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Editor's Introduction

Charlottesville. One week in August 2017 has changed the way the town will be remembered. Before, most knew it as a college town and home of the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson. Now, Charlottesville is a historical moment, one that marks not only the dangerous resurgence of the far right in the United States, but also the moral bankruptcy of the President's reactions. First, Trump blamed the violence in Charlottesville on "many sides," a remark that drew immediate praise from white supremacists such as David Duke and Andrew Anglin. Indeed, the neo-Nazi website *The Daily Stormer* provided an impromptu analysis of the President's speech, noting that "Trump comments were good. He didn't attack us. He just said the nation should come together. Nothing specific against us… There was virtually no counter-signaling of us at all" (Wang 2017).

After walking back some of his initial comments, Trump returned to the theme of false equivalency in a press conference at Trump Tower, noting that he was not going to put any of the protesters on a "moral plane" and that there were some "very fine people on both sides" (Nelson and Swanson 2017). Trump's remarks drew swift condemnation from Republican and Democratic leaders alike. In addition, several CEOs withdrew from the President's business advisory councils and made financial pledges to anti-hate groups such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center (Egan 2017). Despite these condemnations and pushback from corporate and political leaders, the damage to American civil society may already have been done. As the political scientist Michael Tesler noted in the *New York Times*, "There should be a one-sided information flow condemning Nazis. And when there's not, it's very problematic" (Badger 2017).

What, then, can we as scholars do? Plenty. First, and at a very basic level, we can join our larger communities in taking a public stand against white supremacy and its various manifestations. We can also make sure that, as teachers and mentors, we provide students with the critical tools they need to help ensure an inclusive and just society. We can also draw on our research expertise to help improve public understanding.

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Clearly, there is a slew of prior research that can help make sense of these troubled and dangerous times. At the same time, we also need a new wave of research on white nationalism that goes far beyond our existing studies on white racial attitudes and behavior. While behavioral studies can give us a decent sense of the contours of opinion and the micro-conditions under which they can change, we are in desperate need of research that illuminates the role of political elites and institutions in enabling and amplifying the power of white nationalist movements. We also need a new generation of research in critical theory and political philosophy that can help us better conceptualize our individual and collective understandings of race, power, and the rise of white nationalism.

At the same time, we should also not over-react to the present moment and let it dominate our commentary, imagination, and scholarship on race and politics. We need to remind ourselves and others that the study of race, ethnicity, and politics—and indeed the study of American politics or comparative politics more generally—cannot focus solely on the politics of dominant racial and ethnic groups. We also need to redouble our efforts to better understand communities of color and enable them to have visibility and voice, in the United States as well as elsewhere. I am happy to report that the research articles in this issue help us make significant progress in that regard.

First, Karam Dana, Bryan Wilcox-Archuleta, and Matt Barreto help us better understand the political orientation of Muslims in the United States and, in particular, their support for democratic norms. Even if we did not subscribe to any of the hysteria surrounding the purported implementation of "Sharia law" in the United States, we might still assume—based on news coverage of terrorism and Islam—that highly religious Muslims in the United States are less likely to support the ideals of modern democracy. Dana et al. find the opposite to be the case. They provide a contrary set of theoretical predictions, grounded in a detailed reading of Islamic principles and their interpretation in modern democratic societies. And they find that, on several dimensions of religiosity, Muslims who are highly religious are more likely to perceive Islamic beliefs as compatible with U.S. democratic ideals. At the same time, the authors also find mixed evidence with respect to religiosity and higher political participation among Muslim Americans, something worth replicating and examining in future studies of Muslim political behavior.

Next, Kenneth Fernandez and Matthew Dempsey tackle the question of whether local partisan contexts shape the political socialization of Latinos. Building on recent scholarship in party identification, the authors posit that local contexts will have a stronger relationship to party

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identification among first- and second-generation Latino immigrants than among those in higher immigrant generations. This is because parental socialization is likely to play a much more diminished role for populations whose parents were born outside the United States. Using data from the 2006 Latino National Survey and employing a variety of analytical techniques (subgroup analysis, interactive models, regression discontinuity design analysis), the authors provide strong evidence and rationale for the claim that local partisan contexts play an important role in shaping immigrant party identification. It remains to be seen, however, whether recent national developments such as Trump's rhetoric and policies towards Mexican immigrants will wipe out much of the local variation in party identification among Latino immigrants.

The 2016 election and its aftermath may also alter what Allyson Shortle and Tyler Johnson find with respect to Latino candidates and "issue ownership" on immigration. The authors find, based on experimental research in 2012, that ethnic cues help Latino candidates gain credibility on the issue of immigration among voters, including among white, Anglo respondents. Regardless of the content and tone of the immigration policy message, respondents ranked Latino candidates higher than white candidates as being strong, qualified, trustworthy, and experienced on immigration. The dynamics may be quite different today, however, given Trump's ability to alter the national conversation on race and immigration, including his 2016 remarks that a federal judge, Gonzalo Curiel, may be biased against him because of the judge's Mexican heritage (Kendall 2016). Trump's frequent refrains about building a border wall, despite net zero migration from Mexico, might also alter white voter calculations about whether Latino candidates are strong or trustworthy on immigration. Clearly, this topic and study is worth replicating and expanding as we move deeper into the Trump presidency.

The Trump presidency and the contemporary rise of white nationalism may also alter the kind of genetic beliefs about race that Morin-Chassé, Suhay, and Jayaratne uncover in their analysis. Using both observational data and experimental studies, the authors find that genetic explanations for racial inequality are largely absent among conservatives and liberals alike. However, when respondents are exposed to scientific information about the overwhelming genetic similarity between blacks and whites, conservatives are more likely to believe that racial inequality has a genetic basis, while liberals are less likely to do so. The authors thus find strong support for ideologically-biased assimilation of new information, including a rejection of scientific information if it clashes with

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prior ideological commitments. These findings provide a strong caution to those who hope that facts and truths (scientific, historic, demographic, or otherwise) will help improve public understanding and stem the tide of white supremacist movements in the United States and elsewhere.

This issue also contains two other articles of note. First, John García conducts a comprehensive analysis of race-related social science data collections at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). He finds an increasing tendency over time to move away from race as a simple categorical variable (such as black, white, Asian, etc.) to a more complex set of measures that tap into the lived experiences of communities of color (including experiences with discrimination, residential segregation, immigration, and language use). He also finds that researchers of color are far more likely than white scholars to measure race in a complex way rather than in a simple, categorical manner. He concludes by calling for a more "careful, purposeful, theoretically informed" treatment of race in social science data collections, including the collection of data at varying scales (individual, household, locality, state, and federal) that can help illuminate race as a set of everyday, lived experiences.

Finally, in addition to several reviews of recent books in racial and ethnic politics, our Q&A feature continues to provide a bridge between the worlds of academia, politics, and policy. In this issue, we interview Steve Phillips, executive director of Democracy in Color and a well-established national voice on getting communities of color more integrated into political campaigns, from voter engagement to staff diversity and candidate diversity. We discuss the Democratic Party's failure to energize black voters in the 2016 election, and the vigorous debate that has emerged within the party over whether it should devote more resources to converting white voters or to mobilize communities of color. We also discuss the helpful role that political scientists can play, in making sure that voter mobilization efforts are informed by social scientific analysis and evidence, rather than simply the ruminations and declarations of political consultants and pundits. If it were not obvious before, it is now abundantly clear that scholars in race, ethnicity, and politics have critically important roles to play—as researchers, teachers, mentors, and public intellectuals—to help improve public understanding of marginalized populations, in the hopes that we can build a democracy that is more inclusive, equitable, and just.

I end this editor's note with a series of thanks. This will be my last issue as the inaugural editor of the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*

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(*JREP*), and I thank Marisa Abrajano and Jane Junn for serving as the next editors of this journal. Jane Junn has also been instrumental in helping to get *JREP* off the ground, as she chaired the Race, Ethnicity, and Politics steering committee that researched the market opportunity for a new section journal. I also owe a mountain of gratitude to Michael Fortner and Allan Colbern for their tireless assistance as managing editor and editorial assistant, respectively, and I thank Tony Affigne, Michael Jones-Correa, Sheryl Lightfoot, and Dara Strolovitch for their help as associate editors. I am happy to report that Tony Affigne will continue to serve as the journal's book review editor, and that Allan Colbern is helping the journal with its transition to a new editorial team.

I reiterate what I said in my first editor's note: We stand on the shoulders of giants who made this journal possible. We remain grateful to those pioneers, and to everyone else along the way who have helped establish this journal as a fresh and original voice in the study of racial and ethnic politics. The journal will surely scale new heights under the leadership of its new editors, and I cannot wait to join you all, as reviewers, contributors, and engaged readers that will help ensure the continued success of this worthy enterprise.

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