

# Denominational Differences in Support for Race-Based Policies Among White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans

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*This study builds upon past studies of denominational culture and racial attitudes by positioning evangelicals as the basis of comparison when assessing denominational differences in American racial attitudes. The study also attempts to extend the theoretical contribution of religious culture and racial attitudes by assessing support for race-based policies among black, white, Hispanic, and Asian-American evangelical and nonevangelical Protestants. In short, arguments about a distinctive individualistic religious culture among evangelicals may be useful in explaining why white evangelicals maintain lower levels of support for policies aimed at reducing racial inequality than do mainline and secular whites. However, it is of less relevance in explaining the race-based policy attitudes of white evangelicals relative to white Catholics and among nonwhites as a whole.*

A number of scholars note the paradoxical role that religion plays in challenging racial hegemony (Alport 1954; Gorsuch and Aleshire 1974; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Marable 1983). On the one hand, all major religions promote the common kinship of humankind, that all people are neighbors and are equally valuable in the eyes of the creator. On the other hand, the religion of dominant groups often reinforces or, at the very least, offers weak challenges to their own dominance (Gorsuch and Aleshire 1974). Some scholars argue that the empirical connection between white religious involvement and racial prejudice is linked to prejudiced whites being more likely to conform to the status quo of white and Christian hegemony in the United States (Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis 1993; Gorsuch and Aleshire 1974; Hunsberger and Jackson 2005). In contrast, nonreligious whites are more likely to question dominant cultural values, their privileged racial position, and racial inequality (Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis 1993; Gorsuch and Aleshire 1974; Hunsberger and Jackson 2005). Research on denominational affiliation and racial attitudes suggests that there are also real cultural differences in the approach that white religious persons adopt in acknowledging racial inequality (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2001; Hinojosa and Park 2004; Hunt 2007).

By religious culture, this study refers to a set of norms, values, and beliefs that develop and are agreed upon by members who voluntarily join or associate with a specific religious tradition (Swidler 1986; Wood 1999). Consistent with the cultural toolkit thesis, symbols, stories, beliefs, and rituals are utilized by members to gain an understanding of social reality (Swidler 1986). White evangelical Protestants tend to make sense of social reality via free-will individualistic cultural tools (Emerson and Smith 2001). Free-will individualism is based on the premise that individuals exist independent of structures, institutions, and even history. Because individuals are granted free will from God, they are recognized as being fully responsible for their actions (Stark and Glock 1969). From this perspective, racial group distinctions are seen as having a negligible impact on life chances. Rather, one's relationship with the risen Christ has the most impact on behavior, as this relationship distances humans from sin and makes them aware of God's will (Emerson and Smith 2001; Stark and Glock 1969). Evangelical Protestants tend to

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place emphasis on the transcendent belief in Christ as a key strategy in moving society, one person at a time, to reducing human strife and suffering (Emerson and Smith 2001). Hence, evangelicals tend to view public policies as inadequate solutions to racial and other problems in America (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2001). Catholic and mainline social thought also recognizes the impact of individual choices on life chances. However, the prophetic strand of these religious traditions also places great emphasis on the role of structural forces, such as racism, unjust laws, and unequal access to socioeconomic resources, in shaping opportunity structures for marginalized groups (Cooper 2003; Findlay 1993; Gutierrez 1988; USCCB 1979).

Nonetheless, the degree to which one can apply the evangelical racial toolkit beyond whites is questionable. Few studies examine denominational differences in racial attitudes among a variety of racial/ethnic groups (Emerson and Smith 2001 is a noted exception). And so it is unclear if denominational culture informs the racial attitudes of white, black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans in the same way. This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by assessing support for race-based policies among black, white, Hispanic, and Asian-American evangelical and nonevangelical Protestants. This study also seeks to more clearly assess the degree to which the racial attitudes of evangelical Protestants differ from that of specific religious out-group members. There is a fairly consistent line of research suggesting that the race-based policy attitudes of evangelicals are more conservative than that of nonbelievers and nonevangelicals in aggregate (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2001; Hinojosa and Park 2004). However, it is less clear if the racial attitudes of evangelicals are distinctive from members of specific denominational/religious bodies such as, mainline Protestants, Catholics, non-Christians, and others.

### **Denominational Affiliation and White Racial Attitudes**

Despite their many anti-racism educational programs and resolutions, mainline Protestant and Catholic leaders readily admit that there is weak political will among their rank and file, the overwhelming majority of which is white, to challenge the *status quo* of racial inequality (Cavendish 2004; Presbyterian Church 2004; USCCB 1979). Between 1979 and 2004, the average white Catholic, mainline, evangelical, and secularists exhibited diminished support for government policies aimed at ensuring equal opportunity, less support for government aid to blacks, and less support of government's role in ensuring that blacks get fair treatment in jobs (Cavendish 2004; Sapiro, Rosenstone, and NES 2004). Analyses of data drawn from the American National Election Study reveal that prejudice and a desire to protect racial group interests and dominance play a key role in shaping white attitudes toward race-based public policies (Kinder and Sanders 1996).

Notwithstanding, the empirical work of a number of scholars provides compelling evidence that white evangelicals maintain a distinctively less structural orientation than nonevangelicals when it comes to explaining racial inequality (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2001; Hinojosa and Park 2004). Their work suggests that white evangelicals are less likely than are nonbelievers and nonevangelicals to accept the role that racial discrimination plays in accounting for socioeconomic inequality between blacks and whites. Conversely, white evangelicals are more likely than others to believe that racial inequality is the result of individual blacks not trying hard enough. Along those lines, white evangelicals are more likely than others to believe that blacks should not get more economic help from the government than others (Edgell and Tranby 2007). However, as stated above, a slight limitation in the aforementioned studies is that they either compare evangelicals to nonbelievers or all nonevangelicals in aggregate. As such, it is unclear if white evangelicals possess race-based policy attitudes that are significantly different from Catholics, mainline Protestants, and others.

## Religion and Racial Attitudes Among Racial/Ethnic Minorities

In contrast to white evangelicals, conservative black Protestants are more aware than religiously unaffiliated blacks of structural factors, such as racial discrimination, as contributing to racial inequality (Emerson and Smith 2001). Conservative black Protestants are also less likely than religiously unaffiliated blacks to attribute racial inequality to blacks' poor motivation (Emerson and Smith 2001). Similarly, theologically conservative blacks are more likely than other blacks to believe that a lack of access to quality schools contributes to racial inequality (Edgell and Tranby 2007). However, theologically conservative blacks are no more likely than other blacks to believe that blacks should receive governmental assistance because of past discrimination (Edgell and Tranby 2007). Again, because the above studies tend to compare conservative black Protestants to the religiously unaffiliated and nonconservative Protestant blacks, it remains unclear if black evangelicals maintain racial attitudes that are distinctive from blacks affiliated with historically black Protestant, mainline, Catholic, and other denominational and religious groups.

It is unlikely that black evangelicals maintain different levels of support for public policies aimed at curbing racial inequality than blacks affiliated with historically black Protestants, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and others. A history of racial marginalization contributed to the development of a racial consciousness in which African Americans, regardless of religious tradition or denominational background, recognized their common interests in ending racial oppression (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Black racial group interest in improving the social condition of blacks continues to inform the policy attitudes and political behavior of black Americans (Dawson 1994). Moreover, it would not be surprising if black evangelical and blacks affiliated with other denominational bodies maintain similar support for public policies to redress racial inequality.

It is also unlikely that denominational affiliation plays a major role in the racial attitudes of nonblack ethnic minorities. Unlike white Americans, Asian and Hispanic Americans do not have a historical relationship with African Americans characterized by in-group dominance and black marginalization. While Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans tend to constitute the small business class in many urban black communities, they by no means dominate the financial, political, and educational institutions that shape life chances. The lack of hegemonic dominance of nonblack minorities over African Americans may contribute to their clergy and laity facing less of a dilemma within and between religious traditions in regard to their role in amending the socioeconomic disadvantaged position of blacks. Edgell and Tranby (2007) did find, however, that Hispanic Catholics are more likely than Hispanic non-Catholics to believe that unfair laws and social institutions are barriers to African-American advancement. Again, however, the construct of non-Catholics does not clarify whether Hispanic Catholics actually maintain a more structural interpretation of the causes and potential solutions to racial inequality than do evangelical Hispanics. This leads to this study's two central research questions:

- (1) Do white evangelicals possess race-based policy attitudes that are significantly different from white Catholics, white mainline Protestants, and whites of other faiths?
- (2) Do black, Hispanic, and Asian-American evangelicals also possess race-based policy attitudes that are significantly different from their respective Catholic, mainline Protestant, and other faith counterparts?

## METHODOLOGY

### Data

This study utilizes the 2004 National Politics Study (NPS) to test the relationship between denominational affiliation and racial attitudes. The primary goal of the NPS is to gather comparative

data about individuals' political attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and behaviors at the beginning of the 21st century. The Program at Research of Black Americans of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research went into the field in September 2004, shortly before the presidential election and concluded a few months later in February 2005. All of the 3,309 interviews were conducted over the telephone. The interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish, depending on the preference of the respondent, and the overall response rate is 31 percent.<sup>1</sup>

The NPS is the first multiracial and multiethnic national study of political and racial attitudes. This study is based on a national sample of individuals, aged 18 years or older, from a variety of different racial and ethnic groups. Interviews occurred throughout the United States in urban and rural centers of the country where significant numbers of black Americans reside. In total, 756 African Americans, 919 non-Hispanic whites, 757 Hispanics, and 503 Asian Americans were interviewed. An additional 404 Afro-Caribbean respondents were also interviewed. They have been removed from these analyses, however, due to their low evangelical sample size. Each of the NPS racial/ethnic groups were sampled from separate sampling frames. As a result, researchers must treat each racial/ethnic sample as a completely separate study and not include them within the same analyses.

The National Politics Study felt it necessary to investigate the racial and political attitudes of the above groups because of the changing racial/ethnic demographics in the U.S. Census data indicate that Hispanic and Asian Americans are the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States (Passel and Cohn 2008). By 2050, census projections indicate that the United States will no longer be over one-half white (Passel and Cohn 2008). Changing demographics will undoubtedly influence the race/ethnicity of the electorate and expectations of how elected leaders should apportion public resources. To that end, it is increasingly important to understand demographic as well as cultural-religious factors that influence the racial and policy attitudes of an increasingly diverse nation.

## Measures

### *Dependent Variables: Public Opinion on Race-Based Policies and Proposals*

This study measures support for proposals and policies to reduce racial inequality similar to that of other national studies on race-based policy attitudes (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Schuman et al. 2004). Respondents were asked to state whether or not they agreed with the statement that blacks deserve no special favors because European ethnics overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Respondents were also asked if they supported job preferences for groups that have experienced past discrimination and if they believe that affirmative action is a good thing. All three of these variables are dichotomous dependent variables.

### *Independent Variables: Denominational Affiliation*

Similar to Hinojosa and Park (2004), denominational affiliation serves as a proxy for distinctions in the cultural toolkits of evangelicals and nonevangelicals. While limited in scope, this measure is the closest that the NPS comes to measuring this construct. As such, this study relies on Steensland et al.'s (2000) classification of religious denominations. Membership status in national religious organizations such as the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals are used to classify various Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian denominations into evangelical, mainline, and historically black

<sup>1</sup> This is comparable to the median response rate (30 percent) reported by Groves (2006) in his study of over 200 response rates in 35 published articles.

Protestant traditions. Respondents were divided into the nominal categories of evangelical, mainline Protestant, Catholic, black Protestant, Eastern religions (e.g., Buddhists and Hindus), other faiths, and secular. The secular category includes those who do not identify with or affiliate with a religion. This study's denominational/religious groupings are consistent with the denominational/religious groupings as recorded within two of the largest ongoing national public opinion surveys in the United States, the General Social Survey and the American National Election Survey.

Because of sample size considerations, there are slight differences in the denominations/faiths represented among the varying racial/ethnic groups included in this study. There are no separate dummy variables of black Protestant churches and Eastern religious faiths in the white American analyses. Such individuals along with followers of many other faiths are instead grouped in an "other faith" category. Similarly, separate mainline and Catholic dummy variables are not included in the African-American or Asian-American analyses. These variables are instead included as a combined mainline Catholic category. In addition, the Eastern religion category was added for Asian Americans. Finally, mainline Protestants are not included in the Hispanic-American analyses.

### *Control Variables: Sociodemographics and Racial Attitudes*

In an attempt to replicate the analytical approach of past studies on denominational background and racial attitudes (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2001; Hinojosa and Park 2004; Hunt 2007), this controls for frequency of church attendance, college education, family income, home ownership, age, gender, and living in the South.<sup>2</sup> This study also takes into account the racial/ethnic homogeneity of the religious congregation. It does so by comparing the dominant racial/ethnic group in the congregation to that of mixed race/ethnic congregations and others. Finally, this study controls for the immigration status of Asian and Hispanic Americans.<sup>3</sup>

### *Statistical Methods*

Because all of the dependent variables are dichotomous, logit regression was used to test the effect of denominational affiliation on race-based policy attitudes.

## **RESULTS**

The bivariate data presented in Table 1 indicate that white evangelicals have more conservative racial attitudes than do their mainline, secular, and to a lesser extent, other faith counterparts. While white Catholics are more supportive of affirmative action than are evangelicals, both groups share a similar perspective on whether African Americans deserve special favors for past discrimination and on policies that offer job preferences to groups that have faced discrimination in the past. Contrary to white Americans, there is no statistical difference in the racial attitudes of nonwhite evangelical Protestants and others. These analyses are further explored in the multivariate data.

<sup>2</sup> Missing values for family income were imputed from an imputation procedure that organizes missing cases by patterns of missing data so that the missing-value regressions can be conducted efficiently. The imputations did not significantly or substantively alter the analyses.

<sup>3</sup> Immigration status is not taken into account for blacks and whites because 98 percent of the blacks and 95 percent of the whites in this study's sample are native born.

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of support for race-based policies by denomination/faith and race/ethnicity: chi square analyses

	Blacks Deserve Special Favors	Affirmative Action Is a "Good Thing"	Support Job Preferences	Sample Size
<i>Whites</i>				
Evangelical Protestant <sup>a</sup>	16.32%	44.77%	11.72%	239
Mainline Protestant	37.13**	57.49*	24.55**	167
Catholic	22.40	55.21*	17.71	192
Secular	40.97**	60.42**	38.19**	144
Other faith	38.42**	53.11	32.20**	177
<i>Blacks</i>				
Evangelical Protestant	43.11	79.64	50.90	167
Mainline Protestant/Catholic	42.86	78.10	53.33	105
Black Protestant	39.71	80.00	46.38	345
Secular	47.44	78.21	48.72	78
<i>Hispanic</i>				
Evangelical Protestant	26.61	59.68	38.71	124
Catholic	20.89	58.62	33.87	493
Secular	26.58	53.16	40.51	79
<i>Asian</i>				
Evangelical Protestant	27.27	54.55	32.32	99
Mainline Protestant/Catholic	36.14	67.47	31.33	83
Eastern religion	32.86	67.14	24.29	70
Secular	37.19	53.27	35.68	199

<sup>a</sup>The significance tests represent comparisons between the row category and evangelicals.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed test).

### White Americans

The odds ratios presented in Table 2 indicate that while white evangelicals maintain more conservative racial attitudes than do their mainline and secular counterparts, Catholics and evangelicals largely share similar racial attitudes. More specifically, mainline and secular whites are approximately two and a half and two times more likely, respectively, than are evangelicals to believe that blacks deserve special favors due to their unique experience as a racially marginalized group. Whites of other faiths are also more than twice as likely as evangelicals to believe that blacks deserve special favors. Additionally, mainline whites are over one and a half times more likely than are white evangelicals to support affirmative action. Finally, mainline and secular whites are approximately two and three times more likely, respectively, than are evangelicals to support job preferences for groups that have historically been victims of discrimination. Whites of other faiths are also more than two and a half times more likely than are evangelicals to support job preferences. The racial attitudes of white Catholics, however, are not statistically different from that of white evangelicals. College graduates, younger persons, women, and non-Southerners tend to support race-based policies and proposals.

### African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans

Unlike white Americans, African American, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans maintain little denominational/religious differences in racial attitudes. The odds ratios presented

Table 2: Denominational differences in race-based policy attitudes among white Americans (evangelical Protestants are the denominational reference category): logit regression analyses: odds ratios<sup>a</sup>

	Blacks Deserve Special Favors	Affirmative Action Is a "Good Thing"	Support Job Preferences
<i>Denomination/Faith</i>			
Mainline Protestant	2.47** (.64)	1.61* (.35)	1.86* (.53)
Catholic	1.22 (.32)	1.49 (.30)	1.34 (.39)
Secular	2.14* (.69)	1.63 (.46)	3.43** (1.19)
Other faith	2.16** (.57)	1.25 (.28)	2.66** (.77)
<i>Controls</i>			
Church attendance	.92 (.08)	.94 (.07)	.94 (.09)
White church	1.03 (.19)	1.18 (.18)	1.16 (.23)
College graduate	3.27** (.53)	1.15 (.16)	2.33** (.40)
Family income	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)
Own home	.67* (.13)	.86 (.15)	.82 (.17)
Age	.99* (.00)	.99* (.00)	1.00 (.01)
Female	1.48* (.24)	1.58** (.22)	1.72** (.30)
South	.71* (.12)	.92 (.13)	.64* (.11)
Observations	919	919	919
Pseudo $R^2$	.11	.02	.09
Log likelihood	-497.31	-619.25	-456.63

<sup>a</sup>While church attendance and evangelical Protestant are correlated, multicollinearity statistics do not reveal this to be a problem. (More detailed results available upon request.)

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed test).

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

in Table 3 indicate that no statistical difference exists in the racial attitudes of evangelical and nonevangelical blacks. College graduates, however, tend to support race-based policies and proposals. Similar to the African-American analyses, Table 4 suggests that that no statistical difference exists in the racial attitudes of evangelical and nonevangelical Hispanic Americans. However, Hispanic immigrants are less likely than nonimmigrants to support race-based policies and proposals. Finally, Table 5 indicates that little statistical difference exists in the racial attitudes of evangelical and nonevangelical Asians. The lone exception is that of mainline Catholic Asians; they are twice as likely as Asian evangelicals to support affirmative action. Similar to the Hispanic analyses, Asian immigrants tend to be more racially conservative. In sum, while the denominational groups represented in the white, black, Hispanic, and Asian-American analyses

Table 3: Denominational differences in race-based policy attitudes among African Americans (evangelical Protestants are the denominational reference category): logit regression analyses: odds ratios

	Blacks Deserve Special Favors	Affirmative Action Is a "Good Thing"	Support Job Preferences
<i>Denomination/Faith</i>			
Mainline Protestant/Catholic	.95 (.26)	.88 (.28)	1.04 (.28)
Black Protestant	.91 (.18)	1.03 (.25)	.84 (.16)
Secular	1.30 (.42)	1.23 (.47)	1.04 (.33)
<i>Controls</i>			
Church attendance	.88 (.07)	1.15 (.11)	.97 (.08)
Black church	1.53* (.29)	1.13 (.25)	1.26 (.23)
College graduate	2.10** (.38)	1.66* (.40)	2.17** (.40)
Family income	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)
Own home	1.48* (.26)	1.28 (.27)	1.11 (.19)
Age	.96 (.07)	.93 (.08)	1.05 (.08)
Female	.87 (.14)	.57** (.12)	.73 (.12)
South	.80 (.13)	.86 (.17)	.97 (.16)
Observations	707	707	707
Pseudo $R^2$	.04	.03	.03
Log likelihood	-461.85	-349.57	-473.97

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < p.01$  (two-tailed test).

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

are slightly different, these data provide fairly consistent evidence that denominational culture only informs the racial attitudes of whites.

## DISCUSSION

This study builds from past research on denominational culture and racial attitudes by positioning evangelical Protestants as the basis of comparison when assessing denominational differences in support for race-based policies. The evangelical racial toolkit is informed by a free-will individualistic ethic that emphasizes that individual choice and opportunities exist independent of social structures, such as institutional racism (Emerson and Smith 2001). This toolkit may help explain why white evangelicals are less likely than are mainline and secular whites to support policies aimed at reducing racial inequality in this study. However, the white evangelical racial toolkit does a poor job of explaining differences in the racial attitudes among



Table 4: Denominational differences in race-based policy attitudes among Hispanic Americans (evangelical Protestants are the denominational reference category): logit regression analyses: odds ratios

	Blacks Deserve Special Favors	Affirmative Action Is a "Good Thing"	Support Job Preferences
<i>Denomination/Faith</i>			
Catholic	.66 (.17)	.89 (.19)	.80 (.18)
Secular	.79 (.33)	.56 (.20)	1.25 (.46)
<i>Controls</i>			
Church attendance	.89 (.09)	.88 (.08)	1.03 (.09)
Hispanic church	1.20 (.25)	.97 (.17)	1.31 (.24)
College graduate	1.04 (.25)	1.05 (.22)	.81 (.18)
Family income	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)
Own home	1.00 (.20)	1.22 (.20)	.95 (.16)
Age	1.00 (.01)	1.00 (.01)	.99 (.01)
Female	1.24 (.24)	1.03 (.16)	.95 (.16)
South	.84 (.16)	.99 (.16)	.99 (.17)
Immigrant	.46** (.09)	.69* (.11)	1.30 (.22)
Observations	696	696	696
Pseudo $R^2$	.03	.01	.02
Log likelihood	-359.09	-466.50	-444.89

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed test).

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

white evangelicals and Catholics. White Catholics and evangelicals maintain similar levels of support for policies aimed at redressing racial inequality. Such a finding is often hidden in studies that compare evangelicals to the religiously unaffiliated or nonevangelicals in general.

The ideological distance between white Catholic clergy and laity may contribute to the relatively conservative racial attitudes of white Catholics (Cavendish 2004). McGreevy's (1998) research on Catholic civil rights activism during the 1960s suggests that white lay Catholic opposition to racial integration intensified as their clergy increasingly publicized their support for racial integration. Such public appeals clarified and hardened the distance between the church and the laity on civil rights. The same dynamics may be at play in the current era. Catholic leadership remains more progressive on racial justice issues than their laity (Cavendish 2004). Among white Catholics who disagree with the church's position on racial justice, public appeals in support of race-based policies may increase lay opposition to such policies. At this point, however, future research is required to help explain why Catholics and evangelicals maintain similar support for race-based policies.

Table 5: Denominational differences in race-based policy attitudes among Asian Americans (evangelical Protestants are the denominational reference category): logit regression analyses: odds ratios

	Blacks Deserve Special Favors	Affirmative Action Is a "Good Thing"	Support Job Preferences
<i>Denomination/Faith</i>			
Mainline Protestant/Catholic	1.71 (.59)	2.14 (.70)*	1.08 (.36)
Eastern religion	1.75 (.73)	2.18 (.88)	.87 (.37)
Secular	2.14 (1.05)	1.97 (.92)	2.44 (1.20)
<i>Controls</i>			
Church attendance	.91 (.14)	.86 (.12)	.76 (.11)
Asian church	1.26 (.37)	1.86* (.52)	1.27 (.37)
College graduate	2.96** (.87)	1.39 (.34)	1.31 (.35)
Family income	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)
Own home	.69 (.16)	.88 (.20)	.84 (.20)
Age	.99 (.01)	1.00 (.01)	.99 (.01)
Female	1.05 (.23)	1.24 (.25)	.85 (.18)
South	.58* (.15)	.99 (.24)	.87 (.22)
Immigrant	.44** (.11)	.51** (.13)	.85 (.21)
Observations	451	451	451
Pseudo $R^2$	.06	.04	.03
Log likelihood	-271.02	-294.35	-274.78

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed test).

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

This study also suggests that the evangelical Protestant racial toolkit does not apply outside of the white context. For African Americans, denominational affiliation has a negligible impact on support for policies aimed at reducing racial inequality. As mentioned earlier, a history of racial oppression and continued racial inequality may contribute to black church leaders and laity of varying denominational traditions supporting policies that reinforce their racial group interests. Indeed, past research suggests that blacks who are exposed to political messages in their houses of worship tend to adopt a system-blame perspective that places greater weight on the role of institutional factors (e.g., the legal system, corporations, government) in accounting for blacks' poor socioeconomic position (Reese and Brown 1995). Others have shown that black racial group interests and political identification with other blacks are among the strongest predictors of black racial attitudes (Kinder and Sanders 1996). It is plausible that black racial group interest trumps

cultural differences along denominational lines in how blacks interpret the role of the government in redressing racial inequality.

The lack of distinctions in the racial attitudes of Hispanic and Asian evangelical and nonevangelicals may be linked to the nature of the relationship these groups maintain with native-born blacks. As stated earlier, unlike whites, the historical and present-day relationship between native-born blacks and nonblack minorities is not characterized by in-group dominance and black marginalization. As such, nonblack minorities are not likely to perceive themselves as facing a dilemma within and between religious traditions in regard to their role in amending social inequality between blacks and whites.

In sum, this study builds from past work on denominational culture and racial attitudes by positioning evangelicals as the basis of comparison. The current study maintains that the evangelical racial toolkit may be useful in explaining why white evangelicals maintain lower levels of support for policies aimed at reducing racial inequality than do mainline and secular whites. However, future research is required to uncover why this toolkit may be of less relevance in explaining the race-based policy attitudes of white evangelicals relative to white Catholics and among nonwhites as a whole.

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