then completed four measures of affective polarization: *negative trait*

evaluations were measured agreement with statements describing illegal immigrants in the United States (e.g., honest, intelligent, trustworthy, etc.), a feeling thermometer measured *relative in-group favorability*, with participants indicating their feelings toward illegal immigrants currently in the U.S. on a scale of 0 (*unfavorable*) to 100 (*favorable*), *social distance* was assessed by the extent to which participants felt comfortable with an illegal immigrant in their life (e.g., close friend, co-worker, relative by marriage, or neighbor), and *common intergroup identity* was measured by participants' agreement with two statements: "Despite some differences, immigrants and American citizens represent one and the same group" and "American citizens and immigrants represent different groups." Indirect effects of national identity prime were measured with participants' agreement to: "Anyone who comes to the U.S. illegally should be sent home" and "Immigrants who come to the U.S. illegally have no right to be here"). The results showed that participants who were primed with national identity were more likely to select articles that reflected their existing negative views toward immigrants, demonstrating how national identity priming influenced news selection and contributed to affective polarization on immigration issues.

In Study 2, 895 American citizens were randomly assigned to a national identity prime condition (experimental) or the control group. Participants completed the same measures used in Study 1 and an additional measure of *prior attitudes*, assessed by the extent to which participants agreed with four statements related to symbolic and realistic threats (e.g., "American norms and values are being threatened because of the presence of undocumented immigrants") on a 7-point Likert scale. Measuring participants' attitudes

toward immigrants before and after articles were selected allowed the authors to determine the influence of the articles chosen on participants' views. The findings indicated that national identity priming influenced participants to select articles that aligned with their pre-existing negative views toward immigrants, increasing affective polarization. This study reinforced the idea that national identity primes can influence both news selection and emotional reactions, contributing to more polarized attitudes toward immigration.

Study 3 randomly assigned 242 American participants to a pro-attitudinal ($n = 120$) or counter-attitudinal ($n = 122$) immigration article; participants completed the same measures used in Study 2. The results showed that the national identity prime increased participants' sense of national identity compared to the control group, influencing affective polarization among those who opposed immigration. These findings further support the idea that making national identity salient can shape attitudes toward immigration through selective exposure to news content.

To better understand the relationship between national identity, perceived group threats, and attitudes toward immigration policy, Molina and Preddie (2020) determined the relationship between national identity, two distinct forms, *patriotism* (i.e., a more inclusive and constructive form) and *nationalism* (i.e., an ethnocentric and dominance-driven form) and immigration policy across two studies. The authors also questioned if introducing symbolic threats (in both studies) and realistic threats (in Study 2) would weaken the relationship between national identity and immigration policy attitudes, hypothesizing that higher levels of national identity, particularly nationalism, would be

associated with stronger support for restrictive immigration policies. Additionally, they expected that group-based threats, such as symbolic and cultural threats, would predict support for anti-immigration stances.

In Study 1, 148 White American participants completed a series of surveys. *Nationalism* was assessed using three items that reflected beliefs in national superiority or dominance (e.g., “To maintain our country’s economic superiority, aggressive economic policies are sometimes necessary”), *patriotism* was measured with three items emphasizing pride in national identity (e.g., “I am proud to be an American”; Sidanius et al., 1997), *cultural assimilation* was evaluated with three items gauging support for immigrants adopting U.S. cultural values (e.g., “If people want to succeed in the United States, they should adopt the values of my ethnic group”; Hehman et al., 2012). All responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*). Support for *language-related immigration policy* was measured through participants’ agreement with statements about English language fluency (e.g., “Government agencies and offices interacting directly with citizens should make documents, forms, and signs available in languages other than English”), *restrictive immigration policy* attitudes measured support for a temporary Muslim immigration ban and support for building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Participants also reported their political orientation on a scale from 0 (*extremely liberal*) to 7 (*extremely conservative*). The results indicated that patriotism and nationalism were positively associated to cultural assimilation, language-based immigration policies, and restrictive immigration policies. Furthermore,

greater political conservatism was positively associated with national identity, perceptions of cultural threat, and anti-immigration policies.

In Study 2, 135 White American citizens completed the same measures as in Study 1, along with several additional assessments. *Realistic threat* was evaluated using five items (e.g., “Immigrants take jobs from Americans”; Paxton & Mughan, 2006), while *symbolic threat* was assessed with five items (e.g., “Immigrant groups have values and traditions that cannot be reconciled with American values and traditions”; Oskamp, 2000; Van Acker et al., 2014), support for *American employer-focused immigration policy* was measured with three items assessing endorsement of policies penalizing U.S. employers who hire undocumented immigrants (e.g., “Impose heavy fines on U.S. employers that knowingly hire undocumented immigrants”), and *immigrant-focused policy* attitudes toward individuals suspected of being in the U.S. illegally (e.g., “Pass legislation that gives states the right to question people about their immigration status if they are suspected of being in the United States illegally”). The results showed that patriotism and nationalism were positively linked to both realistic and symbolic threats, as well as all immigration policies. Additionally, both symbolic and realistic threats were positively associated with all immigration policies and that greater political conservatism was positively related to national identity measures, realistic and symbolic threats, and various immigration policy items. These findings build on prior research by demonstrating that symbolic threat plays a key role in shaping how nationalism influences views on immigration policy.

Summary and Conclusions

The goal of this quantitative study was to assess the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity. By exploring these dynamics, the study provided insights into how religion, race, and national identity shape perceptions of immigrant threats, with the potential to develop strategies to counteract racist fearmongering in public discourse. The theory of intergroup threat explains threats to national identity experienced by the dominant group, in this case White Christian men, from immigrants to the United States who bring with them their unique cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors. Chapter 3 will outline the research design, instruments, sampling procedures, and statistical methods for this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity. This chapter provides an overview of the research design and rationale used in the current study. The sample description and sampling procedures, including sample inclusion/exclusion criteria, plan for recruitment, and process for data collection are discussed. Chapter 3 also includes a review of reliability, validity, and justification for the instruments used to collect data and a detailed discussion of the data analysis plan. Threats to validity and ethical considerations are also discussed.

Research Design and Rationale

I conducted this quantitative, cross-sectional, nonexperimental, correlational survey study to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism (IV), White racial centrality (IV), and social dominance orientation (IV) in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity (DV). A nonexperimental, correlational research design was appropriate since the purpose was to identify relationships between independent and dependent variables, and instruments that had been tested for reliability and validity were used. In contrast, qualitative research does not focus on quantifying results through statistical analysis; instead, it relies on in-depth interviews and observations without standardized measures (Marczyk et al., 2005). A nonexperimental design was selected, as the independent variables could not be manipulated by the researcher (Kraska, 2010). Survey research can provide insights into the beliefs, attitudes,

opinions, and behaviors of a population by studying a representative sample (Fowler, 2008). To collect data quickly and cost-effectively, the SurveyMonkey platform and audience panel were utilized to recruit participants and administer the survey (Goodwin, 2010).

Methodology

Population

The target population for this study was White English-speaking, aged 18 years of age or older, American citizens residing in the United States. To minimize potential cultural differences in attitudes toward immigrants, participants were limited to those living in the United States. Based on 2020 U.S. Census Data, the target population represented approximately 71% of the U.S. population, with 61.6% identifying as “only White.” This was the most current official count.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

A convenience sampling strategy was used for this study. Self-selected volunteers were recruited by SurveyMonkey. Individuals who met the inclusion criteria (i.e., White English-speaking, 18+ years of age, American citizens residing in the United States) were notified via email that they qualified to participate. At that point, they received a link to the survey where they chose to participate if they wished to do so.

To determine the minimum sample size needed for the study, a power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2009) for multiple regression (fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero). Using an alpha level of .05, power of .80, three predictor variables (i.e., Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance

orientation) and a predicted effect size of .10, the minimum recommended sample size is 114. The estimated effect size for this study was determined based on previous research examining similar relationships, which ranged from small to medium. For example, Earle and Hodson (2022) found a small effect size (.07) for the relationship between racial centrality and perceived threat to national identity, while Pratto et al. (1994) found a medium effect size (.40) for the relationship between social dominance orientation and threat to national identity.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

With IRB approval, the present study utilized SurveyMonkey to recruit participants and administer the survey. Individuals who met all inclusion criteria who wished to participate received a link that included an informed consent form, screening questions to ensure eligibility to participate, a questionnaire to collect demographic data, and the survey instruments. Participant responses remained anonymous; no identifying information was collected.

All prospective participants were asked to provide informed consent prior to participation in the study; to maintain anonymity, participants simply selected the “Agree” link if they wished to participate. The consent form used passive deception, informing participants that the purpose of the study was to explore how psychological characteristics are related to social behavior; this offered them the opportunity to make informed decisions about their participation while not disclosing the specifics of the study. To protect their rights, the informed consent ensured that all participants are competent, knowing, and voluntary (Marczyk et al., 2005). The informed consent also

indicated expectations for participation, study procedures, risks of participation, where and how the findings will be used, privacy guarantees, and benefits to future research. Participants were also provided with my contact information, as well as the contact information for Walden University's participant advocate should they have concerns or questions about the research or their rights.

Once consent was given, participants completed screening questions to ensure eligibility to participate in the study (i.e., White English-speaking, 18+ years of age, American citizens residing in the United States). Those who did not meet inclusion criteria were redirected to a page thanking them for their interest, notifying them that they did not meet participation requirements and my contact information should they have questions. Those who met inclusion criteria received a short demographic questionnaire to report their age, gender, primary language, and country of residence. They then completed the survey, which took approximately 30 minutes. Once participants completed the survey, they were directed to a page thanking them for their time and participation. The page included an overview of the true nature of the study and included my contact information for any questions.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic survey asked for participant information, such as age, gender, race, primary language, religion, political ideology, and current place of residence. Completing the questionnaire was expected to take less than one minute.

Christian Nationalism Scale

The Christian Nationalism Scale (Perry & Whitehead, 2015) is a 6-item instrument that is used to measure how strongly an individual supports the idea that national identity and governance are inherently tied to Christianity (e.g., “The federal government should declare the United States a Christian Nation”). A total score is generated from items using a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), where participants rate statements believed to reflect their personal views on Christian nationalism. This scale took the participants less than five minutes to complete, and written permission was not needed if used for non-commercial research and educational purposes.

Reliability and Validity. The Christian Nationalism Scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.89 (Perry & Whitehead, 2015). Christian nationalism significantly and positively predicted White participants’ discomfort with interracial marriage, aligning with expectations that link Christian nationalism to racially exclusive attitudes. Christian nationalism was statistically significant across all racial pairings: African American partners ($\beta = 0.22, p < .001$), Hispanic/Latino partners ($\beta = 0.15, p < .001$), and Asian partners ($\beta = 0.16, p < .001$). These positive associations support the convergent validity of the Christian nationalism measure as it correlates with related constructs.

Racial Centrality Measure

The Racial Centrality Measure (Spencer-Rodgers & Collins., 2006) is a 4-item Likert-type scale that is used to assess how central an individuals’ racial identity is to

their overall self-concept (e.g., “Being a member of my racial group is an important part of my self-image”). Using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*), participants rate statements to reflect their personal views, scored by summing the participants’ responses for a total score, with higher scores representing race as a central part of identity. The Racial Centrality Measure took the participants less than 5 minutes to complete and may be used for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission.

Reliability and Validity. The Racial Centrality Measure demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .81 (Spencer-Rodgers & Collins, 2006). Convergent validity was determined by examining the relationships between the Racial Centrality Measure and similar constructs: private regard (i.e., a subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale that assesses personal evaluative beliefs and judgments of one’s racial group; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), self-esteem (i.e., items used from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; Rosenberg, 1979), and group attachment (i.e., measures feelings of closeness or separateness from one’s racial or ethnic group; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Racial centrality was positively correlated with group attachment ($r = .60$, $p < .001$), private regard ($r = .34$, $p < .001$), and self-esteem ($r = .17$, $p < .05$), demonstrating good convergent validity.

Social Dominance Orientation Scale

Adapted from the original 14-item measure developed by Pratto et al. (1994), the Social Dominance Orientation-7 Scale (Ho et al., 2015) is a 16-item measure that is used to assess an individual’s general attitude toward social inequality, specifically how much

they support or oppose one group having more power, status, and resources than other groups (e.g., “It’s probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom” or “Group equality should not be our primary goal”). The instrument is divided into two subscales: *SDO-Dominance* (i.e., belief that high status groups should dominate lower status groups) and *SDO-Egalitarianism* (i.e., supports the idea of maintaining group inequalities through abstract justifications). A total score is generated from items that are scored using a 7-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Oppose*) to 7 (*Strongly Favor*). It took participants about 10 minutes to complete the survey. The scale may be used for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission.

Reliability and Validity. The Social Dominance Orientation-7 Scale demonstrated good internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha for SDO-Dominance .87 and SDO-Egalitarianism .85. The overall Cronbach’s alpha for the Social Dominance Orientation-7 scale was .89, which indicates strong internal consistency.

To establish convergent validity, the Social Dominance Orientation-7 scale was compared to hierarchy-promoting attitudes. For example, correlations between SDO-*dominance* and old-fashioned racism (Sidanius et al., 2008), zero-sum competition (Bobo & Hutchings, 1996), and support for torture (Larsson et al., 2012) were .66, .62, and .41, respectively. Additionally, correlations between SDO-*egalitarianism* and political conservatism (Sidanius et al., 2008), opposition to welfare (Ho et al., 2012), and opposition to racial policy (Ho et al., 2012) were .22-.30, .28-.35, and .40-.52, respectively, demonstrating good convergent validity.

Threat to National Identity Measure

The Threat to National Identity Measure (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014) is a 6-item Likert-type scale that is used to assess participants' perceptions of how multiculturalism may impact national identity (e.g., "Widespread adoption of cultural practices from diverse ethnic groups troubles me because they might weaken American culture"). The instrument is divided into two subscales: *symbolic threat* (i.e., the perceived threat posed by diverse ethnic groups to American values and identity) and *realistic threat* (i.e., the perceived threat to consumption of American resources, jobs, and public services posed by diverse ethnic groups). A composite score is generated from items, using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), where participants rate statements that they believe reflect their personal views on threat to national identity. The total score was used for the purposes of this study. The Threat to National Identity Measure took participants less than 10 minutes to complete and may be used for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission.

Reliability and Validity. The Threat to National Identity Measure demonstrated good internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .73 (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014). Convergent validity was determined by examining the relationships between the Threat to National Identity Measure (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014) and other theoretically similar constructs, e.g., Attitudes towards Hispanic Americans (Hayes, 2013) and Willingness to Engage in Intergroup Contact (Esses & Dovidio, 2002; Tropp & Bianchi, 2006). Threat to National Identity Measure was positively correlated with

prejudicial Attitudes toward Hispanic Americans (0.43) and negatively correlated with Willingness to Engage in Intergroup Contact (-0.20), demonstrating good convergent validity.

Data Analysis Plan

Data collected from SurveyMonkey were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30.0 for data analysis. Hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity. In hierarchical regression, independent variables are entered into the regression equation in a series of steps, beginning with the variable that is theoretically expected to have the strongest predictive power (Warner, 2008). Additional predictor variables are introduced at each subsequent step of the analysis. The theoretical framework and relevant literature that informs this study suggest that Christian nationalism would be the strongest predictor of threat to national identity (Perry & Schleifer, 2023; Whitehead & Perry, 2020) followed by racial centrality (Perez et al., 2022) and social dominance orientation (Serek & Mizik, 2021). Before conducting the multiple regression analysis, regression assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were evaluated. Linearity was assessed using scatterplots to verify that each independent variable has a linear relationship with the dependent variable. Normality of prediction errors were examined through histograms and Q-Q plots to ensure a normal distribution. Homoscedasticity was evaluated by using a scatterplot of residuals vs. predicted values, confirming that error variances are

consistent and exhibit no discernible pattern. Multicollinearity was assessed using variance inflation factor (VIF) values to ensure that the independent variables are not highly correlated with one another.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: To what extent is Christian nationalism, as measured by the Christian Nationalism Scale, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

*H*₀₁: Christian nationalism does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

*H*₁₁: Christian nationalism does significantly perceived threat to national identity.

Research Question 2: To what extent is White racial centrality, as measured by the Racial Centrality Measure, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

*H*₀₂: White racial centrality does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

*H*₁₂: White racial centrality does significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

Research Question 3: To what extent is social dominance orientation, as measured by the Social Dominance Orientation Scale, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

*H*₀₃: Social dominance orientation does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

*H*₁₃: Social dominance orientation does significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

Threats to Validity

The current study presented several potential threats to validity. One was the inability to confirm participant eligibility, as self-reported data from online surveys depend on participants' honesty in meeting inclusion and exclusion criteria. To minimize this risk, prospective participants were screened with questions regarding age, race, religion, language proficiency, and residency. Another threat was the use of convenience sampling, which could compromise the representativeness of the sample and limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, online surveys are susceptible to the social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses that portray them favorably rather than accurately reflect their true thoughts or behaviors, particularly when collecting sensitive information (Krumpal, 2013). Finally, nonresponse bias also posed a threat, as participants may skip questions or fail to complete the survey altogether (Goodwin, 2010). To prevent this issue, the SurveyMonkey platform included a response verification feature that alerts participants to any unanswered questions before submission to ensure completed surveys.

Ethical Procedures

In accordance with institutional guidelines, I obtained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB Project # 10-03-25-0741887) prior to recruitment and data collection. Participants received an informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, its potential benefits, and any possible risks. The form also

clarified that all participant information would be collected anonymously to protect their privacy. Participants may have found the research topic to be sensitive and may have been disinclined to disclose feelings about race, religion, and perceived immigrant threats. In the unlikely event that participants experienced emotional distress or feelings of discomfort, they were provided with the contact information for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), including their website (<https://www.nami.org/help>) and phone number (1-800-950-NAMI [6264]), to offer participants access to support resources. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All collected data will be securely stored on my personal password-protected computer, which is accessible only by me, and retained for five years before being permanently deleted.

Summary

The purpose of the current study was to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity. This study used a quantitative cross-sectional, non-experimental, correlational survey design and targeted English-speaking American citizens ages 18+ years old living in the United States. The data were collected by SurveyMonkey and SPSS statistical software performed hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The instruments used in the study, their reliability and validity, potential threats to the study's validity, and ethical considerations, were considered. Chapter 4 will describe the overview of the process for data analysis and report the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity. This study utilized hierarchical multiple regression analysis to address the research questions. This chapter begins by restating the research questions and hypotheses, followed by a description of the data collection and screening procedures, presentation of descriptive statistics, and an evaluation of statistical assumptions. The chapter concludes with a description of the results.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: To what extent is Christian nationalism, as measured by the Christian Nationalism Scale, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

*H*₀1: Christian nationalism does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

*H*₁1: Christian nationalism does significantly perceived threat to national identity.

Research Question 2: To what extent is White racial centrality, as measured by the Racial Centrality Measure, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

*H*₀2: White racial centrality does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

*H*₁₂: White racial centrality does significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

Research Question 3: To what extent is social dominance orientation, as measured by the Social Dominance Orientation Scale, related to perceived threat to national identity, as measured by the Threat to National Identity Measure?

*H*₀₃: Social dominance orientation does not significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

*H*₁₃: Social dominance orientation does significantly predict perceived threat to national identity.

Data Collection

Data were collected on October 6 and 7, 2025. The survey was designed using the online SurveyMonkey platform and administered to participants recruited from their SurveyMonkey Audience. To be eligible for the study, participants were required to meet all inclusion criteria (i.e., White, English-speaking American citizens, at least 18 years of age, and currently living in the United States). Individuals who did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from participation. The survey was administered online and began with an informed consent form outlining the participants' role, confidentiality safeguards, voluntary participation, potential risks, and my contact information. Participants were provided with a brief overview of the study's purpose and were informed that they could withdraw at any time by selecting "exit" in the upper right-hand corner or by closing their browser window.

To safeguard participants' privacy, the survey was conducted anonymously, without collecting any identifying information. Participants who did not provide consent were directed to a thank you page, ending the survey. After all survey questions were answered, participants were then directed to a debriefing page explaining the use of passive deception, a practice whereby the true purpose of the study is not fully disclosed, a common practice used to solicit unbiased participant responses. The debriefing page informed participants of the true nature of the study, which was to "determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting immigrant threat to national identity." While the G*Power software recommended collecting data from 114 participants, Survey Monkey required this number be rounded up to 120 when using their Survey Monkey Audience. When the study closed on October 7, 2025, 239 surveys were collected. The total sample included 160 out of 239 individuals who began the survey, a 67% completion rate. There was a withdrawal rate of 8%, 14 participants, who began the survey but did not answer all the questions. Seventy-nine (33%) individuals were disqualified, as they did not meet the participation requirements. SurveyMonkey required an estimate of the incidence rate; 50% was selected as the approximate number of participants who would qualify for the study. However, the rate was exceeded, as 67% qualified. While SurveyMonkey estimated it would take 5 minutes to complete all survey items, the average time to complete the survey was four minutes and eight seconds.

Demographics

The demographic data (i.e., age, religion, gender, household income) are collected and displayed in Table 1. Participants who ranged from 35 to 44 years old made up the largest portion of the sample ($n = 52$, 32.5%), and the sample included more males ($n = 97$, 60.62%). Participants were asked their religious affiliation and respondents selected Christian ($n = 116$, 72.5%) more than any other category. Lastly, participants reported their household income category.

Table 1*Frequencies: Age, Religion, Gender, Household Income*

Variable		<i>N</i>	%	
Age	18 to 24	6	3.75	
	25 to 34	15	9.38	
	35 to 44	52	32.50	
	45 to 54	45	28.13	
	55 to 64	22	13.75	
	65 or older	20	12.50	
	Total	160	100	
Religion	Christian	116	72.50	
	Jewish	6	3.75	
	Muslim	10	6.25	
	Buddhist	0	0.00	
	Hindu	0	0.00	
	Other	8	5.00	
	None	20	12.50	
	Total	160	100	
	Gender	Male	97	60.62
		Female	63	39.38
Non-binary		0	0.00	
Prefer Not to Say		0	0.00	
Household Income	Total	160	100	
	\$0-\$9,999	7	4.38	
	\$10,000-\$24,999	9	5.63	
	\$25,000-\$49,999	13	8.13	
	\$50,000-\$74,999	17	10.63	
	\$75,000-\$99,999	20	12.50	
	\$100,000-\$124,999	26	16.25	
	\$125,000-\$149,999	19	11.88	
	\$150,000-\$174,999	16	10.00	
	\$175,000-\$199,999	18	11.25	
	\$200,000+	11	6.88	
	Prefer not to answer	4	2.50	
	Total	160	100	

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The following means and standard deviations were calculated for the three predictor variables: Christian nationalism ($M = 21.77$, $SD = 6.05$), racial centrality ($M =$

13.91, $SD = 4.81$), and social dominance orientation ($M = 49.12$, $SD = 18.47$). The following mean and standard deviation was calculated for the dependent variable, threat to national identity ($M = 25.84$, $SD = 11.84$). Table 2 displays the means and the standard deviations for the predictor and outcome variables.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Outcome and Predictor Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Threat to National Identity	25.84	11.84	6.00	42.00
Christian Nationalism	21.77	6.05	6.00	30.00
Racial Centrality	13.91	4.81	4.00	28.00
Social Dominance Orientation	49.12	18.47	16.00	81.00

Evaluations of Statistical Assumptions

Assumptions for multiple regression were tested prior to conducting the hierarchical multiple regression analysis (i.e., normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and independence of residuals). First, the normality of the independent and dependent variables was evaluated. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test statistic for all of the variables was significant ($p < .001$), suggesting that the data were not normally distributed. However, the Shapiro-Wilk test is highly sensitive to even minor deviations from normality in larger samples. Therefore, given the sample size of 160 participants, this violation was not considered problematic, as multiple regression is a robust test and is tolerant of such deviations when sample sizes exceed approximately 50 participants (Field, 2018). Skewness and kurtosis of the independent and dependent variables was also assessed with visual inspection of histograms and Q-Q plots. Thus, the data were deemed to be sufficiently normal for subsequent analyses. Table 3 provides results of the

Shapiro-Wilk test. Q-Q plots consistent with the normality assumption are provided in Appendix A.

Table 3

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Testing for Study Variables

	Statistic	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Threat to National Identity	.923	160	<.001	-.292	-1.203
Christian nationalism	.947	160	<.001	-.481	-.671
Racial Centrality	.935	160	<.001	-.384	.003
Social Dominance Orientation	.869	160	<.001	-.530	-1.208

Linearity between the predictor and outcome variables was assessed with scatterplots. The scatterplots (see Appendix B) illustrate the linear relationship between each predictor and the outcome variable. The data satisfied the linearity assumption.

Multicollinearity was assessed by examining the variance inflation factor (VIF) associated with each variable, which is represented in Table 4. All VIF values ranged from 1.00 to 1.57, which are well below the recommended threshold of 5.0, and tolerance values exceeded .60. Among the predictors, social dominance orientation exhibited the highest VIF value (1.566), which remained within acceptable limits. These results indicate that multicollinearity was met, and all variables were deemed appropriate for inclusion in the hierarchical regression analysis.

Table 4

Collinearity Diagnostics for Predictor Variables

	Tolerance	VIF
Christian Nationalism	.661	1.513
Racial Centrality	.830	1.205

Social Dominance Orientation	.639	1.566
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Independence of residuals was investigated using the Durbin-Watson d test. The Durbin-Watson test results for the regression, using three predictor variables (i.e., Christian nationalism, racial centrality, and social dominance orientation), yielded a score of 1.932. This score fell within the acceptable range indicating that the residuals were independent. Azami et al. (2020) suggested scores ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 are within an acceptable range for this statistic.

Homoscedasticity was assessed using scatterplots displaying the standardized residual and standardized predicted values for the regression analyses (see Appendix C). Examination of the scatterplots indicated that the variance of residuals was mostly constant for all models. Thus, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met.

In addition to testing the assumptions for multiple regression, the reliability of the instruments used in the current sample was assessed by computing Cronbach's alpha. Table 5 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficients (α) for each instrument with each showing acceptable internal consistency except for racial centrality ($\alpha = .251$; George & Mallery, 2024).

Table 5

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for Study Instruments

Instrument	α
Christian Nationalism	0.862
Racial Centrality	0.251

Social Dominance Orientation	0.848
Threat to National Identity	0.948

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to analyze the relative importance of Christian nationalism, racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity. This method was selected to assess the unique impact of each predictor variable, while simultaneously accounting for the potential influence of other predictor variables. In the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, predictor variables were introduced into the regression analysis in order of their predictive power, based on the theoretical rationale, with Christian nationalism first, followed by racial centrality, and social dominance orientation. The order of variable entry aligned with the theoretical framework and existing literature.

The results revealed that at Stage 1, Christian nationalism significantly contributed to the regression model $F(1, 158) = 252.045, p < .001$. Racial centrality significantly contributed to the regression model in Step 2, $F(2, 157) = 150.188, p < .001$. Finally, the addition of social dominance orientation also contributed significantly to the model at Step 3, $F(3, 156) = 217.440, p < .001$. The explained variance for the models R^2 ranged from .615 to .807, indicating the model accounted for significant variability in threat to national identity. Tables 6 and 7 present the regression model summary.

Table 6

Model Summary

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>SE</i>
1	.784 ^a	.615	.612	7.372
2	.810 ^b	.657	.652	6.980
3	.898 ^c	.807	.803	5.251

Table 7*ANOVA Results for Three Stage Regression Model*

Model		<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1	Regression	13697.31	1	13697.31	252.05	<.001
	Residual	8586.47	158	54.35		
	Total	22283.78	159			
2	Regression	14634.60	2	7317.30	150.19	<.001
	Residual	7649.18	157	48.72		
	Total	22283.78	159			
3	Regression	17983.16	3	5994.39	217.44	<.001
	Residual	4300.61	156	27.57		
	Total	22283.78	159			

Research Questions 1 through 3 asked to what extent do Christian nationalism, racial centrality, and social dominance orientation relate to threat to national identity. Table 8 provides the coefficients for the model. Christian nationalism was a significant and positive predictor of threat to national identity, $\beta = .470$ ($t = 10.87, p = <.001$). This finding suggests that stronger Christian nationalist beliefs predicted greater perceived threat to national identity. Therefore, the null hypothesis for research question 1 was rejected, and the alternative was accepted. In Stage 2, the hierarchical regression revealed that racial centrality was a significant and positive predictor of threat to national identity, $\beta = .114$ ($t = 2.96, p = .004$), meaning that a stronger sense of belonging and identification as a White person predicted greater perceived threat to national identity.

Thus, the null hypothesis for research question 2 was rejected, and the alternative was accepted. In Stage 3, the hierarchical regression revealed that social dominance orientation beliefs were a significant and positive predictor of threat to national identity, $\beta = .485$ ($t = 11.02$, $p = <.001$), meaning that a stronger belief in group-based social hierarchies predicted greater perceived threat to national identity. The null hypothesis for Question 3 was rejected, and the alternative was accepted.

Table 8

Regression Coefficients for Model

		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1	(Constant)	-7.534	2.181		-3.45	<.001
	Christian Nationalism	1.533	.097	.784	15.88	<.001
2	(Constant)	-11.826	2.285		-5.17	<.001
	Christian Nationalism	1.387	.097	.709	14.25	<.001
	Racial Centrality	.537	.122	.218	4.39	<.001
3	(Constant)	-13.356	1.725		-7.74	<.001
	Christian Nationalism	.920	.085	.470	10.87	<.001
	Racial Centrality	.281	.095	.114	2.96	.004
	Social Dominance Orientation	.311	.028	.485	11.02	<.001

Summary

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity. Hierarchical multiple regression revealed significant positive relationships between each predictor and perceived immigrant threat to national identity, such that higher levels of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation predicted higher levels of perceived immigrant threat to national identity. Chapter 5 provides an

interpretation of these findings, a description of the study limitations, implications for social change, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the relative importance of Christian nationalism (IV), White racial centrality (IV), and social dominance orientation (IV) in predicting the perceived immigrant threat to national identity (DV). Results from this study offer valuable insights to scholars, policymakers, community leaders, and practitioners seeking to understand the roots of the hatred of immigrants stoked by the current administration under the campaign of “making America great again” through mass deportation. The analysis revealed significant positive relationships between each predictor and perceived immigrant threat to national identity, such that higher levels of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation predicted higher levels of perceived immigrant threat to national identity.

Interpretations of Findings

Christian Nationalism and Perceived Immigrant Threat to National Identity

Christian nationalism was a significant positive predictor of perceived immigrant threat to national identity. The findings of this study revealed that Christian nationalism shaped perceptions of cultural threat, influenced responses to social change, and supported attitudes and policies aimed at maintaining a particular religious (i.e., Christian) and racial (i.e., White) hierarchy central to American identity. These results are consistent with prior research, demonstrating that Christian nationalism is associated with exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants.

Christian nationalism refers to the belief that Christian symbols, values, and political priorities should be preserved and institutionalized as foundational to the United

States (Baker et al., 2020). This worldview has helped scholars explain negative attitudes toward immigrants, including the endorsement of anti-immigrant stereotypes and overt dehumanization (Al-Kire et al., 2022), as well as resistance to immigrant inclusion and acceptance, such as support for mass deportation policies (Arnsdorf et al., 2024). While cultural and political rhetoric linking Christian nationalism to anti-immigrant sentiment has existed since the late 19th century, one of the earliest scholarly examinations framing this relationship in terms of threat-based perceptions of immigrants was conducted by Stroope et al. (2021). Building on this foundation, Al-Kire et al. (2022) demonstrated that participants who read articles describing declining Christian demographics (i.e., threatened with minority status) reported higher levels of threat and stronger endorsement of Christian nationalist beliefs compared to control participants. Similarly, Perry et al. (2022) found that Christian nationalism significantly predicted support for pronatalist ideology, which promotes the institutionalization of traditional Christian values in the United States and reinforces perceptions that White Americans and Christians are being persecuted.

Collectively, the positive relationship between Christian nationalism and perceived immigrant threat to national identity found in the current study aligns with and extends prior research, suggesting that individuals who believe Christianity should be preserved as the “established” religion in the United States are more likely to believe immigrants are posing a threat to the nation’s cultural identity and social order.

White Racial Centrality and Perceived Immigrant Threat to National Identity

White racial centrality (i.e., being White is central to who I am) was also a significant positive predictor of perceived immigrant threat to national identity. This finding indicates that individuals who place greater importance on their Whiteness as part of their self-concept are more likely to believe immigrants threaten the cultural, social, or demographic foundations of the United States. This aligns with prior research demonstrating that strong racial centrality is associated with heightened sensitivity to perceived challenges to racial status and increased support for exclusionary or restrictive immigrant policies. In their study, Outten et al. (2012) found that anticipated ethnic demographic change increased threat perceptions among White Americans with stronger racial identification, which was linked to increased resistance to policies perceived as favoring immigrants or racial minorities.

White identification is conceptualized as an automatic association between the self and the White ingroup (Knowles & Peng, 2005). This construct has been examined extensively in relation to attitudes toward racial and ethnic outgroups (e.g., immigrants, people of color). Prior research demonstrates that racial centrality predicted support for conservative White politicians who often endorse restrictive immigration policies (Bai, 2022), indicating that racial centrality (i.e., how important Whiteness is to a person's self-concept) indirectly reinforces perceptions of cultural, economic, or political threats posed by immigrants. Consistent with this trend, Bech (2023) found that White participants with strong racial centrality responded more negatively to positive political rhetoric about minorities (e.g., Latinos, Muslims) and more positively to negative rhetoric. These

findings suggested a predisposition to view minority groups, including immigrants, as threats to the standing and security of the White ingroup in the United States. Research by Perez et al. (2022) further illustrated that threat to White racial centrality can emerge within one's own political party. White Democrats, who are members of the more racially diverse political party, were more opposed to immigration when they perceived their racial status within the Democratic Party to be diminishing. This suggests that perceived competition over racial representation, even intraparty, can intensify anti-immigrant attitudes.

When considered alongside prior findings, the positive relationship between White racial centrality and perceived immigrant threat observed in the current study reinforces the idea that when individuals view racial hierarchy as normative or believe their racial group should retain social dominance, immigration is more readily perceived as a challenge to that hierarchy and, by extension, to national identity. These threat perceptions extend beyond individual beliefs and are demonstrated in current immigration enforcement practices (i.e., expanded arrests, detention and deportation efforts, and expedited removal without due process; American Immigration Council, 2025; Migration Policy Institute, 2025; Prison Policy Initiative, 2025), illustrating how identity-based threat perceptions can translate into institutional actions. These practices disproportionately affect racial minority populations and often rely on assumptions of criminality or undocumented status, underscoring how perceived threats to national identity may shape policies and practices that define civic inclusion, legal standing, and

access to due process (American Immigration Council, 2025; American Psychological Association, 2025).

Social Dominance Orientation and Perceived Immigrant Threat to National Identity

Social dominance orientation measures support for inequality between social groups, including those defined by race, immigration status, religion, gender, socioeconomic class, and cultural dominance, and plays a central role in intergroup attitudes and policy preferences (Ho et al., 2015). Individuals high in social dominance orientation tend to support policies that preserve existing hierarchies and oppose efforts aimed at increasing equity. Because immigrants are frequently framed as culturally distinct nonmembers whose presence is perceived as hijacking demographic, cultural, or political power structures, they may be perceived as jeopardizing the dominance of the majority group and, therefore, threatening to national identity.

Consistent with this framework, social dominance orientation was also a significant positive predictor of perceived immigrant threat to national identity in this present study. This indicates that individuals who prefer hierarchical social structures and group-based dominance (i.e., White Christian men) are more likely to perceive immigrants as threatening the established social and cultural order of the United States. This relationship persisted alongside other identity-based predictors, which underscores the unique role that dominance-oriented ideology plays in shaping perceptions of national belonging.

This study's findings align closely with prior research demonstrating that social dominance orientation is associated with prejudicial attitudes, opposition to

multiculturalism, and support for exclusionary policies. Extending the work of Wedell and Bravo (2021), the present study indicated that higher levels of social dominance orientation are associated with greater perceived immigrant threat to national identity, suggesting that individuals who endorse hierarchical beliefs are more likely to interpret immigration and multicultural inclusion as challenges to dominant cultural norms (i.e., support for bilingual education, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives) and are more likely to endorse exclusionary conceptions of national identity.

Similarly, Guillermo et al. (2021) demonstrated that social dominance orientation and threat perceptions predicted support for punitive immigration policies. While their work focused on policy preferences, the present study extends this research by identifying perceived immigrant threat to national identity as a key psychological mechanism through which dominance-oriented beliefs may operate. With this in mind, current policy positions endorsed and implemented by the current Republican administration (i.e., expanded immigration enforcement, restrictions on asylum and refugee admissions, and reduction of protections perceived as preferential treatments to immigrants or racial minorities) reflect a broader resistance to inclusionary policies. Together, these findings illustrate how social dominance-based preferences for hierarchical social structures can translate into opposition to multiculturalism and support for policies that preserve the existing social and national hierarchies.

Additionally, Smith and Stathi (2022) found that social dominance orientation was positively associated with stigmatization, moderating the relationship between social contact and stigma. Specifically, individuals high in social dominance orientation

exhibited minimal reduction in stigmatizing attitudes even with greater social interaction (Hodson et al., 2013; Smith & Stahi, 2022). These findings suggest that social dominance orientation functions as an ideological lens through which hierarchical social arrangements are justified and maintained (Pratto et al., 2013; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Consistent with social dominance theory, individuals high in social dominance orientation are more likely to rationalize inequality and morally disengage from the consequences of exclusionary practices directed toward marginalized outgroups (Kteily et al., 2016).

In the context of U.S. immigration attitudes, higher levels of social dominance orientation have been associated with support for punitive enforcement strategies, including restrictive immigration policies and heightened law-enforcement responses toward immigrants perceived as threatening to the dominant social order (Pratto et al., 2013; Thomsen et al., 2008). These threat perceptions have metastasized into current immigration enforcement practices (i.e., arrest, incarcerate, and deport without due process) that disproportionately affect Black and brown individuals and reinforce assumptions of criminality and undocumented status under the Trump administration (American Immigration Council, 2025; Migration Policy Institute, 2025). Together, these findings illustrate how social dominance orientation legitimizes social hierarchies and sustains negative evaluations of outgroups through support for exclusionary policies.

Current manifestations of social dominance orientation extend beyond attitudes to observable political and institutional dynamics. For example, state-level efforts to restrict Critical Race Theory and related discussions of systemic inequality in U.S. education

reflect resistance to frameworks that challenge established racial hierarchies (Ray & Gibbons, 2021; Watson, 2023). Similarly, legislative and executive actions limiting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in higher education and federal institutions have been critiqued as reinforcing dominant group interests while suppressing equity-based initiatives (Florida Senate Bill 266, 2023; Vissing, 2025). Empirical research further demonstrates that dominance-oriented ideologies have behavioral implications, with higher levels of social dominance orientation predicting greater tolerance for political violence and stronger endorsement for exclusionary policy preferences (Piazza & O'Rourke, 2024). Additionally, Renstrom (2023) found that social dominance orientation predicted misogynistic attitudes among American men, even after controlling for right-wing authoritarianism and entitlement. Though focused on gendered attitudes, these findings reinforce the broader concept that social dominance orientation predicts hostility toward groups perceived as challenging hierarchical social relations.

Taken together, these studies are both supported and extended by the current findings. The current study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that social dominance orientation is not only associated with exclusionary attitudes and policy support, but also directly predicts perceptions of immigrants as a threat to national identity. By situating perceived immigrant threat within a broader dominance-oriented framework, this study highlights how preferences for hierarchical social organization shape contemporary understanding of who belongs within the nation and whose inclusion is viewed as destabilizing to the social order.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted online and included only White English-speaking American citizens, aged 18 years and older, residing in the United States. For this reason, the findings are generalizable only to this limited population. Also limiting was the potential for self-selection bias inherent in the use of a convenience internet sample. Convenience sampling may reduce representativeness of the sample, as individuals who elect to participate may differ demographically (e.g., demographically or dispositionally) from those who choose not to volunteer for research (Stroebe et al., 2018). Online surveys are also susceptible to social desirability bias, as participants may provide responses that portray themselves favorably rather than accurately, especially when addressing sensitive topics (Krumpal, 2013). To help reduce this bias, participants were reminded that their responses were anonymous and that no identifying information was collected. This study is also subject to limitations related to its research design. The use of a cross-sectional, nonexperimental, correlational survey design allowed for the examination of the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation to perceived immigrant threat to national identity; however, this approach cannot determine how these attitudes might change over time and does not support casual conclusions. Additionally, because demographic characteristics such as religion, age, gender, household income were included only as descriptive indicators, the study cannot exclude the possibility that these variables affected participants' responses and contributed to the patterns observed in the data. There could also be a limitation associated with an individual's eligibility to participate in the study,

as it could not be confirmed. Although screening questions were used to limit this risk, there was no way to ensure that participants responded to these items truthfully.

Recommendations

The goal of this study was to address the gap in the existing literature by investigating the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity. Although all hypotheses in this study were supported, additional research is needed to deepen understanding of the sociopsychological factors (e.g., individuals' conceptions of national identity, exposure to media or political cues, the quality of intergroup contact with immigrants) that shape perceived immigrant threat to national identity. Future researchers could also consider replicating this study with more demographically and geographically diverse participants, as research has shown that attitudes toward immigration and national identity vary significantly across geographical contexts (Hopkins, 2010). Additionally, including participants with differing immigration statuses may clarify how personal migration histories shape perceptions of threat. As the current study included only participants residing within the United States, future research may include Americans living abroad, whose perspectives on immigration and national identity may differ from domestic residents (Schildkraut, 2007).

Future studies may benefit by implementing longitudinal or experimental designs to assess whether attitudes related to Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation change over time or in response to specific conditions, which would yield causal interpretations. Researchers may also benefit from examining

additional variables that were not included in this study but may play an important role in shaping perceived threat, such as right-wing authoritarianism, national identity centrality, political ideology, or media exposure (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Perry et al., 2021).

Additionally, while this study used a quantitative design, a qualitative or mixed-methods approach, to include interviews or focus groups, may expand understanding by exploring how individuals interpret national identity, react to demographic change, or explain perceived cultural or immigrant threat (Cobb et al., 2019; Edgell et al., 2006).

Finally, methodological recommendations for future research include to employ sampling strategies that enhance representativeness, such as probability or stratified sampling, or combining online recruitment with community-based approaches to reach individuals with limited internet access. Survey accessibility should be improved by offering instruments that are mobile-compatible, which would further expand accessibility and improve participation among underrepresented groups (Dillman et al., 2014). Additionally, future studies might also incorporate behavioral outcome measures (e.g., policy support or resource-allocation decisions), objective indicators of local demographic change (e.g., census-based changes in immigrant population), or advanced statistical models, such as a longitudinal model, to further clarify the mechanisms linking these ideological orientations to perceptions of immigrant threat to national identity over time (Enos, 2016; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). These methodological improvements would strengthen understanding of how Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation shape perceptions of immigrant threat to national identity.

Implications

The results of this study offer several significant theoretical and social change implications. Informed by intergroup threat theory, I predicted, and found, that Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation significantly predicted perceived immigrant threat to national identity. These findings provide strong empirical support for the theory's claim that realistic and symbolic threats involving culture, values, and identity are significant drivers of intergroup tension (Stephan et al., 2009). These findings align with this framework by demonstrating how multiple belief systems, emphasizing cultural preservation and group superiority, escalate perceived threats by immigrants to the cultural identity of the United States.

The link between Christian nationalism and perceived immigrant threat to national identity reinforces the claim made by intergroup threat theory that threat perceptions are shaped by the extent to which immigrants who, with their increasing numbers and importation of their customs, religions, and values, will dilute the White nativist majority way of life. Christian nationalism reinforces symbolic threat by establishing cultural boundaries that marginalize religiously or culturally different groups (Baker et al., 2020). Similarly, White racial centrality predicted perceived immigrant threat, supporting intergroup threat theory's argument that perceived threats to group dominance or status activate defensive responses (Craig & Richeson, 2014). These defensive responses are evident in current political and institutional actions that emphasize boundary maintenance and cultural preservation, including restrictive immigration enforcement practices, limitations for asylum and refugee admissions, and

opposition to inclusionary initiatives framed as undermining traditional values (American Immigration Council, 2025; Migration Policy Institute, 2025). As discussed previously, these defensive responses can also include the state-level efforts to restrict the teaching and discussions of systemic racism in education, which reflects broader opposition to frameworks perceived as destabilizing established racial and cultural hierarchies (Ray & Gibbons, 2021; Watson, 2023).

According to Stephan et al. (2009), when individuals place greater emphasis on their racial identity, they may interpret immigrants as challenging established racial hierarchies or contributing to demographic changes, activating both symbolic threats to cultural values (e.g., language and religion) and realistic threats related to competition for resources (i.e., jobs, healthcare). The significant role of social dominance orientation is consistent with intergroup threat theory, such that individuals who support group-based hierarchy experience greater threat when outgroups are perceived as challenging or weakening existing social structures (Ho et al., 2015; Pratto et al., 1994). For instance, individuals high in social dominance orientation may perceive policies that expand immigrant pathways to citizenship or grant work authorization for immigrants as threatening because these policies are interpreted as elevating a subordinate group and weakening established social hierarchies. Instead of viewing these changes as inclusionary, dominance-oriented individuals are more likely to interpret them as zero-sum (i.e., gains for immigrants are losses for the dominant group) challenges to the status, resources, and cultural authority of the dominant group, which activates heightened perception of threat (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). That social dominance orientation

increased perceived immigrant threat, reinforced the theoretically predicted relation between hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and amplified perceptions of threat from outgroups. Current political rhetoric frequently portrays immigrants as competitors for jobs, healthcare, and social services. Research on ethnic competition and welfare chauvinism demonstrated that perceived competition over these resources heightens exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants (Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). In the context of the current study, these competition-based narratives help explain why social dominance orientation and White racial centrality predicted perceived immigrant threat to national identity, as dominance-oriented individuals are especially likely to interpret labor and welfare debates as challenges to existing hierarchies and entitlement boundaries (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Collectively, these findings strengthen the theoretical foundation of intergroup threat theory by demonstrating how socio-cultural beliefs systems shape threat perceptions and suggesting that perceived threats to cultural values and national identity may be more influential than concerns about material competition in shaping attitudes toward immigrants. The results extend intergroup threat theory by demonstrating how identity-based threat perceptions move beyond attitudinal prejudice to justify aggressive state interventions, to include the deployment of law enforcement and military resources for immigration control, widespread detention and deportation, and the normalization of diminished due process protections for individuals categorized as “illegal” or culturally non-belonging.

The results of this study have several practical implications for practitioners, educators, and community organizations. Understanding that Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation predict perceived immigrant threat may assist professionals working in social services, education, public policy, and community organizations to become more aware of the current social and institutional resistance to immigrant integration initiatives in America. Programs that address misinformation about immigration, demographic change, and national identity may be especially helpful in reducing political and social polarization. Additionally, the findings also underscore the importance of intergroup contact and dialogue-based efforts. Consistent with intergroup contact theory, planned opportunities for positive engagement with immigrants may reduce perceived threat and foster more inclusive attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Practitioners could also integrate discussions about ideology, identity, and cultural narratives into diversity training or community programming, which could inform interventions designed to improve relations between immigrants and U.S.-born residents (Schellhaas & Dovidio, 2016).

In terms of social change implications, the findings in this study highlight the need for public education initiatives encouraging more inclusive understandings of American national identity. Research suggests that narratives highlighting shared values and common goals can reduce negative reactions to outgroups by strengthening belonging and minimizing perceptions of threat (Aldar et al., 2025; Holtug, 2025). Because ideologies such as Christian nationalism and racial identity centrality influence

exclusionary attitudes, efforts to broaden narratives around national identity may promote greater acceptance of immigrant communities.

Additionally, by identifying ideological predictors of perceived immigrant threat, this study supports social change efforts aimed at reducing prejudice, improving immigrant integration, and promoting inclusive democratic norms. Educators, policymakers, and community leaders may use these findings to develop initiatives that foster empathy, reduce fear-based narratives, and promote engagement across cultural and religious differences. Ultimately, such efforts may contribute to more informed policy decisions, improved intergroup relations, and a more inclusive vision of American identity.

Conclusion

The study determined the relative importance of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation in predicting perceived immigrant threat to national identity. As predicted, the results revealed significant positive relationships between each predictor and perceived immigrant threat to national identity, in which higher levels of Christian nationalism, White racial centrality, and social dominance orientation predicted higher levels of perceived immigrant threat to national identity. The findings of this study extend existing research by demonstrating that perceived immigrant threat is not driven by a single ideological factor, but instead reflects the combined influence of religious, racial, and hierarchy-based belief systems. Christian nationalism emerged as a meaningful predictor of perceived threat, reinforcing the role of symbolic threat beliefs in shaping attitudes toward immigrants. White racial centrality

also significantly predicted threat perceptions, highlighting the importance of racial identity and concerns about group status in interpreting demographic change.

Additionally, social dominance orientation contributed uniquely to perceived immigrant threat, consistent with its theoretical link to hierarchy-enhancing beliefs and opposition to social equality. Collectively, these results provide strong empirical support for intergroup threat theory and clarify how distinct but interrelated worldviews shape perceptions of national identity and group boundaries.

While most immigrants in the United States currently hold lawful status, this study found that the increasing perception that immigrants pose a threat to national identity in the United States fuels exclusionary attitudes, prejudice, and opposition to immigration and integration policies. Consequently, these attitudes contribute to an increasingly destabilizing social dynamic in which polarization intensifies, public trust in democratic institutions erodes, and conditions necessary for social cohesion, civic participation, and equal protection under the law are systemically decimated (Lundberg & Abdelzadeh, 2022; Neymotin, 2014). These findings highlight the real-world implications of perceived threat to national identity extending beyond individual attitudes, influencing community cohesion, policy support, public trust, and overall community well-being by shaping how inclusion, belonging, and legitimacy are negotiated within our society.

Aside from its theoretical contributions, this study holds important implications for research, practice, and social change. The findings highlight the need for continued empirical study into how ideological belief systems shape public attitudes toward immigrants, specifically through longitudinal, experimental, and mixed-methods

approaches. The results highlight the value of educational, community-based, and policy-focused efforts that address perceived threat, misinformation, and exclusionary narratives surrounding national identity. Most importantly, this study supports social change efforts aimed at reducing prejudice, improving immigrant integration, and promoting more inclusive and diverse civic values.

In conclusion, perceived immigrant threat to national identity is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon shaped by religious, racial, and hierarchy-based belief systems. By illuminating the ideological foundations of this perceived threat, the present study contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms that shape current debates about immigration and national belonging in the United States. It is my hope that these findings will inform future scholarship, guide evidence-based practice, and support efforts to foster greater social cohesion in an increasingly diverse society.

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Appendix A: Q-Q Plots

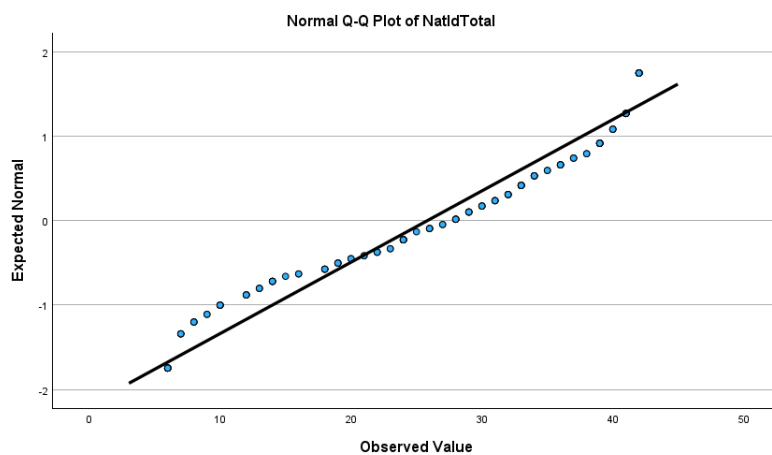
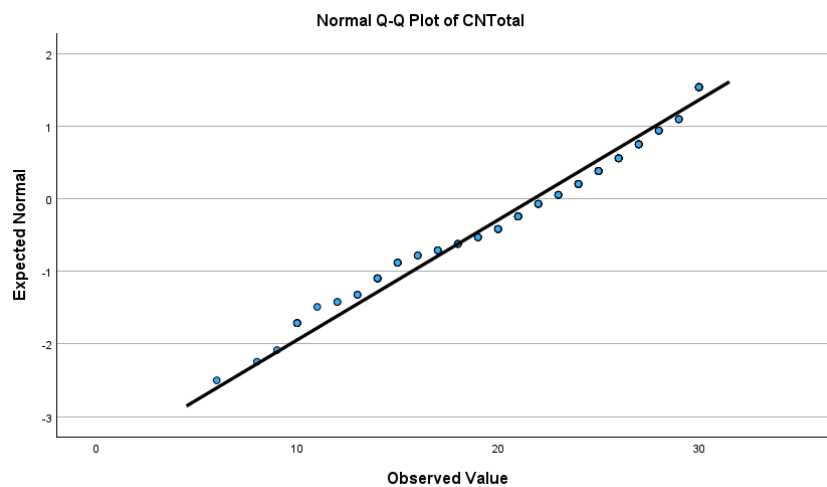
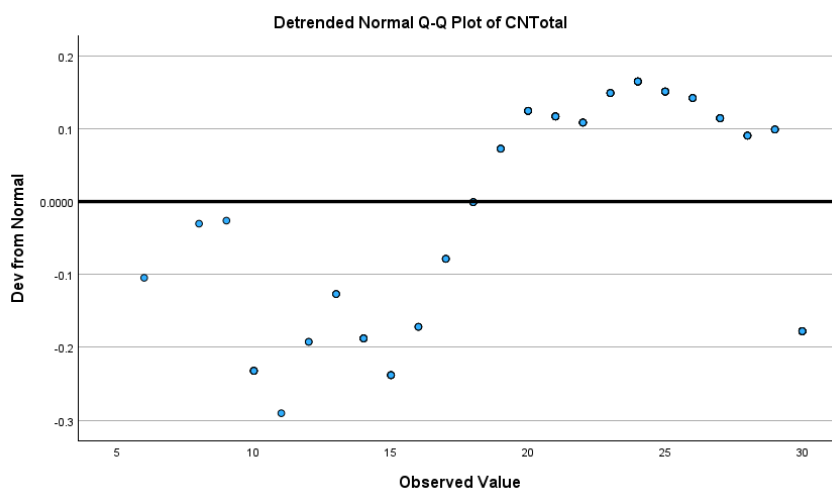
Figure A1*Q-Q Plot for National Identity***Figure A2***Q-Q Plot for Christian Nationalism*

Figure A3

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot for Christian Nationalism

**Figure A4**

Q-Q Plot for White Racial Centrality

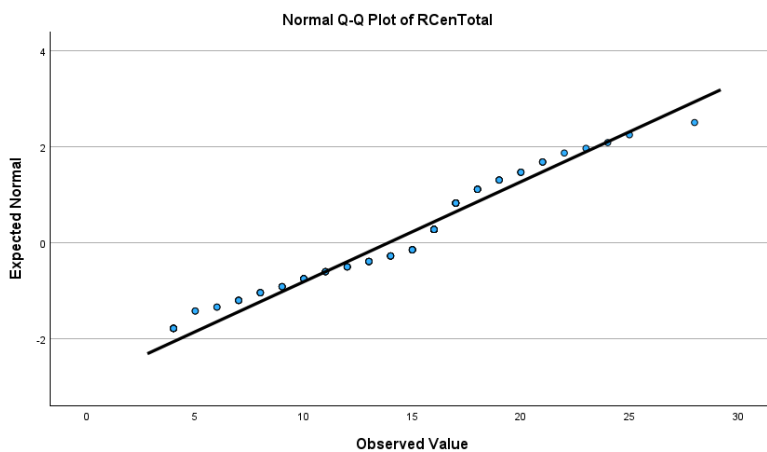
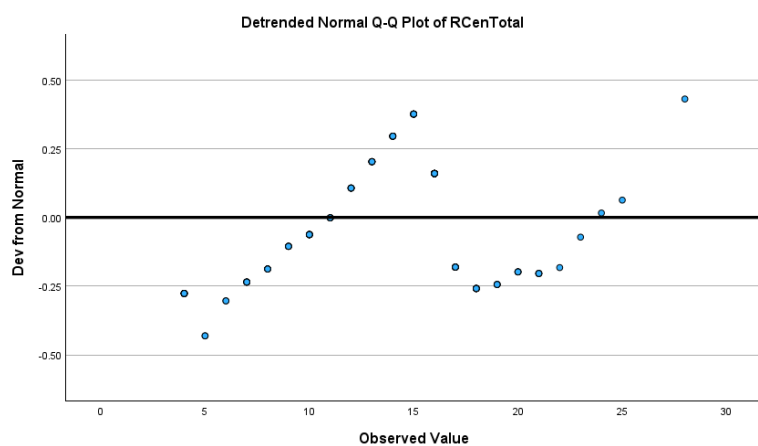


Figure A5

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot for White Racial Centrality

**Figure A6**

Q-Q Plot for Social Dominance Orientation

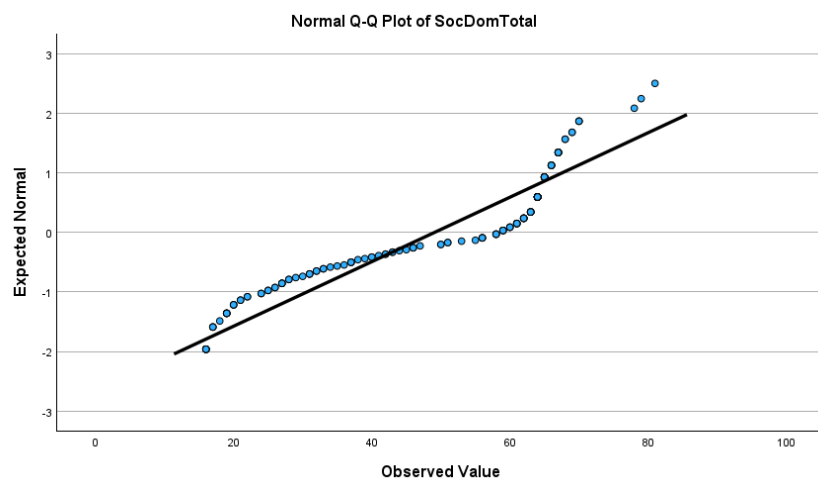
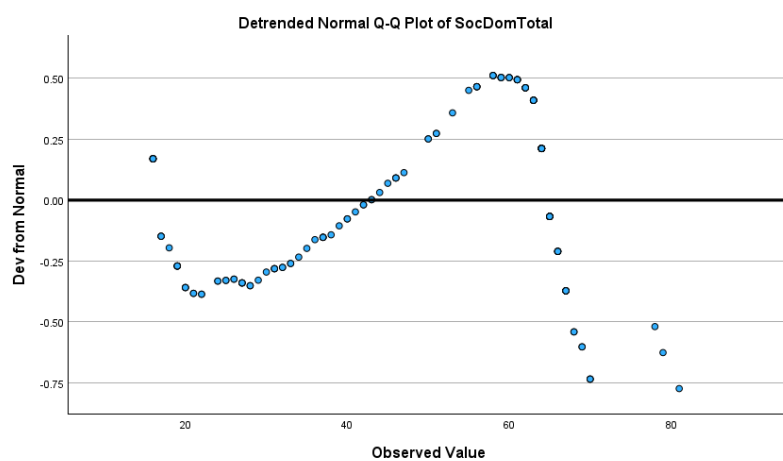
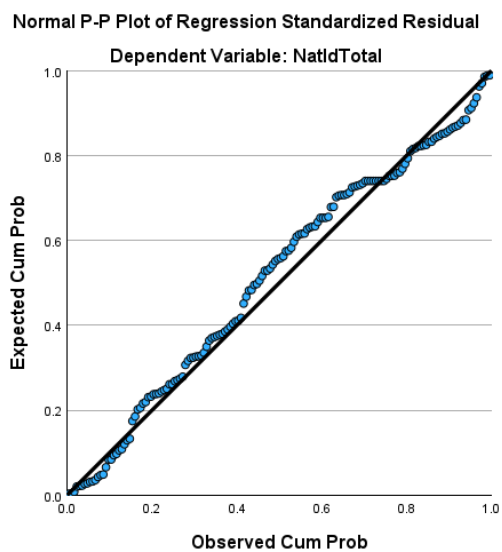


Figure A7

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot for Social Dominance Orientation



Appendix B: P-P Plot

Figure B1*P-P Plot National Identity***Figure B2***Scatterplot National Identity*