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Review of Negy & Ferguson (2025): “Predicting Radical Progressive Ideology (RPI) from Personality and Attitudinal Variables”

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Editor’s note: This reviewer works for the federal government. With the Trump administration banning words related to DEI, the reviewer is concerned that even the review might place the reviewer’s job in jeopardy, hence the review is published here anonymously.

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This paper offers perspectives on Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and provides an exploratory study on personality and attitudinal variables correlated with ‘radical progressive ideology’ (RPI) – a newly developed measure designed to capture support for CRT/DEI ideas. This paper covers a timely and important topic, offering insights that challenge common notions about CRT. My review of this work focuses primarily on the authors’ discussion and subsequent inferences about CRT/RPI that form the foundation of this study. It is important to note that my comments do not stem from an ideological stance on CRT or DEI topics. The counterpoints I raise will likely come to mind among skeptics of this work, and thus addressing them could help advance academic conversations and scholarship on this important topic.

Negy & Ferguson (2025) highlight evidence that indicates minority groups, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, have made significant strides in various domains, such as income, business ownership, and political leadership. They cite examples such as African American and Hispanic individuals earning over \$100,000 per year, the growing number of minority-owned businesses, and the political leadership of African American mayors in major U.S. cities. It is certainly important to recognize examples of progress like this. However, I am not convinced this argument portrays an entirely accurate picture given other evidence that finds racial disparities in earnings (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/about/data/earnings/race-and-ethnicity>¹), wealth accumulation (e.g., “Households with a White, non-Hispanic householder had 10 times more wealth than those with a Black householder in 2021, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)”), federal sentencing (e.g., “Black males

¹ Editor’s note: After this review was accepted for publication, the Trump administration took this page down.

received sentences 13.4 percent longer, and Hispanic males received sentences 11.2 percent longer, than White males”; <https://www.ussc.gov/research/research-reports/2023-demographic-differences-federal-sentencing>), neighborhood quality, and access to housing, employment, and mortgage and business loans (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/written-materials/2024/07/03/racial-discrimination-in-contemporary-america>²). So, while it could be true that “Myriad points of data seem to refute some of CRT’s tenets”, as the authors state on page 4, at a minimum, a more comprehensive summary of the empirical data and a more balanced discussion of this multifaceted issue is merited. Doing so could make the authors’ claims more compelling for readers of this work who may point to some of the contradictory evidence I mention.

What is more problematic in my view is the inference the authors make on page 4: “on all indices of social success, Whites are overshadowed by the broad ethnic group identifying as Asian American. Logically, if racism or racial discrimination were to be “systemic,” it should prevent all non-white groups from, on average, out-achieving Whites.” This argument rests on several assumptions that I am not convinced hold up to critical scrutiny. The claim that “Asian Americans” consistently out-achieve Whites across all indices of social success, and the logic that systemic racism would uniformly prevent non-white groups from excelling, overlooks the complexity of systemic racism, the diversity of experiences within racial and ethnic categories, and the historical and socio-economic factors at play. Below are several key points to consider in rebuttal:

1. The idea that racism should uniformly suppress all non-white groups is overly simplistic. Systemic racism is not a uniform or monolithic phenomenon. It manifests in a variety of ways across different institutions, regions, and historical contexts. For example, the specific challenges faced by African Americans and Latinos are different from those faced by Asian Americans, in part due to their distinct historical and cultural experiences in the U.S. Discrimination does not affect all non-white groups equally and thus some groups may experience different trajectories of social success despite the presence of systemic racism.
2. The categorization of “Asian American” is itself problematic. The term lumps together a wide range of ethnic groups, including Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Mongolian, and Filipino Americans, each with vastly different histories, social statuses, and experiences of race and racism. While some Asian American subgroups may show high rates of educational attainment and economic success, other groups within the broader Asian American category, such as Hmong, Cambodian, or Laotian Americans, face significant challenges related to poverty, discrimination, and educational attainment. The claim that Asian Americans as a monolithic group out-achieve Whites obscures significant intra-group diversity.
3. Similarly, the notion that Asian Americans universally out-achieve Whites plays into the “model minority” myth – a framework that suggests that Asian Americans have succeeded despite systemic racism, often framing this success as a testament to their cultural values or work ethic. However, this overlooks the ways in which Asian Americans have historically been subject to racial discrimination, exclusionary immigration policies, and economic marginalization. While some Asian American groups

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have achieved certain forms of social success, this is often a product of specific historical circumstances, such as selective immigration policies that favored certain types of workers (e.g., highly skilled professionals from Asia in recent decades). These policies are not reflective of the broader reality for people of color in the U.S., especially those who have been subjected to harsher forms of exclusion, such as African Americans or Indigenous peoples. The notion that racism should prevent all non-white groups from surpassing Whites overlooks how racial hierarchies in the U.S. have been shaped over time, with certain groups being both racialized and valorized in particular ways.

4. The premise that social success is primarily determined by educational and economic indicators overlooks the multidimensional nature of social success. For example, racial discrimination may affect health outcomes, political participation, access to housing, and the criminal justice system in ways that are not fully captured by indices such as income or education.

There are other claims in the paper that seem to be overstated. For example, on page 7, it says: “Negy (2020) and others have pointed out RPI proponents’ hyper-criticism of Whites and of the U.S. in general for their histories of conquest, slavery, and racial discrimination while seemingly unfazed by non-European peoples’ own past and on-going commission of similar atrocities. Moreover, one readily encounters a plethora of comments and criticisms against Whites and the U.S. on social media platforms (e.g., “X”) for myriad race-based transgressions.” Is there empirical evidence that people who hyper-criticize Whites and the U.S. are “unfazed” by atrocities in non-European peoples’ pasts? If so, citing it would strengthen this claim. If it is anecdotal then it should be stated as such. Other than Negy (2020) who are the “others” that have made this argument? It very well may be true, but as currently written it lacks sufficient evidence. A skeptic may respond by pointing out that RPI proponents can be concerned with both U.S. and non-U.S. centered atrocities. Having a targeted focus does not necessarily indicate a denial of global injustices. Furthermore, the proliferation of criticisms on social media platforms may be symptomatic of broader cultural discourse. These public criticisms can arise from individual expressions of frustration rather than representing the broader aims of DEI, which, at least in principle, seeks to foster systemic transformation and equity, not simplistic vilification.

Additional points for consideration:

1. The finding that left-wing authoritarianism, attitudes toward Whites, and attitudes toward the U.S. are correlated with RPI is very interesting and contributes a novel finding in the literature. It would make an interesting follow up to run a parallel study that examined right-wing authoritarianism, attitudes towards racial minorities, and attitudes about foreigners to see if they predict radical conservative ideologies. Are there symmetries or asymmetries between radical progressives and radical conservatives? Do demographic or personality variables moderate potential effects?
2. The undergraduate student sample is predominantly female. The authors may want to include mention of this limitation and its potential impact on the findings.
3. I would like to have more detail on how the RPI scale was developed and tested prior to this study and recommend the authors elaborate on this from page 11: “Preliminary

evidence suggests that the RPI scale has acceptable reliability and construct validity (first author's name redacted, 2024)."

In conclusion, Negy and Ferguson (2025) provides novel insights on the correlates of RPI and lends itself to valuable avenues for future research. I recommend the authors provide a more critical engagement with the nuanced realities of racial dynamics that are not fully captured in the current version. Ultimately, by addressing these complexities and refining key arguments, this paper can contribute more effectively to academic conversations on CRT/DEI topics.