

Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Social Context

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Abstract

This article looks at the influence of social identity on public attitudes toward American foreign policy. In terms of foreign policy, U.S. citizens show solidarity with other members of their race by supporting policies that prove beneficial to them. Utilizing data from the 2010 Global Views national survey by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the paper shows social identity as expressed through racial solidarity helps to facilitate this socio-cognitive process. It also provides evidence illustrating racial solidarity increases the desire of different social groups to support policies which will ultimately benefit ingroups at home, as well as overseas populations they consider as part of their ingroup. The paper also argues and provides evidence showing racial solidarity causes certain social groups to have warm feelings toward countries that contain large populations of people they consider as part of their ingroup. The evidence presented in this article moves people closer to understanding the political implications of social identity even in the realm of U.S. foreign policy.

Introduction

Evidence has accumulated that people often divide the world into ingroups and outgroups (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). However, we know very little as to why domestic groups may support policies for certain overseas groups, even if the policy in question provides them with no tangible benefit. This project discusses racial solidarity as a product of social identity because I believe it is important in understanding why domestic groups choose to support U.S. foreign policies which benefit particular groups. I argue racial solidarity increases the desire of different social groups to support policies which will ultimately benefit groups at home as well as overseas populations they consider as part of their ingroup. I also argue racial solidarity causes certain social groups to have warm feelings toward countries that contain large populations of people they consider as part of their ingroup. In this sense, African Americans will likely support a given U.S. foreign policy decision if it will benefit predominately Black populations. This is because the success of the overseas ingroup will provide domestic members of the group with a sense of pride and self-esteem. The image of the members of the domestic ingroup will be enhanced if the status of the overseas part of the ingroup increases. In this vein, attitudes toward international policy are formed in part, through actual and perceived experiences with the social group(s) individuals choose to identify with.

This article makes several contributions to the study of American politics, race and ethnic studies, and international relations. First it adds to the body of research demonstrating the political significance of U.S. foreign policy and its congruence with the will of its citizens. According to McKenzie (2008), our “nation moves closer to an ideal state of democratic practice by carefully considering the multitude of interests and preferences that citizens express on matters relating to foreign and domestic interests” (p.35). Thus, this article adds to our understanding of U.S. foreign policy in the world and the role of citizen opinions in the governance and policymaking process.

Second, evidence for my argument would add a new level of understanding to the debate concerning whether aggregate mass opinion in regard to international affairs is irrational (Almond, 1950) or stable (Page and Shapiro, 1992). My results suggest that public opinion towards U.S. foreign policy are largely rational, but this is not to be confused with what’s rational for the country or the national interest. Rather, my evidence shows that this opinion is rational from the standpoint of the individual and the group they socially identify with.

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Third, research suggests that public opinion concerning foreign policy and world affairs may influence voting behavior (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida, 1989) and public policy (Shapiro and Jacobs, 2000). In fact, Aldrich et al (1989) argue the reason why presidential candidates spend so much time campaigning on foreign policy issues is because attitudes about them influence voting choices just as much as attitudes about domestic issues. Because of this, understanding public opinion toward U.S. foreign policy becomes an important undertaking as we continue to find ways to improve democratic practices.

Fourth, finding effects for social identity on public attitudes about international affairs would add a new realm of theoretical understanding to how citizens form foreign policy opinions. Because Americans are inundated with so much information it is impossible for them to sift through it all and arrive at the soundest decision. They instead use short-cuts or heuristics to help them make beneficial decisions that are consistent with their values (Boudreau and MacKenzie 2014; Bisgaard, Martin, 2015). I show in this article that social identity is such cues that people utilize to form their opinions towards U.S. foreign policy.

Fifth, this article adds to the vibrant literature surrounding the racial context of U.S. foreign policy. The role of social identity through the prism of race is important because when used as a conceptual tool, race and its intersectional consequences provides a more nuanced critique of social relations (Lusane, 2006). It also helps scholars to realize that race itself is a salient and important factor in the formation of foreign policy (Plummer, 2002). Investigating the role of social identity through the prism of race groups allow me to forgo the adventure of constructing an ad hoc social group simply to evaluate my theory (Bishin, 2009). Examining race groups also allow me to rely confidently on groups that have been well-identified in previous social science research. At the same time, because Whites as a group with a distinct social identity has not been investigated to the extent as have different minority groups (Schildkraut, 2015; Craig, 2014) this examination adds to the burgeoning – but relatively nascent – literature on the political implications of White social identity.

The remainder of the article proceeds in five sections. The first examines the literatures on social identity theory and racial solidarity respectively. The second section describes the relationship between the two and how they work to increase our understanding of attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy, while the third develops testable hypotheses. The fourth section presents my empirical analyses of the relationship between social identity, racial solidarity, and public attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy. I conclude with a discussion of my findings' larger implications for our understanding of democratic statecraft in the realm of foreign policy.

Understanding Social Identity Theory

Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) argue when people make decisions regarding their partisanship, one of the questions they ask themselves is what type of social groups are primarily associated with each major party. Once people have these groups in mind, the authors note people then mentally discern which assemblage of groups best describes them (Green et al, 2002). I argue in a policy domain such as foreign policy where the issues at stake are complex and less clear cut than American domestic policy, the social identity they associate with helps shape their political attitudes. In this study, the focus is on social identity as expressed by race.

Social identity theory, as originally imagined in the United States by Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) in the *The American Voter*, is explained as reference group theory. As Miller (1991) aptly described it, "our individual sense of personal identity is derived from groups to which we belong" (22). According to Campbell et al. (1960) – hereinafter referred to as the Michigan Model – in formulating their attitudes, people assign themselves to the particular group(s) they feel themselves as belonging to as opposed to being arbitrarily assigned to a group by a social scientist. Once a person's reference group has been empirically determined, it becomes possible to make better predictions with respect to their political behavior. The Michigan Model authors maintain people identify with different groups and other social gatherings in ways similar to how they identify with political parties. These attachments form early and usually remain stable throughout the course of one's life.

Today, reference group theory has evolved into social identity theory. One early proponent of social identity theory defined it as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a group together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p.255). In their exploration of social identity theory, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) conclude partisan identification is akin to social group identification. These authors stress people identify with their political party in ways similar to identifying with their particular ethnic group.

In thinking of their own idea of partisanship, the authors argue people think of other groups that associate with either the Democratic or Republican parties. Based on the type of groups or associations that come to mind, people will fall alongside those particular groups which best resembles themselves.

According to Conover and Feldman (1980), an affinity for a relevant social group can be instrumental in shaping political opinions, as well as forming negative feelings towards outgroups. Converse (1964) also notes the significance of social identity in shaping political and social attitudes. Thus, social identity theory emphasizes group-belonging and emotion, rather than rational calculations.

The social identity one takes from a given group membership both describes and prescribes one's attributes as a member of the group (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995). This includes how group members should think, act, and behave. As specific aspects of these identities become salient, ingroup members come to view these attributes as normative, while they view certain attributes of outgroup members as stereotypical (Achen and Bartels, 2016). Depending on the nature of relations between the groups, intergroup behavior may also acquire discriminatory and competitive properties (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995). In the case of minority groups such as Asians and Latinos, both of which also happen to be predominate immigrant groups in America, their racial group identities may be as primary to their conscious formation as it is for African Americans. Scholars also note however, that different contexts such as pan-ethnic identity (Padilla, 1984), religious identity (Pachon and DeSipio, 1995), and minority group status (Bobo and Johnson, 2000) may shape the political perceptions of Asian Americans and Latinos. This makes it especially difficult to categorize these minority groups into certain social boxes due simply to their race or ethnicity. Social identity may also be relevant for Whites. As Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk (1981) note, though racial group identity has been shown to be subconscious among Whites, its influence may still affect their political attitudes and decision making.

A Theoretical Framework for Studying Social Identity Theory's Role in Shaping Foreign Policy Attitudes

One approach to examining the influence of social identity in shaping foreign policy attitudes is through the concept known as racial solidarity. Racial solidarity is both a source and outcome of social identity due to its multiple socio-cognitive dimensions such as identifying with a particular race and experiencing a measure of connectedness with the race. Racial solidarity is often realized as the product of different contextual factors such as racial identity, racial consciousness, general awareness of the group's relevant history, and racial pride – among other concepts (Durant and Sparow, 1997; Turner, 1967). It has been conceptualized as an ability to identify with members of the group and a willingness to accept certain personal sacrifices on its behalf (Bledsoe, Welch, Segelman, and Combs, 1995). Because racial solidarity encapsulates ideas and concepts such as race consciousness, identity, and group awareness, it is generally used as a term to collectively frame these amalgamating concepts.

Racial solidarity plays a key role in the political beliefs and behaviors of different race groups. The influence of group solidarity began to draw attention in the 1960s and 1970s when social scientists realized – contrary to popular belief – African Americans participated in politics at rates higher than White Americans after controlling for socio-economic status (Orum, 1966; Verba and Nie, 1972). Some scholars believe group solidarity provided them with extra motivation to participate in politics (Olsen, 1970; Verba and Nie, 1972).

Despite these findings, other research has not consistently showed a positive relationship between group solidarity and different forms of political behavior. For instance, Tate's (1991) examination of the 1984 National Black Election Study (NBES), reveals feelings of group solidarity to be secondary to the larger influence of church membership. She finds racial solidarity to be only slightly related to political behaviors such as taking part in political campaigns or voting in elections. According to Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995), group solidarity has a negligible impact on participation. Using different measures of psychological engagement such as political efficacy, political interest, information, and partisan intensity, they show political interest and awareness (information) proved to be the strongest indicators for political participation. Though research examining group solidarity has focused primarily on African Americans, recent research examines its influence as it relates to other minority groups as well. In the case of Asians, Lien (1994) does not find a robust positive relationship between solidarity and political behavior. Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) observes although indicators of participation varies between Latinos, Blacks, and Whites, social connectedness did explain differences in political behavior between these race groups. Thus, social closeness among race groups helped to account for the group's likelihood of engaging and thinking in a collective sense about politics.

Recent scholarship have also begun to take notice of racial solidarity among White Americans (Danbold and Huo, 2015; Jardina, 2014). For instance, Jardina (2014) argues that in the contemporary political environment, some Whites perceive themselves to be a distinct and aggrieved political group. She notes that “two decades of mass immigration to the U.S., the election of America’s first Black president, and the nation’s growing non-white population have dramatically changed the political and social landscape” (Jardina, 2014, p.1).

Through this prism, a perceived threat to the societal status of members of their ingroup, like other domestic threats, can engender greater racial solidarity among Whites (Schildkraut, 2017; Major and Major, 2016). Such racial solidarity may also have implications for how Whites form their attitudes related to foreign policy.

Hypotheses

The basic argument in this article is that Americans view other nations favorably if the country in question has a racial make-up similar to their own. Americans not only think in terms of ingroups and outgroups in relationship to domestic policy, but also regarding U.S. foreign policy. I build off the theory discussed earlier that individuals support government policies benefitting their own ingroup over others (Kinder and Kam, 2010). The theoretical argument is even when it comes to foreign policy, American attitudes are partly formed in a similar fashion. I expect White Americans to exhibit more favorable U.S. foreign policy positions toward majority White countries. I also expect for Black Americans to exhibit more favorable U.S. foreign policy positions toward majority Black countries. Regarding countries with neither a majority Black nor White population, I have no clear expectations for White and Black American’s positions toward those countries. I do not expect any distinguishable pattern to emerge as it relates to non-majority White or Black countries.

Given these expectations, four hypotheses emerge listed with the independent variables discussed below:

H1a: White Americans will have greater positive views toward majority White countries than Black Americans.

H1b: Black Americans will have greater positive views toward majority Black countries than White Americans.

H2a: White Americans will be more likely to list majority White countries as having an important strategic relationship with the United States than Black Americans.

H2b: Black Americans will be more likely to list majority Black countries as having an important strategic relationship with the United States than White Americans.

Data and Methods

In 2010, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) contacted a national sample of American households to better understand the foreign policy attitudes of the American people. Households for this “Global Views” study were selected by using random-digit dialing (RDD) and address-based sampling methods. The Global Views 2010 survey is ideal for the present type of analysis because of the extensive depth and range of foreign policy topics in which it covers. Respondents were asked over 100 questions on various issues regarding world affairs, U.S. international policy, and attitudes toward other countries, among other topics. The report also includes questions covering respondent’s perceptions and attitudes toward various aspects of U.S. foreign policy. The Global Views 2010 survey is based on the results of a nationwide survey of 2,596 adults conducted between June 11 and June 22, 2010 (see Global Views 2010 for more details).

To test the hypotheses, I conduct a series of independent t-tests to compare the average level of support Blacks and Whites exhibit on the importance of various countries to the United States’ interests and their feelings of warmth toward particular countries. The t-test is useful here because it illustrates the mean level of warmth that each race group expresses in regard to given countries and their people. More importantly however, is that the independent t-test also provides a test of statistical significance between the predictor and outcome variable(s). I then present the results of a logistic regression model on views of the importance of a country (across various countries) to control for important factors besides race that may influence foreign policy views.

Dependent Variables

I focus on two dependent variables in this chapter: a feeling thermometer measure of positive or warm feelings towards individual countries, and views on a country’s strategic importance to the United States. Table 1 lists the specific question wording and coding. The positive feeling or warmth variable is a feeling thermometer with scores ranging from 0-100. The strategic importance variable takes a 1 if a respondent answered very or somewhat important and a 0 if they answered not very or not at all important.

Table1. List of Questions Operationalizing Foreign Policy Issue Domains Taken from the 2010 Global Views Study by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

<p>Warmth Measure:</p> <p>Foreign Policy Concerning Individual Attitudes toward other Countries and Peoples</p>	<p>“Please rate your feelings toward some countries and peoples, with one hundred meaning a very warm, favorable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that country or those people.” The countries used for this study are: <i>Pakistan, Germany, Mexico, Israel, Great Britain, China, Saudi Arabia, France, Brazil, India, Japan, Russia, Venezuela, Iran, Cuba, Iraq, Palestinian Authority, South Africa, North Korea, South Korea, Indonesia, Turkey.</i></p>
<p>Strategic Importance Measure:</p> <p>Foreign Policy Concerning America’s Strategic Relationship with Different Nations</p>	<p>1.) "Here is a list of countries. Thinking about the role each of these countries plays in the world, how important is each country to the United States?" The countries respondents were asked about include: <i>China, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Israel, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Iraq, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, South Korea, Pakistan, India, Brazil, Turkey, and Nigeria.</i></p> <p>Respondents were asked to indicate their preference in the following manner: a) Very Important, b) Somewhat Important, c) Not Very Important, d) Not At All Important, e) Not Sure/Decline.</p> <p>I recode as follows: Very Important=1; Somewhat Important=1; Not Very Important=0; Not At All Important=0; Not Sure/Decline=Discarded</p>

Independent Variable

Social Identity via Racial Identification: The independent variable in this project is social identity as expressed through racial identification. Social identity as expressed through racial identification is accounted for by controlling for the race group each respondent identifies as belonging to, specifically Whites and African Americans. In the models, I code the race variables as Blacks = 1 and Whites = 0 and exclude all others from the analysis. I also included many conventional control variables such as: political ideology, gender, age, socio-economic status, and partisanship.

Results

To illustrate how social identity may influence the way Americans process their attitudes regarding foreign policy, I look here at the role race plays in determining how warmly they feel toward different nations around the world and their respective populations. Below I present results from a series of independent t-tests where the dependent variable is a thermometer question asking respondents how warmly they feel toward a selection of countries. Thus, the empirical question under investigation here is whether racial solidarity is significant in terms that Blacks are warmer towards countries with majority Black populations, and Whites towards countries with White majorities.

The selection of countries used for this question includes: *Pakistan, Germany, Mexico, Israel, Great Britain, China, Saudi Arabia, France, Brazil, India, Japan, Russia, Venezuela, Iran, Cuba, Iraq, Palestinian Authority, South Africa, North Korea, South Korea, Indonesia, and Turkey.* Race is the independent variable. This variable is dichotomous with Blacks=1 and Whites=0.

Table 2. t-test Results Comparing Blacks and Whites Feelings of Warmness Toward Different Countries

Country	Whites		Blacks		Difference	t-value
	Mean	n	Mean	n		
European or Majority White						
France	55.84	895	58.32	90	-2.48	-0.92
Germany	65.36	892	54.37	106	10.99	4.71***
Great Britain	89.00	1878	83.00	231	6.00	3.01***
Israel	58.65	889	51.62	98	7.03	2.35**
Russia	48.09	1869	46.8	222	1.29	0.83
African or Majority Black						
Brazil	56.05	1872	56.66	224	0.61	0.4
South Africa	52.66	859	59.31	110	-6.65	-2.94***
Asian						
China	43.43	1879	50.3	222	-6.87	-4.23***
Indonesia	46.95	854	49.1	99	-2.15	-1.01
Japan	61.96	1877	53.5	225	8.46	4.98***
South Korea	53.76	1866	47.27	221	6.49	3.66***
North Korea	23.62	880	35.25	111	2.31	-5.03***
Hispanic						
Cuba	37.08	854	42.76	115	-5.68	-2.40**
Mexico	45.52	867	50.18	95	4.66	1.73*
Venezuela	41.27	840	47.33	109	-6.06	-2.44**
Middle Eastern						
Iran	24.29	840	30.74	116	-6.45	2.86***
Iraq	33.41	933	40.2	101	-6.79	-2.72***
Pakistan	56.05	1872	56.66	224	-0.61	-0.4
Palestine	31.13	862	41.61	114	-10.48	-4.67***
Saudi Arabia	38.84	872	43.53	112	-4.69	-2.08*
Turkey	48.09	867	45.69	95	2.4	1.05

Standard Error in brackets. Note: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

I first look at the results in Table 2 for different majority White European countries. I begin with Great Britain and its people. The results show that on average, in comparison to African Americans, White Americans are 6 points more likely to report higher levels of feelings of warmness toward Great Britain and its people. This difference is statistically significant at the .001 level. This finding conforms to my expectation and provides evidence to hypothesis 1a in that White Americans feel warmer toward countries with majority White populations than do African Americans.

Looking at other predominately White European countries, we see a similar trend. For example, White Americans are 10.99 points more likely than African Americans, to report feelings of warmness toward Germany and its people. This difference is statistically significant at the .001 level and provides evidence to hypothesis 1a. Thus, on average, White Americans also report having warmer feelings toward the German Republic and its people than African Americans.

Moving to non-White countries, I observe American feelings of warmness toward South Africa. The results reveal that on average, White Americans report having statistically significant lower levels of feelings of warmness toward South Africa and its people than African Americans. African Americans are 6.65 points more likely than White Americans to report having warm feelings toward South Africa. The t-value associated with this figure shows this difference to be statistically significant at the .001 level, thus providing evidence to hypothesis 1b. Looking at American attitudes toward another predominately Black country, Brazil, the results paint a very similar picture.

An independent t-test on African Americans and White Americans reveal that on average, African Americans report having higher levels of feelings of warmness toward the country of Brazil and its people than White Americans. Though the test statistic in this case is not statistically significant, it does point in the expected direction.

Turning our attention back to another majority White country, I now observe whether there are significant differences between White Americans and African Americans in the level of warmness they feel toward the nation of Israel and its people. As expected, White Americans report feeling warmer toward Israel and its people than African Americans. This difference is statistically significant at the .01 level and provides even further evidence to hypothesis 1a. On average, White Americans also have warmer feelings toward France and its people than African Americans. Generally speaking, the t-tests show that on average, White Americans report having warmer feelings toward countries with majority White populations than their Black compatriots. On the other hand, African Americans report having warmer feelings toward countries with predominately Black populations than White Americans. The statistically significant t-values associated with these results support hypotheses 1a and 1b.

In an additional effort to illustrate the role social identity may play in shaping American attitudes toward foreign policy, I also examine the influence of race in forming individual perceptions concerning the strategic importance of different countries to the United States. The outcome of interest in this analysis is public attitudes toward a country's strategic relationship to the United States. Thus, the outcome variable for each model equals 1 if the public believes a country's relationship to the United States is important to the United States, and 0 if otherwise. I model the outcome for each scenario using logit regression. The explanatory variables of interest are controls for whether respondents are White or Black. Also included in the models (full model results in the Appendix) are control variables for partisanship, income, age, education, gender, and ideology. This set-up will be useful as I seek to assess the ways in which different race groups respond to certain countries and the importance of their relationships to the U.S., while holding other variables constant. The nonlinearity of logit analysis however, sometimes causes challenges with interpreting the original coefficients. Because of this, I utilize a technique employed by Stanley, Bianco, and Niemi (1986), and estimate the average marginal impact of each group characteristics (i.e. race) in terms of an average percentage difference that the group characteristic makes. This particular type of analysis allows one to better determine which group characteristics may promote attitudes regarding whether a country is important to the U.S. For example, this type of analysis allows one to estimate the probability that someone who is White, will believe Germany's relationship to the U.S. is important, holding each of the other group traits of that individual constant (for more examples see Brown, 1995). The countries respondents were asked about include: **China, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Israel, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Iraq, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, South Korea, Pakistan, India, Brazil, Turkey, and Nigeria.**

Results

Table 3. Predictive Margins of Race on Attitudes Toward Different Countries

Country	Marginal Effects		Difference Between Race Groups (Black vs. White)
	White	Black	
European or Majority White			
Canada	0.90 [0.01]***	0.84 [0.04]***	-0.06 [0.04]
Germany	0.80 [0.02]***	0.73 [0.05]***	-0.06 [0.25]
Great Britain	0.90 [0.01]***	0.85 [0.03]***	-0.05 [0.03]***
Israel	0.77 [0.02]***	0.79 [0.04]***	0.02 [0.05]
Russia	0.77 [0.01]***	0.74 [0.04]***	-0.03 [0.43]
African or Majority Black			
Brazil	0.52 [0.02]***	0.60 [0.04]***	0.08 [0.05]*
Nigeria	0.30 [0.02]***	0.54 [0.06]***	0.24 [0.06]***
Asian			
China	0.91 [0.01]***	0.89 [0.02]***	-0.02 [0.03]
India	0.67 [0.01]***	0.73 [0.03]***	0.06 [0.04]
Japan	0.89 [0.01]***	0.89 [0.02]***	-0.01 [0.03]
South Korea	0.67 [0.01]***	0.73 [0.03]***	0.05 [0.03]
Hispanic			
Mexico	0.72 [0.02]***	0.72 [0.04]***	-0.06 [0.04]
Middle Eastern			
Afghanistan	0.60 [0.02]***	0.65 [0.04]***	0.05 [0.05]
Iraq	0.61 [0.02]***	0.69 [0.05]***	0.08 [0.05]
Iran	0.60 [0.02]***	0.62 [0.05]***	0.02 [0.06]
Pakistan	0.60 [0.02]***	0.64 [0.05]***	0.04 [0.05]
Saudi Arabia	0.78 [0.02]***	0.81 [0.04]***	0.02 [0.60]
Turkey	0.51 [0.02]***	0.53 [0.05]***	0.02 [0.05]

Standard Error in brackets. Note: *** p <.01, ** p < .05, * p < .10

Table 3 presents estimates of the average marginal impact of race on attitudes toward the importance of a country's relationship to the U.S. based on the full model results in the Appendix. Looking firstly at American attitudes toward majority White countries, we see that White Americans are far more likely to view these countries' relationship to the U.S. as important as African Americans.

White Americans are more likely to view the relationships of 4 out of 5 of the majority White countries as important to the strategic interests of the U.S. as are African Americans. The probability of an average White American to view the relationship of Canada as important to the U.S. is 90% as compared to 84% for the average African American. The probability of an average White American to view Germany as important to the U.S. is 80%, while the probability of an average African American is 73%. Regarding Great Britain, the probability of an average African American to view this country's relationship as important to the strategic interests of the U.S. is 85%, while the probability of an average White American is 90%. The contrast results in Table 3 reveal the difference between the attitudes of Black and White Americans as it relates to the strategic relationship of Great Britain to the U.S. are statistically significant. Responses among White and Black Americans as it concerns Russia tell a similar tale. The average probability of a White American to view Russia as important to the U.S. is 77%, while the average probability of an African American is 74%. The only majority White country where African Americans place greater importance to U.S. strategic interests than White Americans is Israel. When asked about the importance of Israel's relationship to the U.S., the average probability of an African American to believe that it's important is 79%, while the average probability of a White American is 77%; however, this difference is substantively small and statistically insignificant. On the whole, these results conform to hypothesis 2a in that White Americans will attribute more importance than African Americans to countries whose racial make-up largely resembles their own.

For hypothesis 2b, the survey only included two majority Black countries: Brazil (the only South American country included) and Nigeria (the only African country included). As expected, Table 3 shows White Americans to be less likely than African Americans, to regard the relationships of Brazil and Nigeria as important to the U.S. The average probability of a White American to view the relationship of Brazil as important to the U.S. is 52% while the average probability for an African American is 60%.

The table also shows that the average probability of White Americans to regard the relationship of Nigeria as important to the U.S. is 30%, as compared to 54% for the average probability of Black Americans. The contrast results in Table 3 reveal the differences between the attitudes of Black and White Americans as it relates to the relationships of Brazil and Nigeria to the U.S. are statistically significant. Thus, on average African Americans are more likely than White Americans to view the relationships of the majority Black countries of Brazil and Nigeria as important to the strategic interests of the U.S. These results conform to my expectations and support hypothesis 2b. The more a country's racial make-up resembles an individual's particular race group, the more likely they are to believe that that country's relationship to the U.S. is important.

Attitudes related to countries within the Middle East were more varied between White and Black Americans than those toward the examined predominately Black or White countries. White Americans are more likely to view the relationships of Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia as more important to the U.S. than are African Americans. On the other hand, African Americans are more likely to view the relationships of Turkey and Afghanistan as more important to the U.S. These results do not follow a general pattern, nor are they suggestive of a minority connection where minorities favorably view other minorities. If a minority connection did exist, then African Americans would be more prone to consider the relationships of each Middle Eastern country (or at least a majority of them) presented here as important to the strategic interests of the United States. I find no significant differences in these countries so this seems to match my expectation of no difference or clear pattern as it relates to Middle Eastern (or predominately Arab or Persian) countries. Table 3 also displays American public attitudes as it relates to different countries in Asia. American attitudes concerning countries in Asia are similar to those regarding countries within the Middle East. That is, the only pattern they tend to follow is that feelings are mixed between Whites and African Americans regarding the importance of different countries in Asia to the interests of the United States. Whites are more likely than Blacks to report the relationships of China and Japan as important to the U.S. and African Americans are more likely to report the relationship of South Korea as being important to the U.S.

Conclusion

Consistent with my hypotheses, the results in this analysis reveal that social identity increases the likelihood of Americans (at least White Americans and African Americans) to exhibit racial solidarity in their attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy. Consistent with hypothesis 1a, I find that White Americans are more likely than Black Americans to express feelings of warmth toward countries in European or majority-White countries. This was especially the case in regard to Germany, Great Britain, and Israel.

On the other hand, and consistent with hypothesis 1b, I find Black Americans to be more likely than White Americans to express feelings of warmth toward African or other majority-Black nations.

I also find that when it comes to African or other majority-Black nations, African Americans are more likely than White Americans, to view their relationship as strategically important to the United States. Following this same trend, the results reveal that when it comes to majority-White countries, White Americans are more likely than African Americans, to view their relationships with America as strategically important.

The implications stemming from these results are important because they show that identifying as either White American or Black American, has a major impact on how one tends to view and think about U.S. foreign policy. As Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) note, people view themselves as part of a team and it pleases them to see other team members do well. Applying this logic to public opinion with respect to foreign policy, we see that Americans behave no differently than they do when it comes to forming their partisanship in the domestic arena. Americans feel warmer towards other members of their team (in this case members of their own race), while also placing higher premiums of importance on countries where members of their team make-up the majority. On the other hand, they also believe the relationships of countries outside of their ingroup to not be as important to the United States as those they consider as part of their ingroup. Rather than choosing the nation's friends and enemies from a cold assessment of their country's strategic interests and opportunities, Americans allow social identity to serve as a cue as they assign levels of value to different countries. If managed properly, policymakers could actually utilize this information to bring more relief and support to underprivileged areas throughout the world. Since people think in terms of ingroups and outgroups even at the international level, then policymakers who wish to find more support and political cover to send foreign aid and humanitarian relief packages to suffering areas would be wise to mobilize domestic groups that socially identify with people there.

With the use of social media and new technological tools, policy entrepreneurs who advocate for humanitarian purposes are also more equipped than ever to activate feelings of solidarity among domestic ingroups. This analysis reveals the importance of social identity and political socialization, and argues for further development to understand more fully the nature of their relationship in regard to public opinion and U.S. foreign policy.

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