Is Support for Confederate Symbols Motivated by Southern Pride or Racism? Further Distinctions Between “Traditionalists” and “Supremacists”

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Abstract

In two preregistered studies we examine correlates of support for Confederate symbols among White Southerners (Study 1: $N = 559$) and examine potential negative effects of the widespread removal of Confederate symbols (Study 2: $N = 139$). In Study 1 we determine that support for Confederate symbols is largely a function of a traditional Southern worldview where cultural notions of industriousness, fairness, discipline, obedience, loyalty, and honor are central. Furthermore, we identify four distinct types of Southerners, including two types that equally support Confederate symbols: Traditionalists and Supremacists. While these groups equally support Confederate symbols, Traditionalists hold non-prejudicial attitudes that do not differ from those who do not support Confederate symbols, whereas Supremacists hold relatively more negative attitudes toward Blacks. These Supremacists are also more willing to engage in activist and radical behavior in support of Confederate monuments relative to Traditionalists. In Study 2 we show that when Traditionalists and Supremacists are exposed to the removal of Confederate symbols, they demonstrate an increased willingness to engage in activist, but not radical, behaviors in support of Confederate monuments, and they display more anger, disgust, and upset emotions. Supremacists, but not Traditionalists, also display hostility in response to the removal of Confederate symbols.

Keywords: Confederate flag; Southern pride; racial prejudice; symbolic racism; Southern heritage

Is Support for Confederate Symbols Motivated by Southern Pride or Racism? Further Distinctions Between “Traditionalists” and “Supremacists”

On June 17, 2015, a White supremacist murdered nine African-Americans at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Photos of the murderer holding a Confederate battle flag surfaced and set off a firestorm of protests against the Confederate battle flag on state capitol grounds in South Carolina (Clark, 2015; Jones & Barrett, 2015). These protests succeeded and the flag was removed (Collins, 2017). Protests spread and Confederate battle flags were removed across the United States, including the state flag of Mississippi flying over Ole Miss—the state’s flagship university. Dozens of Confederate monuments have also been removed across both southern and northern states and there appears to be no abating of this trend (Bidgood, Bloch, McCarthy, Stack, & Andrews, 2017).

The counter-protests are no less formidable. Hundreds of Confederate monument supporters protested the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, leaving one person dead and dozens injured (Fortin, 2017). This escalation of violence over Confederate symbols underscores the need to examine the motivations for supporting Confederate symbols and the need to examine the potential radicalization of supporters as a result of the widespread removal of these symbols.

Southern Pride or Racism?

Following the Charleston Church Shooting in June of 2015, polling suggested that 57% of Americans viewed the Confederate battle flag as a symbol of Southern pride, in contrast to 33% who viewed it as a symbol of racism (Agiesta, 2015). Following the clash in Charlottesville, the Confederate battle flag was still seen as primarily a symbol of Southern pride (43%) rather than racism (38%), though the gap appears to have shrunk. The public also viewed Confederate monuments as symbols of Southern pride (54%) rather than racism (20%), and generally

opposed the removal of the statue of Robert E. Lee from a park in Charlottesville (48% vs. 30%; Frankovic, 2017). These polls reflect two general perspectives espoused by opponents and supporters of Confederate symbols: the racial ideology perspective and the Southern pride perspective.

Racial ideology perspective. The racial ideology perspective is best viewed through a group-based dominance view. The antithesis to the Southern pride perspective, this view holds that negative racial attitudes drive support for Confederate symbols to preserve the ingroup's privileged position (Federico & Sidanius, 2002). This perspective can be viewed as an extension of research on race-targeted policies (e.g., Federico & Sidanius, 2002; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996). Early research on attitudes toward the Confederate battle flag likewise focused on demonstrating a link with racial attitudes (Clark, 1997; Orey, 2004; Reingold & Wike, 1998). For example, Clark (1997) found that disagreeing with the view that "special effort" should be given to improve the social and economic position of Blacks in the United States was associated with greater support for the state flag of Georgia.¹

Reingold and Wike (1998) created a racial attitudes index from two items. One asked whether discrimination was the *main* reason Blacks generally have worse jobs, income, and housing than White people. The other addressed the speed of civil rights progress. This index was associated with support for the Confederate battle flag, and Reingold and Wike (1998) argued that negative racial attitudes were the strongest predictor of support for the Confederate battle flag. Other research suggested that old-fashioned racism (i.e., that there are inherent differences between Blacks and Whites and Blacks are a less able race) and symbolic racism (i.e., that Blacks violate values of individualism, self-reliance, work-ethic, obedience, and

¹ The Georgia state flag from 1956-2001 prominently displayed the Confederate battle flag.

discipline) were both strongly associated with support for the Mississippi state flag (Orey, 2004).² The link between negative racial attitudes and support for the Confederate battle flag has been corroborated in recent studies (Cooper & Knotts, 2006; Strother, Piston, & Ogorzalek, 2017; Wright & Esses, 2017).

Southern pride. The Southern pride perspective states that support for Confederate symbols stems from a deep pride in Southern culture, which includes the South's heroic, glorious, and sacrificial patriotism (Clark, 1997; Webster & Leib, 2001). But the flag also represents a Southern culture unrelated to the Confederacy such as the "good ol' boy" ethos (Coski, 2009) and country music (Garber, 2015). This perspective can best be described in terms of social identity theory (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). We suggest that Southern pride can be linked independently to support for Confederate symbols because the group's pride is imbedded within its symbolism. Support for these symbols is a mechanism for exhibiting positive distinctiveness, which includes distinct history, food, music, and Southern attitudes and values. Support for Confederate symbols may also be linked with Southern pride as a representation of the group's mythology of a glorious and heroic history, which exhibits positive representations of the ingroup (Sibley, 2010).

In line with social identity theory, we suggest that Southern pride is not necessarily linked to outgroup animosity (Brewer, 1999) but that it functions similarly to the concept of patriotism (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), devoid of dominance and ethnocentrism. "Southern" is a reference group orienting Southerners to the rest of the United States (Reed, 2008). It encapsulates a "healthy national self-concept" (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), positive affect for place and entity, and the ideological space and history of the ingroup (Reed, 2008).

² As of September 2017 the state flag of Mississippi still prominently displays the Confederate battle flag. This flag was adopted in 1894.

Many of the early studies suffered from both poor measurement of racial attitudes (e.g., single items) and a systematic avoidance of constructs resembling Southern pride. These studies used poor proxy measures of Southern pride, such as where respondents grew up (Clark, 1997), how much respondents felt they had in common with other Southerners (Reingold & Wike, 1998), or made no consideration for Southern pride at all (Cooper & Knotts, 2006; Orey, 2004). Even recent research (Strother et al., 2017) has used poor proxy measures of Southern pride (e.g., whether the respondent considers him/herself to be a native Southerner, a converted Southerner, or a non-Southerner, or how many civil war battles participants can name). The only study to use a measure of Southern pride with good face validity and good internal consistency found Southern pride to be more strongly associated with support for the Confederate battle flag than both overt racial attitudes and political ideology and even found a small association ($r = .19$) between Southern pride and support for the Confederate battle flag among Black respondents (Wright & Esses, 2017)—a finding consistent with the notion that the Confederate flag encapsulates a “Southern pride”, not even solely a “White Southern pride.”

Wright and Esses (2017) further suggested that analyzing aggregated general trends misses the nuances that may exist in why people support the Confederate battle flag. Using cluster analysis, these researchers identified four distinct subgroups of Southerners: Cosmopolitans, New Southerners, Traditionalists, and Supremacists. Cosmopolitans are politically liberal, have positive racial attitudes toward Blacks, and have little Southern pride. New Southerners are politically liberal, have positive racial attitudes toward Blacks, and have strong Southern pride. Traditionalists are politically conservative, have positive racial attitudes toward Blacks, and have strong Southern pride. Supremacists are politically conservative, have relatively negative racial attitudes toward Blacks, and have strong Southern pride. The latter two

groups both show equally strong support for the Confederate battle flag, despite the fact that only one of the groups exhibits relatively strong negative racial attitudes toward Blacks. This research demonstrated that the Traditionalists have as positive racial attitudes toward Blacks as do those who oppose the Confederate battle flag (Wright & Esses, 2017).

Despite these two competing perspectives – racial attitudes and Southern pride – dominating the conversation regarding Confederate symbols, other variables may also be important. The effect of age is mixed. Some research suggests that being older is correlated with less support for the Confederate battle flag (Reingold & Wike, 1998; Wright & Esses, 2017) whereas other research suggests that being older is correlated with more support for the flag (Clark, 1997; Strother et al., 2017). Conservative ideology is associated with more support for the flag (Cooper & Knotts, 2006; Orey, 2004; Strother et al., 2017; Wright & Esses, 2017). The desire to respond in socially acceptable ways has also been associated with reduced support for the Confederate battle flag (Wright & Esses, 2017). These various predictors are important control variables in any analysis of support for Confederate symbols. We incorporate right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) as additional control variables because these are common correlates of politically relevant dependent variables and because they are often conceptualized as factors of conservative ideology (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003).

Wright and Esses (2017) cast doubt on the assumptions that negative racial attitudes are the strongest motivator of support for Confederate symbols, and that most supporters of Confederate symbols harbor anti-Black attitudes. These researchers did so with a high-powered study, constructs with good measurement, and used latent variable modeling to control for measurement error. In Study 1 of the current paper, we attempt to replicate their findings, and

extend their findings by examining whether Southern pride remains an important predictor of support for Confederate symbols even after controlling for symbolic prejudice and additional control variables.

Symbolic Prejudice

In the 1970's researchers recognized the decline of overt prejudice among the U.S. population and proposed the symbolic prejudice construct as a method of identifying the “new” prejudice. This “new” form was a combination of anti-Black affect and adherence to traditional American values encapsulated by the protestant work ethic (Kinder & Sears, 1981). Early critics recognized the problem of labeling non-racist motivations (e.g., valuing work ethic, individualism, obedience, and discipline) as racist (Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986) and Kinder (1986) regretted his choice of label for this blended construct (p. 155). Recent research has strongly called into question the symbolic prejudice construct as a measure of prejudice (Carney & Enos, 2017; Wright, Goldberg, Cheung, & Esses, 2019). Instead, it appears to measure generally conservative beliefs about fairness (Carney & Enos, 2017), which manifest as anti-liberal attitudes regardless of race (Chambers, Schlenker, & Collisson, 2013; Wright et al., 2019). Positive attitudes toward Confederate symbols could be motivated by adherence to conservative views about fairness—earning what you have through hard work—rather than negative racial attitudes. We examine this perspective in addition to the traditional Southern pride and racial ideology perspectives.

Radicalization of the South

As mass removal of Confederate symbols throughout the South has continued apace, protests over removal have grown and sometimes become violent. With both Black separatist and White supremacist hate groups on the rise (Potok, 2016), we became interested in whether removal of Confederate symbols inflames race relations by radicalizing its supporters. Wright

(2015) described a general model of radicalization predicated on perceiving threats to one's social identity, which can increase retaliatory behaviors. Since Confederate symbols and monuments are part of a Southern identity for some Southerners, confronting these symbols could be perceived by some Southerners as marginalizing or discriminatory and result in aggressive responses to protect the positive definitions of the ingroup (Lyons-Padilla, Gelfand, Mirahmadi, Farooq, & van Egmond, 2015).

Wright & Esses (2017) described two clusters of Southerners who equally support the Confederate battle flag: Traditionalists and Supremacists. We examine the possibility that Traditionalists and Supremacists may become more engaged in activism or radicalism in support of Confederate symbols as a response to seeing their revered symbols desecrated and removed. We also examine whether Traditionalists and Supremacists report more negative racial attitudes as a result of being exposed to the desecration and removal of their revered symbols, as well as their emotional reactions to these removals.

Study 1

In Study 1 we attempt to replicate the relationship between Southern pride and support for the Confederate battle flag even after controlling for alternative explanations (Wright & Esses, 2017). Additionally, we attempt to replicate the clusters of Southerners that these researchers identified, and we evaluate how these clusters are distinct in terms of their attitudes and willingness to engage in activist or radical behaviors in support of Confederate symbols.

Participants and Procedure

We recruited self-identified Whites from the Southern states of Mississippi, South Carolina, and Georgia using the TurkPrime platform (Litman, Robinson, & Abberbock, 2017). TurkPrime allows targeting of specific demographics (e.g., Whites) using its built-in panel

feature. Recruitment was limited to those with minimum 95% approval ratings to ensure data quality (Peer, Vosgerau, & Acquisti, 2014). We recruited participants for a study on “Southern Cultural Symbols and Identity” and each was reimbursed \$0.75 for approximately 15 minutes of their time. Participants were told that they may be contacted with the opportunity to participate in a second study. Because of the slow recruitment from the three original states, we altered the recruitment strategy to include all 11 Southern states. Six-hundred individuals participated. Participants reported their age, gender, and political orientation. Subsequently, participants completed three questions to confirm some link to the South: what state the participant considered herself to be from, to be born in, and currently living in. Participants then completed measures of Southern pride, SDO, RWA, social desirability, motivation to control prejudice, overt prejudice toward Blacks, symbolic prejudice toward Blacks, attitudes toward Confederate symbols, and willingness to engage in activism or radicalism in support of Confederate monuments.

Measures

For all measures we created an average score for each participant, with higher scores indicating higher levels of the construct. When relevant, items were reverse coded before calculating mean scores.

Southern pride. We measured Southern pride via three items (e.g., “To what extent do you feel pride in being from the South”; Wright & Esses, 2017). Items were rated on a 5-point scale. End points varied based upon the item. The measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .91$).

Social dominance orientation. We measured SDO using 16-items (e.g., “No one group should dominate in society”; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Participants are asked

how positive or negative they feel toward each statement ranging from 1, “very negative” to 7, “very positive”. The measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$).

Right-wing authoritarianism. We measured RWA using a 14-item short form (e.g., “Obedience and respect for authority are the most important values children should learn”; Rattazzi, Bobbio, & Canova, 2007). Statements are rated on a scale from 1, “totally disagree” to 7, “totally agree”. The measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$).

Social desirability. We measured social desirability using the 16-item social desirability scale (Stöber, 2001). Items were responded to on a True (1)-False (0) scale. Example items include: “I always admit my mistakes openly and face the potential negative consequences” and “In traffic I am always polite and considerate of others.” The measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$).

Motivation to control prejudice. We measured motivation to control prejudice via 17 items (Dunton & Fazio, 1997) on a 7-point scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree” to 5, “strongly agree”. Example items include: “In today's society it is important that one not be perceived as prejudiced in any manner” and “It's important to me that other people not think I'm prejudiced.” The measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$).

Overt prejudice. We measured overt prejudice with 7-items (e.g., “It would bother me to have a supervisor/employer who is black”; Wright & Esses, 2017). Items are responded to on a 5-point scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree” to 5, “strongly agree”. The measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .82$).

Symbolic prejudice. We measured symbolic prejudice using the 8-item symbolic racism 2000 scale (e.g., “Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class”; Henry & Sears, 2002). Items were

responded to on a 5-point scale. End point labels vary depending on the item. The measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$).

Attitudes toward Confederate symbols. We measured attitudes toward Confederate symbols in two ways. We used two items from Wright & Esses (2017) to measure attitudes toward the Confederate battle flag (“To what extent do you support Southern states’ maintaining the Confederate battle flag on government premises” and “To what extent do you support Southern states’ maintaining the Confederate battle flag as a part of the official state flag (e.g., in Mississippi)”). Second, we measured attitudes toward Confederate monuments using two items (“To what extent do you support removal of Confederate monuments from government property” and “To what extent do you support the removal of Confederate monuments from public parks”). We measured each item on a 5-point scale from 1, “strongly oppose” to 5, “strongly support”. All four items were highly correlated (r ’s = .75-.88), producing a high reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .94$). An exploratory factor analysis using principle axis factoring produced a single factor solution that explained 85% of variance in the 4 items. Therefore, the four items were averaged to create an index of attitudes toward confederate symbols, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes.

Activism and radicalism. We measured willingness to engage in activism and willingness to engage in radicalism using 4 items (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009) measured on a 5-point scale from 1, “strongly disagree” to 5, “strongly agree”. Willingness to engage in activism assesses willingness to participate in or support legal and non-violent political action, while willingness to engage in radicalism assesses willingness to participate in or support illegal or violent political action. The wording of items was altered to reflect activism (e.g., “I would donate money to an organization that fights for the protection of Confederate monuments”) and

radicalism with regard to protection of Confederate symbols (e.g., “I would continue to support an organization that fights for the protection of Confederate monuments even if the organization sometimes resorts to violence”). Both the activism and radicalism scales were internally consistent (α s = .93 and .79, respectively).

Results

We used three exclusion criteria in Study 1. We eliminated all non-Whites ($N = 17$). While we used TurkPrime’s panel feature, some individuals reported ethnicities inconsistent with our selection and some selected multiple categories. Wright & Esses (2017) categorized individuals as White if this was the only option selected and we adopted their more exclusive approach. We eliminated anyone who did not meet our criterion of “being Southern” ($N = 16$) using the same approach as Wright & Esses (2017), in which participants must meet one of the following conditions: consider themselves from a Southern state, be born in a Southern state, or currently live in a Southern state. We eliminated 7 additional participants for failing either of the two attention check questions and one participant for missing greater than 50% of data. This left 559 Southern Whites for analysis. This sample was predominantly female ($n = 382$) and included two individuals who identified as transgender. The sample had an average age of 38.34 ($SD = 12.03$) and a normal distribution of political ideology ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.77$). This sample size provides 80% power to detect effects as small as $r = .12$.

Bivariate Correlations

We report the bivariate correlations among all variables in Table 1. Positive attitudes towards Confederate symbols were statistically associated with being male, political conservatism, greater Southern pride, greater socially desirable responding, less motivation to control prejudiced reactions, more overt prejudice, more symbolic prejudice, greater SDO, more

RWA, and greater willingness to engage in activism and radicalism in defense of Confederate monuments.

Partial Correlations

The partial correlation between attitudes toward Confederate symbols and overt racial attitudes is reduced to $r = .17, p < .001$, when age, political ideology, Southern pride, social desirability, and motivation to control prejudiced reactions are controlled. This relationship is eliminated when symbolic prejudice is controlled ($r = -.02, p = .663$). The partial correlation between attitudes toward Confederate symbols and Southern pride is reduced to $r = .36, p < .001$, when age, political ideology, overt racial attitudes, social desirability, and motivation to control prejudiced reactions are controlled. This relationship remains even while controlling for symbolic prejudice ($r = .28, p < .001$). The partial correlation between attitudes towards confederate symbols and political orientation is reduced to $r = .39, p < .001$ when age, Southern pride, overt racial attitudes, social desirability, and motivation to control prejudiced reactions are controlled and this relationship remains when symbolic prejudice is controlled ($r = .17, p < .001$). Symbolic prejudice also retains a strong relationship with attitudes toward Confederate symbols while controlling for these other covariates ($r = .48, p < .001$).

Table 1.

Bivariate correlations between all measured variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age													
2. Male	.00												
3. Political Ideology	.08	-.02											
4. Southern Pride	.13**	-.13**	.51***										
5. Social Desirability	.06	-.03	.13**	.07									
6. Motivation to Control Prejudice	-.07	-.18***	-.27***	-.15***	.06								
7. Overt Prejudice	.14***	.04	.34 ***	.24***	-.05	-.34***							
8. Symbolic Prejudice	.13**	-.03	.66***	.50***	.16***	-.41***	.53***						
9. Social Dominance Orientation	.00	.08	.52***	.32***	.02	-.46***	.54***	.63***					
10. Right Wing Authoritarianism	.10*	-.10*	.75***	.50***	.20***	-.24***	.43***	.70***	.54***				
11. Attitudes Toward Confederate Symbols	.08	-.11**	.62***	.56***	.12**	-.33***	.38***	.74***	.47***	.67***			
12. Radicalism	.01	.02	.31***	.29***	.08	-.40***	.47***	.45***	.46***	.39***	.46***		
13. Activism	.13**	-.09*	.48***	.48**	.11*	-.40***	.41***	.59***	.42***	.54***	.69***	.69***	
<i>M</i>	38.34		4.07	3.59	8.56	3.99	1.78	2.89	2.28	3.38	3.17	1.53	2.07
<i>SD</i>	12.03		1.77	1.17	3.58	.63	.70	.95	1.13	1.47	1.42	.78	1.25

Structural Equation Modeling

The structural equation model predicting attitudes toward Confederate symbols follows the decisions of Wright & Esses (2017) and we first attempt to replicate the model reported there. We estimated a model using MPLUS with full information maximum likelihood and 5000 bootstrapped samples. The model accounted for age, political ideology, overt racial attitudes, Southern pride, motivation to control prejudice, and social desirability. We adopted the same parceling-based approach and used the same item-parcel distribution as Wright & Esses (2017) for all variables.³ This model had marginal fit [$\chi^2(93) = 482.89$, CFI = .91, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .087 (90% CI: .079, .094), SRMR = .11]. To improve the model fit we allowed the residuals between political ideology and Southern pride to correlate. This improved model fit [$\chi^2(90) = 256.66$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .058 [90% CI: .049, .066], SRMR = .048] and we interpreted the parameters from this model.

This model accounted for 58% of the variance in attitudes toward Confederate symbols (see Table 2). Notably, both political conservatism and Southern pride were more strongly associated with positive attitudes toward Confederate symbols than was overt prejudice.

Table 2.

Model 1 predicting attitudes toward Confederate symbols.

Variable	B	SE B	β	95% CI (β)
Age	-.003	.004	-.031	-.094, .041
Social Desirability	.551	.279	.079	.004, .157
Motivation to Control Prejudice	-.395	.102	-.157	-.235, -.080
Political Ideology	.265	.035	.352	.260, .438
Overt Prejudice	.310	.112	.141	.047, .237

³ See https://osf.io/5wemj/?view_only=6415e8b0302d44008ae82aa5c92ef209

Southern Pride	.476	.058	.363	.283, .448
R^2	.58			

Subsequently, we added symbolic prejudice to our model, utilizing random parcels as the indicators. We adopted an item-to-construct balanced approach to create the parcels for these variables, which balances the average item-loading across the parcels (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). This approach minimizes random error variance, improves stability of parameter estimates, and leads to better fitting models than item-level approaches (Bandalos, 2002; Matsunaga, 2008). The model had good fit, [$\chi^2(132) = 336.27$, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .053 (90% CI: .046, .060), SRMR = .05]. Notably, the addition of symbolic prejudice increased the explained variance in attitudes towards Confederate symbols from 58% to 74% (see Table 3). The effects of political orientation and overt prejudice were eliminated by the addition of symbolic prejudice, while the effect of Southern pride remained.

Table 3.

Model 2 predicting attitudes toward Confederate symbols.

Variable	B	SE B	β	95% CI (β)
Age	-.005	.003	-.043	-.100, .017
Social Desirability	-.134	.237	-.019	-.086, .047
Motivation to Control Prejudice	-.071	.092	-.028	-.101, .041
Political Ideology	.061	.035	.081	-.008, .171
Overt Prejudice	-.157	.099	-.070	-.154, .017
Southern Pride	.279	.052	.212	.137, .285
Symbolic Prejudice	1.033	.097	.689	.566, .800
R^2	.74			

We extended this structural model by incorporating RWA and SDO as predictors. Again, we adopted an item-to-construct balanced approach to create the parcels for these variables. This model fit the data well [$\chi^2(240) = 701.70$, CFI = .96, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .059 (90% CI: .054, .064), SRMR = .045]. We compared the effects of overt prejudice, symbolic prejudice, political orientation, and Southern pride by examining the bias corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals. There were three notable effects: symbolic prejudice, Southern pride, and RWA.

Table 4.

Model 3 predicting attitudes toward Confederate symbols.

Variable	B	SE B	β	95% CI
Age	-.005	.003	-.048	-.104, .010
Social Desirability	-.306	.234	-.044	-.109, .023
Motivation to Control Prejudice	-.153	.096	-.060	-.136, .014
Political Ideology	.008	.039	.010	-.093, .110
Overt Prejudice	-.158	.103	-.070	-.158, .019
Southern Pride	.255	.050	.194	.117, .266
Symbolic Prejudice	.987	.111	.657	.518, .789
Social Dominance Orientation	-.141	.069	-.101	-.196, -.004
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	.183	.060	.196	.076, .323
R^2	.75			

Cluster Analysis

We attempted to replicate the clusters identified in Wright & Esses (2017). Cluster analysis groups individuals based on their similarity across the variables of interest such that members within a group are as similar as possible and members from different groups are as different as possible (Clatworthy, Buick, Hankins, Weinman, & Horne, 2005). We conducted a two-step cluster analysis using log-likelihood and Schwarz's Bayesian Criterion (BIC) (Satish &

Bharadhwaj, 2010) in SPSS v. 25. This approach automatically selects the optimum number of clusters that maximizes the overall probability of the data given the final clusters.

We included overt racial prejudice, political orientation, and Southern pride as standardized variables. The same clusters reported in Wright & Esses (2017) were identified (see Figure 1): the largest group (31.5%), the “New Southerners”, reflected a moderate political orientation ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.04$), strong Southern pride ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .59$), and positive racial attitudes ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .47$); the “Cosmopolitans” (25.9%) reflected a liberal orientation ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.28$), little Southern pride ($M = 1.99$, $SD = .62$), and positive racial attitudes ($M = 1.41$, $SD = .39$); the “Traditionalists” (27.0%) reflected a conservative orientation ($M = 5.70$, $SD = .91$), strong Southern pride ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .64$), and positive racial attitudes ($M = 1.53$, $SD = .32$), and the “Supremacists” (15.6%) reflected a conservative orientation ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 1.15$), strong Southern pride ($M = 4.23$, $SD = .86$), and relatively more negative racial attitudes ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .39$).

Figure 1. Conservatism, Southern Pride, and Overt Prejudice for Cosmopolitans, New Southerners, Traditionalists, and Supremacists.

Attitudes toward Confederate symbols. We examined the cluster differences in attitudes toward Confederate symbols, willingness to engage in activism, and willingness to engage in radicalism through an ANCOVA with age, motivation to control prejudice, and social desirability as control variables (see Figure 2). We adopted a Bonferroni corrected alpha threshold of .003 to adjust for the 18 independent comparisons across three different dependent variables. There were statistically significant differences in attitudes toward the Confederate symbols based upon distinct cluster, $F(6, 552) = 62.46, p < .001$. The Cosmopolitans' attitudes toward Confederate symbols were significantly more negative than the attitudes of New Southerners, $g = .84, p < .001$, Traditionalists, $g = 1.67, p < .001$, and Supremacists, $g = 1.76, p < .001$. New Southerners showed significantly more negative attitudes toward Confederate symbols than did Traditionalists, $g = .82, p < .001$, and Supremacists $g = .93, p < .001$. Traditionalists and Supremacists did not statistically differ in attitudes toward Confederate symbols, $g = .12, p = .39$.

Willingness to engage in activism or radicalism. We examined the cluster differences in both willingness to engage in activism and radicalism (see Figure 2). There were statistically significant differences in willingness to engage in activism in defense of Confederate monuments based upon distinct cluster, $F(6, 551) = 51.27, p < .001$. The Cosmopolitans' willingness to engage in activism was significantly lower than that of the New Southerners, $g = .54, p < .001$, Traditionalists, $g = 1.10, p < .001$, and Supremacists, $g = 1.47, p < .001$. New Southerners showed significantly less willingness to engage in activism than did Traditionalists, $g = .57, p < .001$, and Supremacists $g = .96, p < .001$. Finally, Traditionalists showed significantly less willingness to engage in activism than Supremacists, $g = .39, p = .004$.

The same analysis revealed differences in willingness to engage in radicalism based upon distinct subgroup, $F(6, 552) = 35.92, p < .001$. The Cosmopolitans' willingness to accept radical defense of Confederate monuments was significantly lower than that of New Southerners, $g = 0.40, p < .001$, Traditionalists, $g = 0.45, p < .001$, and Supremacists, $g = 1.30, p < .001$. While New Southerners showed significantly less willingness to accept radicalism relative to Supremacists, $g = .91, p < .001$, they were no less likely to accept radicalism relative to Traditionalists, $g = .04, p = .70$. Finally, Supremacists were more likely to support radicalism than Traditionalists, $g = .86, p < .001$.

Figure 2. Attitudes toward Confederate symbols (ATCS), willingness to engage in activism (ACT), and willingness to engage in radicalism (RAD) as a function of cluster. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Discussion

We conducted a high-powered and pre-registered replication of the effects of both overt prejudice and Southern pride on attitudes toward Confederate symbols, which suggested that

Southern pride had a substantial effect on positive attitudes toward Confederate symbols and that this effect was larger than that of overt prejudice toward Blacks (Model 1). In Model 2, we evaluated the effect of Southern pride and overt prejudice while also incorporating symbolic prejudice toward Blacks as a predictor in the model. While the effect of overt prejudice was eliminated, the effect of Southern pride remained. In Model 3, we added two additional control variables (SDO and RWA) and Southern pride still remained a predictor of attitudes toward Confederate symbols. Both symbolic prejudice toward Blacks and RWA were also strong predictors of positive attitudes toward Confederate symbols. Thus, three key variables appeared to explain the majority of variance in attitudes toward Confederate symbols. What do these three variables represent?

Southern pride was measured generically, meaning that it represents a respondent's level of reported pride in the South, however so defined. We conceptualized this as a morass of beliefs, values, and traditions as reflected in what the South means to White Southerners themselves. Southern pride has most often been linked to cultural aspects of the South, including its food and music (Garber, 2015), the "good ol' boy" ethos of humility, honor, and chivalry (Coski, 2009), and traditional values of industriousness, politeness, patriotism, loyalty, and generosity (Reed, 2008). In Reed's (2008) in-depth study of Southerners, the content of "being Southern" was never equated with notions of the Confederacy. Despite this, some researchers are intent on equating "Southern pride" with some kind of knowledge of or pride in the Confederacy itself (Strother et al., 2017). Given our comprehensive use of control variables, including two common measures of racial prejudice, our observed link between Southern pride and attitudes toward Confederate symbols is, at present, better interpreted in line with the conceptualizing of Reed (2008) than Strother et al. (2017). Future studies might investigate these various aspects of

the South that engender pride and determine which, if any, are specifically represented through Confederate symbols.

RWA is an ideological attitude that expresses the “motivational goal of maintaining and establishing group and societal order, cohesion, and security” (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007, p. 115). This measure taps into obedience, respect for authority, inclinations for discipline, and traditional moral values including religious notions of purity (Rattazzi, Bobbio, & Canova, 2007). It’s no surprise then that RWA is associated with positive attitudes towards symbols that represent a culture of honor and loyalty (Coski, 2009; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Reed, 2008).

Despite its name, symbolic prejudice reflects general attitudes regarding fairness and hard work without regard for race (Carney & Enos, 2017; Chambers et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2019). It is more strongly associated with attitudes toward various liberal White targets than it is to Black targets, and its association with Black targets is a product of their status as liberals, not their status as Blacks (Chambers et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2019). Symbolic prejudice, RWA, and Southern pride then are three constructs centrally measuring various aspects of a traditional Southern worldview—one where industriousness, discipline, obedience, honor, and loyalty are central. In effect, Southerners’ attitudes toward Confederate symbols are largely motivated by this distinct set of traditional values.

This perspective further reveals itself within the cluster analyses. Of the two clusters that represent Southerners who have equally positive attitudes toward Confederate symbols, only the Supremacists show moderate levels of overt prejudice. On the other hand, Traditionalists are as non-prejudiced as the liberal Cosmopolitans and the moderate New Southerners. Additionally, while Traditionalists are willing to engage in more non-violent activism in support of Confederate monuments relative to New Southerners and Cosmopolitans, they aren’t any more

willing to engage in radicalism relative to New Southerners, while Supremacists are. This suggests a distinction in motivations and in possible behaviors between two subgroups of Southerners. The claim that Southerners are exclusively or even predominantly driven to support the Confederate battle flag because of anti-Black racism (e.g., Strother et al., 2017; Valls, 2018) has been overstated based upon studies that have systematically ignored the possible influence of Southern pride (Clark, 1997; Cooper & Knotts, 2006; Orey, 2004; Reingold & Wike, 1998; Strother et al., 2017).

Study 2

In Study 2 we move beyond potential motivations for supporting Confederate symbols and examine potential negative outcomes of removal of Confederate symbols across the United States. We examine whether exposure to the removal of Confederate symbols among Traditionalists and Supremacists results in increases in expressions of racial prejudice, increased willingness to engage in activism or radicalism in defense of Confederate symbols, and emotional reactions to the symbols' removal.

Method

Approximately four weeks after the completion of Study 1, we contacted all participants who were clustered as Traditionalists ($N = 151$) or Supremacists ($N = 87$) to participate in Study 2. In total, 172 individuals completed Study 2, for a 72% retention rate (112 Traditionalists and 60 Supremacists). We recruited participants through TurkPrime (Litman et al., 2017) and each was provided \$1.00 in exchange for their time.

All participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the experimental condition, participants were asked to review a sample of three news clippings from the New York Times. The first news clipping detailed a Confederate monument in North Carolina that

was toppled by protestors and included a picture of the event. The second detailed the removal of monuments from the University of Texas campus in Austin, TX and included an image of one monument being removed. The third featured a map of all Confederate monuments removed and all Confederate monuments with current proposals for removal across the United States. In the control condition, participants were not asked to review these news clippings.

Following the first two clippings, participants in the experimental condition were asked a question about the material. In the first clipping, they were asked to identify the year that the monument was removed. In the second, they were asked which Confederate monuments were removed. Following the third clipping, individuals in the experimental condition were asked the extent to which they thought Confederate monuments were being removed across the United States on a 7-point scale from 1 (Hardly being removed at all) to 7 (Widely being removed). Participants in the control condition also completed this question but did so without having seen any of the news clippings first. Next, participants responded to the question, “How are you feeling at this moment” by selecting from 1 (very slightly/not at all) to 5 (extremely) in response to 20 negative emotions (e.g., disgusted) and 10 positive emotions (e.g., excited)⁴ from the PANAS (Watson & Clark, 1994). Then all participants completed the scales for overt prejudice, symbolic prejudice, attitudes toward Confederate symbols, activism, and radicalism used in Study 1.

Results

We eliminated 2 participants for failing a general attention check and an additional 33 for failing either one of the two attention-check questions in the experimental manipulation.

⁴ The positive emotion ratings were included as filler and are not reported in this paper. The negative emotions included all emotions from the fear, hostility, and guilt subscales, in addition to upset and distressed.

Analyses were conducted on 137 participants (91 Traditionalists and 46 Supremacists; 79 controls and 58 in the experimental condition).

Manipulation checks. We conducted a 2 (Control vs. Experimental Condition) x 2 (Supremacist vs. Traditionalist) ANOVA to determine whether the experimental manipulation increased participants' belief that Confederate monuments are being widely removed. There was only a main effect of the manipulation, $F(1, 133) = 7.06, p = .009$, such that the experimental group reported a greater belief that Confederate monuments are being removed ($M = 5.88, SD = 1.11$) relative to the control group ($M = 5.39, SD = 1.21$), $g = .42$. There was no statistically significant effect of cluster, $F(1, 133) = .70, p = .404$, or an interaction, $F(1, 133) = 1.19, p = .277$.

Overt and symbolic prejudice. We conducted a 2 (Control vs. Experimental Condition) x 2 (Supremacist vs. Traditionalist) ANCOVA, controlling for baseline prejudice measured in Study 1. Those who received the experimental manipulation ($M = 2.29, SD = .44, 95\% \text{ CI: } 2.18, 2.40$) did not report more overt prejudice, $F(1, 132) = .202, p = .654, g = .07$, than those in the control condition ($M = 2.26, SD = .44, 95\% \text{ CI: } 2.16, 2.36$). Likewise, there was no statistically significant effect of cluster, $F(1, 132) = 1.51, p = .222$, or an interaction between the manipulation and cluster, $F(1, 132) = 2.23, p = .138$. Those who received the experimental manipulation ($M = 4.37, SD = .40, 95\% \text{ CI: } 4.27, 4.48$) also did not report greater symbolic prejudice than those in the control condition ($M = 4.37, SD = .39, 95\% \text{ CI: } 4.29, 4.46$), $F(1, 132) = .00, p = .984, g = .00$, though there was an effect of cluster, $F(1, 132) = 8.11, p = .005, g = .52$, such that Supremacists ($M = 4.47, SD = .39, 95\% \text{ CI: } 4.36, 4.59$) scored higher in symbolic prejudice at time 2 than Traditionalists ($M = 4.27, SD = .38, 95\% \text{ CI: } 4.19, 4.35$), even while

controlling for time 1 symbolic prejudice scores. There was no interaction between condition and cluster, $F(1, 132) = .562, p = .455$.

Activism and radicalism. To examine increases in activism or radicalism, we conducted a 2 (Control vs. Experimental Condition) x 2 (Supremacist vs. Traditionalist) ANCOVA with activism and radicalism as dependent variables, while controlling for the baseline score measured in Study 1. Those who received the experimental manipulation ($M = 2.83, SD = .78$, 95% CI: 2.62, 3.03) reported significantly greater willingness to engage in activist behaviors, $F(1, 131) = 5.56, p = .02, g = .42$, than those in the control condition ($M = 2.51, SD = .76$, 95% CI: 2.34, 2.68). There was no statistically significant effect of cluster, $F(1, 131) = .716, p = .399$, or an interaction between the manipulation and cluster, $F(1, 131) = .155, p = .694$.

Those who received the experimental manipulation ($M = 1.68, SD = .65$, 95% CI: 1.51, 1.85) did not report greater willingness to engage in radicalism than those in the control condition ($M = 1.65, SD = .63$, 95% CI: 1.51, 1.79), $F(1, 132) = .074, p = .787, g = .05$. There was also no effect of cluster, $F(1, 132) = .915, p = .340$, or an interaction between the manipulation and cluster, $F(1, 132) = 1.01, p = .316$.

Negative emotions. As an exploratory component of this study, we assessed whether exposure to the widespread removal of Confederate symbols or cluster influenced the experience of a host of negative emotions from the PANAS. Because there were 20 negative emotions, we adopted a corresponding p value of .002 as our alpha criterion. We found statistically significant effects on anger, hostility, disgust, and being upset.

Anger. Those exposed to the removal of Confederate symbols exhibited more anger ($M = 2.29, SD = 1.45$) than those in the control group ($M = 1.54, SD = 1.10$), $F(1, 133) = 16.57, p < .001, g = .67$. Likewise, Supremacists exhibited more anger ($M = 2.26, SD = 1.51$) than did

Traditionalists ($M = 1.66, 1.15$), $F(1, 133) = 10.10, p = .002, g = .47$. There was no interaction between condition and cluster, $F(1, 133) = 3.08, p = .081$.

Hostility. There was a main effect of condition on hostility, $F(1, 133) = 9.52, p = .002$, a marginal effect of cluster, $F(1, 133) = 7.71, p = .006$, and a marginal interaction between condition and cluster, $F(1, 133) = 7.47, p = .007$. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 5. The effect of the experimental manipulation is almost entirely due to increased hostility among Supremacists when exposed to the removal of Confederate symbols and the effect of cluster is almost entirely due to increased hostility among Supremacists when exposed to the removal of Confederate symbols.

Table 5.

Effect of condition and cluster on hostility.

	Control	Experimental	Effect Size (g)
Traditionalist	$M = 1.31$	$M = 1.38$	.08
	$SD = .88$	$SD = .84$	
	$N = 51$	$N = 40$	
Supremacist	$M = 1.32$	$M = 2.33$	.93
	$SD = .77$	$SD = 1.46$	
	$N = 28$	$N = 18$	
Effect Size (g)	.01	.89	

Disgust. Those exposed to the removal of Confederate symbols exhibited more disgust ($M = 2.26, SD = 1.41$) than those in the control group ($M = 1.53, SD = 1.25$), $F(1, 133) = 13.13, p < .001, g = .55$. There was also a marginally significant effect of cluster such that Supremacists exhibited more disgust ($M = 2.24, SD = 1.51$) than did Traditionalists ($M = 1.64, 1.24$), $F(1,$

133) = 8.58, $p = .004$, $g = .45$. There was no interaction between condition and cluster, $F(1, 133) = 1.61$, $p = .207$.

Upset. Those exposed to the removal of Confederate symbols were more upset ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.43$) than those in the control group (1.62 , $SD = 1.10$), $F(1, 133) = 13.17$, $p < .001$, $g = .62$. There were no effects of cluster, $F(1, 133) = 1.09$, $p = .298$, or an interaction between condition and cluster, $F(1, 133) = .426$, $p = .515$.⁵

Discussion

In Study 2 we examined whether supporters of Confederate symbols would express more racial prejudice, more willingness to engage in activism or radicalism, and would experience more negative emotions in response to removal of Confederate symbols. We found no evidence of increased overt or symbolic prejudice in response to our manipulation, nor that it impacted the willingness of individuals to engage in radical support of Confederate monuments. We did find a moderate effect ($g = .42$) of exposure on willingness to engage in activism in support of Confederate monuments, though the average remained below the midpoint of the scale. We also found evidence that exposure to the removal of Confederate symbols resulted in increased anger, disgust, and upset feelings among both Traditionalists and Supremacists, and increased hostility among Supremacists, but not Traditionalists. Supremacists also generally exhibited more anger and disgust than did Traditionalists regardless of condition.

Movements to remove Confederate symbols are collective protests grounded in the notion that Confederate symbols are symbols of White supremacy. We do not discount this

⁵ Marginal effects included condition on irritability ($p = .049$) and scornfulness ($p = .008$), cluster on scornfulness ($p = .008$), and an interaction between condition and cluster on scornfulness ($p = .03$). These are worth examining in future studies but because of our small sample size and strict alpha thresholds to maintain the family-wise error rate, we do not report or discuss them here.

perspective and recognize that for many, especially African Americans, the symbol does have this meaning. However, these movements may have the unintended consequences of increasing membership in pro-Confederate organizations, increasing donations to these organizations, and increasing turnout at protests against the removal of Confederate monuments. Additionally, the negative emotions experienced by supporters as a result of the removal of Confederate symbols may have consequences for intergroup relations between Whites and Blacks in the American South, especially with Traditionalists, who do not generally harbor anti-Black sentiment. Individuals, groups, and policy makers that are opposed to the display of Confederate symbols in public places may want to consider alternatives to outright removal (e.g., movement to museums) that may mitigate these negative repercussions.

General Discussion

In Study 1 we replicated Wright & Esses (2017), which suggested that Southern pride was an important predictor of support for Confederate symbols, even when including a host of control variables. Our analyses were high powered and preregistered. We extended this finding by examining the role of SDO, RWA, and symbolic prejudice. Even after including these additional variables, Southern pride still remained a predictor of attitudes toward Confederate symbols. We also replicated the relationships between specific Southern subgroups (i.e., Cosmopolitans, New Southerners, Traditionalists, and Supremacists) and attitudes toward Confederate symbols, wherein both a generally non-prejudiced group (Traditionalists) and a relatively prejudiced group (Supremacists) both show equally positive attitudes toward Confederate symbols, despite differing in their behavioral manifestations toward Confederate symbols.

Southern pride appears to be a robust correlate of attitudes toward Confederate symbols more generally, in contrast to alternative claims based upon studies that never examined Southern pride (Clark, 1997; Orey, 2004; Reingold & Wike, 1998; Strother et al., 2017). Strother et al. (2017), for example, claim, "...our survey data do little to substantiate claims that White support for Confederate symbols stems from Southern pride" on the basis of a series of surveys that contain *no measure of Southern pride* (p. 311). Evidence against the Southern pride perspective has accumulated primarily by either excluding Southern pride from research designs or by examining proxy variables with unclear relevance to Southern pride.

One great challenge in the debate over Confederate symbols is that of motive attributions. It is a common refrain that support for Confederate symbols is inherently racist due to the assumed racist meaning of these symbols by their opponents. This is the same error identified by Sniderman & Tetlock (1986) regarding motive attribution in attitudes towards race relevant policies. How do we know, empirically, if negative racial attitudes toward Blacks are part of the driving force behind support for Confederate symbols? This could be demonstrated by finding an association with clearly anti-Black attitudes (e.g., "In my everyday life, I find black people disturbing"), but what about the more difficult case where these clear anti-Black attitudes are found *to be unrelated* to support for Confederate symbols when a host of traditional values are assessed? The possible motives are endless, and just as eliminating any clear evidence of anti-Black racism in regression models would not devastate racial motive attribution in support for race-targeted policies, so it cannot in the case of attitudes towards Confederate symbols.

Racial attribution proponents could still claim that the links between various traditional cultural elements (e.g., Southern pride, attitudes regarding fairness, and adherence to obedience and authority) and support for Confederate symbols are a result of negative racial attitudes

because racism is inherent to these traditional cultural elements (Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986). For example, Strother et al. (2017) claim, "...even if pride in Southern heritage were to underpin support for Confederate battle emblems, we note that White pride in Southern heritage may not be racially innocuous" (p. 311). They continue, "The idea of the South as simultaneously distinctive and quintessentially American has traction in American culture, especially among Southerners. But what, exactly, is embodied in that distinctiveness, if not racial division and White supremacy?" (p. 312). The answer is apparent by the various ways that Southerners define their culture (e.g., humility, honor, chivalry, industriousness, politeness, patriotism, loyalty, generosity, nobility; Coski, 2009; Reed, 2008; Thornton, 1996). Additionally, this position falls into a formulation that avoids falsifiability (Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986).

Motive attribution may be taken seriously by some when discussing what to do, if anything, about Confederate symbols. For these individuals, the various connections to traditional cultural values suggest that a large portion of variance in attitudes toward Confederate symbols can be attributed to non-racial motives. However, in terms of the removal of Confederate symbols across the United States, this may not be the most important consideration.

Symbols have both intended and unintended influences on those exposed to these symbols. In Study 2, we conducted an experiment on Traditionalists and Supremacists to determine whether exposure to the removal of Confederate monuments results in negative outcomes. These results suggest that when supporters of Confederate symbols are exposed to the mass removal of Confederate monuments, they express more willingness to engage in activism in support of Confederate monuments and express being more upset, angry, and disgusted. Traditionalists and Supremacists also differ in their emotional reactions to some extent. Overall, supremacists appeared more angry and disgusted than did Traditionalists, and expressed

considerably more hostility as a result of exposure to the removal of Confederate symbols than did Traditionalists. The removal of Confederate symbols can potentially lead both Traditionalists and Supremacists to more activism in support for Confederate symbols, further agitate Supremacists via their anger, disgust, and hostility, and potentially agitate Traditionalists, who otherwise do not harbor anti-Black sentiment.

Symbols also have potential influences on minority groups that should be considered. For example, some evidence suggested that being exposed to the Confederate battle flag resulted in reduced support for Barack Obama and more negative evaluations of a hypothetical Black character in a vignette, among Whites (Ehrlinger et al., 2011). While flag priming effects have poor replication rates (Klein, 2014), it is plausible that there could be negative effects from extended exposure to a symbol that Blacks largely do not identify with. Research on other cultural symbols suggests that cultural symbols of dominant groups may negatively impact the wellbeing of minority group members (Schmitt, Davies, Hung, & Wright, 2011), though this evidence is based upon small samples, which are prone to inflated effect sizes. Policy makers should consider the potential negative impacts to the psychological wellbeing of Blacks in the American South relative to other concerns (e.g., the negative emotional impact and activist backlash to the removal of Confederate symbols among supporters) and consider the extent to which feelings of inclusiveness are a desired feature of our cities, states, and nation.

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