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CONSERVATIVE WHITE WOMEN: HOW FEAR OF CRIME
PERPETUATES THE PATRIARCHY

by

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ABSTRACT

CONSERVATIVE WHITE WOMEN: HOW FEAR OF CRIME
PERPETUATES THE PATRIARCHY

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To understand White women's political-ideological perspectives, two studies were conducted. I examined White women's attitudes regarding fear of being a victim of crime, patriarchal beliefs, attitudes towards police discrimination, attributes in a presidential candidate, sexism, and trait preferences in a romantic partner. Through correlational analyses, I found that White women who believe the world is dangerous and fear being a victim of crime are more likely to endorse a conservative ideology. In addition, when White women endorse a conservative ideology, they are more likely to desire a president and romantic partner with dominant traits. Through both studies, I uncover a better understanding of why White women endorse and perpetuate patriarchal beliefs in exchange for protection.

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Introduction

In the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, only 43% of White women voted for Hillary Clinton, while 94% of Black women voted for Hillary Clinton (Pahlke, Bigler, & Patterson, 2018). This voting pattern in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election is consistent with broader political affiliation among women. Although only one in four women identifies as a member of the Republican party (Barnes & Cassese, 2017), women of color overwhelmingly vote Democratic. Thus, Republican or conservative women are primarily White women. Traditionally, those who identify as Republicans hold conservative beliefs, specifically a resistance to change and support for inequality. Alternatively, those who identify with the Democratic Party are more likely to be liberal, demonstrating an openness to change and support for equality, even if that means disrupting the status quo (Jost et al., 2003). Beyond candidates, research has shown a more significant gender gap within the Republican Party than the Democratic Party across many policy issues (Barnes & Cassese, 2017). For my thesis, I examined White women's ideological beliefs to better understand why most White women support inequality and are resistant to social change. Thus, my thesis explored if a specific factor, such as fear of crime, is related to White women's association with a conservative ideology within the Republican party. Alignment with the conservative ideology may keep White women subordinate to men in exchange for protection from the crimes they fear.

Jost and colleagues (2003) argue that the primary driving forces of conservatism are fear, threat, and uncertainty. The researchers suggest that political ideology is a motivated ideological belief system influenced by personality and psychological needs, which, in turn, influences ideological beliefs and associated political party affiliation. Further, these researchers illustrate that when situational contexts, particularly those

perceived as fearful or threatening, occur, three primary social cognitive responses (epistemic, existential, and ideological motives) will influence endorsement and affiliation with conservatism. There are more specific motives within these broad social-cognitive motives, such as the need for order, terror management, and system justification, respective to the three broad social cognitive motive categories. When one experiences fear or uncertainty, it is not uncommon for an individual to seek control or order, often through the government or religion (Kay et al., 2010). Thus, my thesis examines specifically how fear of crime and a belief that the world is dangerous is associated with conservatism among White women. Relating to Jost and colleagues' (2003) research, what do conservative White women fear if fear is an ideological motivator for conservatism? Historically, many White men have used protecting White women as an excuse to bring racial violence against men of color (McMahon & Kahn, 2018). Harmful sexual stereotypes have been fabricated to make men of color a threat to White women (McMahon & Kahn, 2018). Not only do these stereotypes create fear in White women, but they also contribute to sexism as they make White women believe a White man can protect them against men of color (McMahon & Kahn, 2018). During Donald Trump's election campaign, he called undocumented individuals from Mexico criminals and rapists (Phillips, 2017). Researchers hypothesized this negative characterization of immigrants was done purposely to invoke a threat response among Republicans (Dunwoody & Plane, 2019). With men of color painted as criminals and rapists, White women may come to fear men of color and have a heightened fear of crime, with which they may associate these men (Lieberman & Fontaine, 2015).

Additionally, there may be a disconnect in which White women feel threatened by men of color and are confident that the police will aid them. In 2020, "Karen" characterized angry White women who acted aggressively towards people of color,

particularly Black men and women. Often, these White women are comfortable calling the police on people of color for superficial reasons, which is a stark contrast to individuals of color who do not always feel comfortable calling or dealing with the police (Negra & Leyda, 2020). This has real-world consequences for individuals of color who are victims of racial profiling. Understanding the potential root of White women's fears of crime/individuals of color could help to stop the "Karen" persona from continuing. In my thesis, I will examine the associations of conservatism, fear of crime, and support for the police to better understand White women's ideological beliefs and how these beliefs influence the traits, specifically dominance, that are preferred for leaders, including the U.S. President.

Across two studies, I hypothesize that conservatism will be associated with the belief that the world is dangerous, fear of crime, support for the patriarchy, and that this support for the patriarchy will be related to support for traditionally masculine traits, including dominance, for leaders.

Study 1: Methods

Participants

A total of 215 cisgender women who identified as White/Caucasian and are at least 18 years of age were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. In exchange for participating in the 30-minute online study, respondents were paid \$1.00. Recruitment was limited to only those who identified as White/Caucasian as the focus of this study was to better understand the factors associated with White women's political beliefs and voting behavior across the political-ideological spectrum. The age range of participants was 20 to 77 years of age ($M=47.2$). In examining political affiliation, 46% ($n=99$) of participants self-identified as Democrat, 29.3% ($n= 63$) of participants identified as Republican, 16.7% ($n=36$) of participants identified as Independent, and the remaining

participants identified as either a member of the Libertarian Party, Green party, or no party at all. Additional demographic details can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Study 1 Demographics

	Demographic	%	n
Political Party Affiliation			
	Democrat	46	99
	Republican	29.3	63
	Independent	16.7	36
	Libertarian	2.3	5
	Green	0.9	2
	None	3.7	8
	Other	0.9	2
Sexual Orientation			
	Heterosexual	78	167
	Mostly Heterosexual	7.9	17
	Bisexual	7	15
	Mostly Homosexual	0.9	2
	Homosexual	1.9	4
	Asexual	2.3	5
	Pansexual	0.9	2
	Other	0.9	2
Relationship Status			
	Single	15.3	33
	Romantic Relationship	19.1	41
	Married	49.3	106
	Separated	1.9	4
	Divorced	10.7	23
	Widowed	2.8	6
	Other	0.9	2
Education			
	Some High School	0.9	2
	High School diploma	22.8	49
	Associate degree	14	30
	Vocational certification/degree	5.1	11
	Bachelor's degree	40	86
	Master's degree	14	30
	Professional degree	1.9	4
	Doctoral degree	1.4	3

Table 1, cont'd. Study 1 Demographics

	Demographic	%	n
Current income			
	Less than \$15,000	3.7	8
	\$15,000-\$25,000	10.7	23
	\$25,001-35,000	13	28
	\$35,001-\$50,000	17.2	37
	\$50,001-\$75,000	21.4	46
	\$75,001-\$100,000	13	28
	\$100,000-\$150,000	15.3	33
	Greater than \$150,000	5.6	12
Location			
	Suburb	50.2	108
	Urban	16.7	36
	Rural	18.6	40
	Small Town	14	30
	Other	0.5	1
Religious Affiliation			
	Agnostic	17.9	38
	Atheist	12.3	26
	Buddhist	1.9	4
	Christian	49.1	104
	Jewish	1.9	4
	Hindu	0.5	1
	Muslim/Islam	0.9	2
	Non-religious/secular	10.8	23
	Other	4.7	10

Measures

Belief in a Dangerous World

Participants completed the Belief in a Dangerous World scale (Cook et al., 2018) to measure beliefs about the current state of the world. This measure consisted of 12 statements regarding the world's current condition of crime. Questions from this measure included, "Any day now, chaos and anarchy could erupt around us. All the signs are pointing to it," and "Our country is not falling apart or rotting from within." Respondents

answered these measures on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). After appropriate reverse-scoring of specific items, higher average scores indicated a greater belief that the world is a dangerous place.

Fear of Crime Scale

Participants completed the Fear of Crime Scale (Cops, 2013) to gauge their sense of personal safety. This measure included eight statements such as, “During the last years, the streets have become less safe,” and “Out of fear of assault, I do not dare to go to some neighborhoods.” Participants rated their responses on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (totally do not agree) to 5 (totally agree); higher average scores indicated higher fear of crime.

Attitudes Towards Police Discrimination

To understand White women’s views of the police and their discrimination tactics, participants completed the Attitudes Towards Police Discrimination scale (Fox & Holte, 2018). This measure included questions related to police targeting people of color. Statements from this measure include, “Police brutality against Blacks is a serious problem,” and “The police are more likely to use excessive force if a suspect is Black.” This measure consisted of seven statements that participants rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree); higher average scores indicated that the police are discriminatory towards Black people.

Death Penalty Opinions Survey

To understand White women’s attitudes regarding the death penalty, respondents answered a portion of the Death Penalty Opinions Survey (Jiang, Lambert, & Nathan, 2009). This measure in full contains 13 questions, but for the sake of this study, respondents answered only 11 of these statements as two questions are specific to the death penalty in China. Statements from the survey include, “The death penalty is a more

effective deterrent than life imprisonment,” and “Innocent people are sometimes sentenced to death.” Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); higher average scores indicated more support for the death penalty.

Patriarchal Beliefs Scale

Participants completed the Patriarchal Beliefs Scale (Yoon et al., 2015) to understand their beliefs about gender power dynamics. For the sake of this study, respondents only answered questions one through twelve of this measure, as these specific questions focus on the institutional power of men. Statements include, “At work, I would have more confidence in a male boss than a female boss,” and “Men would make for more competent CEOs of financial institutions.” Responses were recorded on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher average scores indicated a higher level of endorsement of patriarchal beliefs.

Gender Stereotypes and Presidential Candidates

To understand what White women look for in a U.S. Presidential candidate, respondents reviewed a list of traits from research by Schneider and Bos (2014), originally developed to understand the association of gender stereotypic characteristics with politicians. For this study, respondents were asked, “Take a moment to imagine the perfect leader, more specifically the traits you desire or expect in a presidential candidate. Please rate the following characteristics as you believe they should apply to the President of the United States.” Traits included “hardworking, cautious, active, aggressive.” There were 80 traits that respondents rated on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important). These traits were classified into two categories of masculine and feminine. Higher average scores for each category indicated if participants preferred masculine or feminine traits.

Attitudes regarding the Trump and Biden Administration

To understand White women's behaviors and attitudes related to the U.S. Presidential election in 2016, Trump's presidency, and after the 2020 Presidential election, participants were asked to answer four questions written for this study. First, participants were asked, "Did you vote for Donald Trump in 2016?" to which they could respond either yes, no, or I do not wish to answer. Then, participants were asked, "If you could give Donald Trump an approval rating for the duration of his time as United States President, what would you give him?" with 1 being the lowest approval rating and 100 being the highest approval rating. To understand if Donald Trump made White women feel "safe from crime," respondents were asked, "Under the Trump administration did you feel protected from crime?" Respondents answered on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Finally, respondents were asked, "Do you believe that under the Joseph Biden administration, you will be protected from crime?" Respondents answered on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

Procedure

All participants completed the measures in the following order: questions regarding their political ideology (e.g., What is your political party affiliation? What is your political orientation?), Belief in a Dangerous World, Fear of Crime scale, Attitudes Towards Police Discrimination, Death Penalty opinions survey, Patriarchal Beliefs scale, Gender Stereotypes, Presidential Candidates, and questions regarding the Trump and Biden administration. Participants were asked to answer demographic questions (e.g., age, household income, education level, religious affiliation). The primary demographic question regarding ideology asked participants to identify their political orientation on a scale ranging from "very conservative" to "very liberal." Originally, "very conservative" was coded as 1, while "very liberal" was coded as a 7. These results were reverse coded,

so now “very conservative” translated to a 7 rather than a 1. The reverse scoring of the ideological question was to aid in interpreting the correlational results. Once the participants finished the survey, they were debriefed, thanked for their participation, and the study ended.

Study 1: Results

To understand the potential association between political ideology, belief in a dangerous world, fear of crime, attitudes towards police discrimination, opinions regarding the death penalty, and preference for masculine or feminine traits for a presidential candidate, I conducted correlational statistical analyses. The complete correlation results are included in Table 2, but I highlight the primary results here.

For the psychological measures, I was particularly interested in White women's association between a belief that the world is a dangerous place and their fear of crime, endorsement of the patriarchy, support for the police, and support for the death penalty. Consistent with my hypotheses, there was a strong association between fear of crime and belief in a dangerous world $r(210) = 0.714, p < .001$; thus, White women in this study who believe the world is a dangerous place are more likely to fear being a victim of crime. There was a moderate association between patriarchal beliefs and belief in a dangerous world $r(210) = 0.419, p < .001$; this result may suggest that the more a White woman believes the world is dangerous, the more she endorses a patriarchal belief system. Finally, consistent with my hypothesis, White women who believe the world is a dangerous place were more likely to think that the police are not discriminatory towards Black citizens $r(210) = -0.379, p < .001$. Thus, these results all demonstrate the same general association; if you believe the world is a dangerous place, you are more supportive of systems, police, and the patriarchy, as they may offer protection from this danger, including crime.

My hypotheses were focused on White women, but specifically those who align with a more conservative ideology. Thus, to examine my primary hypotheses, I considered the associations between these psychological variables, political orientation, and preferences for a president's traits. First, there was a moderate relationship between

belief in a dangerous world and political orientation, $r(210) = 0.523, p < .001$; thus, the more conservative women are, the more they perceive the world as dangerous. Further, there was a moderate association between patriarchal beliefs and political orientation, $r(210) = 0.584, p < .001$; thus, the more conservative White women are, the more likely they are to endorse the patriarchy. Support for systems of protection is also demonstrated by the strong negative correlation between attitudes towards police discrimination and political orientation, $r(210) = -.721, p < .001$; thus, the more conservative White women are, the less likely they are to perceive the police are discriminatory towards Black individuals, consistent with my hypothesis. Suppose more conservative White women are more likely to perceive the world as dangerous, support the patriarchy and the police. How does this relate to their preferences for traits of the U.S. President? In examining trait preferences in terms of a president, preference for masculine traits is associated with these psychological variables, but preference for feminine traits is not (see Table 2). Of note, political orientation was positively associated with a preference for a president with masculine traits but negatively associated with a preference for a president with feminine traits. This could indicate that stereotypically male characteristics are valued when seeking a president who will be “tough on crime.”

Table 2. Study 1 Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix		BDW	FC	ATPD	DPOS	PBS	MPT	MFT
Belief in a Dangerous World (BDW)	Pearson's r	—						
	p-value	—						
Fear of Crime (FC)	Pearson's r	0.714	—					
	p-value	<.001	—					
Attitudes Towards Police Discrimination (ATPD)	Pearson's r	-0.379	-0.258	—				
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—				
Death Penalty Opinions Survey (DPOS)	Pearson's r	0.31	0.302	-0.356	—			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	—			
Patriarchal Belief Scale (PBS)	Pearson's r	0.419	0.432	-0.321	0.394	—		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—		
Masculine Presidential Traits (MPT)	Pearson's r	0.289	0.325	-0.162	0.302	0.197	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	0.017	<.001	0.004	—	
Feminine Presidential Traits (FPT)	Pearson's r	0.016	0.12	0.281	-0.032	-0.004	0.483	—
	p-value	0.815	0.078	<.001	0.638	0.959	<.001	—
Political Orientation (PO)	Pearson's r	0.523	0.359	-0.721	0.331	0.584	.200	-0.209
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.003	0.002

In Study 1, I predicted and found that conservatism among White women is associated with a fear of crime and a preference for a leader with masculine traits. If White women prefer a masculine leader, this could be aligned with ambivalent sexism as it is believed women should be cherished and protected by men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). That is, just as conservative White women prefer a political leader that can keep them safe, do they select the same types of characteristics in their romantic partner? From an evolutionary perspective, David Buss (1995) argues that men and women prioritize different characteristics when searching for a mate, associated with survival and reproductive challenges. Perhaps, it is instinctual for conservative White women to believe they need a dominant man to protect them from crime? For Study 2, I hypothesized that White women higher in conservatism with a higher fear of crime would be more likely to attribute traditional gender stereotypes to individuals and prefer a romantic partner who has traditionally masculine attributes.

Study 2: Methods

Participants

A total of 219 White women of at least 18 years of age were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk. In exchange for participating in the 30-minute online study, respondents were paid \$1.00. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 74 ($M=43.2$) years of age. Regarding political party affiliation 45.4% ($n=98$) of participants identified as Democrat, 24.1% ($n=52$) identified as Republican, 20.8% ($n=45$) identified as Independent, while the remaining 22 participants identified as Libertarian, Green Party, or no party at all (3.7%, 1.4%, 4.6% respectively). Additional demographic details can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Study 2 Demographics

	Demographic	%	n
Political Party Affiliation			
	Democrat	45.4	98
	Republican	24.1	52
	Independent	20.8	45
	Libertarian	3.7	8
	Green	1.4	3
	None	4.6	10
Sexual Orientation			
	Heterosexual	71.7	157
	Mostly Heterosexual	11	24
	Bisexual	8.2	18
	Mostly Homosexual	0.5	1
	Homosexual	2.3	5
	Asexual	3.7	8
	Pansexual	1.4	3
	Other	1.4	3
Relationship Status			
	Single	24.2	53
	Romantic Relationship	17.8	39
	Married	47.9	105
	Separated	7.3	16
	Divorced	2.7	6
Education			
	High school diploma	22.8	50
	Associate degree	18.3	40
	Vocational degree/certification	5	11
	Bachelor's degree	36.5	80
	Master's degree	15.5	34
	Professional degree	1.4	3
	Doctoral degree	0.5	1

Table 3, cont'd. Study 2 Demographics

	Demographic	%	n
Current Income			
	Less than \$15,000	4.6	10
	\$15,000-\$25,000	6.8	15
	\$25,001-\$35,000	10.5	23
	\$35,001-\$50,000	19.6	43
	\$50,001-\$75,000	24.2	53
	\$75,001-\$100,000	15.1	33
	\$100,000-\$150,000	12.8	28
	Greater than \$150,000	6.4	14
Geographic location			
	Suburb	51.1	112
	Urban	19.6	43
	Rural	20.5	45
	Small town	8.7	19
Religious Affiliation			
	Agnostic	18.3	40
	Atheist	9.1	20
	Buddhist	0.9	2
	Christian	52.1	114
	Jewish	1.4	3
	Muslim/Islam	0.5	1
	Non-religious/secular	11.9	26
	Other	5.9	13

Measures

Fear of Crime Scale

Participants completed the same Fear of Crime Scale (Cops, 2013) from Study 1.

Patriarchal Beliefs Scale

Participants completed the Patriarchal Beliefs Scale, but as in Study 1, they only responded to the first twelve questions from this measure (Yoon et al., 2015).

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

To understand to what extent White women endorse sexist beliefs, respondents completed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This measure examines both hostile and benevolent sexism. Example questions include, “Men should be willing to sacrifice their wellbeing to provide financially for the women in their lives,” and “Women should be cherished and protected by men.” Respondents rated these statements on a scale from 0 (disagree strongly) to 6 (agree strongly). After appropriately reverse-scoring five questions, higher average scores indicated a greater endorsement of sexist beliefs.

Gender Stereotypes Scales

To further examine the endorsement of paternalistic beliefs, respondents completed the Gender Stereotypes Scales (Hentschel et al., 2019). Participants were asked, “In general women are...” and were shown 26 traits, some of which are stereotypically masculine and others feminine; examples of these traits are “task-oriented, kind, likable, and dominant.” Participants rated each attribute as they believe they pertain to women on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Two averages were created, one for masculine traits and one for feminine traits.

Trait Preference Survey

Participants completed the Trait Preference Survey (Lukaszewski & Roney, 2009) to examine their trait preferences for a romantic partner. Respondents were prompted, “Take a moment to imagine your ideal mate. Please rate the following characteristics for your ideal mate for a committed romantic relationship such as marriage.” There are three different trait categories, dominance, kindness, and trustworthiness. Representative traits from each category include “masculine, sensitive, and loyal,” respectively. Participants

rated each trait on a scale of 1 (not important) to 7 (very important). Three averages were created, one for each of the trait categories.

Procedure

For Study 2, all participants completed the measures in the following order: Fear of Crime Scale, Patriarchal Beliefs Scale, Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, Gender Stereotypes Scale, and Trait Preference Survey. After the participants completed the primary measures, they were asked to answer a series of demographic questions. Once the demographic questions were complete, respondents were debriefed and thanked for their participation before the study ended.

Study 2: Results

I conducted a correlational analysis to fully understand the potential associations between fear of crime, patriarchal beliefs, sexism, endorsement of gender stereotypes, trait preference in a mate, and political ideology. All correlations are provided in Table 4. Consistent with my hypotheses, conservative White women were more likely to endorse ambivalent sexism, $r(205) = 0.553, p < .001$. Critically, the primary analyses of Study 2 focused on political orientation and trait preferences. I hypothesized that conservative White women would particularly prefer dominance in their romantic partner. Consistent with my hypothesis, only dominance was significantly associated with political orientation, $r(217) = 0.457, p < .001$. Thus, a preference for a dominant partner was associated with a conservative orientation, but a preference for kindness and trustworthiness was not related to political orientation. This result may suggest that conservative women are more likely to fear crime and believe the world is dangerous, leading to a preference for a dominant romantic partner as they will offer protection.

Table 4. Study 2 Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix										
		FC	PBS	ASI	MGS	FGS	DTP	KTP	TTP	PO
Fear of Crime (FC)	Pearson's r	—								
	p-value	—								
Patriarchal Beliefs Scale (PBS)	Pearson's r	0.23	—							
	p-value	<.001	—							
Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)	Pearson's r	0.37	0.656	—						
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—						
Masculine Gender Stereotypes (MGS)	Pearson's r	0.057	-0.226	-0.184	—					
	p-value	0.403	<.001	0.008	—					
Feminine Gender Stereotypes (FGS)	Pearson's r	0.22	0.001	0.117	0.643	—				
	p-value	0.001	0.988	0.093	<.001	—				
Dominance Trait Preference (DTP)	Pearson's r	0.372	0.417	0.544	0.231	0.343	—			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—			
Kindness Trait Preference (KTP)	Pearson's r	0.219	-0.142	-0.112	0.42	0.507	0.161	—		
	p-value	0.001	0.036	0.11	<.001	<.001	0.018	—		
Trustworthiness Trait Preference (TTP)	Pearson's r	0.146	-0.297	-0.216	0.339	0.442	0.016	0.605	—	
	p-value	0.031	<.001	0.002	<.001	<.001	0.815	<.001	—	
Political Orientation (PO)	Pearson's r	0.247	0.391	0.553	-0.087	0.14	0.457	-0.092	-0.02	—
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	0.199	0.039	<.001	0.177	0.774	—

Discussion

Throughout this study, my goal was to understand White women's perspectives regarding their political orientation, beliefs about the patriarchy, and the traits they look for in leaders, presidents, and intimate partners. In Study 1, I hypothesized that conservatism would be associated with fear of crime, belief in a dangerous world, and endorsement of patriarchal beliefs, which would affect the characteristics White women would prefer in political leaders. White women in my study, regardless of political orientation, were more likely to fear being a victim of a crime the more they believed that the world is a dangerous place. Further, the more White women thought the world was hazardous or likely to be a victim of crime, the more they endorsed systemic patriarchal beliefs and support for systems (e.g., police).

Through a historical lens, this belief that White women need protection from White men stems back to the post-Civil War era; White women were taught to fear men of color as White men controlled the narrative citing men of color as rapists (McMahon & Kahn, 2018). Through this use of protective paternalism, White women have become dependent on men to protect them. In Study 2, I hypothesized that conservatism would be associated with endorsing traditional gender stereotypes, and conservatism would be associated with a preference for a dominant partner. Statistical analyses from Study 2 indicated that more conservative White women preferred their partner to be dominant rather than kind or trustworthy. This could suggest that White women prefer a dominant partner to protect them from what they perceive to be a dangerous world.

The results of my studies demonstrate that more conservative White women do not believe that the police are discriminatory towards Black citizens. This is consistent with White women's fear of crime and belief in a dangerous world. In recent times, individuals have been labeled "Karen." Karen is defined as a White woman filmed

calling the police on innocent Black individuals and families (Lang, 2020). In line with the results from my study, the “Karen” persona indicates that White women, particularly conservative White women, rely on the police to protect them from perceived “crime.” Therefore, these women may have difficulty reconciling that the police hold discriminatory attitudes towards Black citizens because, to White women specifically, the police serve a protective purpose.

I was also interested in characteristics that White women seek in a president. In Study 1, the more conservative a White woman was, the more likely they were to associate masculine traits as more desirable in a presidential candidate rather than feminine traits. This could indicate that stereotypically feminine traits are undesirable, even to women, when choosing a president.

Limitations

The participant pool system I used to recruit participants, Amazon Mechanical Turk, skews liberal. Due to this, my participant sample consisted of primarily liberal White women. Further, some participants in both studies did not identify as cisgender or as White and were excluded from analyses, reducing my total sample sizes. As these studies were conducted via a survey online, subjects may have felt obligated to answer questions in a way that does not reflect their true feelings due to self-reporting bias. A purposeful limitation of my study was to recruit only cisgender White women; however, this limits my ability to conclude if fear of crime is associated with conservatism for only White women or if this extends to all women. In future research, the participant sample should include transgender women and non-binary people who were assigned female at birth. Finally, a limitation of my thesis is a focus on only correlational analyses. To strengthen my conclusions, I would need to conduct additional statistical analyses,

specifically regressions and mediation analyses, to understand the associations among all variables.

Future Research

Future research should investigate which types of crimes White women specifically fear; this could help better understand where their fears stem from and how fear influences ideological beliefs. In addition, future research should examine different types of sexism endorsement by White women to understand which aspects of sexism they adopt and or reject. I measured ambivalent sexism but did not examine how hostile or benevolent sexism is uniquely related to fear of crime and political orientation for White women. Future research could also investigate racism and any association with White women's fear of crime and potential prejudice or racist beliefs. Finally, religious affiliation should also be explored as an avenue for understanding conservative White women's views.

Implications

The implications of this research have various avenues. The importance of these studies is to showcase White women's significant fear of crime and the belief that the world is a dangerous place. The results from my studies better inform the public why White women vote for political leaders who endorse sexist beliefs and policies. Do women put aside concerns about sexism in response to a fear of crime and belief in a dangerous world? That is, does White women's endorsement of patriarchal beliefs and ambivalent sexism indicate that they are willing to turn a blind eye to sexist comments made by a U.S. President in exchange for a guarantee of protection from crime? This potential trade-off between equality and security is deserving of additional research and would further our understanding of voting behavior among White women. Understanding

White women's voting behaviors could be the key to understanding support for the patriarchy.

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APPENDIX A:
MASCULINE AND FEMININE PRESIDENTIAL TRAITS

Active
Adventurous
Affectionate
Aggressive
Ambitious
Analytical
Arrogant
Artistic
Assertive
Charismatic
Commands respect
Compassionate
Competitive
Confident
Creative
Daring
Decent
Determined
Dominant
Driven
Educated
Feminine
Gentle

Gets things done
Good at problem-solving
Good with numbers
Hard-nosed
Hard-working
Honest
Imaginative
In touch with the people
Inspiring
Intelligent
Intuitive
Knowledgeable
Leader
Masculine
Moral
Motherly
Powerful
Quantitatively skilled
Really cares about people like me
Sensitive
Strong-willed
Sympathetic
Well-educated
Well-spoken