Article

Colorblindness as Identity: Key Determinants, Relations to Ideology, and Implications for Attitudes about Race and Policy

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Abstract

Colorblindness is often conceptualized as a set of deeply held but unrecognized ideological tenets. However, we believe that colorblindness has also now become an explicit cultural discourse involving self-conscious claims and specific convictions. To illustrate this point—which has both conceptual and empirical implications—we introduce the notion of colorblindness as identity. We define this concept as subjectively meaningful, self-asserted identification with colorblindness. We use data from a nationally representative survey to explore the social determinants of colorblind identification and assess its relationship to both colorblind ideologies and standard attitudinal measures. We find that a relatively large percentage of Americans across racial lines identify as colorblind. Furthermore, such identification is connected to racial ideologies but not all tenets of colorblind racism. For white Americans, colorblind identification is associated with decreased perceptions of social distance, but not support for policies designed to ameliorate the effects of racial discrimination. We conclude that colorblind identification is a unique social phenomenon, connected to views on race but not always in the ways that existing research would predict. We also suggest directions for further exploration of the depth of colorblindness as an identity form and implications for theorizing colorblind discourse more generally.

In 2014, Ashley Doane, in an important book chapter, challenged race scholars to develop new, more nuanced analyses of colorblindness, and to "move beyond" a simple focus on the denial or recognition of racial attitudes, hierarchies, and inequalities, or larger theoretical assertions of their role in the reproduction of the existing racial regime. Doane was not speaking specifically about colorblind racism, but he pointedly insisted that scholars need to go beyond theorizing

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abstract ideologies or criticizing basic racialized beliefs (not to mention racism itself) and, instead, explore the functioning of colorblind ideas and ideals more generally, especially with respect to the seeming ability of Americans—white Americans most of all—to hold simultaneous and contradictory positions about racism, racial inequality, and white privilege.

Doane's clarion call was informed, at least in part, by recent qualitative and ethnographic studies that have shown both colorblindness ideology and colorblind racism to be complex, contradictory, and fluid. For example, Meghan Burke's (2012) examination of diverse Chicago neighborhoods showed that white residents were colorblind and "pro diversity" at the same time, holding to tenets of colorblind ideologies even as they talked in appreciative terms about neighborhood diversity. Relatedly, Natasha K. Warikoo and Janine de Novais (2015) used interviews with white students at two Ivy League universities to explore how colorblind ideology shaped their understanding of the role race plays in society. When discussing race within the context of campus life, the students often used a diversity frame that recognized and embraced racial difference, even if it only partially engaged inequality. Yet, when talking about their lives before college and race-related policies, race-marked experiences, and racial inequality in wider society, the same students used colorblind frames.

This paper is in the spirit of these projects and Doane's larger call for complicating and expanding our understanding of colorblind ideologies, ideals, and beliefs (see, for a related intervention, Burke 2016). However, in this project, we take a different and, we believe, even more innovative approach.

As prominent and rightly influential as it has been, existing work on colorblindness has focused almost exclusively on ideologies and beliefs (and their presumed effects in legitimating or obscuring existing racial hierarchies) that are posited by scholars as colorblind rather than on language, claims, and policies that are explicitly understood by subjects to be colorblind. In the literature, in other words, colorblindness has existed more as an analytical category or theoretical construct rather than an actual social formation. We find this emphasis somewhat surprising given how pronounced the actual, explicit language of colorblindness, postracialism, and race-neutrality has been in the media and the public culture at large, at least since the election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2011). One such area of absence is in thinking about those individuals who explicitly and self-consciously claim colorblind ideals and commitments, or even identify themselves as colorblind.

Following the lead of Monica McDermott (2015), we analyze colorblindness as a subjective form of identification, or perhaps even as a form of identity. As a concept in its own right, colorblind identification differs from colorblind ideology in a number of ways. Where ideology is latent and abstract, identification is manifest and on the surface: It is asserted self-consciously and directly. At the very least, it is not hidden or "invisible" as is often the case with ideology. Ideology is directed "outward" in the sense that it makes assertions about the working of the objective social world, while identification looks "inward," and asserts only how the subjective self does or should deal with that world. Most important, it is less clear that colorblindness in this more literal and overt sense is always and necessarily in service of racism and unexamined whiteness (and may even be connected with antiracist ideals and aspirations).

In the analysis that follows, we use data and a relatively new, experimental question from a nationally representative survey to examine three main questions. First, who identifies as colorblind (or with colorblindness), and how broadly distributed is this phenomenon? Second, is colorblind identification related to colorblind ideologies—and if so, how? And third, to what extent does colorblind identification predict support for racial policies or standard measures of social distance and prejudice? Among other things, we find that colorblind identification is fairly widely held among Americans and driven by racially specific attitudes and beliefs rather than abstract ideologies. We also show that it does *not* predict support for public policy intended to address the negative effects of racial discrimination. At least for whites, it is, instead, associated with

decreased perceptions of social distance from other racial groups (though this finding does not appear to hold for African American or Hispanic respondents).

One point to acknowledge before we proceed. There is a certain tension that runs throughout this paper, in both language and theoretical conceptualization, between colorblind identity and identification with colorblindness—in other words, between colorblindness as a form of identity proper versus colorblindness conceived as a set of race-neutral ideals, views, and norms with which people identify. For the most part, we use the latter, softer identification language and conceptualization in the analysis that follows. This is basically because we lack the items, scales, and multiple measures necessary to operationalize and assess identity as properly understood in the social-psychological literature (Stets and Serpe 2013). Connected with these methodological limitations, we do not want to presume that an identification with colorblindness is always or necessarily a highly salient or central part of an individual's subjective identity. That said, we believe that our measures and results gesture strongly toward the possibility that colorblindness does exist as a unique form or dimension of identity, at least in the American context—a theoretical possibility that has implications not only for individual subjectivity but also for colorblindness as a collective cultural discourse. We will expand upon these points, including how the question of identification and identity might be explored further in future research and the implications for our understanding of broader, cultural discourses of colorblindness, by way of conclusion.

Literature Review

Critiques of colorblindness as well as the notion of colorblind racism itself have emerged as primary frameworks for understanding race relations and persistent racial inequalities in the new millennium for sociologists (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Forman 2004; see also DiTomaso 2013), critical legal theorists (Carr 1997; Crenshaw 1997; Gotanda 1991), and those working at their intersections (Obasogie 2013). Colorblindness, in this context, refers to the fact that many Americans believe that they live in a postracial society and that individual effort and will are more important than race in determining social outcomes. As critical race scholars point out, these colorblind beliefs often, thus, obscure or deny the effects of racism by reframing structural inequalities as issues of individual choice and ability. Due to this work in both academic and activist realms, colorblindness has become associated with colorblind racism, based in a set of underlying ideologies that are ironically but not incidentally associated with some of the deepest ideals and aspirations of liberal democratic social theory (Carr 1997; see also Goldberg 1993).

Recent research on colorblindness and colorblind racism has been in two primary directions. On one hand, qualitative and ethnographic researchers have begun to document the structure, function, and complexity of ideologies, discourses, beliefs, and practices theorized as colorblind in specific social contexts. Classrooms (Hooks and Miskovic 2011; Modica 2015; Stoll 2014), conservative movements, and basic political contexts (Garcia 2010; Haney-Lopez 2007) have all received such treatment. Osagie K. Obasogie's (2013) provocative work on perceptions of race among those who are physically blind should also be included in this mix. In another innovative application, Matthew Oware (2016) adds additional complexity and depth to our understanding of colorblind ideology through his study of white underground rappers. He argues that white underground rappers implement racial evasion in a black and brown art form by embodying hegemonic and hypermasculine tropes through their lyrics, which do not make reference to racially political and social themes. Individuals who racially evade are not colorblind, but rather color-averse, meaning that one can see and recognize race, but only on a superficial level, which typically avoids discussions surrounding racism occurring at an institutional or individual level. And we can only reiterate how colorblind ideals and aspirations play into Ellen Berrey's (2015) magisterial analysis of the diversity discourse in a range

of ostensibly multicultural settings and contexts in the contemporary United States, and the related book-length studies of Natasha K. Warikoo (2016) and Meghan Burke (2012) on education and neighborhood communities, respectively.

A second line of research, on the other hand, has begun to assess the scope, scale, and magnitude of colorblind ideologies and colorblind racism, in particular, within the American population more generally—that is, by using quantitative methods and more generalizable survey data. For example, psychologist Helen A. Neville and her team (Neville et al. 2005; Neville et al. 2000) have produced a colorblind racial attitudes scale—CoBRAS, for short—for assessing the impact of colorblind attitudes on various social and policy phenomena. In previous work (Manning, Hartmann, and Gerteis 2015), members of this team used nationally representative survey data to examine the extent to which white and black Americans adhere to core tenets of colorblind racism as theorized by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014). We found that there were differences in how aware these different racial groups were of systemic racial inequalities; however, we also found that the differences were not always large and that there was more acknowledgment of racial inequality among whites than existing theories might suggest. This analysis also indicated that African Americans adhere to abstract liberalism (a key component of colorblind racism) at rates quite similar to white Americans. We used these findings to comment upon the complexity and underlying tensions and ambivalences that Americans, both black and white, have when it comes to colorblind ideals and aspirations. Other examples of this more quantitative approach to studying colorblind ideologies and their effects include Ryan LaCount (2016), Tehama L. Bunyasi (2015), McDermott (2015), and Ryan Burns (2016).

Missing from all of these studies is an attention to the more literal and explicit forms of colorblindness as they have taken shape in contemporary American culture, as well as the self-consciousness of individual citizens and subjects. It is the latter, colorblind identification, that is the focus of this paper.

Colorblind identification is not an entirely new conception for scholars. Almost a generation ago, Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio (1986) claimed that a nondiscriminatory or "colorblind" identity was important to most white Americans, and surveys of college students in the 1990s indicated that 77 percent of whites agreed with the statement "I am colorblind when it comes to race" (quoted in Carr 1997). Kathleen O. Korgen (2009) also highlights the importance of racial identity in her study of colorblindness and biracial identities. But colorblind identification, conceived of as an explicit and subjectively meaningful identification with colorblindness, has not been a focus of any recent, systemic analyses of which we know.

Monica McDermott's recent work comes closest, and sets the stage for our work. McDermott (2015) has centered white identity in her investigation into what it means to be white in a period of colorblindness and optional ethnicity. By determining the demographic characteristics and predictors of different ancestral identity selection, McDermott argues that colorblind ideologies are differently expressed and understood depending on how white Americans identify in terms of ancestry. There are four categories of identification: "white," "none," "American," and "ethnicity." In the case of white identities, each one was appealing to different segments of white America and also held varied, but specific, pathways to adherence to colorblind ideology. McDermott argues that Americans that identify as "white" are actually establishing a color-visible identity and enact elements of colorblind ideology differently. Although choosing to identify as "white" when other colorblind options are available is a color-visible act, it is still contingent and can be used to counter nonwhite claims to racial justice and equality. McDermott refers to this as color-visible racism, an "overt assertion of the right of Whites to greater social benefits than non-whites" (McDermott 2015:1470). As Hughey (2012) states, color-visible white identities are very much entangled with—and often marshaled to legitimate—whiteness, thus, still reproducing a key outcome of colorblind ideology: the denial and silencing of antiracism politics, policies, and dialogue. It is also worth noting

that Bonilla-Silva (2014:27) has pointed out that the subtlety of colorblind racial ideologies often exist alongside more overt and vulgar racist forms (for more on the relationships between whiteness and white racial identity, see Lewis 2004).

Ultimately, McDermott (2015:6) gestures toward the need for a distinction between color-blind ideology and colorblindness as identification. "Several different ways of expressing color-blind racism have been identified in the literature," she argues, "but there has been little to connect these means of expression with the characteristics of the individuals who adopt them" (for an exception, see, again, Bunyasi 2015). As a corrective, McDermott suggests that color-blindness can also operate as an identity—that is, it can become a characteristic or quality that an individual self-consciously claims as an important dimension of their personhood, value commitments, or social ideals.

Conceptualization, Data, and Method

At the root of our investigation, then, is the distinction between colorblindness as an *ideology* and colorblindness as an identity or form of *identification*. Again, most of the existing work on color-blindness has understood it in the former sense, and members of our research group have played a role in analyzing this approach to colorblindness (Manning et al. 2015; Bell and Hartmann 2007). From this perspective, colorblindness is an ideological package of abstract but connected elements that connect it to a latent, but largely unexamined or "invisible" sense of whiteness, and at the same time, a blindness to the privileges that go with it. In contrast (or perhaps in addition), we believe that colorblindness also exists as a self-asserted identification, often proudly declared and less obviously tied to whiteness or other implicit ideologies and attachments.

So, what is this identification with colorblindness? Colorblind identification, as we conceptualize and operationalize it in this paper, is *not* an identity in the fullest, most formal sense of the term as defined by social psychologists (Stets and Serpe 2013). Although we would not rule out such a definition in theory entirely, we lack the items and measures to fully explore the three primary bases of identity posited in and required by sociological theories: role, person, and group (see also Burke and Stets 2009; Serpe and Stryker 2011). Nor does identification with colorblindness refer to the conceptions of social identity, associated with the work of Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (2004), which categorize people into concrete ingroups and outgroups. Rather, in this paper at least, colorblind identification refers to the more-or-less explicit, self-conscious internalization of or aspiration to values, ideals, and norms associated with colorblindness or race-neutrality. It is, in other words and quite simply, an explicit personal identification with colorblindness in some form.

Making sense of this identification with colorblindness and its relationship with colorblind ideology is the task of this paper. It has three main components: (1) to try to figure out which Americans are most likely to identify as colorblind. To put it in the form of a research question: who claims colorblindness, and how pervasive is this identification?; (2) to assess if and how colorblind identity is related to colorblind racism and/or core tenets of colorblind ideologies. In other words, in what ways is colorblind identity different or unique? Are these the same constructs or phenomena or something different?; and (3) to determine whether this new variable of color-blind identification has any predictive power with respect to important social and political variables, such as support for racial public policies or social distance scales and scores. That is, to what extent does colorblind identification predict support for racial policies or social distance scores?

Data for these analyses come from the Boundaries in the American Mosaic survey (BAM), a large, nationally representative survey of American adults recruited through the GfK Group's KnowledgePanel (American Mosaic Project 2014).[1] The BAM sample was drawn from panel members using a probability proportional to size (PPS) weighted sampling approach, including an oversample of African Americans and Hispanics. KnowledgePanel members received an e-mail link to the web survey from GfK to participate in the BAM Survey, followed by e-mail

and phone reminders after three days of nonresponse. Data collection took place between February 28, 2014 and March 16, 2014. Of the 4,353 people that were contacted, 2,521 completed the survey for a survey response rate of 57.9 percent.[2] The median survey completion time was 28 minutes. Data in the BAM Survey are weighted using base and stratification weights from the KnowledgePanel sample combined with survey specific weights for the BAM sample.

This data source, which has already been used in several publications (see, for example, Edgell et al. 2016), has several distinctive features that are crucial for our purposes. First, as a follow-up and extension to an earlier American Mosaic Project survey, it included a number of items specifically designed to operationalize concepts from critical race scholarship in a theoretically sensitive way (see, for example, Croll 2007; Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll 2009). Second and most important for this particular analysis, the second-generation survey included a new item that allows us to assess colorblind identification: "For the most part, I'm colorblind—that is, I don't see race." The wording—which is not, in our view, ideal since it conflates "colorblindness" with the proposition that "I don't see race"—was borrowed from an item used on a special, experimental block of questions on the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS) designed to measure and more deeply assess both white identities and racial ideologies. (Although several analyses that use the item are currently working their way through conference presentations and the publications pipeline, nothing, so far as we are aware, has yet been published.) Finally, the survey also included oversamples of African American and Hispanic respondents, which allows us to explore the different determinants of this identification by race. This is important because a relatively large proportion of each racial group identified as colorblind and yet, as we will show, this identification is driven in very different ways.

Descriptive statistics for all variables included in the analyses can be found in Table 1 (below). The key dependent or outcome variable in our first analyses is colorblind identity (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*). However, our multivariate analyses use a binary coding of this measure with those who strongly agree serving as our indicator of colorblind identity and the other three response categories serving as the referent.[3] In our second set of analyses, we measure respondents' agreement (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*) toward three racial policy measures as dependent measures: affirmative action ("African Americans should receive special consideration in job hiring and school admissions"), governmental economic assistance ("African Americans should get economic assistance from the government"), and charity help ("Charities and other non-profit organizations should do more to help African Americans"). In our final analyses, measures of social distance comprise our dependent variables. The first measure asks respondents whether they approve of a hypothetical marriage between their son/daughter with an African American (1 = *disapprove*, 2 = *no difference*, 3 = *approve*). The second dependent measure inquires as to what extent the respondent believes African Americans share their vision of America (1 = *not at all*, 4 = *almost completely agree*).

Our individual-level demographic block of variables consists of political persuasion (1 = *Liberal*, 2 = *Moderate*, 3 = *Conservative*), race (*White* = 1, *non-White* = 0), age (numeric by year), gender (*male* = 1, *female* = 0), and education (numeric by year). The BAM dataset also contains tract-level Census data joined by the county Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code. These tract-level measures all come from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). From the 2013 1-Year ACS, we use the tract-level population estimate. From the 2012 5-Year Estimate ACS, we include percent below the poverty line and percent nonwhite. We also calculate a tract-level racial homogeneity index using the Herfindahl Index (see Olson 1998).

We also utilize measures of abstract ideology to explore how Bonilla-Silva's colorblind ideology relates to our measure of colorblind identity. These measures consist of the respondent's belief in individualism, which is the belief that people can make it in the United States if they work hard, and that all people in the United States have equal opportunities (for each, 1 = *strongly*

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Dependent measures			1	4
Colorblind identity	2.95	0.87	1	4
Affirmative action	1.82	0.87	1	4
Governmental assistance	1.98	0.89	1	4
Charity assistance	2.21	0.91	1	4
Intermarriage	1.92	0.69	1	3
African American social distance	2.31	0.78	1	4
Demographics				
Political persuasion	4.21	1.66	1	9
Race (*White* = 1)	0.62	0.49	0	1
Age	50.14	16.85	18	94
Gender (*M* = 1)	0.50	0.50	0	1
Education	2.77	1.01	1	4
2013 population (per 10,000)	117.31	195.37	0.21	1,001.71
FIPS percent poverty	15.87	5.64	4	43.6
FIPS percent nonwhite	27.56	16.35	0.99	80.77
FIPS homogeneity index	0.64	0.21	0	1
Abstract ideology				
Individualism	0.63	0.48	0	1
Hard work	2.88	0.91	1	4
Equal opportunity	2.33	0.96	1	4
Experience				
Perceived discrimination (*Y* = 1)	0.39	0.49	0	1
Diverse experiences	3.20	0.65	1	4
Talk about race	2.70	1.05	1	5
Racial identity importance	2.95	0.97	1	4
Racial ideology				
Racism doesn't matter	1.98	0.86	1	4
Race divides	3.03	0.74	1	4
Value difference	3.19	0.74	1	4
Threatened by other races	1.89	0.83	1	4

Note. These descriptive statistics were calculated off just the white subsample, as they are the dependent variables in the analyses in Table 8, which estimates use only white respondents. FIPS = Federal Information Processing Standards.

disagree, 4 = *strongly agree*). The next block of variables relay respondents' racial experiences: perceived discrimination (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), a rating of the respondent's diverse experiences (1 = *very negative*, 4 = *very positive*), how often the respondent talks about race (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *several times a week or more*), and how important the respondent's racial identity is to them (1 = *not at all important*, 4 = *very important*). The final block of variables measures aspects of respondents' racial ideology: belief that race no longer matters, belief that race divides people in America today, how much the respondent values social difference, and the extent to which the respondent feels threatened by other races (for each, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*).

Analytic Strategy

Our research design is essentially threefold. It begins with a presentation of the univariate distribution of colorblind identity, as well as a bivariate cross-tabulation of colorblind identity by race

and a host of other demographic variables previously established as salient or relevant to the study of racial attitudes and ideologies. The goal here is simply to establish how generally distributed claims about colorblind identity are among Americans and the basic demographic patterns that define Americans who adhere to the colorblind identification item.

The second major component of our analysis is to conduct a series of multivariate logistic regressions, regressing colorblind identity onto predictors including colorblind ideologies. First, colorblind identification is regressed on respondent demographics (Model 1), followed by the addition of racial experiences (Model 2). Model 3 and Model 4 add colorblind ideologies, first adding abstract ideologies (Model 3) and followed by the addition of racial ideologies (Model 4). A second set of analyses then consists of the final model (Model 4), estimated using white, black, and Hispanic subsamples shown separately. The overarching goal of these analyses is to answer our second research question and examine the extent to which colorblind identifications are associated with core tenets of colorblind racism or colorblind ideologies more generally.

The third and final component of our study investigates the impact of colorblind identification on race-related outcomes. This portion of the analysis is divided into two distinct parts or sets of tables. In the first, we present ordered logistic regressions predicting support for racial policies: affirmative action, governmental assistance, and charitable assistance. The second contains ordered logistic models predicting the social distance indicators that are both public and private in nature. The two models focus on white respondents' beliefs about intermarriage and social distance from African American (our "shared visions" item).

The 2,524 BAM Survey respondents are dispersed among 873 FIPS codes across the United States, and the lack of adequate clustering makes a multilevel modeling (HLM) framework inappropriate. Specifically, 61.1 percent of our respondents live in one of the more than 1,539 counties with three or fewer respondents. To help correct for correlated errors, our multivariate models are estimated using logistic and ordered logistic regression with robust standard errors clustered at the FIPS level (Rogers 1993; Williams 2000).

Results

Who Identifies as Colorblind?

Our first set of analyses involves a basic exploration of the social demographics or determinants of respondents who identify as colorblind. Table 2 displays the weighted univariate distribution on the 2,451 survey respondents who responded to the question, "How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For the most part, I'm colorblind—that is, I don't see race." The modal response to the survey prompt was "*somewhat agree*," garnering more than 42 percent of the sample. Overall, the majority of respondents (more than 70 percent) indicated they "*somewhat agree*" or "*strongly agree*" with a colorblind identity. More than seven out of 10 Americans see themselves as colorblind in terms of inward, self-identification. It is clear that this belief is widespread in the United States. Furthermore, this self-identification is strikingly consistent across racial groups, especially considering much wider variation between racial groups on other types of racial beliefs. Do respondents who identify with colorblindness vary in any significant respects? We looked first at one of the most obvious potential dimensions of such variation: race. Table 3 is a cross-tabulation of colorblind identification by race. Consistent with the univariate distribution, a majority of respondents in each racial group responded in agreement (either "*somewhat agree*" or "*strongly agree*") with the colorblind identification item (white = 72.2 percent, black = 61.9 percent, Hispanic = 77.3 percent). Across racial groups, large numbers of Americans adhere to a self-identification of colorblindness. When asked, a majority see themselves as colorblind. However, a statistically significant Kruskall-Wallis population equivalency test, $\chi^2(2) = 34.76$, $p < .05$, suggests that differences in identification as colorblind do exist

Table 2. Weighted Distribution of Colorblind Identification.

Colorblind identification	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Strongly agree	679	28.45	28.45%
Somewhat agree	1,039	42.41	70.86%
Somewhat disagree	564	23.03	93.89%
Strongly disagree	149	6.11	100.00%
Totals	2,451	100	

Table 3. Weighted Distribution of Colorblind Identification by Race.

Colorblind identification	White	African American	Hispanic
Strongly agree	24.6% (375.9)	30.7% (123.5)	44.2% (183.8)
Somewhat agree	47.6% (725.2)	31.2% (125.5)	33.1% (137.8)
Somewhat disagree	22.8% (348.0)	21.6% (87.7)	17.1% (71.0)
Strongly disagree	5.0% (75.9)	16.5% (66.3)	5.6% (23.4)
Totals	100.0% (1,525)	100.0% (402)	100.0% (416)

Note. Kruskall-Wallis $\chi^2(2) = 34.76$, $p < .05$.

between racial groups. As Table 3 shows, African Americans are less likely than whites and Hispanics to claim a colorblind identification, and Hispanics are more likely than the other groups to claim this identification. While the differences between the racial groups presented here are real and statistically significant, colorblind identification is still the dominant belief for all three racial groups.

It is also important to note that African American respondents responded with "*strongly disagree*" at a greater rate (16.5 percent) than either whites or Hispanics (5.0 percent, 5.6 percent, respectively). Although white respondents were overall more favorable to a colorblind identification than African Americans (72.2 percent vs. 61.9 percent), whites responded at a comparable rate in the "*strongly agree*" category to African Americans. In juxtaposition, Hispanics responded with "*strongly agree*" at a higher rate (44.2 percent) than either white or African American respondents. In summary, then, we see some meaningful differences by race but also that a solid majority of respondents across racial lines adhere to a claim of colorblind identification. In essence, then, we see some variation by race but not any particularly striking or significant patterns.

The adoption of or adherence to colorblind identification, in fact, appears across a wide range of the basic demographic variables known to be associated with racial attitudes and beliefs. In Table 4, we see a series of weighted cross-tabulations of various core demographic characteristics and expressed adherence to colorblind identification. While a few variations appear (for example, Hispanics are a bit of an outlier), what stands out is the absence of any obvious, overt patterns or differences. In other words, claims to colorblindness are widely held and appear relatively stable or uniform across a range of social and demographic variables.

Is Colorblind Identification Related to Colorblind Ideology?

The next set of analyses is designed to answer the question of the relationship between colorblind identification and more general colorblind ideologies or tenets of colorblind racism. The initial results can be found in Table 5, which presents multivariate logistic regression models iteratively regressing the colorblind identification measure onto blocks of predictors.

Table 4. Weighted Cross-tabulations of Various Demographics and Colorblind Identity.

Colorblind identity	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Variable					
Race					
White	24.6% (405.9)	47.6% (783.3)	22.8% (375.8)	4.9% (82.0)	100% (1,647.2)
Black	30.7% (82.9)	31.2% (84.3)	21.6% (58.2)	16.5% (44.5)	100% (270.0)
Other	39.0% (208.3)	32.2% (171.8)	42.4% (130.4)	4.4% (23.3)	100% (533.8)
Gender					
Male	25.0% (294.7)	43.2% (508.8)	24.8% (292.4)	6.9% (81.7)	100% (1,177.7)
Female	31.6% (402.4)	41.7% (530.7)	21.4% (272.1)	5.4% (68.1)	100% (1,273.3)
Education					
<HS	35.4% (106.0)	39.2% (117.4)	18.5% (55.4)	7.0% (21.0)	100% (299.8)
HS	30.8% (225.9)	42.1% (306.6)	21.4% (153.7)	5.6% (39.9)	100% (171.6)
Some college	32.1% (225.9)	42.0% (298.8)	20.2% (142.0)	5.7% (40.3)	100% (703.9)
Bachelor's+	19.7% (143)	44.4% (323.6)	29.3% (213.4)	6.7% (48.6)	100% (729.6)
Income					
<$25,000	33.1% (109.0)	46.5% (153.0)	14.1% (46.5)	6.3% (20.7)	100% (329.1)
$25,001–$59,999	32.0% (286.5)	39.7% (355.2)	21.7% (193.7)	6.6% (59.3)	100% (894.6)
$60,000+	24.6% (301.8)	43.3% (531.3)	26.4% (324.3)	5.7% (69.8)	100% (1,227.2)
Age					
18–29	29.2% (149.3)	40.0% (203.9)	21.9% (111.5)	8.9% (45.4)	100% (510.1)
30–44	27.8% (171.3)	38.8% (238.8)	27.3% (168.5)	6.1% (37.5)	100% (616.1)
45–59	30.3% (206.2)	44.2% (300.7)	21.1% (143.2)	4.4% (29.6)	100% (679.7)
60+	26.4% (170.3)	45.9% (296)	21.9% (141.3)	5.8% (37.3)	100% (645)
Political identification					
Liberal	25.6% (185.1)	42.7% (309.2)	23.2% (167.9)	8.5% (61.4)	100% (723.7)
Moderate	30.9% (249.0)	43.6% (351.6)	19.7% (158.5)	5.8% (46.7)	100% (805.8)
Conservative	27.7% (245.9)	41.5% (368.1)	26.4% (234.2)	4.4% (39.4)	100% (887.5)

Note. HS = high school.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Models Predicting Colorblind Identification.

Variables	Model 1 OR	Model 1 SE	Model 2 OR	Model 2 SE	Model 3 OR	Model 3 SE	Model 4 OR	Model 4 SE
Demographics								
Political	1.07	0.037	1.13**	0.044	1.09	0.047	1.10**	0.051
Race (*White* = 1)	0.60***	0.084	0.58**	0.095	0.60**	0.098	0.62***	0.104
Age	1.00	0.003	1.00	0.004	0.99	0.004	1.00	0.004
Gender (*M* = 1)	0.71**	0.082	0.76*	0.096	0.68**	0.094	0.67***	0.093
Education	0.84***	0.045	0.75***	0.048	0.79***	0.050	0.83***	0.056
2013 population (10,000)	1.00	0.001	0.99	0.001	0.99	0.000	1.00	0.000
Percent poverty	1.03*	0.013	1.03	0.015	1.04**	0.015	1.04**	0.015
Percent nonwhite	1.00	0.005	0.99	0.006	0.99	0.006	0.99	0.006
Homogeneity index	0.91	0.304	0.83	0.293	0.94	0.360	0.97	0.393
Experience								
Perceived discrimination (*Y* = 1)			1.26	0.175	1.35*	0.194	1.35**	0.200
Diverse experiences			2.83***	0.135	2.90***	0.335	1.94***	0.273

(continued)

Table 5. (continued)

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
Talk about race			0.82**	0.050	0.82**	0.051	0.83***	0.055
Racial identity importance			0.73***	0.053	0.71***	0.052	0.77***	0.057
Abstract ideology								
Individualism					1.16	0.153	1.13	0.155
Hard work					1.15	0.111	1.11	0.117
Equal opportunity					1.24*	0.103	1.17*	0.103
Racial ideology								
Racism doesn't matter							1.61***	0.169
Race divides							1.19*	0.117
Value difference							1.81***	0.220
Threatened by other races							0.76***	0.064
Constant	0.66	0.268	0.09***	0.056	0.029***	0.021	0.00***	0.004
Pseudo-R^2	.029		.109		.122		.153	
	N = 2,443		N = 2,267		N = 2,077		N = 2,037	

Note. Standard errors clustered by county (Federal Information Processing Standards; FIPS). OR = odds ratio. All tests are two-tailed.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

The models are predicting the likelihood that respondents *strongly agree* with the colorblind identification measure. Model 4 includes all independent variables in the study, addressing whether each predictor has an independent effect on the outcome while controlling for all other independent variables. The p values of the t tests for each variable are reported in the table next to each significant coefficient, and the pseudo-R^2 values for each model are reported at the bottom of the table.

In model 1, which includes just the demographical predictors, race, gender, and education are all significantly associated with a lower likelihood of colorblind identification. The odds ratio for the race variable in model 1 (specifying white respondents) is .60, meaning that white respondents are 40 percent less likely than nonwhites to strongly agree that they have a colorblind identification (calculated by subtracting the odds ratio of .60 from the value of 1). There is also a negative effect for males in the model (odds ratio of .71) and education level (odds ratio of .84). Therefore, nonwhites, females, and individuals with lower levels of educational achievement are associated with a strong colorblind identification, net of other variables. County-level percent poverty also has a statistically significant effect, where respondents in more impoverished areas are more likely to identify as colorblind. Political persuasion, with more conservative individuals associated with a colorblind identification, is on the verge of conventional levels of significance. However, the statistical significance of political persuasion in the final model suggests that this effect exists in the population.

Model 2 adds the racial experience variable block to the model. Reporting having diverse racial experiences increases the likelihood of identifying as colorblind by more than 2.8 times, whereas respondents who report having frequent talks about race are 18 percent less likely (lower odds of .82) to have a strong colorblind identification, net of other predictors. Those whose racial identity is important to them are also associated with a lower likelihood of colorblind identification (27 percent less likely). The demographic predictors maintain their independent effects, although percent poverty does fall outside of conventional levels of significance. Interestingly, political persuasion comes into statistical significance with the addition of the racial experience items.

Model 3 adds measures of abstract ideology to the model. Abstract ideology is one of the main frames of colorblind racism. Model 3 tests to see if colorblind identification is related to abstract ideologies. Included in the abstract ideologies block in the model is a measure of the belief that equal opportunity exists in America, which is an indicator of abstract liberalism. This measure is significantly associated with higher levels of colorblind identification. Respondents who believe equal opportunity exists are more likely to have a strong colorblind identification. However, the other indicators of abstract ideology—belief in individualism and in hard work—are not associated with colorblind identification. Again, the demographic indicators retain their independent effects from previous models. There is some connection between colorblind identification and abstract ideology from within colorblind racism, but only on one of the key measures of abstract ideology routinely used in this work.

Model 4 adds measures of racial ideology to the model. Minimization of racism, a central frame of colorblind racism, is included in these measures. Model 4 tests to see if colorblind identification is related to the racial ideologies built into the frames of colorblind racism. This model, which includes all predictors in the analysis, reveals the significant effects of racial ideology on colorblind identification. Individuals who believe that racism does not matter anymore, as well as those who value difference, are associated with higher probabilities of identifying as colorblind. Individuals who feel threatened by other races are associated with a lower likelihood of colorblind identification. The demographic and racial experience predictors retain their independent effects. Important here is that all of the measures of racial ideology have statistically significant effects on predicting the likelihood that respondents strongly agree that they have a colorblind identification. Whereas model 3 showed little connection between abstract ideologies and a colorblind identification, model 4 shows that there is a strong connection between colorblind identification and racial ideologies. The next set of models shown in Table 6 examines the relationship between colorblind identification and colorblind ideology broken out by three racial groups: African Americans, Hispanics, and whites. In this table, we show only the full, final models for each group, set in comparison with the full model generated for the sample as a whole. As the models in Table 6 show, there are differences by race when the model predicting colorblind identification is broken out by racial group.

The first model (column 1) in Table 6 repeats the full model from Table 5. The model for all respondents (column 1) as well as the model for whites only (column 2) both show a significant effect of political affiliation in predicting colorblind identification. For white respondents only, more conservative individuals are significantly associated with a colorblind identification. However, looking at columns 3 and 4 in Table 5, we see that there is no significant effect of political affiliation for African Americans and Hispanics. There are not significant differences in levels of colorblind identification for nonwhites in terms of political affiliation.

While political affiliation has differing effects for racial groups, the effect of gender is consistent across all racial groups. For whites, African Americans, and Hispanics, males are far less likely to have a strong colorblind identification. In fact, the negative effect on odds (the odds ratios shown in the table labeled "OR") increases as we move across the columns looking at gender in Table 5. White men are 24 percent less likely (1–.76) than white women to have a strong colorblind identification. African American men are 41 percent less likely (1–.59) and Hispanic men are 68 percent (1–.32) less likely than their female counterparts to say they are colorblind.

Education shows a similar pattern to political affiliation. Whites with higher levels of education are less likely to have a strong colorblind identification, but this significant effect does not hold for other racial groups. Education level is not a significant predictor of colorblind identification for African Americans and Hispanics.

The effects of the racial experience variables are more complex than the demographic variables when compared across racial groups. Whites who believe they have experienced discrimination because of their race are more likely to have a strong colorblind identification. However, there is no effect of perceived discrimination for African Americans, and the opposite effect is found for

Table 6. Logistic Regression Models Assessing Colorblind Identification versus Colorblind Ideologies Split by Race.

Variables	All OR	SE	White OR	SE	African American OR	SE	Hispanic OR	SE
Demographics								
Political	1.10**	0.051	1.12*	0.069	1.12	0.117	0.98	0.120
Race (*White* = 1)	0.62***	0.104	—	—	—	—		
Age	1.00	0.004	1.01	0.005	0.97**	0.012	0.98**	0.008
Gender (*M* = 1)	0.67***	0.093	0.76*	0.122	0.59*	0.187	0.32***	0.114
Education	0.83***	0.056	0.86*	0.073	0.85	0.158	0.99	0.196
2013 population (10,000)	1.00	0.000	1.01***	0.001	1.00	0.001	1.00	0.000
Percent poverty	1.04**	0.015	1.04**	0.018	1.03	0.036	1.03	0.044
Percent nonwhite	0.99	0.006	1.00	0.009	1.00	0.014	1.00	0.012
Homogeneity index	0.97	0.393	0.71	0.393	1.96	1.757	0.28	0.289
Experience								
Perceived discrimination (*Y* = 1)	1.35**	0.200	1.48**	0.282	1.17	0.464	0.52*	0.174
Diverse experiences	1.94***	0.273	1.61***	0.281	1.66*	0.488	2.19**	0.739
Talk about race	0.83***	0.055	0.88	0.077	0.74*	0.123	0.76*	0.120
Racial identity importance	0.77***	0.057	0.71***	0.062	1.02	0.222	0.71	0.163
Abstract ideology								
Individualism	1.13	0.155	1.13	0.199	2.03**	0.726	0.79	0.336
Hard work	1.11	0.117	1.01	0.130	1.17	0.287	1.56	0.465
Equal opportunity	1.17*	0.103	1.21*	0.133	0.96	0.230	1.03	0.238
Racial ideology								
Racism doesn't matter	1.61***	0.169	1.71***	0.200	2.10***	0.495	1.45*	0.279
Race divides	1.19*	0.117	1.16	0.142	1.39	0.339	1.16	0.265
Value difference	1.81***	0.220	1.99***	0.314	1.63	0.550	1.71*	0.528
Threatened by other races	0.76***	0.064	0.70***	0.083	0.95	0.219	0.80	0.158
Constant	0.00***	0.004	0.00***	0.004	0.00***	0.006	0.04	0.093
Pseudo-R^2	.153		.154		.174		.225	
	N = 2,037		*N* = 1,314		*N* = 320		*N* = 316	

Note. Standard errors clustered by county (Federal Information Processing Standards; FIPS). OR = odds ratio. All tests are two-tailed.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Hispanics. Hispanics who believe they have experienced discrimination because of their race are significantly *less* likely to have a strong colorblind identification. However, the effect of having diverse experiences increases the likelihood of someone identifying as colorblind across all racial groups. How often respondents talk about racial issues with their family and friends has a significant effect for African Americans and Hispanics, but not for whites. While the amount of time white Americans talk about race does not have an effect on the likelihood that one self-identifies as colorblind, both African Americans and Hispanics who talk about racial issues with their family and friends are *less likely* to have a strong colorblind identification. Finally, the effect of having a strong racial identity ("my racial identity is important to me") varies by racial group. Whites who say their white racial identity is important to them are less likely to have a strong colorblind identification. However, the level of importance of racial identity for African Americans and Hispanics does not have a significant effect in predicting colorblindness.

Turning now to the abstract ideology block of variables in the models in Table 6, we start first with a brief review of the model for all respondents (column 1). As discussed in the previous table, the set of abstract ideology variables does not play an important role in predicting the likelihood that respondents have a strong colorblind identification. Even when breaking out the models by racial group in Table 6, there are still very few significant effects in the abstract ideologies block across all the models in Table 6. The belief that equal opportunity exists in America is significantly associated with higher levels of colorblind identification for all respondents and for whites. However, this belief in equal opportunity is not a significant predictor of colorblind identification for African Americans or Hispanics. The only other abstract ideology variable with any significant effect is a belief in individualism, which results in African Americans only being more likely to have a strong colorblind identification. African American respondents who believe in the importance of individualism are much more likely than other African Americans to have a strong colorblind identification.

As discussed previously, the racial ideology variables have a much larger role in predicting colorblind identification than the abstract ideology variables. Across all three racial groups examined in Table 6 (columns 2–4), the belief that racism does not matter anymore leads to an increase in the likelihood of identifying as colorblind. For all racial groups, this minimization of racism leads to higher levels of colorblind identification (ORs greater than 1.00 show a positive effect on the likelihood of having a strong colorblind identification). However, this is the only racial ideology variable with consistent, significant effects across all three racial groups. The belief that race divides people in America today, while significant at the overall level for all respondents, does not have a significant effect in any of the three racial breakouts predicting colorblind identification. For whites and Hispanics, those who value difference are associated with higher probabilities of identifying as colorblind, but this significant effect is not found for African Americans. For African Americans, valuing difference is not a significant predictor of a colorblind identification. Finally, whites who feel threatened by other races are associated with a lower likelihood of colorblind identification. However, this significant effect is not found in the models for African Americans or Hispanics. Feeling threatened by other races is only significantly related to colorblind identification for whites. It plays no role in predicting colorblind identification for African Americans and Hispanics.

To What Extent Does Colorblind Identification Predict Support for Racial Policies or Social Distance Scores?

Table 7 represents ordered logistic regression models regressing policy support items on blocks of various demographic and ideological factors. While there are a number of positive associations in the models, they are all quite familiar to scholars interested in factors predicting support for racialized public-policy preferences. What is most important for present purposes is that colorblind identification is not statistically significant in any of the three models. This suggests that identifying as colorblind does not affect one's policy choices concerning African American disadvantage. (Note: colorblind identification is nonsignificant in just a bivariate regression model as well.) That colorblind identification is not significant in any of the models in Table 7 is extremely important. One of the reasons work on colorblind racism, focusing on colorblind ideologies, has become so widespread is the demonstrated relationship between these colorblind ideologies (especially abstract liberalism, minimization of racism, and cultural racism) and negative views about racial policies and efforts to address racial inequality. The power of work on colorblind racism is that the set of ideologies contained within this framework generates a substantial barrier to racial progress, often without the individuals involved realizing their racial resistance and inherent racialized thinking. The findings in the models in Table 6 around abstract liberalism and racial ideologies support this line of research. Americans who adhere to core

Table 7. Ordered Logistic Regression Models Predicting Racial Policy Support.

Variables	Affirmative action		Government economic assistance		Charities should do more	
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
Demographics						
Political	0.78***	0.033	0.79***	0.032	0.87***	0.033
Race	0.36***	0.049	0.51***	0.073	0.59***	0.082
Age	1.00	0.003	0.99***	0.003	1.00	0.003
Gender (M = 1)	0.85	0.093	0.85	0.090	1.01	0.109
Education	1.02	0.064	0.98	0.057	1.12**	0.060
2013 population (10,000)	1.00*	0.000	1.00	0.000	1.01*	0.000
Percent poverty	1.02	0.012	1.02	0.012	1.00	0.011
Percent nonwhite	1.00	0.005	1.00	0.004	1.01	0.005
Homogeneity index	1.31	0.419	1.29	0.387	1.53	0.451
Experience						
Perceived discrimination (Y = 1)	0.73***	0.084	0.72***	0.085	0.82*	0.094
Diverse experiences	1.21	0.142	1.28**	0.143	1.10	0.128
Talk about race	1.10	0.070	1.15**	0.074	1.12**	0.066
Racial identity importance	1.04	0.066	1.08	0.071	0.95	0.062
Abstract ideology						
Individualism	0.72***	0.083	0.75***	0.081	0.83*	0.089
Hard work	0.76***	0.059	0.77***	0.063	0.89	0.072
Equal opportunity	0.98	0.082	0.89	0.070	1.00	0.077
Racial ideology						
Racism doesn't matter	1.13	0.107	1.25***	0.096	1.22**	0.094
Race divides	1.12	0.097	1.08	0.089	1.19**	0.096
Value difference	1.17	0.119	1.09	0.109	1.34***	0.140
Threatened by other races	1.21**	0.097	1.05	0.076	1.17**	0.091
Colorblindness						
Colorblind identification	0.98	.130	1.10	.141	1.17	.151
McFadden's pseudo-R^2	.076		.068		.038	
	N = 1,994		N = 1,994		N = 1,992	

Note. Standard errors clustered by county (Federal Information Processing Standards; FIPS). OR = odds ratio. All tests are two-tailed.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

American ideals of abstract liberalism such as individualism, hard work, and effort are less likely to support racial policies. Americans who believe race does not matter anymore and/or see race as a problem are more likely to believe charities need to do more to help than the government. There is a lack of support for programs such as affirmative action or governmental economic assistance. Much of our work as scholars in this area has been to let our students and our publics know that these colorblind ideologies hamper our efforts to address enduring racial inequalities.

Yet, the role of an inward, self-identified measure of colorblindness operates quite differently when examining predictors of support for racial policies. Americans who strongly agree with the statement "For the most part, I'm colorblind—that is, I don't see race" are no more likely than others to support or object to race-based public policies. This is where we argue that language, terms, and conceptual precision matter. In our work demonstrating that colorblind ideologies have harmful effects on racial progress, it is easy to reduce what we say to simpler statements such as

Table 8. Ordered Logistic Regression Models Predicting Social Distance: White Respondents' Attitudes about African Americans.

Variables	American vision		Intermarriage	
	OR	SE	OR	SE
Demographics				
Political	0.95	0.047	0.94	0.045
Age	1.00	0.004	0.99***	0.004
Gender (M = 1)	0.83	0.108	1.11	0.144
Education	1.12	0.084	1.20**	0.087
2013 population (10,000)	1.00	0.001	1.00*	0.000
Percent poverty	1.01	0.015	0.99	0.014
Percent nonwhite	1.00	0.007	0.99	0.007
Homogeneity index	1.31	0.575	1.05	0.457
Experience				
Perceived discrimination (Y = 1)	0.86	0.128	0.82	0.124
Diverse experiences	1.47***	0.196	1.36**	0.182
Talk about race	1.14*	0.082	1.14*	0.084
Racial identity importance	0.89	0.064	0.64***	0.048
Abstract ideology				
Individualism	0.92	0.127	1.03	0.138
Hard work	0.96	0.084	0.98	0.089
Equal opportunity	1.18*	0.106	0.97	0.086
Racial ideology				
Racism doesn't matter	1.16	0.121	1.10	0.102
Race divides	0.74***	0.079	0.93	0.086
Value difference	1.46***	0.181	1.94***	0.239
Threatened by other races	0.87	0.073	0.76***	0.066
Colorblindness				
Colorblind identification	1.47**	0.239	1.68***	0.258
McFadden's pseudo-R^2	.060		.133	
	N = 1,291		N = 1,306	

Note. Standard errors clustered by county (Federal Information Processing Standards; FIPS). OR = odds ratio. All tests are two-tailed.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

"colorblindness is a problem." In fact, this is often what we do in the classroom and in discussions with people outside of the academy. We know the problematic effects of colorblind ideologies so we explain to others in a simplified version that colorblindness is a problem and is something that needs to be addressed. However, the models here show a more complex and nuanced story. Yes, colorblind ideologies have negative effects, but having a colorblind identification, or a general self-reflective view that one claims to not see race, are not the same thing. We make this claim both conceptually and, now, empirically. The constructs of colorblind ideology and colorblind identification do map onto each other one-to-one. There are distinct measures from each other, and they have significantly different effects in predicting support or opposition to racial policies.

So if a colorblind identification does not have a significant effect in predicting support for or against racial policies, what does it do? Where does it play a significant, predictive role? We turn to these questions next. Table 8 contains ordered logistic regression models regressing predictors on social distance items for white respondents about African Americans. On both social distance

items, a strong colorblind identification is significantly associated with higher levels of agreement. In other words, colorblind identification *decreases* perceived social distance net of other factors. (While, in theory, we could examine a host of pairwise comparison of racial social distance measures, we focus on white respondents' views of African Americans because of their centrality in racialized American culture. Our findings below suggest that future research would examine how colorblind identification impacts a much larger set of comparisons.)

Here, in Table 8, we see significant effects of colorblind identification. Across both measures of social distance, colorblind identification has a *significant, positive* effect. These models are looking at white respondents only and predicting their belief that African Americans share their vision of America and the level of acceptance of intermarriage between their white children and African Americans. On both measures, white respondents who strongly agree with the measure of colorblind identification are much more likely than others to have positive views about African Americans on these social distance scales. Not only does colorblind identification not generate the same negative effects as measures of colorblind ideology, but it is also possible that a strong colorblind identification can have a positive effect on race relations.

We believe that this is a very important finding, one that challenges many established assumptions about and analyses of colorblindness in the research literature as well as within activist circles. This point cannot be overemphasized. We will return to it below.

Summary Conclusion and Discussion

Influential theory and research in the social sciences on race and colorblindness have thoroughly studied the nature and effects of colorblind ideology, generating the notion of colorblind racism in the process. We have argued that self-conscious *identification* with colorblindness is conceptually and empirically distinct from colorblind ideology, and itself worthy of consideration and analysis. "For the most part, I'm colorblind—that is, I don't see race." In this paper, we have explored the questions of who says this about themselves, how many Americans say this, and with what consequence or impact. But what does it mean to claim oneself as colorblind? In this final section, we wish to move from these findings themselves to a consideration of how they should be interpreted and what they might mean for future research on colorblindness.

As shown in the analyses above, a majority of all Americans, across all racial groups and demographics, directly, explicitly, and self-consciously connect with colorblindness at a personal level. While there are some differences in magnitude, it is clear that most Americans see themselves as colorblind, in the sense that they identify with some variation of colorblind ideals, commitments, and claims. Furthermore, we have shown that this identification is associated with a number of demographic and experiential factors, but only imperfectly with colorblind ideology itself. The more abstract parts of colorblind ideology are not associated with colorblind identification, while more concrete racial ideologies are. This is particularly true of "liberal" views—claiming racism does not matter, for example, or valuing difference—that would seem to privilege the kind of cosmopolitanism that might accompany a blindness to or lack of awareness of structural inequalities. Yet, we have also shown that, in some ways, this cosmopolitanism allows a certain kind of racial awareness, limited and partial though it may be. Those who say they are colorblind are *not* less likely to support policies designed to ameliorate such inequalities, for example, while whites who say the same feel *less* distant from African Americans.

If it appears these findings are not all of a piece—that is, they do not follow a single pattern, in some ways reinforcing previous research and expectations on the determinants and impacts of colorblindness and in other ways cutting against them—that is probably true. We readily acknowledge unevenness in our findings about colorblind identification *and* that there are some important limitations to what we have been able to do in this work. Both theory and empirical research on colorblind ideology are much farther advanced, while we are working

with a single item and measure for operationalizing identification with colorblindness. And we certainly would not disagree with those who suggest we do not fully know what is behind a strong positive response to the item we used to index colorblind identification. Do respondents who strongly agree with a colorblind identification truly not see race, or do they simply wish to present themselves in a way that they see as socially desirable when asked about colorblindness in this straightforward manner? And what do we make of how education levels impact and interact with colorblind identification? Many questions remain, much work is to be done. In many ways, the analysis here remains preliminary, a provocation intended to raise such questions and encourage much more research on the more explicit and self-conscious dimensions of colorblindness in contemporary American culture.

Among the first and most immediate lines of work that we hope might be spurred by this research is the question of the extent to which Americans not only identify *with* colorblindness but identify *as colorblind*. To put it bluntly, is colorblindness an actual identity? Contemporary sociological theories of identity have posited three primary bases of identity: role, person, and group (Burke and Stets 2009; Serpe and Stryker 2011; Stets and Serpe 2013). As defined and measured in the current analysis, colorblind identification is essentially a "person" identity, which, in turn, has implications for the racial group identities of black, white, and Latino Americans. However, to assess the salience of all three dimensions of identity (and, thus, develop a full theory of colorblindness as identity) will require survey questions, measures, and scales that go well beyond the single, experimental item that was available to us for this analysis. And given our interest in the political implications and correlates of colorblindness, it would be particularly important to conceptualize and measure what Stets and Carter (2011, 2012) might call the "moral" aspects or dimensions of colorblind identity.

Here, we would also note that to the extent we can begin to theorize colorblindness as identity, it is an "internalized" identity form aligned with the sociological perspective on identity and standing in contrast with more other, more structural conceptions of social identity (Tajfel and Turner 2004). In this latter approach or scheme, social identities are understood to categorize people into ingroups and outgroups and, as such, are phenomenon easily identifiable in social interaction—for example, gender, ethnicity, age, and so on (on ethnicity and race specifically, see Brubaker 2006; Cornell and Hartmann 2007). The mode of identification posited in the social-psychological tradition that this paper is most directly in dialogue with, however, is not something so tangibly identified with specific social groups in everyday life. Instead, colorblind identification here is framed as the more or less explicit, self-conscious internalization of or aspiration to values and norms associated with colorblindness. To the extent that a person's actual race or ethnicity (or connections with other groups or collective identities) can and, as our analysis suggests does, have clear effects in identifying with colorblindness, this is where the Turner/Tajfel "group" conception of social identity would come into play.[4]

Obviously, more research—both survey- and interview-based—is needed on this concept of colorblind identification and the potential extensions or elaborations we have suggested. Nonetheless, we feel the results here are at least promising enough to start a nuanced conversation about the elements of an expanded analytic framework for colorblindness, one that would delve more fully into aspects of colorblind culture, language, and discourse that are more overt and explicit than ideologies, as well as consider the possibility that not all components of colorblindness are equally harmful and negative for racial progress.

At a minimum, the findings in this paper suggest that researchers should not assume that colorblind identification and awareness are the same thing as colorblind racism, nor that they are driven by colorblind ideology in a direct and uncomplicated way. Again, we do *not* wish to suggest that colorblind identification is uniformly positive, or that it will itself ameliorate racial divisions or inequalities. For example, even though a colorblind identity (for whites) is correlated with a reduced sense of social distance from African Americans, we do not know if this

has tangible outcomes in terms of interactions or choices at an interpersonal or sociocultural level—more diverse friends, or less antipathy to living in majority-white neighborhoods. Rather, we think it is important to theorize and study colorblind culture and consciousness on its own terms—as well as in terms of how it is embraced or understood by members of different social groups and communities.

Future work on colorblind identification (not to mention colorblind cultural phenomena more generally) will require a certain nuance and balance. On one hand, it will need to engage critics of colorblind identification and culture—often people of color—who see how claims to colorblindness and race-neutral culture, language, and discourse can miss the structural inequalities of race and/or whitewash the experiences of those who are not in the social majority or cultural mainstream. On the other hand, it is also important to highlight that the findings here suggest that for many Americans—black and Hispanic Americans[5] included—colorblind identification is aspirational and can, in certain contexts and for certain kinds of questions and issues, provide a starting point for improved racial awareness and tolerance. That in itself reveals something about racial discourse in the United States, as well as the very individualist way that Americans want to see themselves as overcoming it.

How we conceptualize and understand colorblindness is not just a theoretical or academic issue. People outside of the academy are often confused or skeptical when scholars insist that colorblindness is a deeply problematic racial formation. Too often, the academic counterresponse is dismissive; believing that as critical theorists and race scholars, we know what is really going on, that we know better than those living every day in the worlds and places we study. But our results here suggest something different. It is possible that we scholars are the ones who need to be a little more careful and thoughtful with what we are saying and suggesting. There is no doubt that a self-asserted belief that one "does not see race" is potentially problematic and overly simplistic. But, it is also possible that this desire to "not see race" is an aspiration many hold dear for reasons that we might not want to dismiss quite so easily. If a principled commitment to colorblindness can be coupled with a realistic understanding of the persistent problems of race in our society, we may be able to find a place where we all agree with the core principle that race should not matter, yet we still acknowledge the ways in which it does, thus creating a foundation for racial progress and justice moving forward in the twenty-first century.

Framed as such, it should be clear that the study of colorblind identification is not just a matter of taking the subjective perceptions and beliefs of American citizens seriously (which it obviously is). It is also recognizing that attention to the differences between a colorblind ideology and a colorblind cultural discourse may help us develop a more complex, nuanced picture of racial ideas and ideals in our current times, allowing us to see the potential for both positive and negative effects of prevailing cultural understandings of race in all its complexity in the contemporary United States.

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Notes

1. GfK's KnowledgePanel is a probability-based online panel consisting of approximately 50,000 adult members. From 1999 to 2008, KnowledgePanel recruited participants through random digit dialing

(RDD) sampling method based on a sampling frame of U.S. residential landline telephones. After 2009, KnowledgePanel adapted an address-based sampling (ABS) technique that randomly samples addresses using the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Approximately 97 percent of American households are covered by KnowledgePanel's current sampling methods. Addresses chosen are mailed an advance letter requesting them to participate in the panel, followed by up to 14 phone call requests for up to 90 days. Those agreeing to participate in KnowledgePanel are compensated with either Internet access and a personal laptop or a cash-incentive program per survey for those already owning a personal computer. Respondents are assigned to no greater than one 10- to 15-minute survey per week and are limited to between four and six surveys per month.

2. Compared with similar nationally representative surveys, the Boundaries in the American Mosaic (BAM) Survey has a higher-than-average response rate, especially considering the low contact rate (Holbrook, Krosnick, and Pfent 2008). Research on nonresponse bias in KnowledgePanel samples has found no significant differences in respondents and nonrespondents related to the goals of the survey (Heeren et al. 2008). Studies using Heckman selection procedures have shown that self-selection bias is not an important factor in participating in KnowledgePanel surveys (Camerona and DeShazob 2013).

3. We ran our multivariate analyses with the original 4-category coding, as well as an agree/disagree binary. Results proved robust across all codings of the dependent variable.

4. These clarifications were suggested by one of the original, anonymous reviewers of this paper and are gratefully acknowledged here. In terms of social categories and colorblind identities, one line of research that should certainly be pursued further is the relationship between colorblind identification and whiteness. While the issues here go well beyond the scope of a single footnote, we might point out that the various ways in which white Americans identify with colorblindness (and with such different associations with other racial attitudes and beliefs) revealed in this paper seem to indicate that whiteness itself may be a less consistent, universal, or categorical formation than is sometimes presumed or presumed in the literature. For contrasting views on this topic, see Hughey (2010) and Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll (2009).

5. Given the heterogeneity of the group as well as the range of racial categories and ideologies in Latin America (think here of the denial of race even in the face of obvious racial stratification and colorism [cf. Roth 2012]), it would be fascinating to further explore patterns of colorblind identification among Hispanic or Latino/a Americans.

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