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Reconceptualizing Colorblindness:

A Racecraft Approach

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirement for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

by

Oscar Jose Mayorga

2024

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Reconceptualizing Colorblindness: A Racecraft Approach

by

Oscar Jose Mayorga

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Vilma Ortiz, Chair

This dissertation bridges the gap between the role of racial ideology and its material impact. I have done this by extending understanding of what appear to be distinct but related ideologies—colorblindness and the free market—into a larger framework of racecraft. My work draws from Barbara and Karen Fields' concept of racecraft, which describes how racism creates and shapes beliefs about race and, as a result, influences a person's perception and experiences of reality. I build on this theoretically and empirically by showing how it can occur.

Utilizing the American National Election Study from 2000 to 2020, my research contains three main findings. I argue that racist beliefs, such as colorblindness, are related to economic beliefs that justify and influence people to prefer free-market capitalism. Colorblindness and free-market beliefs, which are based on misconceptions of political and economic liberalism or fairness, serve to normalize and minimize the role of racism while simultaneously rejecting active intervention efforts by institutions or governments that favor equity.

Colorblindness and free-market beliefs are aligned and work together to justify inequality and the policies that continue to reproduce it. I then demonstrate how racecraft affects policy preferences for funding social programs, such as assistance for poor people, Social Security, and crime prevention. The broader theoretical contribution of my dissertation is that I link racial ideology with material impact. I analyze the relationship and interaction between colorblindness and free-market beliefs. My examination has provided empirical evidence for previous theoretical claims about the relationship between colorblindness and neoliberal ideology. The implications of this finding help to expand understanding of how apparent "free-market" policies are, in fact, not race neutral but racialized. Moreover, policy rationales based on free-market beliefs are a source of the persistence of inequality. In other words, these policies use a race-blind and free-market justification that reinforces racism and inequality to end government interventions that support equity. This dissertation builds on sociological literature to highlight how race neutral attitudes reinforce racist beliefs among voters in the first two decades of the 21st century.

The dissertation of Oscar Jose Mayorga is approved.

Jennie E. Brand

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2024

I dedicate this dissertation to Jill, Lydia, and Mateo.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I'd like to thank my committee members for all their support during the dissertation process. Vilma, I appreciate your patience and dedication in helping me complete this PhD. Your kind and supportive approach helped me overcome numerous challenges, and I am so grateful to you. I would also like to thank all the members who were a part of Vilma's working group for providing helpful and constructive feedback over the years. Moreover, I want to acknowledge my peers who provided academic support and friendship. I would not have finished without you: Abraham C., Carla S., Ian P., Paul M., Dan Z., and Jalil B. Also, a special thank you to my long-time friend Joe Creamer, who has seen me through all my degrees and has always been encouraging and supportive. I also want to thank my COVID-19 pod friends who, together, navigated a pandemic, wrote dissertations, and raised children while attempting to keep our sanity. Thank you to my sisters, Carla and Sarah, who have been so supportive every step of the way, particularly by providing valuable insights into navigating life and the academy. And to my brothers, Luis and George, who brought laughter and distractions from the work that sometimes was too much at the moment. My parents for their continued support and trips to Los Angeles to bring me home-food comfort. Finally, to my kids, who only know their father as a PhD student. I love you. To Jill, my wonderful, patient, and generous partner, thank you for allowing me to start this journey nine years ago. I promised you it was going to be done in four years. Well, I underestimated how long it was going to take. Thank you for always being there and believing in me.

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INTRODUCTION

My first meaningful experience of being racialized was during my college orientation, which took place the summer I was 18. I had just arrived at Providence College, and that evening I attended the first social where incoming freshmen got to meet other students. I introduced myself to one of my future classmates and asked her where she was from. She named a town in Massachusetts. She asked me the same question. I responded that I was from Miami, Florida. Then she asked a clarifying question: "No, where are you really from? You have an accent." Pondering the question, I said, "Well, I was born in Nicaragua, but I have lived most of my life in the U.S." Her response: "I have never met a Hispanic before." Several questions immediately came to mind. What kind of town does she live in? Where do I "really come from?"—what a weird follow-up question! I wondered, do I have an accent? What accent do I have? She is the one with the accent, I thought, the well-known Boston accent.

I never anticipated that this would be only the first of many other related encounters and experiences I had on campus. People wrote racial epithets on my residence hall walls and on my bedroom door. I received death threats for speaking out about increasing diversity at the college. This all took place in 1997, toward the tail end of the 1990's multicultural movement, when Beverly Daniel Tatum's book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* was the talk of the academy. Charles Mills' book *Racial Contract* and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's *Racism without Racists* were both released during the years I attended Providence College. These scholars helped me make meaning of what I was experiencing. It was these experiences and written works that put me on the path to answering the overarching question, "Why does racism still exist and why is it so persistent?"

I won't bore you with the details of the next 19 years of my life. Let me just say that, in light of all I experienced, the Trump election was a shock but also a vindication, as it affirmed my belief that claims of racial progress were overstated (Ray and Seamster 2016; Seamster and Ray 2018). My experience while holding various leadership positions in higher education for 15 years exposed me to the persistent rhetoric that prevented concrete progress from being made in terms of higher education fully becoming a tool of liberation. This is not to say that education is not a lynchpin of social progress (Ortiz and Telles 2017); however, access to and experience in higher education varies widely among racial groups (Bishop and Mayorga 2019; Mustaffa 2017; Ochoa 2013). My experience in higher education enabled me to see a connection, which has been explored by others (Hohle 2015; Omi and Winant 2015), between colorblindness and neoliberalism ideologies. I experienced firsthand how the university used the tools of neoliberalism (e.g., austerity and privatization) to support cuts and to eliminate programs that promoted equity, diversity, and inclusion—including my job as chief diversity officer. The election of Donald Trump as president of the United States was the catalyst that finally removed any remaining aura of racial progress and led me to pursue the question, "What is the relationship between neoliberalism and colorblindness?" This is the foundation of my dissertation.

My three-chapter dissertation examines this question in terms of both theory and, importantly, the material consequences. By material consequences, I mean how the polity supports and detracts from public and private funding preferences. My first chapter is titled, "The Effect of Colorblindness and Free-Market Beliefs on Social Policy Preferences." The study explores the funding preferences of respondents who participated in the American National Election Study between 2000 and 2016. I find that both colorblindness and free-market beliefs

have a strong moderating effect on policy preferences. Moreover, I observe how the racial narratives and histories of policies impact how colorblindness and free-market beliefs affect the respondents' policy preferences.

My second chapter, "The Trump Effect: Did Four Years of Trump Impact the Polity's Policy Preferences?" examines whether the four years of the Trump administration impacted the trend that I observed in chapter 1. In other words, I tested for a "Trump Effect." Did the polity's policy preferences change after four years of large tax cuts, the separation of migrant children from their parents, a ban on Muslim immigration to the U.S., the constant barrage of explicit racial animus, and the "symphony" of racial dog whistles that emerged during the Trump years. I was fortunate to have access to a panel sample of the American National Election Study, which captured the preferences of people who voted in 2016 and 2020. This panel provided almost all the variables in chapter 1 and revealed how the respondents voted in both elections. I find no actual Trump Effect but, rather, a continuation of the strength of racism.

My third chapter is titled "Colorblindness and Free-Market Ideologies as Racecraft." Although this is an empirical chapter, it's central purpose is to explore the relationship between colorblindness and the free market in light of my findings in the previous two chapters. Colorblindness and free-market ideologies normalize inequality, which renders them distinct yet interconnected. This research challenges the conventional understanding of these two entities as separate by highlighting their interdependence in supporting racial ideology and inequality. I find that colorblind beliefs have a statistically significant influence on free-market beliefs, thereby revealing that free-market ideologies are not race neutral. Those who believe in both free-market principles and colorblindness are more likely to oppose equal opportunity policies. Underscored

in this chapter is my finding that the role of racecraft in shaping perceptions of inequality and justifying policies perpetuates racial disparities.

This dissertation answers the question that has been like a gadfly in my intellectual and personal life. Although expected, the results were not preordained. My findings reflect the inconsistencies found in ideology and provide insight into how to move forward to challenge the persistent nature of racism.

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Chapter 1

The Effects of Colorblindness and Free-Market Beliefs on Social Policy Preferences

*You start out in 1954 by saying, "N*****, n*****, n*****." By 1968 you can't say "n*****"—that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states' rights, and all that stuff, and you're getting so abstract. Now, you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things, and a byproduct of them is blacks get hurt worse than whites…. "We want to cut this" is much more abstract than even the busing thing, uh, and a hell of a lot more abstract than "N*****, n*****."* (Perlstein 2012)

This quote from Lee Atwater, a presidential campaign manager for Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, points to the changing dynamics of the political space after the end of the civil rights movement. It also highlights how racism is applied through policy to affect Black people. I want to point out Atwater's description of how racism, or the use of power, continues to influence policies that hurt "Black people." When Atwater points to how "economic things" are used to harm Black people, he speaks the quiet part out loud. This shows how the creation of economic policy, economics policy itself, and the rhetoric used to disguise racism are tools of racial animus.

The political and economic wins of the civil rights movement brought about a backlash that was reoriented toward ways the state could exclude non-white people from state-sponsored services (Hohle 2015). The political milieu that could use clear racial animus was transformed into one that used abstract liberalism, a culture of poverty, and minimizing racism frameworks to justify disinvestment in communities of color, a lack of state funding for development in those communities, and the abdication of protections through policies that appeared to be race neutral (Bonilla-Silva 2014). These changes were brought out by shifting the racial ideology (Omi and Winant 2015) and the meaning of racial categories, and how these changing meanings affected our perceptions and interpretations of both the world at large and the events that directly affect us.

A belief in colorblindness is a racial ideology that has been identified as the main framework for the continued justification of disinvestment, exclusion, and neglect of communities of color. The colorblind ideology denies the impact of historical and contemporary racism and offers egalitarian counterarguments to policy proposals that attempt to redress social and economic inequalities (Doane 2017). However, another set of beliefs known as free-market ideology has also impacted how people of color in the U.S. have experienced government exclusion, primarily through deregulation, tax cuts, privatization, and austerity. Free-market beliefs, more commonly known as neoliberalism, have been used to justify economic policies that disinvest in communities of color. Free-market beliefs view the market as an autonomous, natural, self-regulating entity that allocates resources efficiently within society via an unseen mechanism (i.e., the "invisible hand"). In other words, the market, through its "natural process," can sort and allocate resources to those in society who are deserving (i.e., meritorious) (Block and Somers 2014).

Both Omi and Winant (2015) and Hohle (2015) have described the relationship between colorblindness and free-market beliefs. Omi and Winant (2015) identify the relationship as neoliberalism and use the "deep current of white supremacy" to gather support to overturn popular programs that originated with the New Deal, World War II, and the Great Society (p. 213). In other words, neoliberalism, whose agenda in the U.S. is to maintain wealth and capital for those who have them, relies on racism to challenge popular social economic programs based on Keynesian economics. Hohle (2015), in contrast, presents the relationship between neoliberalism and racism. He argues that racism is what has led white people to support neoliberalism because there were "no rational or economic reasons" to do so (p. 221). The southern business elites used the "moral rationale" of segregationists to support the policies of

privatization, austerity, tax cuts, and deregulation (p. 221). The commonality between Omi and Winant and Hohle is that they identify a relationship between racism and neoliberalism.

However, evidence is missing on how these beliefs, together or separately, impact policy preferences, in particular how colorblindness and free-market beliefs interact across various policy areas. Are colorblindness and free-market beliefs consistently working in conjunction, or are there circumstances in which they do not work together? Understanding these dynamics will refine our understanding of colorblindness and free-market beliefs.

In this study, I examine the effects free-market beliefs and colorblindness have on increasing or decreasing federal spending in three areas: aid to poor people, Social Security, and dealing with crime. I further explain how colorblindness and free-market beliefs interact and how policies, contemporary racial narratives, and history differentiate how colorblindness and free-market beliefs affect the federal policy preferences of respondents to the American National Election Study.

RACIAL NARRATIVE AND HISTORY OF POLICY

It is well documented that, in order for policymakers on either side of an issue to achieve their desired outcome, "horse trading" must necessarily occur during the legislative process. Policymaking is, therefore, both relational and a political process. However, an additional circumstance that affects policymaking is how politicians and the people who vote for them view and understand an issue. In other words, how a problem is defined and understood directly influences the solutions offered. Max Weber (1946) had significant insights about the power of ideas, including his "famous dictum that ideas have profound effects on the course of events, serving like switchmen who direct interest-based action down one track or another" (Campbell

2018: 280). Continuing in this vein, the categories of racial groups have meanings associated with them (Omi and Winant 2015), and they frame how people experience and understand the world around them (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Feagin 2013; Fields and Fields 2014). This includes who is human and deserves public money (i.e., white people), and who is neither human nor deserving (i.e., Black people) (Hohle 2015). This perception of reality directly impacts the consideration of what the real problems are, and the possible solutions.

As political scientists and sociologists offer a relational understanding of policymaking, economists and public policy scholars point to the science of policymaking (Campbell 2002; Craig 2013), which is framed as having a neutral and objective perspective. Through this neutral and scientific process framework, free-market theories have been used to justify reducing government funding for social programs because they are inefficient and wasteful (Blyth 2013). Moreover, scientific policymaking places human rationality—*homo economicus*—as having importance; in other words, it assumes that the laws of economics can be applied to human choices. This overt rationality in policymaking has been the foundation of 21st-century policy discourse (Brown 2019; Centeno and Cohen 2012). In the following section, I describe the racial history of aid to the poor, Social Security, and dealing with crime, and how the free-market policymakers have analyzed them.

Aid to Poor People

Social science has played a role in understanding who the recipients of welfare are. Oscar Lewis's *Culture of Poverty* and Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* offered "scientific" evidence that those who receive aid from the state are undeserving because their circumstances of poverty are of their own making. Other scholars have pointed out that these authors' research was racist,

and that it was built on and attached to the longstanding white supremacist belief that Black people and other people of color are inferior. Lewis's and Murry's discourse can thus be viewed as racially charged and racially motivated, rather than as racially neutral, or its racialized intent being ignored. The rise of anti-welfare beliefs is steeped in anti-Blackness, typified by the trope of the welfare queen. The move toward cultural racism was in part a replacement for the biological racism that claimed to be supported by science.

The consequence of this anti-welfare rhetoric was that politicians such as Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich used these cultural frames to support "the end of welfare as we know it." This led to a transformative moment in aid to the poor—the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The main purpose of the 1996 welfare reform act was to repeal Title IV of the Social Security Act of 1935, and the program then known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or AFDC. This is the only program from the 1935 Social Security Act ever to be repealed (Social Security Administration n.d.). AFDC was replace by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF. The TANF reforms, which included time limits on support that were tied to recipients working, were based on the free-market belief of austerity. The TANF program's temporary support and lifetime limit were intended to reduce the cost of the program. The work component was also important, because in theory it made TANF recipients deserving of help.

TANF provides a clear example of how colorblindness and free-market beliefs worked in conjunction to change how aid was provided to poor people. Block and Somers (2014) have pointed out that free-market beliefs are based on the view that welfare recipients' personal failings are the source of market failure. Cultural racism is implicit in this view—that is, the belief that the group identity of being Black, Mexican, or Puerto Rican is what leads to being

poor. Consequently, a "good" government should not intervene in the market's natural process to aid the undeserving. In this view, if a person does not have the means to, in the Marxian lexicon, "reproduce themselves" (i.e., survive), the state should not interfere. Free-market beliefs focus on individual outcomes, rather than on the social structures that help to produce such outcomes, such as institutional racism or sexism.

Social Security

Unlike aid to poor people, Social Security payments are made to people who have worked to earn the benefit; it is an entitlement that American workers expect to receive when they retire. The Social Security program was created as a result of negotiations between segregationist southern Democrats and progressive northern Democrats in the 1930s. The deal made between these two factions allowed the creation of Social Security on the condition that agricultural and domestic workers would not be allowed to participate in the program. This compromise excluded large segments of the Black and Mexican populations that were overrepresented in these job categories. Social Security at that time helped millions of impoverished, largely white elderly folks escape poverty.

Those who support the free market have wanted to privatize Social Security, but the topic has long been a political third rail. The solvency of the Social Security program has been debated for the last 40 years, and although some changes have been made to address the issue, it remains a program with wide popular support. A large segment of the U.S. elderly population—Social Security's main constituency—is politically active and tends to go to the polls. Nevertheless, President George W. Bush made a large-scale attempt to privatize Social Security. This Republican effort was one reason the Democrats won back the House of Representatives in

2006. The logic offered for privatizing Social Security was that the government was running the program ineffectively and that investing in the market would be a better and safer choice. These statements were made just a year before the collapse of the financial services firm Lehman Brothers, which marked the beginning of the Great Recession.

Dealing with Crime

The some of the initial police forces in the United States were founded to catch runaway slaves. During the civil rights eras of 1886 and 1965, police forces were marked by their being used to maintain the racial rules through the maintenance of Jim Crow laws. The scholarship of the carceral state and the use of police is robust (Alexander 2012; Slobodian 2018). Phrases such as "dealing with crime," "tough on crime," and "law and order" evoke historical and contemporary calls to support policies that maintain a white racial order. In the Jim Crow era, such calls came with the lynching and brutalizing of Black men and boys, including Emmett Till; in the western U.S., Mexicans were also lynched. In the post-civil rights era, terms like "super predators" and "get tough on crime" led to a police regime that practiced hyper-surveillance and led to more arrests of Black and Brown people in U.S. cities. One example is New York City's stop-and-frisk law. The concept of how to deal with crime has been tightly coupled with state-sanctioned violence.

At the same time, however, free-market beliefs are also tied to protection. One of the few government interventions for free-market proponents is the protection of life and property. Thus, although the government should not interfere with the market, it is called on to protect the market from interference by political movements or from protests calling for greater benefits and more protection of property rights (Slobodian 2018). Efforts are also underway to reduce

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government involvement by privatizing U.S. prisons, even though privatization has been shown to increase the prison population.

In sum, U.S. policies relating to aid for poor people, Social Security, and dealing with crime have been strongly influenced by racist thinking and actions. Contemporary understanding of these policies is affected by these histories, and by the present context of racism in the United States. Meanwhile, market solutions are presented as being race neutral, even though their effects appear to build upon past racist histories.

COLORBLINDNESS, FREE-MARKET BELIEFS, AND POLICY

Colorblindness and free-market beliefs have been dominant in the 21st century. Extensive scholarship has been conducted on the development of and transition Keynesian Capitalism to our current condition (see Centeno and Cohen 2012; Chorev 2010; Krippner 2007). In this section, I focus on understanding how previous scholarship has described the role of colorblindness and free-market beliefs in aid to the poor, Social Security, and dealing with crime.

Colorblind Beliefs

Extensive research has been conducted on where and how colorblind beliefs or, more broadly, ideology has impacted institutional settings, in particular the description of policies as race neutral. The impact of those policies is nevertheless racialized (Burke 2017; Doane 2017). The subject of aid to the poor, commonly called welfare, has been a major focus for colorblind scholars. The main finding about colorblind beliefs and aid to the poor is that those who have colorblind beliefs are less likely to support welfare. Their rationale is about deservingness and fairness—in other words, the frames of abstract liberalism and cultural racism are used to justify

the view that welfare is essentially the unfair spending of money on people who do not deserve support because their failures are their own. Burnhan (2007), for example, argues that the policy behind the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was built on racism. Weigt (2006) explains that justification of the transition to TANF from the previous model was that people would be given help only if they were first going to help themselves. This policy goal was accomplished by making TANF both temporary, limited in use, and based on the condition that recipients work. In sum, colorblind beliefs have been identified as the justification for the disinvestment of public dollars to support those deemed undeserving, without any explicit racial justification.

Dealing with crime is another policy that has similarities with aid to the poor (Wacquant 2009). It has been argued that the disinvestment of welfare and increased funding for dealing with crime is intentional. As Alexander (2012) argues, colorblind beliefs and frameworks have defined policing and the laws that support dealing with crime in the late 20th and early 21st century. The main feature of colorblindness in these laws and policing is that the laws are framed as race neutral. For instance, New York City's stop-and-frisk policy allowed law enforcement officers to randomly frisk people based on their perception that a person looked suspicious. The outcome of that policy was that an overwhelming number of Black and Latino men were stopped and frisked, which led to the increased harassment and incarceration of men of color. Scholars have noted that colorblind beliefs have provided a rationale for such policies, which overwhelmingly impact people of color while being framed as not having anything to do with race. Moreover, although the question of how colorblindness affects Social Security policies has not yet been examined, I have already stated that racism was part of the process of the creation of Social Security (Poole 2006).

Free-Market Beliefs

The impact of free-market beliefs or neoliberalism is ubiquitous in examinations of economic and social policy issues. Moreover, scholars have examined how neoliberalism and race are related across different policies (Berrey 2011, 2015; Goldberg 2009; Hohle 2015; Ochoa 2013). In this section, I focus on how free-market beliefs have been found to impact welfare (i.e., aid to the poor), Social Security, and dealing with crime.

The study of neoliberalism or free-market beliefs is focused mainly on how the welfare system, which is a cash transfer program for people who do not meet an income threshold, was augmented, and at times dismantled, from the late 1970s to the 1990s. Free-market beliefs led to reduced welfare funding. As Block and Somers (2014; 2005) have pointed out, free-market beliefs—colloquially known as the invisible hand, or the market's ability to distribute resources efficiently in society—are quasi-religious concepts. In other words, free-market beliefs are a stand-in for the belief that a self-regulating, autonomous entity—that is, the market—can determine who should receive state resources based on some internal determination of who is deserving or undeserving. Block and Somers (2014) point to a similar premise in the "poor laws" of England: that giving money to poor people keeps them poor, or the poverty-to-perversity theory. Free-market beliefs, or what Block and Somers call market fundamentalism, use these underlying beliefs about deservingness to justify who is eligible for government aid—that is, welfare.

An overwhelming number of scholars have come to the conclusion that the end of welfare is based on the rhetoric used by proponents of the free market to demonize recipients of welfare and mark them as undeserving, one example being the fictitious welfare queen. Efforts

have been made using this rhetoric of austerity and the redistribution of federal dollars through tax cuts to reduce or end welfare. As previously stated, this led to the reform of welfare and the creation of TANF in 1996, which reduced both access to long-term financial support and the amount granted to needy families.

Aligned with these changes to welfare was a new approach to dealing with crime and neoliberalism, which used the tool of privatization. The rhetoric around dealing with crime and neoliberalism as relates to spending was the need to privatize prisons because the government could not run them efficiently, and that private industry was better suited to making tax dollars go further. These free-market beliefs led to the rebuilding and privatization of prison management. The idea was that the free market would reduce the cost of dealing with crime through privatization—that private industry could handle it better. Government involvement was reduced, and promises were made that private prisons would be cheaper to operate. The results soon made it clear that they were not.

As stated before, Social Security is an entitlement that workers pay into, but it has long been and continues to be a political "third rail." The consistent rhetoric about Social Security in the early 21st century is that spending is out of control and the program is not well managed. The proposed approach to solving the Social Security problem and making the program solvent included a framework of cost reduction—austerity—and letting some entity other than the government manage it—privatization. Austerity and privatization would be accomplished by managing Social Security funds in the free market, particularly through investment firms. However, this attempt to privatize social security by creating private retirement accounts that grew in the stock market failed in 2006, and helped return the House of Representatives to Democratic control during the G. W. Bush administration.

Most scholarship on neoliberalism has not applied a racism lens. Scholars also have shown that failure in the economy among people of color is not due solely to their individual choices but to structural and intergenerational barriers, and to white people receiving unmerited financial advantages (Mills 2004).

In this study, I demonstrate how racial colorblind beliefs predict and interact with free-market beliefs and federal spending preferences. I use American National Election Study (ANES) survey data from 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 to capture people's free-market and colorblind beliefs. The period selected covers the hegemonic dominance of neoliberal and colorblind beliefs. I address two questions:

1. *What is the relationship between colorblindness and the free market across various policy areas?*

2. *How do colorblindness and free-market beliefs predict the electorate's policy funding preferences?*

DATA AND SAMPLE

The ANES (2016) is a collaboration between Stanford University and the University of Michigan to collect public opinion, voting, and civic participation data. The resulting dataset is ideal for analysis because it contains nationally representative data on various items, including attitudes of racial resentment, the economy, and federal spending priorities, as well as questions about participants' ideological preferences (e.g., neoliberalism and political orientation). The ANES is administered during each presidential election year. I pooled a subsample of the study from 2000 to 2016, inclusive. Sample weights were needed to obtain accurate estimates and

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standard errors (DeBell 2010). The total pooled sample size for 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and

2016 was 19,990.

VARIABLES OF INTEREST AND COVARIATES

Policy Preferences

  Austerity is a category of variables that operationalize one distinct feature of libertarian

perspectives: less government spending on social programs. The item stem asks respondents if

they want to increase (1), maintain (2), or decrease (3) the (then current) level of funding across

the following programs: Poor People (mean of 1.66), Social Security (mean of 1.55), and

Dealing with Crime (mean of 1.42) (Table 1.1).

Free-Market Beliefs

  A key variable is free-market beliefs, which consists of beliefs about the role of the

market versus the role of government in economic matters. However, the central premise of the

free market is that the "invisible hand" of the market is best able to make decisions about how

resources and goods are to be distributed, and that the government should not intervene in market

actions. I used two items to capture the essential features of the free market. The first item reads,

"You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your

views: ONE, the less government, the better [not recoded in the analysis]; or TWO, there are

more things that government should be doing [recoded to zero]." The first part of this item—

"less government, the better"—captures the government's role in making or interfering in the

market's economic decisions. Fifty-five percent of respondents agreed with that statement. The

second item reads, "You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one

is closer to your views: ONE, we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic

problems [recoded to zero]; or TWO, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved [recoded to one]." The second item—"the free market can handle the economy"—focuses on the market's ability to manage the economy. Forty-four percent of respondents agreed with that statement (see Table 1.1).

Colorblind Beliefs

The key independent variable is colorblind beliefs. I rely on Bonilla-Silva's conceptualization of colorblindness, including measures for cultural racism, minimizing racism, and abstract liberalism.[2] In Table 1.1, I outline how each item relates to each sub-belief. One item says, "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class," which aligns closely with the minimization of racism. Since the item points to historical practices, I consider this indicative of minimizing historical racism. Forty-two percent of respondents agree that "Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed." I recoded this variable so that higher values mean "Historical conditions do not make it difficult for Black people to succeed." The second item says, "It is a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites." This captures cultural racism, which argues that Black people's standing in society is a product of their lack of effort and problematic values. Sixty-six percent of respondents agree that "Black people must try harder to succeed." The third item says, "Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors." This indicates abstract liberalism, which argues that additional policy efforts are unnecessary to ensure equality. Seventy-four percent of respondents agree that "Black people should not have special favors to succeed." This construct of abstract liberalism is distinct from the equal opportunity measure used, because the survey

item focuses more on the idea of Black people "bootstrapping" or putting more effort into being successful than on the assumption that society offers equal opportunity (see Appendix A).

Political Ideology and Partisanship

Experts and researchers have discussed the growing polarization of political discussions among parties and ideologies, particularly conservative and liberal beliefs. Scholars also have emphasized the importance of political ideology in shaping perceptions of various social issues (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017). To measure conservative ideology, a self-reported survey item is used, and is scored on a seven-point scale ranging from "extremely liberal" (1) to "extremely conservative" (7), with a midpoint of "moderate or middle of the road" at 4. The average score for conservative ideology is 4.26 (refer to Table 1.2). To gauge the emotional and partisan sentiment in the United States, I have included a political "feel thermometer" for Democrats. This asks respondents to rate their feelings on a scale of 0 (no warmth) to 100 (maximum warmth). The average score for "Warm Feeling Towards Democratic" is 46.69 (refer to Table 1.2).

Income, Education, and Employment Status

The literature on stratification identifies two primary economic drivers: income and years of education. These indicators have been shown to have a significant impact on economic mobility. In this study, I measured family income by asking respondents to report their income percentile within five categories. Each category was assigned a numerical value representing the midpoint of the percentile group. The mean family income percentile was 59 percent. Similarly, years of education were measured by categorizing respondents into seven groups based on their

highest level of education. Again, each category was assigned a numerical value representing the maximum level of education attained. The mean years of education were 14.6 (See Table 1.2).

Demographic Controls

The ANES questionnaire includes a question about binary sex, with men being the reference group. The sample comprises 46 percent women (as shown in Table 1.2); to account for potential age cohort effects of racial colorblind racism, an age measure has been used. The mean age of the sample is 45 years (Table 1.2). A subnational analysis was included in this study, utilizing the geolocation data gathered by the ANES. The sample consists of 18 percent from the Northeast, 22 percent from the Midwest, 37 percent from the South, and 22 percent from the West (Table 1.2). This study covers five presidential elections: 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. The sample comprises 27 percent of the 2016 election (see Table 1.2). As regards racial categories, the sample demographics show that white people comprise 80 percent of the sample (see Table 1.2). Black people constitute 11 percent of the sample, while other people of color make up eight percent.

PLAN OF ANALYSIS

I analyzed multinomial logistic regression to examine the relationship between colorblindness and free markets in funding policy preferences. Unfortunately, I cannot include all the colorblind frame items in one model because of multicollinearity (see Tables 1.3). Therefore, I ran separate models for each colorblind belief item and each free-market item, which led to 18 regression models. After seeing that all results across colorblindness and the free market were consistent across each dependent variable. I combined each colorblind item into a

single item by adding them together. The scale was from 3 to 15, with a standard deviation of 3. Based on centering the variable with the mean, I recoded the variable from 3 to 6 to mark the lower 33 percent colorblindness belief; the middle 66 percent is 7 to 13, and the top 33 percent is 14-15. Similarly, I combined the two free-market variables into a single variable. The range is 0 to 2. I did not recode it because 0 means no free-market beliefs, while 2 means both free-market beliefs were answered affirming free market beliefs. Recoding colorblindness and free-market allows the analysis to move from 18 regressions to 3.

Moreover, using multinomial logistic regression brings additional challenges in interpreting results. The multinomial output compares the base outcome to other options of the dependent variable. In my case, it would compare keeping funding the "same" option, my selected base outcome, to either increasing or decreasing funding levels. The relative risk ratio (RRR) would be the likelihood that a respondent would be the same when compared to the other option of increase or decrease. RRR does not provide insight into the effect of colorblindness and free-market beliefs on policy preferences. As an alternative, I opted to show the adjusted predicted outcome for colorblindness and the free market. An adjusted predicted outcomes is when you "specify values for each of the independent variables in the model and then compute the probability of the event occurring for an individual who has those values" (Williams 2012: 311). Using adjusted predicted outcomes, I can show how colorblindness and free-market beliefs predict policy preferences across increased and decreased funding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show that colorblindness and free-market beliefs impact policy funding preferences. More importantly, the results show us that racism is the primary aim of the two

ideologies—colorblindness and the free market—through the strong moderating effects colorblindness has on the free market.

Spending on Poor People

The main effects findings for colorblindness and free market on spending on poor people (Table 1.4) show the case when colorblindness and free-market beliefs are aligned. By alignment, I mean that the effects of both colorblindness and free-market beliefs are pointed in the same direction. There is a 20-point decrease in increasing spending between high and low colorblindness. When examining decreasing spending, there is a 13-point difference between high and low colorblindness. Similarly, with free-market beliefs, there is a 24-point decrease between high and low free markets in increasing spending. At the same time, I have a 14-point increase between the high free market and low free market in decreasing spending on poor people.

In addition to the main effect, there is a statistically significant interaction term between colorblindness and free-market beliefs for increased spending on poor people. To better understand the effects of interaction, it is important first to establish what an interaction is. An interaction occurs when two distinct variables, such as colorblindness and the free market, have individual effects on a dependent variable, such as spending on dealing with crime, but also have a joint effect that differs from the simple sum of their independent effects. Essentially, the relationship between colorblindness and the free-market effect depends on one another within the model for spending on dealing with crime. In other words, one cannot understand the effect of colorblindness without the effect of free-market beliefs, and vice versa.

In Figure 1.1, the x-axis is levels of colorblindness. The y-axis is the predicted probabilities of increased spending on poor people. The blue line is low free-market respondents, and the red line is high free-market respondents. Figure 1.1 shows that the slope of low free-market beliefs respondents is -0.58, while the slope of high free-market beliefs respondents is -0.11. The low free-market slope is five times steeper, meaning that respondents with low free-market beliefs have a higher rate of change when they have higher colorblind beliefs. In other words, colorblindness has a stronger effect on low-free-market respondents than on those with high free-market beliefs.

I attribute these results to the history and racial narrative about who poor people are. Poor people are racialized as non-white, even though most poor people are white. This shows that colorblindness and free-market beliefs can be aligned with policy preferences that have negatively racialized policies.

Spending on Social Security

In the main effects of Social Security, I observed the misalignment of colorblindness and free-market beliefs. That is, colorblindness and free-market beliefs are going in the opposite direction. There is an 11-point increase from high colorblindness to low colorblindness in increasing spending on Social Security (Table 1.5). However, there is a 15-point decrease from a high free market to a low free market in increasing spending on Social Security. There is no difference in decreasing spending for colorblindness and free-market beliefs.

The history and narrative explain how colorblindness and the free market racialize Social Security. Unlike the racialization of funding for poor people, Social Security is racialized in different ways. For colorblindness, Social Security is seen as an earned benefit that is based on

people's hard work, and those workers are racialized as white and deserving. As a result, it is expected to see those with high colorblindness wanting to increase spending on Social Security. Colorblindness is not just about denying benefits to people of color but about awarding or protecting benefits for white people (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Lipsitz 1998; Vera and Feagin 2007). At the same time, free-market beliefs racialized those who use the Social Security entitlement as poor or undeserving because they did not have the savings or financial means to use something other than a public benefit. To be labeled poor and undeserving is to be racialized as non-white. Although both colorblindness and the free-market beliefs racialize Social Security, the narratives are not aligned. In other words, racism is still occurring either as an unearned benefit of colorblindness or a punitive policy for free-market beliefs. The case of Social Security demonstrates the contradictory nature of racist ideologies as they relate to policy action. However, one thing is clear: the aim of racist ideologies is inequality. There was no statistically significant interaction term in the Social Security model.

Dealing with Crime

The results are what I expected for colorblindness and dealing with crime. When respondents have stronger colorblindness beliefs, they are more likely to prefer to increase spending on dealing with crime, and prefer not to decrease spending on dealing with crime. Dealing with crime—that is, prisons and policing—are strongly tied to maintaining racial order through state-sanctioned violence. There is a 16-point increase in spending on dealing with crime from high to low colorblindness (Table 1.6). Moreover, there has been a nine-point decrease in spending on dealing with crime from high to low colorblindness.

However, free-market beliefs show an 11-point decrease increasing spending on dealing with crime. At the same time, there is a two-point gain in decreasing spending on dealing with crime. At first glance, the pattern is similar to the one seen in Social Security, where colorblindness and the free market are not aligned in dealing with crime. However, a statistically significant interaction between colorblindness and free-market beliefs changes the story.

In Figures 1.2 and 1.3, the x-axis is colorblindness. The y-axis is the predicted probability of spending on crime. The blue line is low free-market respondents, and the red line is high free-market respondents. In Figure 2, the slope of respondents with low free-market beliefs is 0.45, and that of those with high free-market beliefs is 0.21. The low free-market slope is approximately twice as steep, meaning that those with low free-market beliefs have a higher rate of change when they have higher colorblind beliefs. In other words, colorblindness has a stronger effect on low-free-market respondents than on those with high free-market beliefs. However, it is also important to note that strong levels of colorblindness also impact respondents with high free market beliefs. However, we must look beyond the differences in the slope. The slope for high free market beliefs is positive in the interaction model, which is unexpected. The main effect of free market beliefs on dealing with crime was negative—that is, it decreased. Thus, colorblindness has moderated the effect of firm free-market beliefs on funding preferences in dealing with crime. The moderation of colorblindness was so strong that it flipped its direction from negative to positive. Thus, colorblindness increases the likelihood that both high- and low-free-market respondents will prefer to increase spending on dealing with crime.

Figure 3 shows a similar pattern for decreasing spending on dealing with crime. A low free market has a steeper slope. Low free-market respondents are 2 percent at high

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colorblindness, while high free-market respondents are 7 percent at high colorblindness. Similar to Figure 1, colorblindness affects low and high free markets. What we can take away is that colorblindness and the free market are a couple, but that racism is a primary driver of the effect of both levels of the free market.

The history and narrative of dealing with crime differ from those of poor people and Social Security. Dealing with crime consists largely of policing and prisons, which have been the main tools for maintaining the racial order through state-sanctioned violence. Moreover, dealing with crime as a policy is primarily focused on people of color. Thus, colorblindness supports increased spending on dealing with crime. However, unlike racialization in Social Security, there is no alternative framework of racialization from a free-market perspective that aligns with racism. As a result, there is a conflict between free-market and colorblindness beliefs on dealing with crime. Moreover, the result is that colorblindness moderates the effects of a high free market so that it changes direction to support racism. The racial narrative trumps the efficiency of the invisible hand.

In sum, we observe significant relationships when we examine colorblindness and free markets in predicting policies and funding preferences, but they are not all in the same direction. Racial narrative and history impact the direction and the effect of the relationship. Colorblindness and the free market's main effects are aligned for spending on poor people and have similar predicted probabilities. Colorblindness moderates low free-market respondents five times more than high free-market respondents. The main effects of Social Security, colorblindness, and the free market go in the opposite direction. Each belief supports racism in its way, either by increasing or decreasing funding for Social Security. The main effects of

dealing with crime, colorblindness, and the free market go in the opposite direction, but the moderate effect on the free market is strong. The colorblindness moderating effect is so strong that it flips the direction of the high free market. So, regardless of the level of free-market beliefs, respondents support more funding for dealing with crime. Finally, I want to point out how the racialized histories and narratives of the policies impact respondents' policy preferences, which are observed in the effects of colorblindness and free-market beliefs.

CONCLUSION

I connect racialized narratives from colorblindness and the free market to explain their relationship. Colorblindness and the free market provide the basis for the scripts, social interactions, and meaning-making moments of our lived experience. Thus, colorblindness and free-market beliefs inform social interactions in society, including what are considered problems and what solutions might solve them.

My findings enable us to move from focusing solely on colorblindness as an example of contemporary racial ideology. It is racist ideologies, not one racial ideology, that shape and ensure the persistence of racism and result in greater inequality. We have been looking at half the picture by focusing on colorblindness. Colorblindness and free-market beliefs are the shared collective beliefs that shape how people experience the world and act upon it. The actions resulting from colorblindness and free-market beliefs help us look beyond policy inconsistencies to see how the racial narrative around whom the policy is targeted affects policy.

In conclusion, I want to share some of the impact this theoretical change can have on the sociology of race and racism. Free-market beliefs as racist beliefs enable us to reconsider how past and current use of neoliberal policies are enacting racist outcomes. This study shows how other ideologies that seemingly appear race neutral are part of racist ideologies. Moreover,

seeing free-market beliefs as tools to understand how white grievances, downplaying the role of racism in society, and discouraging policy solutions to address inequality are part of the same phenomenon. In sum, understanding the free market as a racial ideology provides the theoretical tools to explore and test how other ideologies that appear race neutral can predict the decisions and actions that impact our chances in life.

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Table 1.1. Descriptive Statistics Dependent and Independent Variables

	Mean	S.E.
Federal Spending Priorities		
Decrease spending: Poor people	1.79	0.01
Decrease spending: Social security	1.55	0.01
Decrease spending: Dealing with crime	1.53	0.01
Pro-Free-Market Beliefs		
The less government, the better	0.54	0.01
The free market can handle the economy	0.41	0.01
Pro-free-market beliefs scale	0.96	0.01
Colorblind Racist Beliefs		
Conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed *(Disagree)*	3.23	0.02
Black people should not have special favors to succeed *(Agree)*	3.52	0.02
Black People must try harder to succeed *(Agree)*	3.27	0.02
Colorblind racism belief scale	2.02	0.01

Note: Survey weights used to calculate means

Table 1.2. Descriptive Statistics Covariates

Political Ideology and Sentiment	Mean	S.E.
Conservative	2.14	0.01
Warm feelings toward Democrats	47.58	0.34
Social Economic Status		
Family income percentage group	0.54	0.003
Years of education	14.37	0.04
Demographics		
White people	0.76	0.01
Women	0.49	0.01
Age	47.23	0.23
Region		
Northeast	0.17	0.01
Midwest	0.22	0.01
South	0.37	0.01
West	0.23	0.05
Survey Year		
2000	0.04	0.002
2004	0.07	0.002
2008	0.14	0.004
2012	0.47	0.006
2016	0.28	0.006

Note: Survey weights used to calculate means

Table 1.3. Correlation between Sub-Colorblind Beliefs

	Conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed	*Black people should not have special favors to succeed*	*Black people must try harder to succeed*
Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed.	1		
Black people should not have special favors to succeed.	.40	1	
Black people must try harder to succeed.	.38	.60	1

Table 1.4. Predicted Probabilities of Colorblindness and Free-Market Beliefs about Spending on Poor People

	Increase Spending	Decrease Spending
Low Colorblindness	0.47***	0.08***
High Colorblindness	0.27***	0.21***
Low Free Market	0.49***	0.08
High Free Market	0.25***	0.22

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05

Table 1.5. Predicted Probabilities of Colorblindness and Free-Market Beliefs about Spending on Social Security

	Increase Spending	Decrease Spending
Low Colorblindness	0.46***	0.04
High Colorblindness	0.58***	0.04
Low Free Market	0.61***	0.02***
High Free Market	0.43***	0.06***

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05

Table 1.6. Predicted Probabilities of Colorblindness and Free-Market Beliefs about Spending on Dealing with Crime

	Increase Spending	Decrease Spending
Low Colorblindness	0.46***	0.10***
High Colorblindness	0.65***	0.04***
Low Free Market	0.63	0.05***
High Free Market	0.49	0.07***

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05

Figure 1.1. Predicted Probabilities of Colorblindness and Free-Market Beliefs about Spending for Poor People
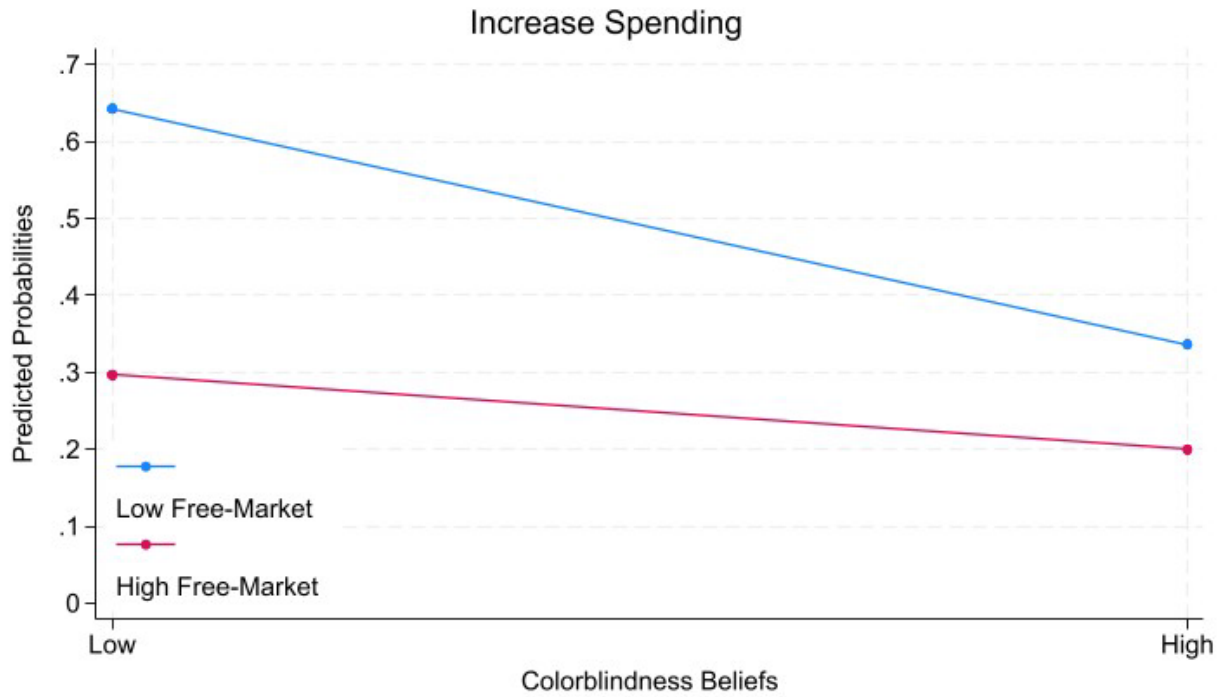
Figure 1.2. Predicted Probabilities at High and Low Colorblindness and at High and Low Free-Market Beliefs about Increased Spending on Dealing with Crime
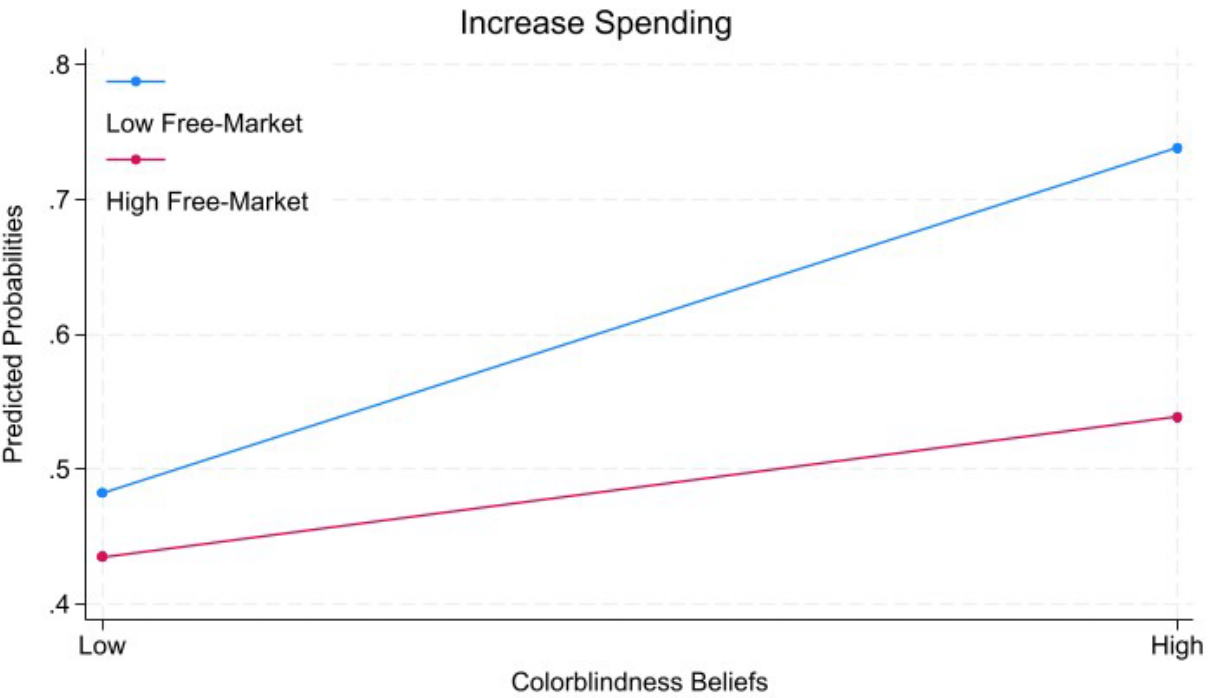
Figure 1.3. Predicted Probabilities at High and Low Colorblindness and at High and Low Free-Market Beliefs about Decreased Spending on Dealing with Crime
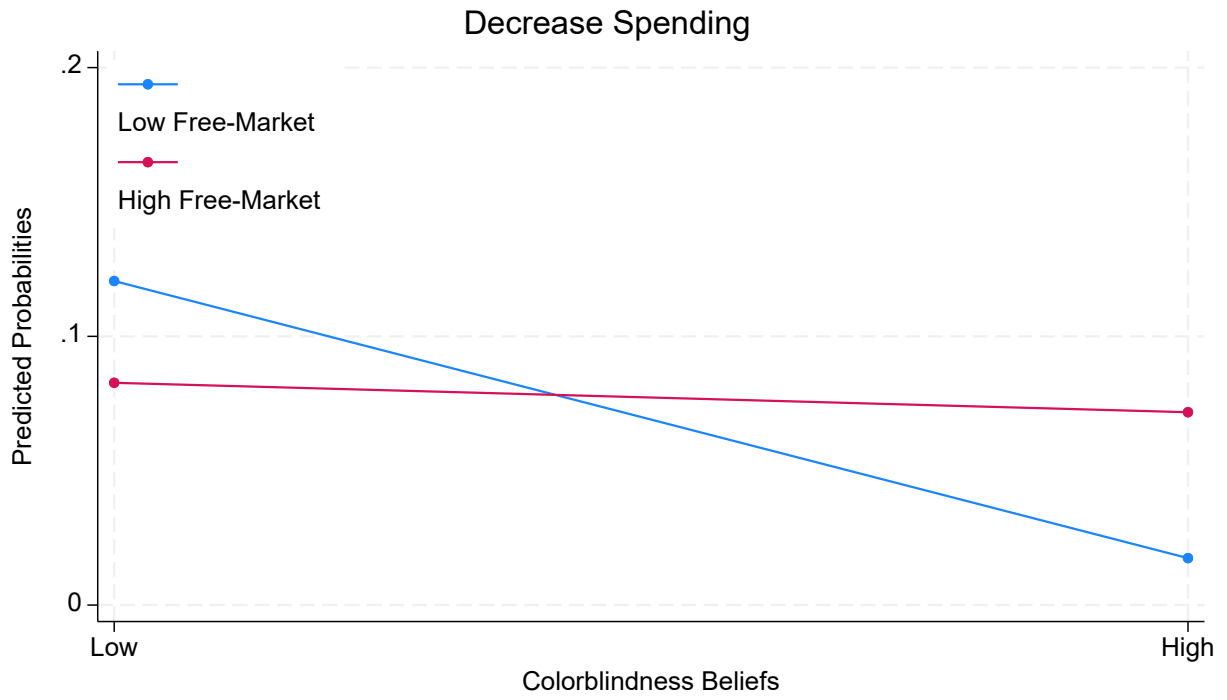
APPENDIX A. VARIABLE NAMES AND DEFINITIONS

Table A1.1. Survey Questions of Dependent and Independent Variables

Variable	Question Stem	Options
Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed.	Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
Black people should not have special favors to succeed.	Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
Black people must try harder to succeed.	It's a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
The less government, the better.	Next, I am going to ask you to choose one of two statements. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your (2000:own) views.	One, less government, the better; or two, there are more things government should be doing
Free market can handle the economy	Next, I will ask you to choose one of two statements. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your (2000:own) views.	One, we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems; or two, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved
No support for ensuring equal opportunity	Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know

APPENDIX B. FULL REGRESSION RESULTS

Table B1.1. Poor Dependent Variable, Full Results

VARIABLES	(1) Increase	(2) Increase	(5) Decrease	(6) Decrease
	RRR	S.E.	RRR	S.E.
Colorblindness	0.56***	0.05	1.39**	0.20
Free Market	0.40***	0.06	1.21	0.25
Interaction Term	1.27***	0.09	1.11	0.10
Conservative				
Liberal	1.34***	0.11	0.92	0.14
Conservative	0.86	0.07	1.26*	0.12
Democratic Warm	1.01***	0.002	0.98***	0.00
White People	0.65***	0.05	0.91	0.10
Women	1.09	0.07	0.96	0.08
Age	0.99***	0.00	0.99***	0.00
Family Income	0.38***	0.05	1.86***	0.29
Years of Education	0.93***	0.01	1.01	0.02
Region				
Northeast	1.01	0.09	0.93	0.11
Midwest	0.77***	0.07	0.98	0.10
West	0.98	0.08	1.01	0.11
Years				
2000	1.06	0.14	0.55***	0.11
2004	1.47***	0.17	0.61***	0.11
2008	1.83***	0.19	0.61***	0.10
2012	0.64***	0.05	1.13	0.10
Constant	24.58***	8.19	0.28	0.13
Observation	9,027		9,027	

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05
The same is the reference for multinomial logistic regression
People of color are the reference for white people
South is the reference for the region
2016 is the reference for years

Table B1.2. Social Security Dependent Variable, Full Results

VARIABLES	(1) Increase	(2) Increase	(5) Decrease	(6) Decrease
	RRR	S.E.	RRR	S.E.
Colorblindness	1.30***	0.07	1.09	0.14
Free Market	0.73***	0.03	1.43***	0.13
Conservative				
Liberal	0.98	0.08	0.77	0.16
Conservative	0.79***	0.06	1.02	0.15
Democratic Warm	1.01***	0.001	0.99***	0.00
White People	0.87	0.06	0.97	0.16
Women	1.27***	0.07	0.78	0.10
Age	1.00	0.00	0.96***	0.00
Family Income	0.55***	0.06	1.10	0.26
Years of Education	0.92***	0.01	1.09***	0.02
Region				
Northeast	1.00	0.09	0.88	0.16
Midwest	0.86	0.07	0.98	0.16
West	0.80***	0.06	1.04	0.16
Years				
2000	0.94	0.12	0.44*	0.15
2004	1.11	0.12	0.79	0.19
2008	0.99	0.10	0.90	0.19
2012	0.55***	0.04	0.92	0.12
Constant	5.11***	1.36	0.30	0.16
Observation	9,004		9,004	

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05
The same is the reference for multinomial logistic regression
People of color are the reference for white people
South is the reference for the region
2016 is the reference for years

Table B1.3. Dealing with Crime Dependent Variable, Full Results

VARIABLES	(1) Increase	(2) Increase	(5) Decrease	(6) Decrease
	RRR	S.E.	RRR	S.E.
Colorblindness	1.58***	0.13	0.49***	0.08
Free Market	0.97	0.13	0.51***	0.12
Interaction Term	0.89*	0.05	1.46***	0.17
Conservative				
Liberal	0.73***	0.06	2.23***	0.37
Conservative	1.07	0.08	1.34	0.21
Democratic Warm	1.00	0.00	0.99***	0.00
White People	0.68***	0.05	0.81	0.11
Women	1.22***	0.07	0.80*	0.09
Age	1.01***	0.00	0.99***	0.00
Family Income	0.68***	0.08	0.45***	0.10
Years of Education	0.93***	0.01	0.97	0.02
Region				
Northeast	0.90	0.08	0.63***	0.11
Midwest	0.91	0.07	0.82	0.12
West	0.81***	0.06	0.84	0.11
Years				
2000	1.09	0.14	0.61	0.17
2004	0.88	0.09	0.48***	0.13
2008	0.65***	0.06	0.55***	0.11
2012	0.47***	0.03	0.80	0.10
Constant	3.69***	1.08	7.16***	4.01
Observation	9,047		9,047	

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05
The same is the reference for multinomial logistic regression
People of color are the reference for white people
South is the reference for the region
2016 is the reference for years

Chapter 2

The Trump Effect:
Did Four Years of Trump Impact the Polity's Policy Preferences?

*You start out in 1954 by saying, "N*****, n*****, n*****." By 1968 you can't say "n*****"—that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states' rights, and all that stuff, and you're getting so abstract. Now, you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things, and a byproduct of them is blacks get hurt worse than whites…"We want to cut this" is much more abstract than even the busing thing, uh, and a hell of a lot more abstract than "N*****, n*****.* (Perlstein 2012)

When talking about U.S. visas, Trump said that people from Haiti "all have AIDS" and that Nigerian immigrants would never "go back to their huts" after experiencing the United States. (Shear and Davis 2017)

UGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way." Any difficulty and we will assume control, but when the looting starts, the shooting starts." (Wines 2020)

In stark contrast to the approach taken by Lee Atwater (the first quote above), a presidential campaign manager for Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, Donald Trump's approach to public discourse goes beyond using "dog whistle" politics. Trump also uses direct and explicit "old-fashioned" racial animus, which has caused some scholars and pundits to speculate whether Trump is a unique, charismatic candidate who has been able to upend the normative political discourse. Dog whistle politics is the use of coded or suggestive language in political messaging to garner support from a particular group. However, other scholars have pointed out that Trump's approach, although it may be different from that of past presidential campaigners in the post-civil rights era, continues to rely on the racist racial narrative employed in that era.

In chapter 1, I argued that the polity's policy preferences from 2000 to 2016 were driven by a dual set of beliefs: colorblindness and free-market beliefs. I demonstrated how the racial narrative and policy history directly impact people's understanding of and approach to policy preferences. But how do these findings fare when compared to the election and four-year

administration of Donald Trump? Did the Trump administration disrupt what appears to be a pattern for the last 16 years? In other words, is there a "Trump Effect"—that is, a change in standing political beliefs and practices—during the four-year Trump administration. If there is, how has it impacted polity's policy preferences?

The current sociological literature on the Trump Effect is scant. In this study, I examine the Trump Effect on polity's policy preferences in terms of continuing support for programs that provide aid to poor people, fund Social Security, and deal with crime. Moreover, I test whether the Trump Effect maintains or changes the findings presented in chapter 1. In other words, did the indirect nature of colorblindness and free-market beliefs have the same effect on policy preferences after four years of the Trump administration that it had when he was elected?

RACIAL NARRATIVE AND HISTORY OF POLICY

The creation of policy is inherently political and involves negotiation and compromise among various stakeholders. How issues are perceived and defined significantly corresponds with the solutions proposed. Max Weber argues that ideas about a topic being analyzed impact the direction of policy (Campbell 2002). Race scholars point out that the racialization of a policy topic similarly shapes the perceptions of the problem, which affects who is deemed deserving of assistance and who isn't, and thus helping predict policy outcomes.

Examining policies relating to aid for poor people, Social Security, and dealing with crime reveals the racial bias ingrained within them. For instance, welfare policies have been shaped by racially charged narratives, such as the stereotype of the welfare queen. This led to such reforms as the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, which tied assistance to finding work and imposed lifetime limits. Similarly, the historic exclusion of certain racial groups from receiving

Social Security benefits reflects racial and gender bias. Policies that address crime also exhibit racial bias, such as the historic use of law enforcement to uphold white supremacy. Tough-on-crime rhetoric often perpetuates racialized policing practices, which disproportionately affects Black and Brown communities. Meanwhile, those who support free-market beliefs advocate for minimal government intervention, except in terms of protecting life and property. This has led to some privatization of prisons (Kim 2022).

In chapter 1 of this dissertation I demonstrated that, because U.S. policies related to aid for the poor, Social Security, and crime management have been shaped by racist ideologies and actions, the history and those ongoing narratives continue to impact how policies are understood, as well as the funding preferences of the polity. Despite claims of neutrality, free-market solutions often perpetuate racial disparities, which highlights the need for a critical examination of the historic and present-day racial contexts of those policies.

COLORBLINDNESS, FREE-MARKET BELIEFS, AND POLICY

Extensive research has demonstrated how colorblind beliefs influence institutional settings, particularly in terms of policies that are perceived to be race neutral but in fact have a racialized impact. In welfare policy, colorblind beliefs justify disinvestment and portray recipients as undeserving. This is exemplified in the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, which tied temporary support to the condition that recipients would find work. Policy to deal with crime similarly reflects colorblindness by enacting laws like New York's stop-and-frisk, which disproportionately targeted Black and Latinx individuals under the guise of racial neutrality. The impact of colorblindness on Social Security policy remains largely unexplored, despite its racially influenced origins. Overall, colorblind beliefs racialize policies

that disproportionately affect marginalized communities while avoiding explicitly racial justifications.

Free-Market Beliefs

The study of neoliberalism or free-market beliefs sheds light on the predictability they have on various policy areas, such as welfare, Social Security, and crime management. Neoliberalism significantly reshaped welfare policies from the late 1970s to the 1990s, emphasizing austerity measures and demonizing welfare recipients as undeserving. This led to reforms like the establishment of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in 1996, a program that limited long-term financial support for families. In dealing with crime, neoliberalism led to the privatization of prisons with the promise that it would be more efficient and cost-effective. However, privatization of the prisons in fact resulted instead in increased spending and other inefficiencies. Social Security, often considered a political "third rail" due to its widespread popularity among the voting public, faced pressure from neoliberal approaches that emphasized austerity and privatization to address perceived financial problems. Attempts to privatize Social Security failed in 2006, contributing to the Republicans losing the house in the 2006 midterm elections.

Despite scholars' extensive study of neoliberalism, a racism lens has not been fully integrated into the discussion. Structural and intergenerational barriers, along with unmerited financial advantages for white individuals, underscore the need for a deeper understanding of the intersection between neoliberalism and race.

In chapter 1, I demonstrated that the racial history and narrative of a policy affects how respondents perceive it. Moreover, the contemporary racist ideologies of colorblindness and free-market beliefs are used to justify these narratives and the resulting preferences to either increase or decrease funding. I argue that colorblindness and free-market beliefs are how racist narratives

are perpetuated, both those that we tell ourselves and those we have in common with others in society. Individuals and the greater society collectively make meaning and interpret the world around us through the beliefs of colorblindness and a free market. This concept is similar to Karen and Barbara Fields' notion of racecraft. I explore this relationship in more detail in chapter 3. However, for this study, I study the effect of four years of the Trump administration on the polity's policy preferences.

TRUMP EFFECT

Since the presidential campaign, election, and administration of Donald Trump, we have seen an increase in hate crimes—both anti-Asian and anti-Latinx hate, antisemitism, and the popularity of and marches by white nationalist groups and other explicit types of public racial animus. This is in contrast to the social science literature that espoused a new era in which racial animus was on the decline and focused on the rise of "new types of racism," such as laissez-faire (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1996), symbolic (Matsueda and Drakulich 2009), and colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Burke 2016; Doane 2017). The spike in "old school" racism has been attributed to Trump's use of explicit racist rhetoric: one Trump Effect. In the following section, I review the scholarship on racial progress, beliefs, and policy gaps, and present scholarship on the strength of racial ideology in maintaining and furthering racism through racial narratives (e.g., racial dog whistles, colorblindness, and free-market beliefs).

Trump's ascendence to the presidency, and his use of racist, sexist, and xenophobic rhetoric, has been discussed ad nauseam in the general discourse (Campbell 2018). On the one hand, pundits have either lamented or praised Trump's ability to engage the polity with a "populist" message and to generate devotion to his candidacy. Trump himself acknowledged

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such devotion when he boasted that he could shoot someone on 5th Avenue in New York City and still be elected. Despite the exaggeration, Trump's comment to some degree reflects reality; after being impeached twice and indicted 91 times, he is the likely 2024 GOP nominee for president. On the other hand, race scholars and others have pointed out that Trump's racism was and is a tool he uses to activate a majority of the white polity (Haney-López 2014).

The Trump Effect can be described empirically as a catalyst that heightens or reactivates a dormant feature in society: old-school racism. Old-school racism is racial animus made visible through word and deed, such the white high school students in Indiana who yelled racial epithets and Trump slogans at a school of predominantly Latinx students in 2016 (Bieler 2021). There also was a measured increase in anti-Asian hate during the recent pandemic, when Trump started calling COVID-19 "the China virus" (Rogers, Jakes, and Swanson 2020). Scholars have pointed to the Trump Effect as relates to Republicans who, in previous administrations, were tied to ideological stances but now focus more on party loyalty than on the ideological consistency of conservatism (Nichols 2024). However, Morgan and Lee (2019) argue that there was an earlier surge in white nationalism, due to the Tea Party Movement in the early 2000s and to the racial rhetoric during the Obama administration, both of which allowed Trump to ride the wave to an electoral college victory. Alamillo's (2019) study of Hispanic Trump supporters showed that the level of "denial of racism" was higher among Latinx Trump supporters in 2016 than in previous elections. These studies focused on the 2016 election and explained how the Trump Effect helped him get elected. However, the persistent nature of the Trump Effect during his four-year administration remains unaddressed, as does the question of whether the Trump Effect went beyond electoral politics and seeped into the creation of policy.

In this study, I demonstrate that there is in fact no Trump Effect and that racism is and continues to be the dominant social phenomenon currently influencing the polity's policy preferences. I use a panel sample of the American National Election Study (ANES) survey data for 2016-2020 to capture people's free-market and colorblind beliefs. The selected period covers respondents' 2016 and 2020 policy preferences, whom they voted for, and key covariates such as colorblindness and free-market beliefs. My research question is:

> *What is the relationship between people's voting record in 2020 and their 2020 policy preferences?*

DATA AND SAMPLE

The ANES (2020) is a collaboration between Stanford University and the University of Michigan to collect data on public opinion, voting, and civic participation. The resulting dataset is ideal for analysis because it contains nationally representative data on various items, including attitudes of racial resentment, the economy, and federal spending priorities, as well as questions about participants' ideological preferences (e.g., neoliberalism and political orientation). The ANES is administered during each presidential election year. I have a panel sample of respondents for 2016 and 2020. Sample weights were necessary to obtain accurate estimates and standard errors (DeBell 2010). The total panel sample size for the analysis was 2,796.

VARIABLES OF INTEREST AND COVARIATES

Policy Preferences

The dependent variable items stem asks respondents if they want to increase (1), maintain (2), or decrease (3) the (then current) level of funding across the following programs: aid to poor

people, Social Security, and dealing with crime. The mean for aid to poor people in 2016 was 1.7; in 2020 it was 1.6. The mean for Social Security in 2016 was 1.5; in 2020 it was 1.5. The mean for dealing with crime was 1.4 in 2016; in 2020 it was 1.6 (Table 2.1).

The 2016 policy preference measure was used in the model to account for the previous selection. One can assume that a policy preference may not change or could be sticky in the kind of partisan and polarized political period we currently are in (Doherty, Kiley, and Tyson 2017). Thus, by having the previous preferences within the model, I can infer that the relationship between the dependent variable, 2020 policy preferences, and 2020 levels of colorblindness and free-market beliefs are not due to their 2016 levels. Therefore, the results measure the effect of the 2020 independent variables.

Colorblind Beliefs

The key independent variable is colorblind beliefs. I rely on Bonilla-Silva's conceptualization of colorblindness, including measures for cultural racism, minimizing racism, and abstract liberalism.[2] In Table 2.1, I outline how each item relates to each sub-belief. One item says, "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class," which aligns closely with the minimization of racism. Since the item points to historical practices, I consider this indicative of minimizing historical racism. I recoded this variable so that higher values mean "Historical conditions *do not* make it difficult for Black people to succeed." The mean in 2016 was 3.0; in 2020 it was 2.8. The second item is, "It is a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites." This captures cultural racism, which argues that Black people's standing in society is a product of their lack of effort and problematic values. In 2016 the mean was 3.0; in 2020 it was 2.7. The third item reads,

"Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors." This indicates abstract liberalism, which argues that additional policy efforts are unnecessary to ensure equality. The mean in 2016 was 3.5; in 2020 it was 3.2. This construct of abstract liberalism is distinct from the equal opportunity measure used because the survey item focuses more on the idea of Black people "bootstrapping," or putting more effort into being successful, than on the assumption that society offers equal opportunity (see Appendix A). Due to the multicollinearity of the colorblindness items, I have created a scale from 3 to 15. The mean of the scale in 2016 was 9.4; in 2020 it was 8.8. The sample appeared to have a small reduction of colorblindness (Table 2.1).

Free-Market Beliefs

Another key variable is free-market beliefs, which consist of beliefs about the role of the market versus the role of government in economic matters. However, the central premise of the free market is that the "invisible hand" of the market is best able to make decisions about how resources and goods are to be distributed, and that the government should not intervene in market actions. I used one item to capture the essential features of the free market: "You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your views: ONE, the less government, the better [not recoded in the analysis]; or TWO, there are more things that government should be doing [recoded to zero]." The first part of this item—"the less government, the better"—captures the role of government in making or interfering in the market's economic decisions. In 2016, the mean for "less government is better" was .5; in 2020 it was .4 (see Table 2.1).

Political Ideology

Scholars have emphasized the importance of political ideology in shaping perceptions of various social issues (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017). Moreover, experts and researchers have discussed the growing political polarization of parties and ideologies, particularly between conservative and liberal beliefs. To measure conservative ideology, a self-reported survey item is used, scored on a 7-point scale ranging from "extremely liberal" (1) to "extremely conservative" (7), with a midpoint of "moderate or middle of the road" (4). There is a "Have not thought about it" category at 0. I created a nominal measure of 0 for "Have not thought about it," 1 for liberal, 2 for middle of the road, and 3 for conservative. The proportion of liberals between 2016 and 2020 stayed constant at .27. There was an increase in 2020 in both middle of the road and conservative, from .19 to .22, and from .31 to .34, respectively. This increase was most likely fueled by a decrease in the number of respondents who selected "Have not considered it" from .24 to .17 (see Table 2.2).

Covariates

The literature on stratification identifies two primary economic drivers: income and years of education. These indicators have been shown to have a significant impact on economic mobility. This study measured family income by asking respondents to report their income percentile within five categories. Each category was assigned a numerical value representing the midpoint of the percentile group. The median income in 2016 was $62,500; in 2020 it was $67,500. Similarly, years of education were measured by categorizing respondents into seven groups based on their highest level of education. Again, each category was assigned a numerical value representing the maximum level of education attained. The mean years of education in 2016 was 13.2; in 2020 it was 14.6. Regarding racial categories, the sample demographics show that white people comprised .70 of the sample in 2016 and .68 in 2020 (see Table 2.2).

PLAN OF ANALYSIS

In my multinomial logistic regression analysis[1], I cannot include all the colorblind frame items in one model because of multicollinearity (see Table 2.3). Therefore, I ran separate models for each colorblind belief item, which led to nine regression models. After seeing that results across all colorblindness and free-market items were consistent across each dependent variable, I combined each colorblind item into a single item by adding them together. The scale was from 3 to 15. Recoding colorblindness allowed the analysis to move from nine regression models to three.

Before reviewing the findings of the Trump Effect model, let me review how the model is constructed. The dependent variable is the respondents' 2020 policy funding preferences. First in the model is their 2016 policy preferences. Including the previous election cycle preferences will enable us to see if there is any change. The next variables are how they voted in the 2020 election, their 2020 colorblindness scale, and the free-market measures. The expectation is that, if voting for Trump in 2020 is statistically significant, then there is a "Trump Effect" on public policy preferences. Similarly, if the finding is that colorblindness or the free-market measure is statistically significant *and* voting for Trump in 2020 is not statically significant, I infer that there is a relationship between those colorblindness and free market and no "Trump Effect". The other covariate of interest is respondents' 2020 measures of self-reported political ideology, income, level of education, and how they identify racially.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

Using cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis, I observed whether respondents switched votes between 2016 and 2020. Overall, I observed that respondents voted similarly in 2016 and 2020. Of those respondents who voted for Trump in 2016, 92.8 percent voted for him again in 2020 (Table 2.4). Of those who did not vote for Trump in 2016—that is, they voted for Hilary Clinton—96.0 percent voted for Biden in 2020 (Table 2.4). Of interest is the small shift of 7.3 percent by 2016 Trump voters to become non-Trump voters in 2020. A smaller percentage, 3.78, of non-Trump voters in 2016 became Trump voters in 2020. The changes across voting choices in the two elections were statistically significant (ChiSq=1300, one degree of freedom, $p < .001$).

I next examine funding preferences for aid to poor people, Social Security, and dealing with crime. Overall, respondents reported shifts in their policy preferences between 2016 and 2020. Of the respondents who selected an increase in aid to the poor in 2016, 74.5 percent did so again in 2020. Of those who changed their choice in 2020, 21.7 percent selected "keep the same," and only 3.8 selected "decrease" aid to the poor (Table 2.5). However, of those who selected a decrease aid to the poor in 2016, only 33.5 percent made the same choice in 2020 (Table 2.5). The changes across aid to the poor from 2016 to 2020 were statistically significant (ChiSq=750.7, four degrees of freedom, $p < .001$). Most of the respondents who chose "decrease" aid to the poor in 2016 moved to other categories in 2020; 51.1 percent selected "keep the same." In sum, the overall trend from 2016 to 2020 was toward a more generous perspective on aid to the poor. The "increase" option remained consistent, while the "decrease" option had a high rate of change.

The pattern in my examination of Social Security measures is similar to that for aid to the poor. The largest percentage of those whose choices remained the same in 2016 and 2020 was for the increase option, at 71.6 percent (Table 2.6). The decrease option had the smallest

percentage for the same period, with 21 percent remaining the same (Table 2.6). The changes across Social Security from 2016 to 2020 were statistically significant (ChiSq=467.5, four degrees of freedom, p < .001).

The same pattern continues with dealing with crime, but the effect is not as strong. In other words, the percentage changes are not as large as for aid to the poor or Social Security. Of the respondents who selected an increase in funding to deal with crime in 2016, 66 percent did the same in 2020 (Table 2.7). Similarly, at 35.8 percent, those who selected a decrease in funding to deal with crime were the largest percentage, more than for a decrease in either Social Security or aid to the poor. Based on these trends, respondents in 2020 were marginally less inclined to support funding for dealing with crime. As argued above, dealing with crime is part of a historical and contemporary narrative of maintaining the racial order through police and prisons. The changes in dealing with crime from 2016 to 2020 were statistically significant (ChiSq=321.5, four degrees of freedom, p < .001).

Trump Effect

No Trump Effect was found across all the respondents' policy preferences—aid to the poor, Social Security, and dealing with crime (see Tables 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10). The non-statistical significant results were also affirmed in an adjusted Wald test. This means that whether respondents voted for Trump was unrelated to their support for spending on various policy issues. On the other hand, colorblindness was statistically significant for aid to the poor and dealing with crime (Tables 2.8 and 2.10). Colorblindness in particular was statistically significant in comparison to the reference category in the multinomial regression and the adjusted Wald test (Tables 2.8 and 2.10). This finding is even more surprising, given that the mean scores for colorblindness decreased between 2016 and 2020. The free-market measure

"less government is better" did not have a statistical significance in any of the models; however, free-market beliefs were statistically significant in the adjusted Wald test, but only for aid to the poor.

Colorblindness has maintained a clear and present relationship with how respondents selected their preferences for levels of funding. There also could be a similar relationship with free-market beliefs; however, the data does not allow us to arrive at firm conclusions. What can be concluded, given the dataset and sample analyzed, is that there is no measurable Trump Effect. The question is, then, what is the phenomenon behind Trump's rise and continued popularity, despite his unchanging policy preferences? In thinking about my results in chapters 1 and 2, I believe that racecraft can explain the phenomenon theoretically within the current analysis. However, more data is needed to test this hypothesis. My third chapter provides a preliminary analysis of the relationship between racecraft and colorblindness.

However, noting the limitations, my findings support the conclusion that people's ongoing racism between 2000 and 2016 was not impacted by a Trump Effect. As observed in the descriptive data, the sample exhibited a "stickiness" in staying committed to their political choices. Stickiness is the unwillingness to change one's political position despite evidence that your position contradicts your beliefs.

Trump leveraged the racial narrative and racism in society and in an undemocratic electoral college to obtain political office. A key example is the white Christian evangelicals who have raised issues of morality against political opponents like President Bill Clinton but then support Trump, who has been legally convicted of sexual assault, is twice divorced, and publicly cheated on his current spouse. This contradictory loyalty continued through his presidency, as white evangelicals supported his presidency despite his policy of separating families at the

border and other acts usually considered contrary to Christian morals. I argue that racism is causing the stickiness. The multinomial regression on policy preferences demonstrates that colorblindness has a meaningful impact, even when controlling for past preferences. In other words, Trump's rhetoric *and* his actions as president, which utilize "dog whistle" politics and racial animus, did not change people's policy preferences. The four years of the Trump presidency did not dissuade 91 percent of the people who voted for him in 2016 to change their minds.

Other Findings

Social Security funding preferences did not correspond to any of the variables of interest (Table 2.9).Income and education were statistically significant in increasing Social Security funding, whereas self-identified racial identity was statistically significant in decreasing funding. Another finding of note is that a respondent's self-identified racial identity was statistically significant in the model for dealing with crime.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the discourse around the Trump Effect is a distraction from what is and continues to be the problem: racism. Trump has no personal ability or trait that caused or enabled an increase in the experience of explicit racial animus. Moreover, the discourse around Trump or what he brought to the political discourse is an obfuscation of the people and policies that enable the use of colorblindness and free-market beliefs to justify the exclusion of people of color. The study has limitations due to its measures of colorblindness and free market. These variables may not fully capture the intricate relationship between colorblindness and free-market ideologies. To

enhance the findings, developing a survey tailored to measure the variables of interest would bolster the study's validity and reliability.

In chapter 3, I will explore the relationship and interactions between colorblindness, the free market, and racecraft, with a particular focus on postulating how colorblindness and free-market beliefs affect how racecraft functions in American society.

NOTES

1. Using a panel dataset of the ANES, I first examined the use of fixed and random effect models and considered using the long dataset. However, the descriptive analysis of the long dataset found little variability, which led to a small sample size for the regression. The total number of observations was 176. By adding covariates, the observations dropped to 76. Based on these results, I determined that a multinomial logistic regression would be the best approach. I included the 2016 policy variables of aid to the poor, Social Security, and dealing with crime to account for previously held beliefs in the 2016 election. The resulting model would measure the change in the effect of the independent variables of colorblindness and the free market in 2020.

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    1960s." *The New York Times*, May 29.

Table 2.1. Descriptive Statistics Dependent and Independent Variables

	Mean	
	2016	2020
Federal Spending Priorities		
Decrease spending: Poor people	1.7	1.6
Decrease spending: Social Security	1.5	1.5
Decrease spending: Dealing with crime	1.4	1.6
Colorblind Racist Beliefs		
Conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed (Disagree)	3.0	2.8
Black people should not have special favors to succeed (Agree)	3.5	3.2
Black people must try harder to succeed (Agree)	3.0	2.7
Colorblind racism belief scale	9.4	8.8
Pro-Free-Market Beliefs		
The less government, the better	0.5	0.4

Note: Survey weights used to calculate means

Table 2.2. Descriptive Statistics Covariates

	Proportion	
	2016	2020
Ideology		
Have not considered it	.24	.17
Liberal	.27	.27
Middle of the road	.19	.22
Conservative	.31	.34
Social Economic Status		
Respondent's annual income (Median)	$62,500	$67,500
Years of education (Mean)	13.2	14.6
Demographics		
White people	0.70	0.68
Non-white people	0.30	0.32

Note: Survey weights used to calculate means and proportions

Table 2.3. Correlation Matrix for Colorblindness Items

	Conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed (Disagree)	*Black people should not have special favors to succeed (Agree)*	*Black people must try harder to succeed (Agree)*
Conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed (Disagree)	1		
Black people should not have special favors to succeed (Agree)	0.63	1	
Black people must try harder to succeed (Agree)	0.61	0.71	1

Table 2.4. Change Between 2016 and 2020 for Voting for Trump

	Voting for Trump 2020	
	Trump	Not Trump
Voting for Trump 2016	%	%
Trump	92.8	7.2
Not Trump	4.1	95.9

Table 2.5. Change Between 2016 and 2020 Responses with Aid to Poor People

	Poor 2020		
	Increase	Same	Decrease
Poor 2016	%	%	%
Increase	74.5	21.7	3.8
Same	37.6	54.2	8.2
Decrease	15.5	51.0	33.5

Table 2.6. Change Between 2016 and 2020 Responses with Social Security

	Social Security 2020		
	Increase	Same	Decrease
Social Security 2016	%	%	%
Increase	71.6	26.3	2.2
Same	36.8	59.1	4.1
Decrease	25.3	53.7	21.0

Table 2.7. Change Between 2016 and 2020 Responses to Dealing with Crime

	Deal with Crime 2020		
	Increase	Same	Decrease
Dealing with crime 2016	%	%	%
Increase	66.0	27.5	6.6
Same	39.6	46.1	14.2
Decrease	29.8	34.4	35.8

Table 2.8. Aid to the Poor Full Model

VARIABLES	Poor 2020 Increase	Poor 2020 Increase	Poor 2020 Decrease	Poor 2020 Decrease
	RRR	S.E.	RRR	S.E.
Poor 2016				
Increase	2.78***	0.50	1.42	0.25
Decrease	0.59*	0.13	2.93***	0.60
Voted Trump 2020	0.79	0.16	1.31	0.53
Colorblindness	0.86***	0.03	1.09**	0.04
Less government	0.61	0.10	1.44	0.32
Ideology				
Liberal	1.54	0.35	0.85	0.54
Moderate	1.18	0.29	1.28	0.60
Conservative	0.75	0.17	1.68	0.74
Income 2020	0.99*	1.13e-06	1	1.29e-06
Level of educ. 2020	0.99	0.03	1.05	0.04
White people 2020	0.67	0.12	0.93	0.03
Constant	6.77*	0.12	0.01	0.29
Observation	1,984		1,984	

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05
The same is the reference for multinomial logistic regression
Haven't considered it as a reference for ideology
People of color are the reference for white people

Adjusted Wald Test: Testing if all coefficients are equal to zero
Colorblindness F=13.73 P < .001
Less government F=6.68 P < .001
Vote for Trump F=.87 Not Statistically Significant
Ideology F=3.11 P < .05
Income F=3.12 Not Statistically Significant
Years of education F=.86 Not Statistically Significant
White F=2.51 Not Statistically Significant

Table 2.9. Social Security Full Model

VARIABLES	Social Security 2020 Increase		Social Security 2020 Decrease	
	RRR	S.E.	RRR	S.E.
Social Security 2016				
Increase	4.04***	0.51	0.98	0.41
Decrease	1.01	0.33	5.77***	2.14
Voted Trump 2020	0.76	0.17	1.62	0.42
Colorblindness	1.01	0.03	0.99	0.05
Less government	0.73	0.13	1.25	0.53
Ideology				
Liberal	1.25	0.32	0.47	0.42
Moderate	1.03	0.26	1.16	0.73
Conservative	0.84	0.20	0.97	0.97
Income 2020	1.00***	9.32e-07	1.00	2.44e-06
Level of educ. 2020	0.92***	0.03	1.00	0.981
White people 2020	0.72	0.12	0.42*	0.15
Constant	4.71***	0.12	0.17	0.16
Observation	1,984		1,984	

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05
The same is the reference for multinomial logistic regression
Haven't considered it as a reference for ideology
People of color are the reference for white people

Adjusted Wald Test: Testing if all coefficients are equal to zero
Colorblindness F=.05 Not Statistically Significant
Less government F=2.79 Not Statistically Significant
Vote for Trump F=.87 Not Statistically Significant
Ideology F=1.08 Not Statistically Significant
Income F=4.44 P < .05
Years of education F=4.30 P < .05
White F=4.30 P < .05

Table 2.10. Dealing with Crime Full Model

VARIABLES	Deal w/ Crime 2020 Increase	Deal w/ Crime 2020 Increase	Deal w/ Crime 2020 Decrease	Deal w/ Crime 2020 Decrease
	RRR	S.E.	RRR	S.E.
Deal w/ Crime 2016				
Increase	2.71***	0.32	0.76	0.16
Decrease	1.11	0.30	2.29*	0.85
Voted Trump 2020	1.11	0.23	0.48	0.23
Colorblindness	1.13***	0.03	0.85***	0.03
Less government	0.97	0.15	0.97	0.15
Ideology				
Liberal	0.84	0.19	1.72	0.85
Moderate	1.07	0.23	1.04	0.60
Conservative	1.69*	0.39	1.40	0.84
Income 2020	1.00	8.69e-07	1.00	1.55e-06
Level of educ. 2020	0.95	0.03	1.03	-.04
White people 2020	0.56***	0.09	0.80	0.22
Constant	0.86	0.44	0.43	0.22
Observation	1,984		1,984	

NB: Two Tail Test, *** < .001, ** < .01, * < .05
The same is the reference for multinomial logistic regression
Haven't considered it as a reference for ideology
People of color are the reference for white people

Adjusted Wald Test: Testing if all coefficients are equal to zero
Colorblindness F=21.96 P < .001
Less government F=.30 Not Statistically Significant
Vote for Trump F=1.23 P <.001 Not Statistically Significant
[Increase] Ideology F=4.48 P < .001
[Decrease] Ideology F=1.06 Not Statistically Significant
Income F=0.59 Not Statistically Significant
Years of education F=2.26 Not Statistically Significant
White F=6.42 P < .001

Appendix A. Variable Names and Definitions

Table A2.1. Survey Questions of Dependent and Independent Variables

Variable	Question Stem	Options
Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed.	Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
Black people should not have special favors to succeed.	Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
Black people must try harder to succeed.	It's a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
The less government, the better.	Next, I am going to ask you to choose one of two statements. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your (2000:own) views.	One, less government, the better; or two, there are more things government should be doing

Chapter 3

Colorblindness and Free Market Ideologies as Racecraft

Colorblindness is a cornerstone of contemporary sociological research on race and racism. Many scholars have studied it as a racial ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Burke 2017). Some have studied its relationship to white racial attitudes (Croll and Gerteis 2019; Manning, Hartmann, and Gerteis 2015), and others have examined the role colorblindness plays in discourse (Mueller 2017) and identity (Hartmann, Croll, Gerteis, and Manning 2017). However, race scholars have lamented the narrowing and limited nature of recent colorblind research, particularly the fact that colorblindness has been missing a material analysis and an explanation of how it functions within other ideologies (Burke 2016; Doane 2017). Building on these important theoretical insights and calls to examine the ideological and material impacts of colorblindness, I investigate how the relationship between colorblindness and free-market ideologies produces support for and acceptance of inequality. Examining this relationship enables us to reconsider how we think about colorblindness.

In this study, I demonstrate that colorblind beliefs are part of a larger universe of beliefs that support inequality, especially inequality that targets people who are categorized and typified as non-white. Americans typically understand colorblindness as a means to produce a just society. This suggests that past racism does not affect the present as long as a person's race is no longer considered. The general public's understanding of the free-market is a promise that an "invisible hand" (i.e., autonomous, self-regulating market) efficiently and justly (i.e., with no other social considerations) distributes resources to the most deserving and hard-working resulting in a meritorious society. Both free-market beliefs (Block and Somers 2014) and colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva 2014) naturalize inequality. Although the polity perceives racial colorblindness and free-market beliefs as distinct ideologies, considering them together offers new ways to understand inequality in the United States.

In this paper, I offer an alternate explanation for the persistence of inequality that integrates these distinct ideas. Building on the work of Barbara and Karen Fields (2012), I argue that the beliefs of colorblindness and a free market are themselves a form of racecraft. Racecraft is "imagined, acted upon, and re-imagined, the action and imagining inextricably intertwined" (Fields and Fields 2014:19). Racecraft describes how beliefs that support racism shape reality as well as make racism real. In other words, racecraft describes the connection between ideology and material realities. The concept of racecraft has yet to fully emerge in the discipline of sociology (Benjamin 2014; Heideman 2023; Magubane 2023). Conceptualized by Barbara and Karen Fields (2014), racecraft challenges commonsense thinking and inverts the traditional relationship between race and racism with the argument that racism constructs race (Heideman 2023; Magubane 2023). Through the concept of racecraft, the Fields trace how racial ideology creates and shapes what is experienced as a real phenomenon and how these racial "phantoms" erase or obscure the social actions (e.g., policymaking and practice) that create inequality. Thus, an outcome of racecraft is the experience of a person and a society to have racist beliefs and experience them as a "vivid truth" (Fields and Fields 2014:19). Embracing these beliefs enables people to perceive current and historical attempts to exclude Black people and other people of color from political, social, and economic life as trivial or nonexistent.

I use racecraft to reconceptualize colorblindness and free-market beliefs as central to the persistent inequality in the United States. I heed Mugubane's (2023) call to engage with the Fields' (2014) work as a way to incorporate political economy—the materiality of racism—into the beliefs and ideologies that justify and perpetuate racism and inequality. Using the racecraft framework and the American National Election Study (ANES) dataset, I examine the relationships and interactions between colorblindness and free-market and equal opportunity

beliefs in order to understand more fully how they intersect to support a continued belief in inequality. I demonstrate that the colorblindness embedded in free-market beliefs supports ongoing inequality in the United States, as measured by the belief in equal opportunity. I demonstrate further that the colorblind beliefs of abstract liberalism, minimization of racism, and cultural racism are working in conjunction with free-market beliefs to perpetuate and justify inequality.

RACIAL COLORBLINDNESS BELIEFS: HOW THEY MINIMIZE AND DISCREDIT THE EFFECTS AND IMPACT OF RACISM

Racial colorblindness is an ideology that denies the impact of historical and contemporary racism and offers egalitarian counterarguments to policy proposals that attempt to redress social and economic inequalities (Doane 2017). Colorblindness ideology and its associated beliefs rearticulate old racial frames, ignore the causes of inequality, and naturalize societal inequality. The power of colorblindness is its repackaging of racial tropes that have been endemic in the United States for centuries to make them appear to be non-racist statements of fact. Colorblindness does two things with this repackaging. First, it validates the racist order's longstanding negative values and meaning that are associated with the Black phenotype or ancestry, all under the guise of embracing the "bedrock" principles of merit, individualism, and equal opportunity. Second, colorblindness centers on the individual and interprets inequality as a natural state. This is a way to obfuscate the roles policy and history have played in producing inequitable outcomes in education, housing, healthcare, employment, and other facets of life. Colorblindness is perhaps most often associated with Bonilla-Silva's (2014) four frames[1], which show how colorblind racism manifests in white racial discourse. These frames, and the beliefs this study uses, are abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of

racism.[2] In sum, colorblindness obfuscates the impact of racism and naturalizes inequality by characterizing the outcomes of racist policies as individual failures. Individuals who adhere to the notion of colorblindness may attribute disparate outcomes between racial groups to inherent disparities or variations in individual effort.

Scholars disagree on how to define beliefs and ideology. This study breaks down colorblind ideology into its component beliefs, such as abstract liberalism and cultural racism. Disaggregating colorblind racism, a racial ideology, into its component beliefs allows for improved theorizing and improved research methods. First, ideology is a set of beliefs that are heterogeneous and contextual (Bonilla-Silva 2014). Consequently, conceptualizing ideology as a set of beliefs allows for a research method that aligns with my theoretical approach to examining the beliefs that make up colorblind racism ideology. Second, it allows for better empirical testing. There is no single survey item or interview question that can capture the complete scope of an ideology. The benefit of examining the beliefs that make up an ideology is that I can provide empirical evidence to advance the understanding of how the different beliefs within an ideology function in a particular context, thus demonstrating the inconsistent arguments and uses of that particular ideology. Finally, I use the tenets of colorblindness (and also free markets) to measure the beliefs they engender as a proxy for the ideology they represent.

I use the belief in equal opportunity to test the relationship between colorblindness and free markets. The belief in equal opportunity is present and working in society and is strongly associated with the colorblind tenet of abstract liberalism (Bonilla-Silva 2014). I briefly explore how previous scholars of colorblindness have discussed the relationship of abstract liberalism to the belief in equal opportunity. Colorblind scholars have agreed that equal opportunity is a prevalent belief within abstract liberalism (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Park, Chang, and Davidson

2020). It is important to note that abstract liberalism is dependent on society believing that equal opportunity is universal and has no social barriers. In this context, abstract liberalism can exert its claim that any intervention to stop racism is unfair because racism no longer affects our contemporary society and that any intervention to "level the playing field" unfairly benefits people of color. Bonilla-Silva (2014), for example, points out how abstract liberalism, one frame of colorblindness, captures the ways notions and discourses of equal opportunity and economic liberalism are used to justify the prevention of government intervention to end racism. Moreover, Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich (2011) offer a free-market rationale in their example of abstract liberalism, which expresses a belief in pro-equal opportunity to justify not using race-conscience policies.

Of interest to this study is how equal opportunity has been operationalized in research previously used by race scholars to study colorblindness. Manning, Hartman, and Gerteis (2015), for example, use the theoretical starting point that equal opportunity is part of abstract liberalism. To obtain a direct measure of equal opportunity, they asked their study respondents if "all people in the U.S. have equal opportunities" (538). They found that "half of the white [respondents] and about two-thirds of black [respondents] disagree or strongly disagree that equal opportunity exists for everyone" (538). Manning et al. conclude that, like previous scholarship (i.e., Burke 2000), white people express skepticism about the value of equal opportunity as a core belief. My approach is to decouple abstract liberalism from equal opportunity. In the ANES, the measure for abstract liberalism is distinct from that for equal opportunity. As I discuss later, equal opportunity may be doing more than serving as a prerequisite for colorblindness.

THE INVISIBLE HAND KNOWS BEST: FREE-MARKET BELIEFS IN THE U.S.

Neoliberalism is the global hegemonic policy orientation of the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Slobodian 2018). Consequently, free-market beliefs are ubiquitous and they dominate our polity's discourse in understanding the world around us. This study's scope of free-market beliefs is the U.S. domestic context. In the United States, free-market beliefs consist of two parts. The first part relates to what constitutes "the market." The market is viewed as an autonomous, self-regulating natural entity that allocates resources efficiently within society via an unseen mechanism (i.e., the "invisible hand"). In other words, the market, through its "natural process," can sort and allocate resources to the deserving (i.e., meritorious) in society (Block and Somers 2014). Second, because the market "knows best" how to distribute resources within a market economy, the government needs to protect the market's natural process from interference from outside forces (e.g., democratic forces) and from the government itself, which may be forced by its constituency to make changes (Slobadian 2018). In sum, like colorblindness, free-market beliefs naturalize inequality through creating an external entity—the market—by framing failure in the marketplace as an outcome that is deserving because of an innately personal trait or choice. This reduces government intervention to an unnatural action in an otherwise harmonious natural economic system.

But with no invisible hand or objective guide for making market decisions, elites (e.g., lawmakers, politicians, business leaders) make the choices that guide how the markets operate. Market decisions are policy choices created to produce certain outcomes under the guise of market independence. For example, the creation of the healthcare marketplaces are one way elite choices can be observed. In a healthcare marketplace, people can spend their dollars on whatever kind of medical coverage they choose. And yet, it is clear that those without jobs that provide healthcare or sufficient income to purchase medical coverage leads to inequality in terms of who

dies and who lives. The response to this from those who subscribe to free-market beliefs is that people who cannot afford medical care either need to make more money or pick the coverage they can afford. Innate in this is the belief that free-market choices are objective because a person can make them without direct coercion. Such a decision, however, is in fact not freely made. Therefore, free-market beliefs frame people's choices and the outcomes of those choices as explicitly neutral. However, as shown in the healthcare marketplace, free markets reflect societies' priorities and preferences (Polanyi 2001; Somers and Block 2005).

Most sociological research has not focused on free-market beliefs; however, the research on market embeddedness is a notable exception in the literature. Embeddedness is an insight that markets are always part of and informed by the rules and institutional relationships (Somers and Block 2005). Granovetter's (1985) seminal study argues that the free market is informed and constrained by "ongoing social relations" within society. In other words, the relationships between people define and determine markets. Laws, rules, expectations, and people's beliefs also inform the relationship that defines the market. Granovetter's contribution is to re-situate the perspective of individual transactions as an abstract entity, "the market," into one manufactured by the government and the society it serves. Greta Krippner and Anthony Alvarez (2007) outline how embeddedness can be understood. They highlight the difference between Granovetter's and Polanyi's approaches. Whichever approach one finds more compelling—Granovetter's "concept of embeddedness [that] involves identifying relational bases of social action" (Krippner and Alvarez 2007: 222) or Polanyi's perspective of the "integration of the economy into broader social systems" (Krippner and Alvarez 2007: 222)—both argue that people's actions, not impersonal forces, are the center of markets. Legislators, judges, business owners, and others create laws and processes that define how the market acts. Both Granovetter and Polanyi focus

on institutional but not necessarily systemic beliefs that shape society's values and priorities. In sum, racism is the social structure in which markets are embedded.

Building on Granovetter's and Krippner's work, Block and Somers' (2014) study on ideational embeddedness expands our understanding of what can influence markets, that is, what can influence the people making the rules that govern markets. Their concept of ideational embeddedness is that markets are informed and shaped by people's ideas and beliefs (Block and Somers 2014). They extract Polanyi's (2001) definition of embeddedness to show that peoples' ideas and beliefs make the market what it is. Block and Somers use the concept of ideational embeddedness to explain how market fundamentalism—the belief that the market is an autonomous, self-regulating entity—continues to persist in conservative U.S. politics. Their contribution is important because it links the object—the markets—with those who believe in them. In other words, Block and Somers argue that beliefs are central to shaping reality and that they impact how we understand markets. Free-market beliefs thus appear to function much like beliefs about race.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND INEQUALITY

Equal opportunity beliefs are linked to and inform how people understand and perceive inequality. Equal opportunity and inequality are foundational and orienting ideas behind colorblindness and free market belief. Colorblindness is based on the belief that talent and merit will lead to success. Free-market beliefs share the similar view that hard work produces success in the market, and that failure is the result of personal inadequacies and nothing else. A central tenet of equal opportunity beliefs in the United States is that opportunities are plentiful and that people are fully free to take advantage of them (Kluegel and Smith 1986; McCall 2013). There is an

implicit assumption within equal opportunity that inequality is acceptable and natural to society if there is equal opportunity.

Within the context of equal opportunity, inequality is perceived as the "have nots" could not succeed within an equal opportunity landscape and that inequality—or the reason one person is better off than another—is the fault of the person not doing well. As a result, equal opportunity and inequality are linked to beliefs of deservingness and merit. As Kluegel and Smith (1986) found, "Americans consistently and strongly endorse individual reasons for the economic position, particularly for poverty, and reject liberal and (especially) radical explanations emphasizing structural cause" (100-01). It is important to highlight the individualistic and personal framework within which inequality beliefs prevail. Inequality beliefs exclude structural causes for failure to succeed such as discrimination or lack of opportunity because of some unmerited cause. Measuring support for equal opportunity provides an indirect measure for belief about inequality. I can measure the acceptance of inequality by measuring how people perceive equal opportunity.

The connection between equal opportunity and racism was established more than 30 years ago. Studies by Kluegel and Smith (1986) and McCall (2013) included racial analyses. Kluegel and Smith's (1986) results support Lawrence Bobo's (1996) findings that "whites need not hold blatantly stereotyped beliefs or animosity towards [B]lack [people] to justify to themselves or others resistance to [B]lack [people's] demands for social change, including, of course, opposition to equal opportunity programs" (212). In other words, opposition to equal opportunity programs is a form of racism. Moreover, White people can oppose social change aimed at improving the financial well-being of Black people without being called racist.

McCall (2013) similarly explores the relationship between equal opportunity, inequality, and racism by examining equal opportunity beliefs through the lens of racial inequality, income

inequality, and egalitarian beliefs. McCall finds that concerns about inequality for Black people and women decreased as concerns for income inequality increased. Moreover, racial identity strongly affected egalitarian views (i.e., Black people's support for egalitarianism was strongest). At the same time, racial and gender issues seem to have had less influence on those concerned with income inequality. In other words, workers (e.g. white men) make income and women and Black people do not. This finding suggests a disconnect between those who are unfairly treated within income inequality and Black people who are also experiencing income inequality under a different name. McCall (2013) does not point to colorblind beliefs as an explanation for these results. According to McCall, income inequality may violate "fair pay according to performance and contribution," while racial and gender experiences of inequality may be labeled as people not working hard enough or not pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. Her findings about the difference between income and racial inequality suggests white people who are workers are entitled to equal opportunity. The idea of income and worker are racialized as white and male.

McCall (2013) further finds that perceptions of income inequality are not associated with "hostility towards minorities, women, or immigrants" (180). Although McCall's analysis stops there, there is a difference between racial animus and other forms of racial ideology. The previous findings that income and worker are racialized points to the possibility that beliefs such as colorblindness or free markets are present and used to justify the existence of inequality as not being a racist outcome. However, Kluegel and Smith's (1986) conclusions about race and inequality point to the rise of laissez-faire racism and moving away from racial animus. Laissez-faire racism is not the same as colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Burke 2017). Laissez-faire racism is the "persistent negative stereotyping of African Americans, a tendency to blame blacks themselves for the black-white gap in socioeconomic standing, and resistance to meaningful

policy efforts to ameliorate U.S. racist social conditions and institutions" (Bobo, Kluegel and

Smith 1997:16). In sum, Kluegel and Smith (1986) believe that equal opportunity beliefs and

inequality beliefs are influenced by racism. However, McCall's (2014) analysis provides an

opportunity to explore the question using a colorblind framework. Moreover, the frameworks of

racism used by both studies are not speaking to contemporary racism scholarship on colorblind

beliefs because they consider laissez-faire racism and individual racial prejudice. Building on

their work, I bring in direct measures of colorblind and free-market beliefs to further explore how

equal opportunity beliefs are impacted by colorblindness and free-market beliefs.

IDEAS AND ACTIONS: RACECRAFT

So far, I have discussed and alluded to how colorblindness, free-market, and equal

opportunity beliefs share common traits, such as naturalizing inequality and dismissing racism.

My intention here is to argue that these beliefs support a larger phenomenon of inequality. The

concept of racecraft explains how colorblind and free-market beliefs operate in conjunction with

each other and furthers the acceptance of inequality. I argue that it is through racecraft that a

person can simultaneously use free market and colorblind beliefs to justify why Black people's

inequality is not based on structure but on "their" lack of talent and ambition, thus removing the

source of the racist acts and policies. Racecraft allows the populace to create and imagine a

reality that reinvents the meaning of facts. It is accomplished using the conjunction of

colorblindness and free-market beliefs to obscure racist actions and allow those actions to be

understood as natural personal failings that are an acceptable consequence of inequality.

In this paper, I bring together the insights of scholarship on colorblind racism and

racecraft to demonstrate how the suturing of colorblindness, free-market, and equal opportunity

beliefs support the naturalization and justification of inequality. These three beliefs shape how

society perceives the social, economic, and political events that affect our life chances. Moreover, I argue that free-market and equal opportunity beliefs are also used to support colorblind beliefs. Racecraft allows us to reimagine three distinctive beliefs under the single function of servicing an ideology that conceals power dynamics and facilitates inequality.

I also demonstrate how colorblind beliefs predict and interact with the free-market and equal opportunity beliefs. I use ANES survey data from 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 to capture people's free-market and colorblind beliefs. The period selected covers the hegemonic dominance of neoliberal and colorblind beliefs. I therefore address two central questions: Do colorblind beliefs predict individual free-market beliefs? Do colorblind and free-market beliefs predict and interact with equal opportunity beliefs?

DATA AND SAMPLE

The American National Election Study is a collaboration between Stanford University and the University of Michigan to collect public opinion, voting, and civic participation data (ANES 2016). The resulting dataset is ideal for analysis because it contains nationally representative data on various items, including attitudes of racial resentment, the economy, and federal spending priorities, as well as questions about participants' ideological preferences (e.g., neoliberalism and political orientation). The ANES is administered during each presidential election year. I pooled a subsample of the study from 2000 to 2016, inclusive. Sample weights were needed to obtain accurate estimates and standard errors (DeBell 2010). The total pooled sample size for 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 was 19,990.

Variables of interest and covariates

Free-market beliefs

The first dependent variable, free-market beliefs, consists of beliefs about the role of the market versus the role of government in economic matters. However, the central premise of the free market is that the "invisible hand of the market" is best able to make decisions about how resources and goods are to be distributed and that the government should not intervene in market actions. I used two items to capture the essential features of the free market. The first item reads, "You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your views: ONE, the less government, the better [not recoded in the analysis]; or TWO, there are more things that government should be doing [recoded to zero]." The first part of this item— "the less government, the better"—captures the role of government in making or interfering in the market's economic decisions. Fifty-five percent of respondents agreed with that statement. The second item reads, "You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your views: ONE, we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems [recoded to zero]; or TWO, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved [recoded to one]." The second part of this item—"free market can handle economy"—focuses on the market's ability to manage the economy. Forty-four percent of respondents agreed with that statement (see Table 3.1).

Equal opportunity beliefs

The second dependent variable about the role of society in providing equal opportunity is measured in the ANES by the following question: "Our society should do whatever is necessary to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed." Equal opportunity is measured by respondents' support for ensuring that society provides equal opportunity. The focus here is on the active verb "ensure," which references the fact that equal opportunity may not always exist and that action may be taken to ensure that everyone has it. It can be argued that those who

oppose ensuring equal opportunity may believe that it already exists in society, or that inequality exists and does not need to be addressed. I reversed the coding of responses, so higher values represent less support for society's role. Therefore, the variable "no support for ensuring equal opportunity" with a higher value (4) indicates strong support for this belief, and a lower value (1) indicates a lack of support for this belief. In the weighted sample, 0.48 strongly disagree (coded as 1), 0.30 disagree somewhat, 0.07 agree somewhat, and 0.03 strongly agree (coded as 4; see Table 3.1). I combined the strongly agree and agree and strongly disagree and disagree categories because I am using multinomial logistic regression. One of the requirements for multinomial logistic regression is that the categories need to be independent, that is, not overlapping. Lastly, the measure is positively skewed, and I used robust estimation to address any potential analysis biases (Treiman 2009).

Colorblind beliefs

The key independent variable is colorblind beliefs. I rely on Bonilla-Silva's (2014) conceptualization of colorblindness, including measures for cultural racism, minimization of racism, and abstract liberalism.[2] In Table 3.2, I outline how each item relates to each sub-belief. One item says, "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class," which aligns closely with the minimization of racism. Since the item points to historical practices, I consider this indicative of the minimization of historical racism. Forty-two percent of respondents agree that "Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed." I recoded this variable so that higher values mean "Historical conditions do not make it difficult for Black people to succeed." The second item is, "It's a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites." This captures cultural racism, which argues that

Black people's standing in society is a product of their lack of effort and problematic values. Sixty-six percent of respondents agree that "Black people must try harder to succeed." The third item says, "Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors." This indicates abstract liberalism, which argues that additional policy efforts are unnecessary to ensure equality. Seventy-four percent of respondents agree that "Black people should not have special favors to succeed." This construct of abstract liberalism is distinct from the equal opportunity measure used because the survey item focuses more on the idea of Black people "bootstrapping," or putting more effort into being successful, than the assumption that society has equal opportunity (see Appendix A).

Political ideology and partisanship

Experts and researchers have discussed the growing polarization of political discussions among parties and ideologies, particularly conservative and liberal beliefs. Scholars also have emphasized the importance of political ideology in shaping perceptions of various social issues (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017). To measure conservative ideology, a self-reported survey item is used, scored on a seven-point scale ranging from "extremely liberal" (1) to "extremely conservative" (7), with a midpoint of 4, "moderate or middle of the road." The average score for conservative ideology is 4.26 (refer to Table 3.1). To gauge emotional and partisan sentiment in the United States, I have included a political "feel thermometer" for Democrats. This asks respondents to rate their feelings on a scale of 0 (no warmth) to 100 (maximum warmth). The average score for "Warm feelings toward Democrats" is 46.69 (refer to Table 3.1).

Income, education, and employment status

The literature on stratification identifies two primary economic drivers: income and years of education. These indicators have been shown to have a significant impact on economic mobility. This study measured family income by asking respondents to report their income percentile within five categories. Each category was assigned a numerical value representing the midpoint of the percentile group. The mean family income percentile was 59 percent. Years of education were similarly measured by categorizing respondents into seven groups based on their highest level of education. Again, each category was assigned a numerical value representing the maximum level of education attained. The mean years of education were 14.6 (See Table 3.1).

Demographic controls

The ANES questionnaire includes a question about binary sex, with men being the reference group. The sample comprises 46 percent women (as shown in Table 3.1) and, to account for potential age cohort effects of racial colorblind racism, an age measure has been used. The mean age of the sample is 45 years (Table 3.1). Additionally, a sub-national analysis has been included in this study, utilizing the geolocation data gathered by the ANES. The sample consists of 18 percent from the Northeast, 22 percent from the Midwest, 37 percent from the South, and 22 percent from the West (Table 3.1). This study covers five presidential election years, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. The sample comprises 27 percent of the 2016 election (see Table 3.1). Regarding racial categories, the sample demographics show that white people comprise 80 percent of the sample (see Table 3.1). Black people constitute 11 percent of the sample, while other people of color make up 8 percent.

Plan of analysis

I conducted an analysis using logistic regression to examine the connection between colorblindness and free markets. Unfortunately, I could not include all the colorblind frame items

in one model because of multi-collinearity (see Table 3.3). Therefore, I ran separate models for each colorblind belief item. To investigate the relationship and interactions between the free-market and colorblind beliefs, I employed weighted multi-nominal logistical regression on equal opportunity beliefs.

RESULTS

I find that the minimization of racism, abstract liberalism, and cultural racism beliefs correspond with free-market beliefs. All three colorblind beliefs had statistically significant effects on both free-market beliefs: "less government, the better" and "free market can handle the economy." For example, respondents who do not believe "historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed," or minimization of racism, were 17 percent more likely to believe the "less government, the better" and 16 percent more likely to believe the "free market can handle the economy" (Table 3.4). Similarly, respondents who believed "Black people should not have special favors to succeed," or abstract liberalism, were 20 percent more likely to believe the "less government, the better" and 24 percent more likely to believe the "free market can handle the economy" (see Table 3.4). Respondents who believe that "Black people must try harder to succeed," or cultural racism, were 11 percent more likely to agree the "less government, the better" and 16 percent more likely to agree the "free market can handle the economy" (Table 3.4). These findings show that free-market beliefs are not race neutral and are in fact cam be predicted by colorblindness. In other words, beliefs that the market is autonomous and self-regulating (i.e., free-market beliefs) and those that seek to prevent government intervention in the markets are implicated in supporting and perpetuating racial ideology.

Consequently, I argue that free-market beliefs appear to obscure the role of racism in society and, in turn, help justify inequality. Therefore, when considering the function of free-

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market beliefs and, by extension, policies in contemporary society, free-market beliefs justify racist policy outcomes by proving an alternative explanation for the inequality observed. Inequality is not racism; the market is sorting individuals based on merit and deservingness. Hence, colorblindness is not a solitary racial ideology; it works in conjunction with other ideologies to perpetuate racism and inequality. These results bolster the findings of previous research linking colorblindness and neoliberalism (Omi and Winant 2015; Goldberg 2014; Hohle 2015) by linking how the underlying beliefs of colorblindness and free-market policies support each other.

Equal Opportunity, Colorblind, and Free-Market Beliefs

To explore the relationship between colorblindness and the free market, I tested how each colorblind and free-market belief would help predict respondents' perception of equal opportunity. The measure is respondents' perception that equal opportunity already exists in society or that inequality exists and does not need to be addressed. Surprisingly, I find that the minimization of racism is the only colorblind belief that is statistically significant. However, with further consideration, the results make sense because the dependent variable is measuring the need to ensure equal opportunity. Thus, in the dependent variable respondents are implicitly being asked to consider possible barriers that will need to be overcome when instituting a policy that ensures equal opportunity. Restated bluntly, there is no problem with racism or inequality and nothing needs to be done.

The minimization of racism belief had a statistically significant main and interaction effect with the two indicators of free-market beliefs. I find that the minimization of racism is enhanced by free-market beliefs of "less government, the better" and the "free market can handle the economy" when considering beliefs on equal opportunity. Respondents who believe "the less

government, the better" and minimization of racism were 18 percent less likely to strongly

disagree/disagree with not ensuring equal opportunity (see Figure 3.1). Those same respondents

were nine percent more likely to strongly agree/agree with not ensuring equal opportunity (See

Figure 3.2). Similarly, respondents who believed in "market is better" and minimization of

racism were 17 percent less likely to strongly disagree/disagree with no support of ensuring equal

opportunity (See Figure 3.3) and six percent more likely to support not ensuring equal

opportunity in society (See Figure 3.4). Respondents who believed in free market beliefs and

that minimization of racism have a steeper slope for those who did *not* support the minimization

of racism and free market beliefs. In other words, those with stronger minimization of racism and

free-market beliefs have a higher rate of believing that equal opportunity already exists in society

or that inequality exists and does not need to be addressed. Therefore, I argue that these findings

show that colorblindness and free-market beliefs are mutually reinforcing beliefs about inequality

(see Appendix B for full regression results for all models).

In sum, I am arguing that colorblindness should not continue to be the central study of

racial ideology, but one that contributes to racism and inequality. Racecraft is what offers the

link between free market beliefs and colorblindness and larger system of racism that generates

inequality. As I stated earlier, the general public and many scholars who do not study race,

would not make a connection between two distinct sets of beliefs or ideas -- free market and

colorblindness. Yet, I have shown how colorblindness and free market beliefs are connected to

each other and share a connection to belief in inequality. Moreover, their connection is also

observed through sharing similar mental framework and policy approaches to obscure the actors

and actions that generate inequality. The connection between the macro of racist ideology and its

material impact to inequality is racecraft.

DISCUSSION

Racecraft creates the perception that racism is natural, and also provides the means to make the perception a lived reality. In other words, both free market and colorblindness serve as the micro process that naturalize and obscure the actors of inequality and place the onus on others for their material insufficiency. Inequality, in this context, is the difference seen between people that lay outside of human variation. Racecraft is the phenomenon that connects the enduring belief of inequality that allows the justification of human suffering as normal, blames those who suffer for their plight and justifies policies that allow inequality to persist. As a result, these racist ideologies of colorblindness and free market and subsequent actions informed by these set of beliefs is what racecraft describes as its phenomenon and the outcome of racecraft is the justification and continuation of inequality. To be clear, I am not suggesting that I have an exhaustive list of all beliefs that are part of racecraft. However, my work provides an empirical and specific example to explain how racecraft occurs by showing how seemingly independent beliefs are coupled and mutually reinforced to perpetuate support for inequality, while minimizing or displacing the costs of inequality in society.

Moreover, the consequence of understanding colorblindness and free markets as a function of racecraft allows us to understand how inequality gains a racialized meaning. Fields and Fields (2014) describe racecraft as captivating the mind's eye to make what is not there present and erase what is present. That is, people interpret inequality phenomena through the erasure of specific actions and actors in order to dismiss well-founded criticism of inequality and others' experience of inequality. Instead, the commonsense discourse of racecraft relies on free markets and the colorblind belief-based rhetoric of "financial moral hazards," "reverse racism," or, simply, "unfairness" to justify white grievances about social and economic policies that

would help all people (Fields and Fields 2014:286). For example, when asked about income inequality, respondents raised questions about the abundance of equal opportunity in society (McCall 2013; Kluegal et al. 1986). However, when questioned about the inequality experienced by Black people, respondents pointed to a lack of hard work and deservingness, thus justifying the inequality. In this example, the effects of colorblind minimization of racism and abstract liberalism, as well as free-market beliefs, create a condition where the income inequality experienced by Black people is not seen or understood as being tied to larger inequality within society. The action of not seeing is racecraft. In other words, colorblindness, free-market, and equal opportunity beliefs support inequality by directly connecting racism to inequality through people's use of racecraft.

Consequently, policy efforts to reduce or eliminate inequality are ignored and rejected because they are antithetical to the majority's understanding of what inequality represents: a fair system in which hard work allows people to get their just desserts. Inequality is perceived to represent fair and just outcomes that should be expected in a system of equal opportunity and free markets. Thus, those marked as undeserving and not hard working, particularly people of color, are justifiably excluded from economic growth. In contrast, the economic system built on the exploitation of countless individuals goes unchallenged. I argue that the link between colorblindness and its material impact lies not in its sole action but in the essential belief that connects racism and inequality in racecraft.

CONCLUSION

Studies of colorblindness have offered valuable insights into how racial ideologies have evolved since the civil rights movement. Scholars of race have also analyzed how other ideologies, such as free market principles and equal opportunity, affect access to opportunities

and life chances. By examining the concept of racecraft, I have demonstrated how seemingly disparate beliefs are intertwined to justify inequality, perpetuate white grievance, downplay the role of racism in society, and discourage policy solutions to address inequality. The study is limited by the cross-sectional nature of the data, which prevents the examination of changes in beliefs over time. Additionally, the study's reliance on limited measures of variables of interest may not fully capture the complexity of the relationship between colorblindness and free-market ideologies. Utilizing panel data would strengthen the findings by allowing for the examination of changes in individuals' beliefs over time, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between colorblindness and free-market ideologies. Additionally, creating a survey specifically tailored to measure the variables of interest would enhance the study's validity and reliability, ensuring that the data collected accurately reflects the nuances of participants' attitudes and beliefs.

NOTES

1. The term tenets has been used as well by Manning, Hartmann, Gerteis (2015) to describe Bonilla-Silva's four frames.
2. The fourth tenet, naturalization, is not included because no items of the ANES reflect its definition.

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Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	S.E.
Free-Market Beliefs		
Less government, the better	0.55	0.007
Free market can handle the economy	0.41	0.007
Equal Opportunity Beliefs		
Strongly agree	0.48	0.007
Agree somewhat	0.30	0.007
Neither agree nor disagree	0.12	0.005
Disagree somewhat	0.07	0.004
Strongly disagree	0.03	0.003
Racially Colorblind Racist Beliefs		
Conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed	3.20	0.02
Black people should not have special favors to succeed	3.64	0.02
If Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites	3.24	0.02
Partisanship		
Level of being conservative	4.25	0.02
Warm feelings toward Democrats	47.38	0.38
Social Economic Status		
Family income percentage group	.57	0.004
Years of education	14.60	0.04
Demographics		
Women	.48	0.007
Age	45.35	0.24
Region		
Northeast	.18	0.006
Midwest	.22	0.006
South	.37	0.007
West	.23	0.006

Note: Survey weights used to calculate means; used the subpopulation of survey years 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. S.E. is a linearized standard error.

Table 3.2. Survey Questions Alignment with Colorblind Racism Frames

Variable	Question Stem	Colorblind Racism Frame
Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed.	Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.	Minimization of racism: This item denies the significance of historical oppression and discrimination as a reason Black people succeed less than white people.
Black people should not have special favors to succeed.	Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.	Abstract liberalism: This item argues that additional policy efforts are unnecessary to ensure equality.
Black people must try harder to succeed.	It's a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites.	Cultural racism: This item argues that Black people's standing in society is a product of their lack of effort, loose family organization, and inappropriate values.

Table 3.3. Correlation between Sub-Colorblind Beliefs

|	*Conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed*	*Black people should not have special favors to succeed*	*Black people must try harder to succeed*
Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed.	1		
Black people should not have special favors to succeed.	.40	1	
Black people must try harder to succeed.	.38	.60	1

Table 3.4. Effect of Racial Colorblind Racism Beliefs Indicators on Free-Market Beliefs

	Less government, the better (DV)		Free market can handle the economy (DV)	
	Odd Ratios	S.E.	Odd Ratios	S.E.
Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed (minimization of racism)	1.17***	0.03	1.16***	0.03
Black people should not have special favors to succeed (abstract liberalism)	1.20***	0.03	1.24***	0.04
Black people must try harder to succeed (cultural racism)	1.11***	0.03	1.16***	0.03

Note: Each racial colorblind racism beliefs variable is tested in a separate regression analysis; *** $p < 0.001$, **$p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$; S.E. is a linearized standard error two-tailed test.

Figure 3.1. Interaction Terms of Minimization of Racism and Less Gov't, the Better on the Belief That There Is "No support for ensuring opportunity- Strongly Disagree/Disagree"
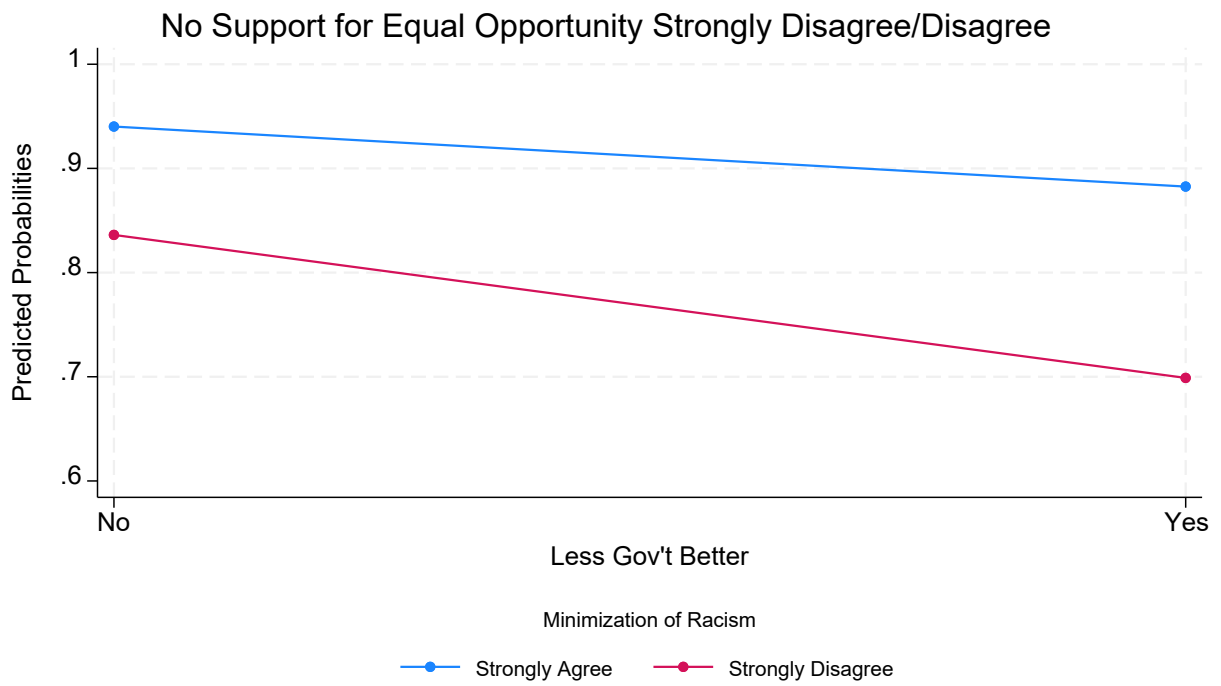
Note: All other covariates are at means.

Figure 3.2. Interaction Terms of Minimization of Racism and Less Gov't, the Better on the Belief That There Is "No support for ensuring opportunity – Strongly Agree/Agree"
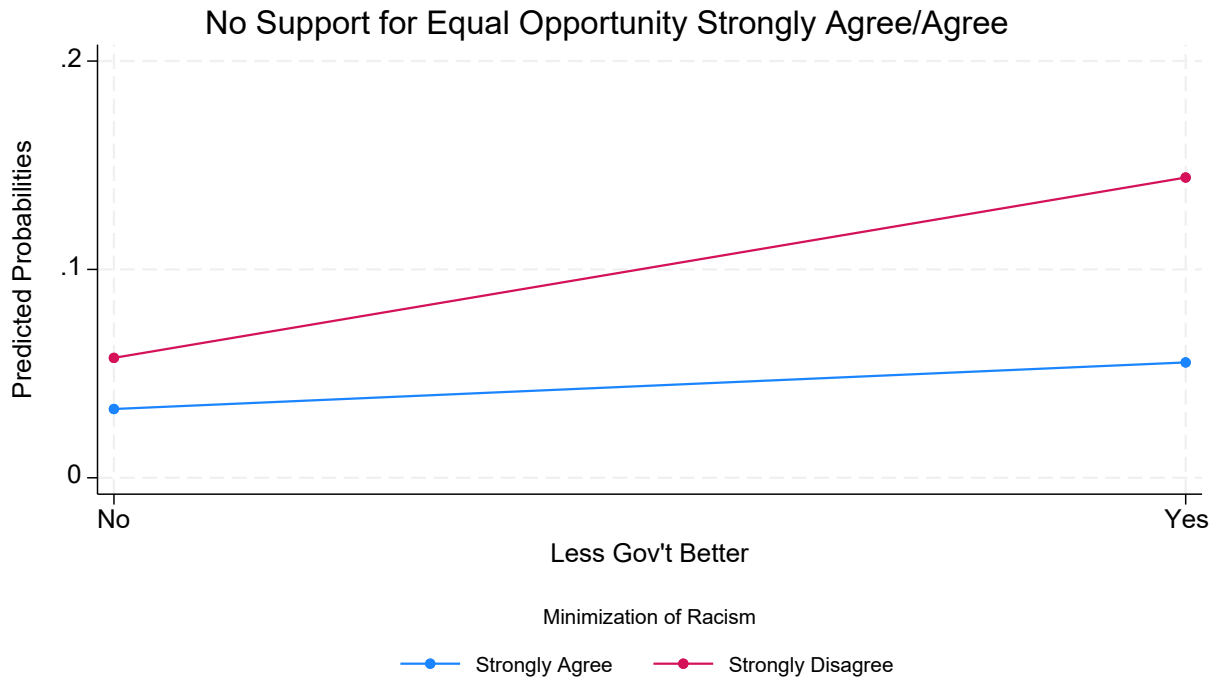
Note: All other covariates are at means.

Figure 3.3. Interaction Terms of Minimization of Racism and the Belief That "Free market can handle the economy" and "No support for ensuring opportunity"

Note: All other covariates are at means.

Figure 3.4. Interaction Terms of Minimization of Racism and the Belief That "Free market can handle the economy" and "No support for ensuring opportunity"

Note: All other covariates are at means.

APPENDIX A. VARIABLE NAMES AND DEFINITIONS

Table A3.1. Survey Questions of Dependent and Independent Variables

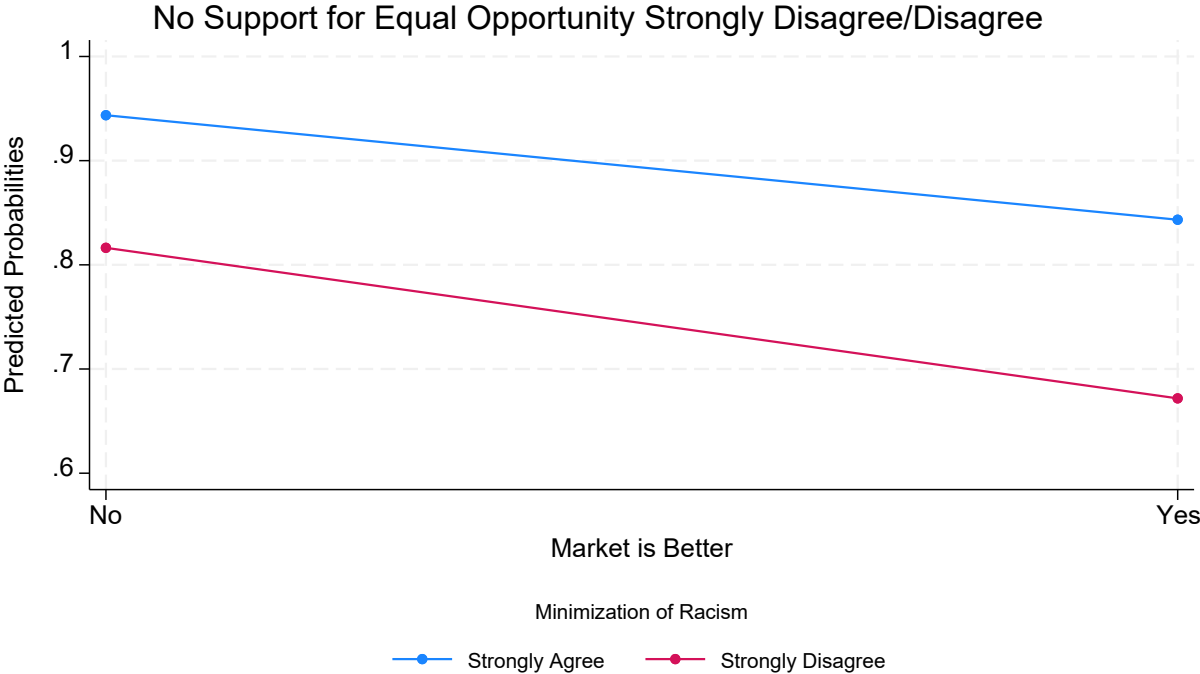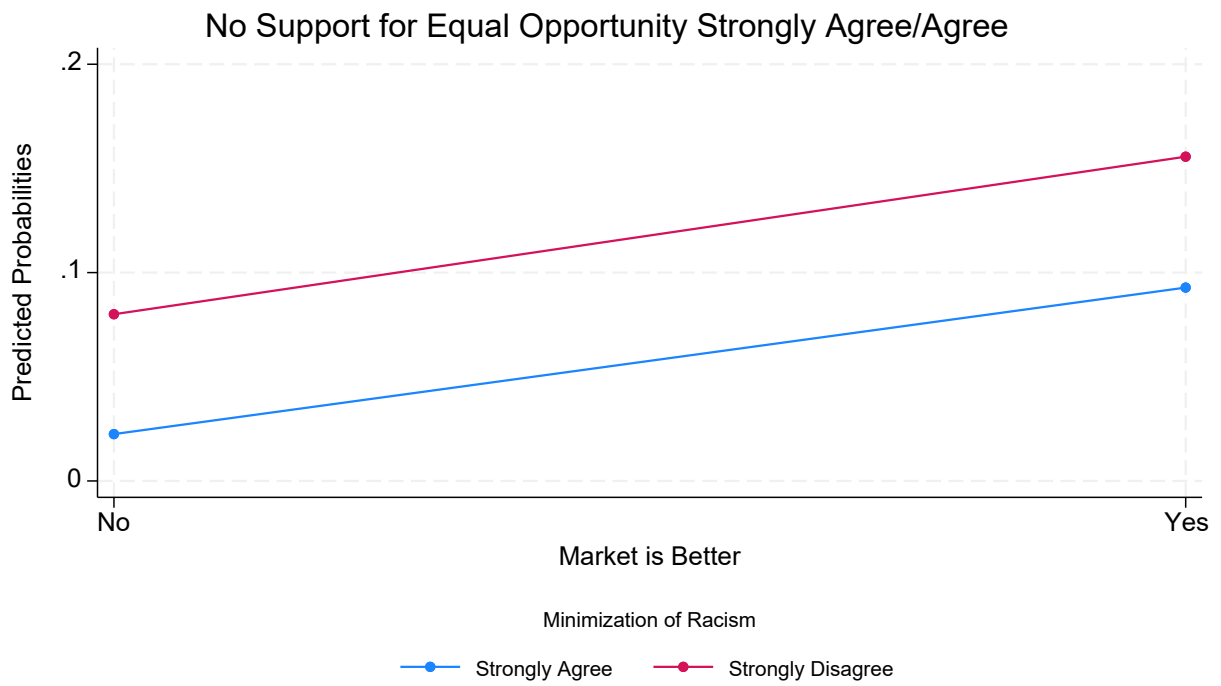| Variable	Question Stem	Options
Historical conditions make it difficult for Black people to succeed.	Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
Black people should not have special favors to succeed.	Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
Black people must try harder to succeed.	It's a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know
Less government, the better	Next, I am going to ask you to choose one of two statements. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your (2000: own) views.	One, less government, the better; or two, there are more things government should be doing
Free market can handle the economy	Next, I will ask you to choose one of two statements. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your (2000: own) views.	One, we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems; or two, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved
No support for ensuring equal opportunity	Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.	1. Agree strongly 2. Agree somewhat 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree somewhat 5. Disagree strongly 8. Do not know

Table B3.1. Full Regression for All Colorblindness Items on "Less government, the better"

Variables	Less Government, the Better					
	Odds Ratio	S.E.	Odds Ratio	S.E.	Odds Ratio	S.E.
Conditions make it difficult for Blacks to succeed	1.17***	0.03				
Blacks should not have special favors to succeed			1.20***	0.03		
Blacks must try harder to succeed					1.11***	0.03
Partisanship						
Conservative	1.38***	0.04	1.37***	0.04	1.40***	0.04
Warm feelings toward Democrats	0.97***	0.001	0.97***	0.001	0.97***	0.001
Social Economic Status						
Family income percentage group	1.47**	0.18	1.53***	0.19	1.53***	0.19
Years of education	1.07***	0.01	1.08***	0.01	1.07***	0.01
Demographics						
White people	1.61***	0.12	1.63***	0.13	1.71***	0.13
Women	0.72***	0.04	0.72***	0.04	0.73***	0.05
Age	1.01***	0.001	1.01***	0.001	1.01***	0.001
Region						
Northeast	0.85	0.08	0.86	0.08	0.85	0.08
Midwest	1.16	0.10	1.18*	0.10	1.16	0.10
West	1.18*	0.10	1.19*	0.10	1.17	0.10
Years						
2000	0.86	0.11	0.85	0.11	0.87	0.11
2004	1.01	0.12	0.97	0.11	0.99	0.11
2008	0.98	0.10	0.95	0.10	0.95	0.10
2012	1.38***	0.10	1.38***	0.10	1.41***	0.10
Constant	0.09***	0.03	0.08***	0.02	0.10***	0.03
Observations	9,171		9,168		9,160	

Note: *** .001, **.01, *.05, S.E. is a linearized standard error, two-tailed test.

Table B3.2. Full Regression for All Colorblindness Items on "Free market is better"

Variables	Odds Ratio	S.E.	Odds Ratio	S.E.	Odds Ratio	S.E.
			Free Market Is Better			
Conditions make it difficult for Blacks to succeed	1.16***	0.03				
Blacks should not have special favors to succeed			1.24***	0.04		
Blacks must try harder to succeed					1.16***	0.03
Partisanship						
Conservative	1.36***	0.04	1.33***	0.04	1.36***	0.04
Warm feelings toward Democrats	0.98***	0.001	0.98***	0.001	0.98***	0.001
Social Economic Status						
Family income percentage group	0.92	0.14	0.96	0.15	0.94	0.15
Years of education	1.05**	0.02	1.05***	0.02	1.05**	0.02
Demographics						
White people	1.33***	0.10	1.33***	0.10	1.39***	0.11
Women	0.75***	0.05	0.75***	0.05	0.77***	0.05
Age	1.00	0.001	1.00	0.001	1.00	0.001
Region						
Northeast	0.98	0.09	1.00	0.09	0.99	0.09
Midwest	1.06	0.08	1.07	0.09	1.06	0.09
West	1.22*	0.10	1.24**	0.10	1.22*	0.10
Years						
2000	1.43**	0.19	1.38*	0.18	1.43**	0.19
2004	1.26*	0.15	1.18	0.14	1.19	0.14
2008	1.05	0.11	1.02	0.10	1.01	0.10
2012	1.28***	0.09	1.26**	0.09	1.28***	0.09
Constant	0.14***	0.04	0.11***	0.03	0.13***	0.04
Observations	9,182		9,177		9,173	

Note: *** .001, **.01, *.05 S.E. is a linearized standard error two-tailed test.

Table B3.3. Main Effect and Interaction for Minimization of Racism and "Less Gov't, the better" on "No support for ensuring opportunity"

	Neither		Strongly Disagree/Disagree	
VARIABLES	Relative Risk Ratios	Robust S.E.	Relative Risk Ratios	Robust S.E.
Less Gov't, the better	0.91	0.17	1.82	0.67
Minimization of Racism				
Strongly Disagree	0.09***	0.02	0.70	0.33
Disagree Somewhat	0.22***	0.04	0.88	0.32
Agree Somewhat	0.41***	0.08	1.49	0.56
Strongly Agree	0.39***	0.08	1.38	0.51
Interactions				
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Strongly Disagree	2.70*	1.13	0.98	0.58
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Disagree Somewhat	1.71*	0.46	1.45	0.62
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Agree Somewhat	1.73*	0.43	1.19	0.50
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Strongly Agree	1.93*	0.50	1.65	0.69
Partisanship				
Conservative	1.03	0.04	1.19***	0.05
Warm Feelings Towards Democrats	0.99***	0.00	0.98***	0.00
Demographics				
White People	1.13	0.12	1.33*	0.18
Women	0.93	0.08	1.03	0.10
Age	0.98***	0.00	0.99***	0.00
Family Income Percentage	0.78	0.13	1.32	0.24
Years of Education	1.00	0.02	1.04*	0.02
Region				
New England	1.10	0.14	1.26	0.18
Midwest	1.18	0.13	1.27*	0.15
West	1.14	0.13	1.26	0.15
Years				
2000	0.54**	0.12	1.54*	0.29
2004	0.40***	0.08	0.61*	0.12
2008	0.46***	0.08	0.69*	0.12
2012	1.19	0.11	1.43***	0.15
Constant	1.06	0.39	0.03***	0.01
Observations	9,164		9,164	

Note: *** .001, **.01, *.05 S.E. is robust, two-tailed test.

Table B3.4. Main Effect and Interaction for Minimization of Racism and " Market is Better" on "No support for ensuring opportunity"

VARIABLES	Neither		Strongly Disagree/Disagree	
	Relative Risk Ratios	Robust S.E.	Relative Risk Ratios	Robust S.E.
Less Gov't, the better	1.73**	0.33	1.95*	0.61
Minimization of Racism				
Strongly Disagree	0.14***	0.04	0.43*	0.16
Disagree Somewhat	0.32***	0.06	0.89	0.25
Agree Somewhat	0.59**	0.10	1.33	0.38
Strongly Agree	0.51***	0.09	1.75*	0.49
Interactions				
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Strongly Disagree	1.22	0.55	2.37	1.29
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Disagree Somewhat	0.87	0.23	1.51	0.56
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Agree Somewhat	0.89	0.21	1.34	0.49
Less Gov't x Min of Racism Strongly Agree	1.17	0.29	1.21	0.43
Partisanship				
Conservative	1.03	0.04	1.18***	0.05
Warm Feelings Towards Democrats	0.99***	0.00	0.99***	0.00
Demographics				
White People	1.14	0.12	1.37*	0.19
Women	0.93	0.08	1.04	0.10
Age	0.98***	0.00	0.99***	0.00
Family Income Percentage	0.80	0.13	1.40	0.26
Years of Education	1.00	0.02	1.04*	0.02
Region				
New England	1.06	0.13	1.24	0.17
Midwest	1.18	0.13	1.29*	0.15
West	1.12	0.12	1.25	0.15
Years				
2000	0.47***	0.11	1.35	0.25
2004	0.43***	0.08	0.59**	0.12
2008	0.46***	0.08	0.66*	0.11
2012	1.21*	0.11	1.41**	0.15
Constant	0.75	0.28	0.03***	0.01
Observations	9,174		9,174	

Note: *** .001, **.01, *.05 S.E. is robust, two-tailed test.

Table B3.5. Interaction Results for Minimization of Racism and Free-Market Beliefs on No Support for Equal Opportunity

	Degrees of Freedom	Chi Square	p-values
Less Gov't. the Better			
Minimization of Racism (strongly disagree vs strongly agree) on No Support for Equal Opportunity Strongly Disagree/Disagree	1	42.50	< .001
Minimization of Racism (strongly disagree vs strongly agree) on No Support for Equal Opportunity Strongly Agree/Agree	1	19.37	< .001
Market is Better			
Minimization of Racism (strongly disagree vs strongly agree) on No Support for Equal Opportunity Strongly Disagree/Disagree	1	19.86	< .001
Minimization of Racism (strongly disagree vs strongly agree) on No Support for Equal Opportunity Strongly Agree/Agree	1	3.86	< .05

CONCLUSION

The three studies comprising this thesis have demonstrated a relationship between colorblindness and free-market beliefs. My findings affirm previous research from Omi, Winant, and Hohle about the existence of the relationship and expand on how we can understand colorblindness. First, I find that colorblindness is not the only belief that impacts how a person can understand a racialized policy. Moreover, what appears to be race-neutral can be impacted by colorblindness. In other words, the discourse around the racialized nature of a topic does not exclude the effects colorblindness has on the polity.

Second, I find that the relationship between colorblindness and free-market beliefs may not be one of equal partners but of a superhero and sidekick. This intriguing dynamic is evident in how the free market is moderated in the context of dealing with crime, but not in funding Social Security. While there is no interaction between Social Security and colorblindness, there also is no statistically significant result for colorblindness. These findings, while promising, underscore the need for further exploration using different datasets and under different conditions before a more definitive conclusion can be drawn.

Third, my studies have pointed to the possibility that colorblindness is not a *sui generis* ideology; that is, that colorblindness is dependent on and co-constructed by another phenomenon: racecraft. Moreover, the "non-racial" ideology of the free market is both racial and part of the same phenomenon. Racecraft provides a feasible explanation for how the racial narrative and history of Jim Crow shifted and transformed into one of colorblindness and free-market beliefs. As Field and Field argue, the main idea behind racism and the creation of racial categories is to maintain inequality. As my findings in chapter 3 demonstrate, colorblindness and the free-market influence a belief in equal opportunity. I argue with others that the expectation

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that equal opportunity is present allows for the continued justification and naturalization of inequality—that is, of the have-nots.

My study in chapter 3 has limitations. The variables I used to construct the colorblindness and free-market scale and to infer the latent relationship could be more robust. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling would help affirm the colorblindness scale and the latent relationship. Moreover, direct measures of racecraft would be helpful, although no current measures are available. They would need to be created.

The impact of these studies is that they provide direct evidence that challenges the persistent narrative that free-market or, more broadly, economic beliefs are race neutral. Consequently, I argue that we can begin to challenge neoliberal policies and the empty rhetoric of equal opportunity through an anti-racist approach. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said in the last year of his life, it is not enough to focus on opportunity or chances but on outcomes. Identifying the relationship between free-market beliefs, equal opportunity, and colorblind beliefs enables scholars to reconsider how policies guided by free-market beliefs and equal opportunity support and reify inequality. Considering this relationship, I argue that neoliberal and equal opportunity policies are a type of economic and racial "dog whistle." After neoliberal policies were established as a common approach in both political parties in the 1990s, politicians' continuation of free-market and equal opportunity policies tapped into the white supremacy discourse of the United States. Therefore, when the question arises of why white people or people of color support neoliberal and equal opportunity policies that do not benefit them financially, the answer is that they are investing in systems that continue to support white supremacy.

In completing the dissertation and reflecting on a particular moment during my college orientation in that long-ago summer, I have learned that the stories we tell ourselves matter. The reality is that the books used in schools and colleges and the stories the media portrays continue the justifications for oppression and suffering in the world People of Color experience. We experience in particular how suffering and oppression are justified as natural consequences due either to an "invisible hand" or to innate racial differences, which allows the polity to turn the other way.

If I may take the liberty of paraphrasing Patricia Hill-Collins, we find the truth in the dialectic between oppression and challenge. The videos of the George Floyd and Rodney King assaults, pictures of Bloody Sunday, or the bombing of the 16th Street Church in 1963 are all moments that, for the white polity, shatter the facade of racial "peace" or "progress. Those moments did bring some change, but business as usual has largely continued. Ending racism will require what Ibrahim Kendi calls an anti-racist position. More specifically, it will require active, ever-ongoing work to dismantle the rhetoric and actions that support systematic oppression. Anti-racist work also requires a "freedom dream," which Robin Kelley describes as the ability to imagine a world beyond the present oppression, where a person can use their agency to build the world they desire. The one narrative I no longer believe is that racial progress is inevitable or willed by a divine entity. Only solidarity and intersectional social movements grounded in an anti-racist perspective will make liberation happen.

My time at UCLA was shaped by professors and learning that fed my intellectual activism. I was fortunate to meet like-minded people there, like Jalil Bishop, with whom I started a nonprofit called the Equity Research Cooperative, which enables us to live our freedom dreams. This organization we have created "centers the margins" of society and actively

redistributes the organizational financial gains to the communities we work with. I now have the

opportunity to live the life I had sought for so long—an intellectual life grounded in changing the

world I live in.