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Public Knowledge and Sentiments about Elite Deviance

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Public Knowledge and Sentiments about Elite Deviance

by

Cédric Michel

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Criminology
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ABSTRACT

A growing body of research has revealed that the financial cost and physical harmfulness of elite deviance overshadow the impact of street crime on society (Knowlton et al., 2011; Landrigan et al., 2002; Leigh, 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Herbert & Landrigan, 2000; Rebovich & Jiandani, 2000; Reiman & Leighton, 2010). However, despite such discrepancies, crimes of the poor continue to outshine white-collar offenses in the news media (Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et al., 1991; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Lynch, Nalla & Miller, 1989; Lynch, Stretesky & Hammond, 2000), the criminal justice system (Calavita, Tillman, & Pontell, 1997; Maddan et al., 2011; Payne, Dabney, & Ekhomu, 2011; Tillman & Pontell, 1992) and even academia (Lynch, McGurrin & Fenwick, 2004; McGurrin, Jarrell, Jahn & Cochrane, 2013).

Surprisingly, scholarly efforts that have investigated societal response to crimes of the powerful have limited their field of inquiry to public opinions about white-collar crime (e.g., Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010; Kane & Wall, 2006; Rebovich et al., 2000; Schoepfer, Carmichael & Piquero, 2007, etc.). While these studies have provided valuable empirical evidence of a growing concern among Americans regarding the danger posed by elite offenses, their failure to include a valid measure of lay knowledge about white-collar crime significantly limits our ability to infer the extent to which the public is familiar with the scope and magnitude of this social issue.

The present study seeks to address such limitation by providing the first measure of public knowledge about elite deviance. Four hundred and eight participants completed an online questionnaire that comprised measures of respondents' knowledge and sentiments (i.e., perceived seriousness and punitiveness) about white-collar crime. Results of statistical analyses revealed that participants were not sufficiently informed about elite deviance and suggest the existence of popular "myths" about white-collar crime; more specifically, a substantial number of subjects were not inclined to acknowledge hard-earned empirical evidence such as the greater physical harmfulness of elite deviance over street crime and to recognize that some elite offenses - which they admit are common in underdeveloped nations (e.g., human trafficking) - can be committed in the United States with little to no legal repercussion for the perpetrators. Further, less knowledgeable subjects and "myth" adherers (including men, those with higher income levels, more politically conservative subjects, Republicans, conservative Protestants, and those who believed that white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions) were often more lenient in their attitudes towards elite deviance, both in terms of perceived seriousness and punitiveness, compared with street crime. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are thoroughly discussed.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that fear of crime ranks high among Americans' concerns about major national issues. More specifically, in a recent Gallup poll, respondents ranked feeling safe from crime ahead of job satisfaction, financial security, and health (Saad, 2011). Surprisingly, though, with violent and property crime rates at an all-time low in recent history (UCR, 2010), Americans fear crime much more than other harms likely to affect them. For example, U.S. citizens are thirty times more likely to die of a heart attack than they are from criminal homicide (Kochanek et al., 2011), yet coronary infarction is not among the things of which most Americans are afraid. Such discrepancy between perceived and actual risks suggests an intrinsic lack of public knowledge regarding the criminal phenomenon. Moreover, it is possible that the definition of crime used in those opinion surveys helps further obfuscate what the public really knows about criminal activity.

The vast majority of polls choose to focus on "street" crime (i.e., property and violent offenses such as burglary, larceny, assault, rape or homicide), which is predominantly committed by members of the lower class, and not "white-collar" or "suite" crime (i.e., illegal or unethical acts such as toxic dumping, labor exploitation, large-scale fraud, illegal warfare, etc.), which is perpetrated by corporations, politicians, and other elite groups. This almost exclusive focus on street crime is unfortunate, for research has established that white-collar crime greatly exceeds

the impact of street crime on society, both in terms of financial cost and harmfulness (Knowlton et al., 2011; Landrigan et al., 2002; Leigh, 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Herbert & Landrigan, 2000; Rebovich & Jiandani, 2000; Reiman & Leighton, 2010). More specifically, while street offenders cost the public about \$18 billion each year (UCR, 2010), annual losses due to financial crime (e.g., fraud) and health costs caused by work-related injuries and illnesses as well as environmental pollution add up to over a trillion dollars (Knowlton et al., 2011; Landrigan et al., 2002; Leigh, 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006).

Similarly, whereas murder and negligent manslaughter claim the lives of about 14,000 people annually (UCR, 2010), the number of victims of work-place related deaths (e.g., workers who sustain accidental injury due to the company's negligence, illnesses caused by prolonged exposure to toxic chemicals, etc.), toxic waste dumping and deadly pollutants, faulty consumer products, and nefarious and addictive substances (e.g., tobacco) exceeds 100,000 a year (Herbert & Landrigan, 2000; Leigh, 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006). Moreover, another 225,000 have been estimated to be victims of medical malpractice annually (Starfield, 2000).

However, despite these staggering differences, white-collar crime is still less prosecuted than street crime. In fact, corporate regulations are weak, the culpability of corporations harder to prove for prosecutors, and their sentences for corporate offenders have up until recently typically been more lenient compared to those imposed upon street criminals (Calavita, Tillman, & Pontell, 1997; Maddan et al., 2011; Payne, Dabney, & Ekhomu, 2011; Tillman & Pontell, 1992). Nevertheless, because of the way the aforementioned opinion surveys introduce crime to their respondents, whether the public is informed about such discrepancies remains unclear.

Most of the empirical literature on public response to crime has focused on street offenders. Moreover, the majority of this body of research taps attitudes about it (i.e., perceived

seriousness) and not actual knowledge. The few studies (e.g., Bohm, 1987; Doob & Roberts, 1983; Kappeler, Blumberg, & Potter, 1996; Macleans, 1995; Maguire & Pastore, 1995; Roberts & Stalans, 1997; Wilbanks, 1987) that explored public awareness of crime have identified several “myths” such as increasing crime rates (Macleans, 1995; Maguire & Pastore, 1995), violent crime rates increasing faster than property crime (Knowles, 1984), overly high recidivism rates (Doob & Roberts, 1983), and the deterrent effect of the death penalty (Bohm, 1987, 2003). While these “myths” have been debunked by existing research, they remain solidly anchored in the public psyche and belie a distorted view of the reality of crime marked by an overestimated perceived risk of victimization (Roberts & Stalans, 1997).

Because the majority of public knowledge about crime and justice is derived from the media (Dowler, 2003; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Surette, 1998), it could be that news outlets do not perform their duty of disseminating scientific knowledge to the public. Moreover, street crime is given disproportionate coverage, both in newspaper headlines and in local television news, compared with white-collar crime (Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et al., 1991; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Lynch, Nalla & Miller, 1989; Lynch, Stretesky & Hammond, 2000). Consequently, given the public’s limited exposure to relevant information about white-collar crime in the media, Americans might indeed hold “myths” about crimes of the powerful as they do regarding street crime. To date, no study has examined the extent of public knowledge regarding white-collar crime. Therefore, this dissertation proposes to assess the degree to which the public is informed or misinformed about white-collar crime.

The present study is articulated around six chapters. Chapter one was meant to briefly introduce the topic and provide a rationale for measuring public level of knowledge about white-collar crime. Chapter two provides a review of the literature on white-collar crime from its

inception as a sociological construct to the scientific debate regarding its exact definition, and acquaints the reader with the concept of elite deviance, its typology, the various issues scholars are confronted with when conducting research on it, as well as empirical evidence on its impact on society (i.e., financial cost, physical harm), and its perpetrators' relative legal immunity compared with their street counterparts. Also reviewed are popular "myths" about traditional crime to buttress the argument that Americans may share similar misconceptions and erroneous beliefs about elite deviance, as well as scholarly findings on public attitudes about white-collar crime. Lastly, a rationale for the present study is reiterated and research questions presented.

The methodology used in the present study is described in detail in chapter three, including a discussion about the sample, data collection process, measures (popular knowledge about white-collar crime, correlates of such knowledge, and public sentiments about elite deviance), and data analytic plan. Chapters four and five present the results of statistical analyses and provide answers to each of the research questions previously introduced. Finally, chapter six provides a discussion of these findings, including a summary and interpretations of the analytical findings, a review of the limitations of the present study, theoretical and practical implications as well as avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of the literature is organized into nine sections. As previously mentioned, the first section covers the original definition of the white-collar crime concept and the confusion that ensued within the academe regarding its actual significance and theoretical scope. Elite deviance is subsequently introduced in the second section as an alternative concept to remedy such confusion. The third section offers a typology of elite deviance, including economic domination, government control, and denial of basic human rights. Various methodological issues inherent in white-collar crime research are exposed in the fourth section. Sections five and six cover the empirically established greater financial impact and physical harm of elite deviance compared with traditional crime. Despite these findings, the relative legal immunity enjoyed by many white-collar offenders due to their status is also highlighted in section seven. The eighth section introduces popular “myths” about street crime and hints that the American public might hold similar misconceptions concerning crimes of the powerful. Section nine summarizes the empirical findings on public attitudes regarding white-collar crime. Lastly, the tenth section provides a rationale for expanding such research to the study of knowledge about elite deviance and introduces the research questions that this dissertation will strive to answer.

Defining White-Collar Crime

First coined in 1939 by the sociologist Edwin Sutherland during his address to the American Sociological Society annual conference, the term “white-collar crime” was subsequently defined as any “crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation” (Sutherland, 1949). This provocative conceptualization of criminals wearing the proverbial white-collar - a symbol of professional success as opposed to working class employees’ blue collar - was a landmark in the history of criminology. Until then, the field had maintained its focus on such offenses as burglary, armed robbery, sexual assault and murder, that is, illicit activities that were generally associated with impoverished neighborhoods (Akers & Sellers, 2008). Conversely, Sutherland’s argument that large-scale fraud was not only more socially harmful but also, because of the culprits’ high social standing, had better chances of going unreported and/or unpunished, provided fertile grounds for new criminological theories.

Over time, though, considerable confusion in the literature has grown regarding the true nature and extent of white-collar crime. Some scholars have interpreted Sutherland’s original definition as ambiguous, reasoning that it does not distinguish crimes committed by individuals from those perpetrated by corporations (Clinard & Quinney, 1973). Other critics have pointed out that it could encompass both occupational crimes (i.e., acts committed in the course of one’s occupation for personal gain) and avocational crimes (i.e., acts that are usually unconnected with one’s profession such as income tax evasion or credit card fraud, Albanese, 1995). Strader (2002) has called the term “white-collar” a misnomer, arguing that these crimes can be perpetrated among the working class (e.g., scams, retail crime, tax evasion, etc.) as much as within the upper class (e.g., antitrust violation). According to her, the term is a useful moniker to

differentiate nonviolent crime for financial gain committed by means of deception (e.g., securities fraud) from more common (i.e., street) crime in the public mind. Similarly, Brightman (2009) has argued that the white-collar crime construct should include any non-violent act committed for financial gain, regardless of one's social status.

A similar perspective is echoed in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), which collects information on all street crimes reported to the police each year. Interestingly, the eight index offenses included in Part I, which indexes violent crimes (i.e., aggravated assault, forcible rape, murder, and robbery) and property crimes (i.e., arson, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft), do not include any type of white-collar crime. In fact, embezzlement, forgery, counterfeiting, and fraud are the only potential white-collar crimes included in Part II, which indexes less serious crimes such as status offenses (e.g., curfew offenses, loitering, disorderly conduct, runaways, vandalism, etc.) and consensual crimes (e.g., drug offenses, prostitution, vagrancy, etc.). This assignment suggests that even law enforcement agencies nationwide perceive street crimes to cause the most physical and property damage to American society (Robinson 1994; Rosoff, Pontell, & Tillman, 2010).

The problem is that those four types of crime do not fall under the umbrella of the white-collar crime concept as envisaged by Sutherland. Sutherland was clear in his definition of white-collar crime that the term described an offense committed by a person of high social status in the course of their occupation, which clearly leaves out working class crimes and crimes that are not part of work contexts. However, such misreading of Sutherland's original work is still present today in the official data, which many criminologists rely upon in their investigation of white-collar crime.

Perhaps the economic changes that took place during the twentieth century were

responsible for causing scholars to misconstrue Sutherland's message. Because the United States has shifted from an industrial to a service economy, the nature of the job market is now very different from what it was back in the 1940s. Today a postal clerk may well don a white collar but can hardly be considered a person of "high social status". In fact, an employee embezzling a few hundred dollars from his/her company may share more similarities with a street offender than with the powers-that-be denounced by Sutherland. If one defines power in terms of economic control (i.e., ownership of the means and modes of production) and political influence, then, respectable but relatively powerless figures (e.g., bank tellers, accountants, etc.) that would be considered white-collar offenders according to the UCR do not quite fit Sutherland's original definition. Since white-collar crime has lost its original meaning, the term "elite deviance" may be more apt to encapsulate the social class dimension of the construct.

Elite Deviance

Acknowledging the obsolescence of the "white-collar crime" appellation, some scholars have favored the terms "crimes of the powerful" (Quinney, 1978) and "elite deviance" (Simon & Eitzen, 1993), and used conflict as a theoretical framework to guide their research. Conflict theory is a sociological paradigm that views society as being in a constant state of internal conflict between a small ruling elite and the masses (Bonger, 1916; Chambliss, 1964; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Mills, 1956; Paternoster & Bachman, 2001; Quinney, 1974; Sellin, 1938; Turk, 1969; Vold, 1958). Following Sutherland's introduction of the white-collar crime concept, C. Wright Mills (1956) coined the term "power elite" to describe the unequal balance of power between the leaders of military, political and corporate entities, and relatively powerless citizens. Such imbalance is seen as running counter to the principles of fairness and equality before the law, which form the basis of the American criminal justice system. More precisely, under this

perspective, those in power may manipulate the law to maintain their status and prosper while keeping others subservient (Siegel & Welsh, 2011).

Criminal and deviant behaviors are by definition relative concepts that may differ from one society to another and vary over time (Barkan, 2012). As Becker (1963:9) noted, “social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders”. Since illegality is determined by a distinct elite group of officials (i.e., the legislature), the same elite that labels and prohibits street crime may overlook white-collar crimes such as war profiteering, government corruption, large-scale fraud, or toxic dumping to protect powerful interests. Consequently, corporations can engage in unethical (i.e., intentional, reckless, and negligent) behaviors that are not legally defined as criminal (e.g., regulatory offenses) - even though they may kill and injure more people every year than do street crimes - with little fear of legal consequences (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006).

With elite deviance as a theoretical avenue to guide the present study, the measurement of public knowledge about white-collar crime will extend well beyond the FBI’s official but narrow definition and back to Sutherland’s original concept. More precisely, based on Friedrichs and colleagues’ distinction between “organizational” offenses (e.g. committed by corporations) and “individualistic” ones (i.e., perpetrated by individuals), this dissertation will mostly focus on corporate crime because of its greater damaging impact on society. Moreover, to avoid redundancies, the terms “white-collar crime” and “elite deviance” will be used interchangeably and should be understood as synonyms of a form of criminal behavior performed by a small dominant group of individuals in control of a disproportionate amount of power.

Typology

The three power elite groups referred to here - corporate, political, and military institutions - can harm society through economic domination, government control, and denial of basic human rights, respectively (Simon & Eitzen, 1993).

Economic Domination

Economic domination includes both financially and physically harmful offenses. Elite deviance can be financially detrimental to the public when corporations defraud the government (Theobald, 2009) or engage in tax evasion (DeBacker, Heim, & Tran, 2012). Companies can also cheat consumers in cases of price-fixing (i.e., establishing the price of a product or service, rather than allowing it to be determined by supply and demand, Connor, 2008), price-gouging (i.e., artificially inflating prices when no alternative retailer is available, Zwolinski, 2008), and false advertising and misrepresentation of products (Tushnet, 2010). Moreover, competitors can be the victims of anti-trust law violations (i.e., monopolistic practices, Dogan, & Lemley, 2008), and insider trading (i.e., buying or selling of a security by someone who has access to nonpublic information, Meulbroek, 2012). Finally, owners and creditors can be wronged via managerial fraud (Fairchild, Crawford, & Saqlain, 2009), self-dealing (i.e., a fiduciary acting in his/her own best interest in a transaction rather than his clients', Djankov et al., 2008), and strategic bankruptcy (Moerman & Van De Laan, 2009).

Corporate offenses can also be physically harmful to the public through unsafe environmental practices such as toxic emissions above the legal limit (Katz, 2012; Lynch, & Stretesky, 2010), toxic dumping and hazardous waste disposal (Waldo, 2009), and the release of deadly pollutants (Rao, 2012). Moreover, corporations can harm consumers with the manufacturing and distribution of unsafe products (Pyke & Tang, 2010). Lastly, employees can

be victimized when subjected to unsafe working conditions (Landsbergis, 2009), which can lead to preventable occupational diseases, accidents and deaths (MacDonald, Cohen, Baron, & Burchfiel, 2009).

Similarly, crimes by professionals in the medical, legal, academic, and religious sectors can also be defined as elite deviance, insofar as the perpetrators operate under the guise of respectability and the protection of powerful guilds. More specifically, physicians can harm their patients through medical negligence and malpractice, unnecessary operations, tests, and other procedures, as well as false and fraudulent billing (Gogos et al., 2011; Miller, 2012). The same is true about attorneys when they defraud their clients or collude with their crimes (Abel, 2012). In addition, college faculty can abuse their position through gross negligence in the fulfillment of their teaching responsibilities, or when using fraudulent data in research (Michalek, Hutson, Wicher & Trump, 2010). Lastly, televangelists (i.e., a portmanteau term referring to preachers using television to communicate the Christian faith) sometimes engage in scams to defraud believers and use offerings or donations for corrupt purposes (Morefield & Ramaswamy, 2011).

Government Control

Government control (i.e., state crime) can occur domestically when offenses are committed by the legislative, judiciary and executive branches of power as is the case with corruption (Issacharoff, 2010), corporate tax loopholes (McIntyre, Gardner, Wilkins, & Phillips, 2011), crimes of electioneering and usurpation of power (Christensen & Colvin, 2009), violations of individual civil rights such as illegal surveillance by law enforcement agencies (Michelman, 2009), denials of due process of law (Heupel, 2009), and political party infiltration (Werbner, 2010). Governments can also impact and destabilize foreign nations through coups d'état (Marshall, 2009), international law violation, unlawful warfare and war profiteering

(Sandholtz, 2009), the threat of nuclear war (Escalona, 1982), state repression and corruption (Ross, 2010), and even collaboration with organized crime (Armao, 2012). Further, an indirect negative consequence of government control and state crime is the erosion of public trust in elites whose behavior fosters demoralization, cynicism, and alienation and deviance (i.e., street crime).

Denial of Human Rights

State crimes may also include denial of human rights. The denial of basic human rights refers to threats to the dignity and quality of life of humankind and particularly oppressed minorities. It is logically expected when the unequal distribution of power places non-elites at the mercy of profit-seeking groups that happen to define and control the law. Human rights violation can be experienced among workers through economic exploitation and human trafficking, both in underdeveloped and/or instable nations (Shelley, 2010) and in the United States (Bales, 2004; Gillmore, 2004), unfair labor practices (e.g., surveillance of employees, Gorman, 2006), sexual harassment (Murrell, Olson, & Frieze, 2010), and racial and gender discrimination in the workplace (Beal, 2008; Pinzon-Rondon et al., 2010).

Denial of human rights reaches a culmination point with rape, torture, genocide and ethnic cleansing (Totten & Parsons, 2012). Importantly, now that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - to which the United States is signatory - has been ratified by a sufficient number of nations (Tsutsui, 2012), such acts should fall under international law. Nevertheless, more than sixty years after its issue, Amnesty International and other sources report that individuals are still tortured or abused in at least 81 countries, face unfair trials in at least 54 countries, and are restricted in their freedom of expression in at least 77 countries (Hopgood, 2010).

Even in the United States, some types of human rights violations that are legally defined

as crimes by American law (e.g., affirmative action prevents discrimination against employees or applicants for employment, on the basis of color, religion, sex, or national origin) are difficult to prosecute due to the status of the offenders (Push, 2011). Prosecution is even impossible for related offenses that have not been criminalized by the legislature (i.e., one of the three branches of the power elite). For example, the forced labor of inmates by corporations, though arguably unethical, is authorized by the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Similarly, while domestic human trafficking and workers' exploitation does fall under American law, the use of sweatshops and child labor in underdeveloped countries by U.S.-based firms - facilitated by corporate globalization - allow these companies to lower costs and increase profits with relative legal impunity due to their complicity with the local polity (Rosen, 2002). These discrepancies further exemplify the collusions between state and corporations. In fact, the interconnections between the political sphere and elite deviance could explain the paucity of official data regarding white-collar crime.

Issues in Research

While administrative and regulatory agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) do collect information on regulatory offenses, they are given considerable discretionary leeway in defining and responding to these offenses (Friedrichs, 1995). In fact, as of 2011, OSHA had only secured 12 criminal convictions on the 51 cases the Department of Justice agreed to prosecute since the administration's inception in 1971 (Tribe, 2011).

Criminologists often rely on two types of data to examine officially recognized white-collar crime: The UCR and victimization surveys. There are several problems related to the use of the UCR. First, as previously mentioned, the offense reported may not accurately reflect the

definition of white-collar crime proposed by Sutherland. Moreover, white-collar crime victims are often unlikely to report the crime to authorities (Jesilow, Klempner, & Chiao, 1992; Titus, Heinzelmann, & Boyle, 1995), either because they feel the police are neither willing nor able to help or they are unaware of the existence of special fraud units (Friedrichs, 1995). Moreover, victimized corporations may be reluctant to file reports because they fear negative publicity or loss of trust from shareholders in the organization (Levi, 1992).

Similarly, using victimization surveys to draw an accurate picture of the prevalence and impact of elite deviance has several limitations. Among these are the delayed harm white-collar crime creates as well as its lack of immediacy compared with traditional crime, which may result in a failure to recognize or report these offenses. More specifically, because there is typically little direct contact between the offender and the victim in white-collar crime (Friedrichs, 1995; Weisburd & Schlegel, 1992), many victims may not know they are victimized until later (Albanese, 1995). Further, victimization surveys do not often directly ask about white-collar crime victimization experiences. For example, while the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) conducts yearly household surveys, it mostly collects information about street crimes such as rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft, and tends to bypass white-collar offenses.

Moreover, researchers in the social sciences have rarely attempted to employ their usual data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, direct observations and examination of case records to explore the problem of white-collar crime. First, it is understandably more difficult to collect data within the corporate world than from offenders such as juvenile delinquents. Before one can obtain the cooperation of an organization or corporation, the research proposal has to be introduced in a non-threatening way and present a potential benefit for the organization (Yeager

& Kram, 1990). Further, peer review panels for government research funding tend to favor studies relevant to conventional crime and its control more than projects that intend to investigate the wrongdoings of major corporations and government organizations (Galliher, 1979).

There are, however, alternative ways to conduct research on elite deviance. For example, numerous databases maintained by a variety of state agencies address white-collar or elite crimes (e.g., injury, disease, employment, and inflation data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, costs data from the National Council on Compensation Insurance and the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project, the National Academy of Social Insurance, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Health Care Financing Agency, the Practice Management Information Corporation, etc.). However, because these data are not collected uniformly nor centralized, it remains difficult to estimate the exact extent of the white-collar crime problem. Still, despite difficulties in aggregating these data, it has been established that the financial and physical impact of elite deviance on society overshadows that of traditional crime - even if, perhaps, the true extent of elite crime has been underestimated in prior research.

Financial Impact

When he devised his conceptualization of white-collar offenses, Sutherland (1977:5) already suspected that “the financial cost of white-collar crime is probably several times as great as the financial cost of all the crimes which are customarily regarded as the crime problem”. He also noted, however, that the financial harm resulting from white-collar crime was still less important than the damage it caused to “social relations” through violation of trust as well as its physical harmfulness. As previously mentioned, the exact impact of elite deviance is difficult to

ascertain. What is known, however, is that whatever figure white-collar crime represents in terms of financial cost to society, that figure greatly exceeds the physical and financial harms caused by traditional crimes. More precisely, it has been estimated that street offenders cost the public an average \$18 billion each year (UCR, 2010). This amount includes the total economic loss to victims, that is, \$1.19 billion for violent crime (e.g., loss of revenue due to homicide, health costs as a result of assault, rape, etc.) and \$16.21 billion for property crime (BJS, 2007). More specifically, in 2010 the average dollar loss due to robberies reported to the police was \$456 million, \$6.1 billion were lost to larceny/thefts, \$1.4 billion to arsons, \$4.6 billion to burglary (UCR, 2010), and another \$499.9 million in victim compensation programs (NACVCB, 2011).

Figures related to the cost of street crime, although considerable, are still relatively modest compared to the combined costs of corporate crime such as fraud, tax evasion, price-fixing, price-gouging, false advertising (see, e.g., Simon, 1999; Simon & Eitzen, 1993), anti-trust violations, and embezzlement (see, e.g., Weisburd et al., 1991), which add up to over \$500 billion dollars annually (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Rebovich & Jiandani, 2000; Reiman & Leighton, 2010). Of course, this figure does not include occasional scandals such as the Enron debacle, which cost its shareholders an outstanding \$74 billion (Pava, 2010). Even an individual white-collar crime such as Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme added up to \$65 billion in economic losses for investors (Arvedlund, 2009), and alone far exceeds the cost of all street crimes that year.

Health costs due to corporate misconduct must also be included. The number of fatal and nonfatal injuries in the workplace in 2007 was estimated to cost \$6 billion and \$186 billion, respectively. Similarly, the cost of fatal and nonfatal illnesses was estimated at more than \$46 billion and \$12 billion, respectively. For injuries and diseases combined, cost estimates were \$67

billion, and indirect costs were almost \$183 billion. Overall, the total estimated medical costs were approximately \$250 billion (Leigh, 2011).

Further, total annual health costs associated with environmental pollutants (e.g., toxic chemicals of human origin in air, food, water, and communities) were estimated to be \$43.4 billion for lead poisoning, \$2.0 billion for asthma, \$0.3 billion for childhood cancer, and \$9.2 billion for neurobehavioral disorders. Alarming, this sum constitutes almost 3 percent of total U.S. health care costs (Landrigan et al., 2002). Moreover, besides medical and insurance administration expenses, indirect categories such as lost earnings, lost home production, and lost fringe benefits further add up to the economic burden of elite deviance (Leigh et al., 1997).

Finally, the impact of corporate activity on the environment also comes at a price. More specifically, costs associated with predicted climate change-related events such as ozone pollution, heat waves, hurricanes, infectious disease outbreaks, river flooding, and wildfires have been estimated to be as high as \$14 billion. Ninety-five percent of this figure can be attributed to the value of lives lost prematurely. Moreover, subsequent health care costs due to these climate change-related events add up to \$740 million (Knowlton et al., 2011). If we add up all these figures, it appears white-collar crime may cost society over a trillion dollars a year compared with the \$18 billion lost to street crime. Perhaps more disconcerting than the gargantuan economic impact of elite deviance is the evidence that it causes more violent and physical harm than does street crime.

Physical Harm

Official statistics reveal that about 14,000 people are victims of murder and negligent manslaughter every year (UCR, 2010). In contrast, reasonable estimates place the number of deaths due to toxic waste dumping and deadly pollutants, preventable occupational diseases,

accidents and deaths, faulty consumer products (e.g., automobiles, toys, food, drugs, etc.), and nefarious and addictive substances (e.g., tobacco) at 100,000 a year, that is, eight times as much as the number of street crime victims (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Reiman & Leighton, 2010). As of 2000, approximately 65,000 workers died each year of work-related injuries (e.g., motor vehicle accidents, machinery-related events, manslaughter, falls, and electrocution) and occupational diseases such as cancers, asbestosis, and silicosis (Herbert & Landrigan, 2000). In 2007, the numbers of fatal and nonfatal injuries were estimated to be more than 5,600 and almost 8,559,000, respectively. Further, the numbers of fatal and nonfatal illnesses were estimated at more than 53,000 and nearly 427,000, respectively (Leigh, 2011).

Moreover, iatrogenic effects (i.e., injuries caused by a physician, including both error and nonerror adverse events) have made medical care the third leading cause of death in the United States, after heart disease and cancer (Starfield, 2000). An estimated 12,000 people die each year from unnecessary - but lucrative - surgeries such as silicon breast implants, circumcision, coronary artery bypass, hysterectomies, and cesarean (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006), 7,000 of medication negligence in hospitals, 20,000 of other errors in hospitals, 80,000 of infections in hospitals, and 106,000 of negative effects of drugs, for an estimated total of 225,000 victims of medical crime (Starfield, 2000).

The harm caused by the premature - and profit-driven - release of potentially deleterious drugs should also be included. One such example was the Fen/Phen drug case (Mundy, 2001) in which the injurious effects of a supposedly harmless medicine were silenced until they had caused the death of more than 100 people. Another similar scandal was the Thalidomide prescription disaster where a sleeping-pill-tranquilizer caused 8,000 babies to have been born deformed (Pontell & Geis, 2007). Due to the ties between the pharmaceutical industry and the

polity, such examples qualify as elite deviance. Indeed, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) sometimes overlooks international regulations regarding potentially harmful drugs. For instance, it approved a livestock drug - beta agonist ractopamine (i.e., a repartitioning agent that increases protein synthesis) - which had been banned in 160 nations due to its correlation with hyperactivity, muscle breakdown and ten percent mortality in pigs (Rosenberg, 2010).

Finally, the harmfulness of environmental pollution cannot even be clearly calculated. Attaching an economic or physical cost to that kind of behavior becomes difficult when the end result is the destruction of the environment, extensive human and animal misery. Nevertheless, if the intent is simply to compare elite deviance with traditional crime in terms of physical harm, currently available figures suggest that white-collar crime may harm or injure over 8,986,000 people every year and lead to the untimely death of another 283,600 people, that is, more than 20 times as many as street crime. Contrasting these figures to the 24,330 homicides reported by the FBI when homicide rates nationwide peaked in 1990 (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006) further puts the potential public “myth” that street crime is more harmful than elite deviance back in perspective.

Relative Legal Immunity

Nevertheless, because of the abovementioned difficulty to investigate these offenses, this figure may well underestimate the magnitude of the problem. Again, many acts that endanger human lives without being clearly defined as illegal or criminal (e.g., state and government crime) inevitably remain unreported and/or unpunished. Worse yet, even white-collar offenses that fall under American law are statistically less likely to be prosecuted than street crime. In fact, despite efforts to bring white-collar offenders to justice (e.g., citizen suits by private parties who have been injured or threatened, or class action suits by a group of directly injured parties,

Friedrichs, 1995), corporate regulations are weak and corporate offenders have the financial means to provide effective defenses, delay judgments, avoid criminal sanctions and receive more lenient sentences compared to those imposed upon street criminals (Calavita, Tillman, & Pontell, 1997; Maddan et al., 2011).

Further, given the difficulty in establishing criminal intent when dealing with a complex, hierarchized organization, prosecutors are often reluctant to take on corporate crime cases (Braithwaite, 1982; Braithwaite and Geis, 1982; Sinden, 1980) and usually prefer to focus on individual white-collar offenders. Business organizations undeniably profit from the “rotten apple” perspective on occupational crime, which favors an individualistic rather than systemic explanation of elite deviance (Ashforth et al., 2008; Gottschalk, 2012). Based on such a perspective, Bernard Madoff’s surprisingly severe prison sentence could be understood as symbolic degradation (Levi, 2009), that is, an attempt to soothe public outrage at other, more harmful white-collar offenses such as the British Petroleum gulf oil spill, which resulted in a \$7.8 billion class action settlement but no criminal prosecution and no prison time for the company’s executives (Thomas, 2012). Perhaps more alarming is the unwillingness of economically depressed communities to cooperate and press charges against local corporations if such legal action could result in massive unemployment in the area (Friedrichs, 1995).

Given the wide gap between the deleterious impact of elite deviance on society and that of street crime, the relative legal immunity enjoyed by white-collar offenders should logically cause indignation among the populace. It is not certain, however, to what extent the public is aware of the body of knowledge that has been amassed by the empirical literature on white-collar crime. In fact, research shows that Americans are not well informed about crime in general.

Popular “Myths” about Traditional Crime

National and state surveys conducted in the United States (e.g., Knowles, 1984, 1987; Maguire & Pastore, 1995), Canada (e.g., Doob and Roberts, 1982) and Australia (e.g., O’Connor, 1978; Indermaur, 1987) have revealed that the public holds several misconceptions about crime rates (Robert & Stalans, 1997). One such misconception is crime being rampant (Barkan, 2012). More specifically, Knowles (1984) reported that when the annual rate of violent crime in Ohio was fewer than four incidents per 100 residents, only 5% of respondents perceived the rate to be that low. Similarly, in a 1993 Harris poll that asked Americans whether they thought crime rates had increased, decreased or remained the same, more than 50% of respondents believed that crime had increased when in fact significant declines had been observed for a variety of crimes (Maguire & Pastore, 1995). Official statistics reveal that crime has been falling sharply and unexpectedly since the mid-1990s. For example, between 1993 and 2000, murder and robbery rates both declined over 40% (Blumstein, 2006), and the trend is ongoing today (Barkan, 2012; UCR, 2010). Nevertheless, a 2010 Gallup poll revealed that 67% of respondents believed that crime rates were increasing (Albanese, 2012).

Another popular misconception seems to be the particularly violent nature of crime (Indermaur, 1987; Macleans, 1995; Warr, 1980, 1982) when in reality official data and victimization surveys suggest that violent crime (i.e., homicide, rape, robbery, and assault) only represents 12% of all serious crimes reported to the police and 20% of all crimes counted by victimization surveys, whether reported or not (Albanese, 2012; Barkan, 2012; Robert & Stalans, 1997). The belief in high recidivism rates constitutes yet another public misconception. Doob and Roberts (1983) found that 60% of their respondents over-estimated the recidivism rate for property offenders, while 79% over-estimated the figure for violent offenders. Other “myths”

include the belief that most victims are Whites and targeted by African American criminals (when in fact most violent crime is intraracial, and Blacks are more likely to be victimized than Whites, Lundman, 2003), and that most violent offenders are youths (when in reality, only about 14% of violent crime is committed by teenagers, Dorfman & Schirardi, 2001).

Perhaps the most salient crime “myth” is the deterrent effect of “get tough” policies (e.g., “three strikes and you’re out” laws, longer sentences for less serious crimes, use of the death penalty, etc.), which are all corollaries of a more punitive approach to crime control. Although several studies have found some evidence for the purported deterrent effect of incarceration on crime rates, they also vary widely in their conclusions about its strength (Blumstein, 2006; Blumstein & Wallman, 2000, 2006; Levitt, 2004). For example, Doob and Webster (2003) found some inconclusive or, at best, weak evidence of marginal deterrence. Similarly, Pratt and colleagues (2006) maintained that the effects of severity estimates and deterrence/sanctions composites, even when statistically significant, are too marginal to suggest practical policy implications. More recently, Paternoster (2010) critiqued deterrence research and effectively suggested that the evidence is so weak that criminologists should stop examining this point altogether. Lastly, despite popular belief, the vast majority of studies on capital punishment have concluded to its lack of deterrent effect (for a review, see Bohm, 1987, 2003).

How to explain such discrepancy between actual crime statistics and common perceptions among the public? Why are people so misinformed? Where do they get their information? Research suggests that Americans derive most of their knowledge about crime from the news media (Dowler, 2003; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Surette, 1998). Unlike street crime, which is overemphasized on local news stations (Barlow, Barlow, & Chiricos 1995; Chiricos 1995; Marsh 1991; Ruel 1994; Welch et al. 1998), white-collar crime is not widely reported

(Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et al., 1991; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006, Lynch, Nalla & Miller, 1989; Lynch, Stretesky & Hammond, 2000). Further, when it is, the perpetrators are often portrayed in a less negative light than are street offenders (Geis & Meier 1977; Welch et al. 1998; Williams 1992). Although a case could be made that the treatment Bernard Madoff received in the wake of his Ponzi scheme scandal was nothing short of media lynching, news networks are less prone to vilifying well-known and respected companies such as Microsoft, which nonetheless engage in equally reprehensible white-collar offenses (Lande & Hawker, 2011).

Some scholars view this disparity as the result of powerful entities exerting control over the media (Barkan, 2012; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006). In keeping with conflict theory, which denounces the imbalance of power between a ruling elite and the rest of the populace (Mills, 1956), corporations should logically benefit from the public's ignorance of white-collar crime. Absent ubiquitous awareness of the deleterious effects of elite deviance, these corporations can persist with their wrongdoings without fear of legal consequences. Consequently, the media's almost exclusive focus on traditional crime may serve to distract citizens away from other and arguably more serious types of criminality, leaving the American public with distorted views concerning the reality of street crime and, expectedly, very limited knowledge about elite deviance. In fact, people may very well harbor "myths" about white-collar crime as they do regarding traditional crime. Nevertheless, such hypothesis has never been directly tested since most of the empirical research on elite deviance has focused on *attitudes* and not *knowledge*.

Public Attitudes about White-Collar Crime

The literature on perceived seriousness of street crime generally reveals high levels of consensus among the American public (Grabosky, Braithwaite, & Wilson, 1987; Hauber,

Toonvliet, & Willemse, 1988; Newman, 1976; Scott & Al-Thakeb, 1977; Warr, 1989; Wolfgang et al., 1985). More specifically, a majority of respondents tend to view conventional crime as a serious social issue that requires harsh sanctions. Conversely, early research on public perceptions of elite deviance suggested that Americans did not consider white-collar crime as an important social problem, especially in comparison to crimes committed against a person or the public (Geis, 1973; Sutherland, 1949; Wheeler et al., 1988). Two probable factors for such apathy could be the aforementioned delayed harm and lack of immediacy of white-collar crime. For example, work-related illnesses and deaths may occur years after exposure to toxic substances in the workplace and may not shock public opinion as much as homicide (Albanese, 1995).

Nevertheless, Braithwaite (1982:732-733) noted that “contrary to a wide spread misconception, there is considerable evidence to support the view that ordinary people subjectively perceive many types of white-collar crime as more serious than most traditional crime.” Similarly, Conklin (1977:27) posited that there is a “greater degree of public condemnation of business violations than is thought to exist by those who claim that the public is apathetic or tolerant of business crime”. In fact, several studies (Cullen, Link, & Polanzi, 1982; Cullen, Clark, Mathers, & Cullen, 1983; Cullen et al., 1985; Grabosky, Braithwaite, & Wilson, 1987; Geis, 1972; Hauber, Toonvliet, & Willemse, 1988; Holtfreter et al., 2008; Meier & Short, 1982; Rebovich & Jiandani, 2000; Rebovich & Kane, 2002; Rossi et al., 1974; Schragar & Short, 1980; Sinden, 1980; Wolfgang et al., 1985) have suggested that the traditional wisdom about public apathy regarding white-collar crime might be erroneous.

It could be that elite deviance draws more attention when it mimics street crime’s violence and physical harmfulness (Albanese, 1995). For example, Holtfreter and colleagues

(2008) found that while fraud might be viewed more favorably than robbery (perhaps because the latter implies a violent act), white-collar offenses such as work-related deaths that could have been prevented are usually perceived more negatively. Importantly, their respondents were not opposed to severe sanctions for white-collar offenders if evidence of harm to society could be provided. Nevertheless, harmfulness may not be the decisive factor in explaining perceived severity of elite deviance. In fact, Schoepfer, Carmichael and Piquero's 2007 study of public perceptions of sanction certainty and severity indicates that both robbery and fraud are perceived to be equally reprehensible.

National research efforts reveal similarly surprising public perceptions of white-collar crime's seriousness relative to street crime. Every five years since 1999, the National White-Collar Crime Center (a congressionally funded non-profit corporation) has been surveying public attitudes about the seriousness and impact of elite deviance. More precisely, the National Public Survey on White-Collar Crime has been conducted and published on three consecutive occasions (Rebovich et al., 2000; Kane & Wall, 2006; Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010). The first iteration, conducted by Rebovich and colleagues (2000), compared respondents' perceptions of the likelihood of apprehension of street and white-collar offenders with their opinions on how they should be sanctioned. Participants were presented with a scenario that compared the chances of apprehension of someone stealing \$1,000 in a robbery with someone obtaining \$1,000 through a fraudulent action. Only 22% of the sample believed the fraudster had a greater likelihood of being apprehended. Even fewer respondents (16%) believed that the convicted fraudster would be punished more severely by the criminal justice system. Although public knowledge about elite deviance was not directly measured, these results nonetheless suggest that people may be partly aware of the relative legal immunity enjoyed by white-collar offenders compared to their street

counterparts.

A comparison of the respondents' perception of who would be arrested with their beliefs about who *should* be punished more severely revealed an interesting difference. More specifically, less than one third thought that the robber should be punished more severely, while higher percentages believed the fraudster deserved greater punishment and that both should be punished with equal severity. Again, these results run counter to the old perception that people are apathetic about or more lenient with elite deviance.

The second effort by the National White-Collar Crime Center (Kane & Wall, 2006) expanded upon the original by proposing a more comprehensive definition of the white-collar crime construct that included illegal or unethical acts violating fiduciary responsibility or public trust for personal or organizational gain. This new definition incorporated high-tech crimes and crimes committed both inside and outside of the occupational setting. Importantly, the survey focused on three areas of public experience with white-collar crime: victimization, reporting behaviors, and perceptions of crime seriousness. Participants were presented with twelve scenarios depicting both white-collar offenses and more traditional types of crime. These scenarios were dichotomized into the following categories: white collar/traditional crime, physical harmful/financially costly crime, organizational/individual offenders, and high-status/non-status offenders. Respondents were found to rate white-collar crime as equally serious as street crime. Moreover, physically harmful crimes were perceived to be significantly more serious than those that involved monetary loss. Interestingly, organizational offenders were rated more negatively than individual offenders. Finally, participants reacted more harshly against crimes committed by high-status offenders in a position of trust.

These results were echoed in the third and latest National Public Survey on White-Collar

Crime (Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010). Once again, measures of public opinion about and perceived seriousness of various types of elite deviance were collected. As was the case before, researchers developed a series of scenarios that were first incorporated into different categories expressing specific variables and then grouped on the basis of common attributes to compare the perceived seriousness (1) of a white-collar crime to that of street crime, (2) of a crime involving harm to that of a crime involving financial loss, (3) of a crime involving an organizational offender to that of a crime involving an individual offender, and (4) of a crime committed by a high-status offender (e.g., an individual in a position of trust) to that of a crime committed by a low-status offender.

This time, survey results indicated that the public tended to view white-collar crime as slightly more serious than street crime. Not surprisingly, crimes that involved direct physical harm to individuals were once again found to be more serious than the crimes that resulted in monetary loss. As was the case in 2006, participants reacted more harshly to cases involving organizational instead of individual offenders. Similarly, crimes involving high-status offenders were statistically deemed more serious than those involving low-status offenders. Although the National Public Survey on White-Collar Crime examined only a limited number of white-collar and street crime scenarios, these findings suggest that Americans may see elite deviance as a more serious social issue than was previously hypothesized and might even sometimes take it more seriously than traditional crime.

Perhaps, then, punitiveness is a function of knowledge. After all, maybe the 2010 British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico met with such public indignation and outrage because of the visible, tangible damage it provoked. The greatest limitation of the National White-Collar Crime Center survey may have been its failure to control for public knowledge about elite

deviance. While respondents' fear and negative attitudes about corporate offenders suggest a reasonable amount of knowledge about this form of deviance, the true extent of information among the public - particularly in regards to the physical costs of white-collar crime - remains uncertain. Hypothetically, there could be increased demand for tougher sanctions against high-status offenders if people were better informed about the tremendous impact of elite deviance on society. Then again, this suggestion is mere conjecture since no study, to date, has provided a measure of what people really know about white-collar crime. Measuring public knowledge about elite deviance and comparing it to sentiments about white-collar crime would therefore represent an important contribution to the field.

The Present Study

The present study expands research on public opinions about white-collar crime by providing a much-needed measure of popular knowledge regarding elite deviance. The following research questions will be addressed:

1) *Is the public informed about elite deviance? If it is, to which extent are Americans informed about it?*

The field of epistemology (i.e., the branch of philosophy concerned with the study of knowledge) differentiates truth (evidence-based information) from belief (non-evidence-based opinion). One proposition is that knowledge may be better understood as justified true belief (Turri, 2012). That is, a belief becomes knowledge if it is both believed to be true and currently supported by extant research. Knowledge about elite deviance will therefore be conceptualized and operationalized as statements that according to extant research are commonly regarded as valid (e.g., superior harmful costs to society compared with street crime). As previously mentioned, since most Americans derive their information from the news media (Dowler, 2003;

Roberts & Doob, 1990; Surette, 1998), and because the news media do not report on cases of white-collar crime at the same rate they do on street crime (Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et al., 1991; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Lynch, Nalla & Miller, 1989; Lynch, Stretesky & Hammond, 2000), it is plausible to expect that the public is not well educated about the problem of elite deviance.

2) Is there a gap between the public's subjective and objective knowledge about white-collar crime?

By “subjective” knowledge, one must understand what people think they know about elite deviance. Conversely, “objective” knowledge refers to what they actually know about white-collar crime. Several studies in the social science have observed a gap between the public's subjective and objective knowledge about various issues related to crime and the criminal justice system. Phrased differently, there can be a discrepancy between what individuals believe they know and how informed they truly are. As previously mentioned, extant research on public knowledge about street crime has revealed gross differences between the people's perceived and actual risks of victimization (e.g., Doob & Roberts, 1983; Kappeler, Blumberg, & Potter, 1996; Macleans, 1995; Maguire & Pastore, 1995; Roberts & Stalans, 1997; Wilbanks, 1987). Such discrepancy was also observed with measures of public information about capital punishment (Bohm, 1987, 2003; Cochran & Chamlin, 2005). More specifically, those studies revealed that Americans were not as informed about issues related to the death penalty as they thought they were. Therefore, there might be a similar gap between what individuals think they know about white-collar crime and their actual level of information regarding elite deviance.

3) *Does the public hold common “myths” about elite deviance like they do regarding street crime?*

With knowledge about elite deviance conceptualized and operationalized as statements that according to extant research are commonly regarded as valid (e.g., superior harmful costs to society compared with street crime), unsubstantiated beliefs and arguments that have been debunked by science but which the American public might still commonly hold therefore constitute white-collar crime “myths”. As previously mentioned, research has identified public “myths” about street crime and the criminal justice system (e.g., Bohm, 1987; Doob & Roberts, 1983; Kappeler, Blumberg, & Potter, 1996; Macleans, 1995; Maguire & Pastore, 1995; Roberts & Stalans, 1997; Wilbanks, 1987). Given the limited coverage allotted to various forms of white-collar crime in the news media (Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et al., 1991; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Lynch, Nalla & Miller, 1989; Lynch, Stretesky & Hammond, 2000), it is very likely that Americans harbor specific “myths” regarding elite deviance. Recall that some studies have shown that people tend to rate white-collar crime as less serious than street crime until they are presented with evidence of the harmfulness of elite deviance (Albanese, 1995; Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010; Holtfreter et al., 2008). Consequently, the perceived harmlessness of white-collar crime compared to its street counterpart could be one of many prevalent “myths” about elite deviance. This study will therefore attempt to identify such public “myths”.

4) *What are the correlates of knowledge about white-collar crime?*

Because white-collar crime is such a complex social phenomenon, information about elite deviance might correlate positively with one’s general level of education. That is, those with higher degrees may have had previous exposure to relevant information about white-collar crime

and possess better knowledge and understanding of it. Still, it is not clear what other characteristics may be associated with knowledge about elite deviance, either positively or negatively. Does knowledge about white-collar crime vary by age, race, gender, profession, socioeconomic status, or other sociodemographic characteristics? Research suggests significant variations in perceived seriousness of white-collar crime among the public. More specifically, some studies found that older people and people of lower socioeconomic status tend to view elite deviance as somewhat more serious than conventional violent crime and narcotic offenses (Grabosky, Braithwaite, & Wilson, 1987; Hauber, Toonvliet, & Willemse, 1988). Further, Blacks tend to rate white-collar crimes directed at consumers (e.g., fraud, health threats and deception from the production and sale of goods and services, etc.) as somewhat more serious than do Whites, who seem more sensitive to white-collar crimes directed at businesses (e.g., forgery, embezzlement, etc., Miethe, 1984). However, it is not known whether such attitudes were dictated by prior knowledge of the problem.

5) Is knowledge about elite deviance correlated with public opinion regarding white-collar crime?

Several studies have found that because business executives, managers, criminal justice bureaucrats, and lawyers are aware of the complexity of white-collar crime compared to street crime, they tend not to consider harsh penal sanctions to be the most effective way to deal with it (Cole, 1983; Frank et al. 1989; Hartung, 1953; McCleary et al., 1981). Of course, it could be that such individuals are unlikely to support severe sentences for white-collar offenses because they are themselves part of the elite groups that engage in those acts. It is uncertain, however, whether and how knowledge about elite deviance may affect public opinion regarding its seriousness as well as the measures that should be taken against its perpetrators (e.g., type of legal actions,

choice of punishment, sentence severity, etc.).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Sample

The subjects in this study were recruited on Amazon's Mechanical Turk, a web service that coordinates the supply and demand of human intelligence tasks (HIT). More precisely, requesters post HITs that can be done on a computer (e.g., a survey) and workers volunteer to complete them based on the size of the reward (i.e., a small payment) and maximum time allotted for the completion. Mechanical Turk has recently become popular in the social sciences, particularly in psychology (e.g., Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2011; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Horton, Rand, & Zeckhauser, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010), but also in criminology (Nadler & McDonnell, 2012; Robinson, Goodwin, & Reising, 2010) as a source of data collection due to its low cost and convenient recruitment.

Mechanical Turk presents several advantages compared to other data collection methods. Recruitment is made easy by the increasing popularity of crowdsourcing platforms (i.e., websites that outsource jobs to an undefined group of individuals in the form of an open call). Crowdsourcing offers a large, stable pool of people willing to participate in experiments for very low pay (Mason & Suri, 2011). Since there are no travel costs, and because workers choose when they want to complete tasks, the effort to participate is much lower than in lab-based experiments. As a result, rewards typically range from \$0.01 to \$1, with most HITs being paid

\$0.10, which makes it a relatively inexpensive way to collect data. While compensation rate and task length do impact participation, payment levels do not appear to affect data quality. For example, mean alphas computer by Buhrmester and colleagues (2011) for data collected at three levels of compensation (2, 10, and 50 cents) were within one hundredth of a point across the three compensation levels. Further, research suggests that data collected on Mechanical Turk are as reliable as those obtained via traditional methods. More specifically, Paolacci and colleagues (2010) replicated standard judgment and decision-making experiments among subjects recruited on Mechanical Turk, online discussion boards, and at a large university and found the results to be qualitatively identical. In addition, Mechanical Turk workers are at least as representative of the U.S. population as traditional subject pools, with gender, race, and age all matching the population more closely than college undergraduate samples and Internet samples in general (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2011; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ieiritis, 2010).

Moreover, Amazon's terms of service follow standard guidelines in conducting research with human subjects. For instance, both requesters and workers must be at least 18 years of age. In addition, the system does not allow requesters to ask for identifying information, thus protecting workers' anonymity. More specifically, workers' IDs are anonymized strings that do not contain personally identifiable information. Subjects are further protected in that they can read brief descriptions and see previews of the tasks before accepting to work on them.

Informed consent is provided via a statement on the preview page of the HIT that explains the purpose, risks and benefits of the task, and where to contact the researcher (and/or IRB). The working conditions and hours are entirely determined by the worker and there is no direct or indirect obligation on the workers to do any unwanted work. Once they choose to

complete a task and effectively do so, the researcher who supplied that task pays them. Payment is denied if the task is not entirely completed, which helps ensure data quality and minimize attrition. Furthermore, confidentiality is facilitated by the use of external HITs. More specifically, by providing a survey link to another website instead of uploading the survey directly on Mechanical Turk, the data go straight from the worker to the external website (e.g., Qualtrics, a web-based survey service that provides advanced security and confidentiality for results with password protection) and are never available to Amazon.

Data Collection Process

Once approved by the IRB, a questionnaire was uploaded on Qualtrics and a survey link was made available on Mechanical Turk. The preview page included the title of the study and a brief description of the purpose, risks and benefits of the project. The name and contact information of the lead investigator (myself) and institutional review board were included. The description of the study stated that subjects' participation was voluntary, that in accordance with Amazon's terms of service their identity would remain anonymous, and that the information they would provide would not be tied to them in any way.

Also included was the payment amount and expected completion time. These two elements are important in determining sample size. Prior research suggests that recruiting 500 subjects on Mechanical Turk for a social science experiment is a realistic goal (see, e.g., Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2011; Buhrmester; Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Paolacci and colleagues (2010) posted a task that required workers to answer a 5-minute survey for \$0.10 and were still able to attract 131 workers. Because the instrument to be used in the present study was twice as long (pilot-testing showed that completion time was about 10 minutes) and admittedly more

complex, a monetary incentive of \$2.00 per respondent was proposed to maximize completion rate.

Prospective subjects were also informed that they could take the survey only once. Restricting a task to one attempt was made easy by Amazon's policy, which prevents workers from having multiple accounts. Moreover, while Mechanical Turk is available in several nations, it was possible to restrict the desired sample to one country only. This is a non-negligible advantage, given that the present study proposes to measure public knowledge and attitudes about elite deviance in the United States. Lastly, because it was uncertain how fast quality data would be obtained, it was decided that the survey would be initially available for one month and could be extended for another until the sample size goal had been reached.

Data collection took place on April 1st, 2013. The sample size goal of 500 participants was reached within only three hours. As previously mentioned, piloting of the instrument indicated that at least 10 minutes were necessary to read all questions carefully and provide honest answers. As a result, every survey completed in less than 10 minutes was considered unusable and subsequently deleted. Eliminating incomplete and/or dubious surveys yielded a final sample of 408 respondents. Overall participants rated the experience favorably. More specifically, several respondents took the time to email the lead investigator to comment on the interest they took in the survey's topic and expressed their desire to seek out further information about white-collar crime.

The demographic characteristics of the sample were somewhat representative of the overall American population. The 2010 United States Census indicates that the national median age is 36.8, that 50.8% of Americans are females, that 78% identify as Whites, 13.1% as Blacks, 1.1% as Middle Eastern, 1.2% as American Indians or Alaskan Natives, 5% as Asians, 0.2% as

Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders, and 16.7% as Hispanics. Comparatively, the median age in this study was 31, 49.8% of the respondents were females, 83.6% of them identified as Whites, 8.8% as Blacks, 0.5% as Middle Eastern, 0.5% as American Indians or Alaskan Natives, 5% as Asians, 0.2% as Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders, and 6.9% as Hispanics. Further, the median annual household income was between \$40,000 and \$49,000 (i.e., slightly lower than the national estimate of \$52,762). College graduates (Bachelor's degree or higher) accounted for 49.5% of the total sample (against only 28.2% at the national level), and 41.7% of the respondents were employed full-time (against 44.1% of the overall population).

It therefore appears that the largest discrepancies with national rates involve age, race/ethnicity, and education. These gaps can be explained by the choice of data collection method. Despite its increasing popularity, Amazon's Mechanical Turk is still a relatively new market place for work that is restricted to a specific category of individuals with knowledge of and interest in computer technologies and online crowdsourcing. Not surprisingly, these individuals are more likely to be younger and better educated. It is not clear, however, why racial and ethnic minorities were not more represented. A likely explanation is that while the proportion of Black and Hispanic Internet users has nearly doubled between 2000 and 2010, African-Americans and immigrant Spanish speakers are still less likely than Whites to go online (Smith, 2010). Despite its imperfections, the sample in this study is still an acceptable proxy for the American public, following national trends closely in terms of gender, household income and employment status distribution. Table A (see Appendix A) summarizes the descriptive statistics of the variables and measures that follow.

Measures

The questionnaire used in this study included five sections: (1) Respondent sociodemographic characteristics (items 1 to 17), (2) measures of public knowledge about elite deviance (items 18 to 27), (3) perceived seriousness of white-collar crimes compared with a baseline street crime (items 28 to 38), (4) punitiveness, including perceived seriousness of white-collar crimes involving physical risks compared to harmful street crimes with choice of prosecution process, sentence determination, and sentence severity (items 39 to 43), and (5) choice of attribution style (i.e., perceptions of white-collar offenders' motives; items 44 to 51).

Sociodemographic Control Variables

A sociodemographic questionnaire was used to control for certain variables that might account for variation in public information and opinions concerning elite deviance. As previously mentioned, these potential correlates of knowledge about white-collar crime include gender (0 = female, 1 = male), age (coded in years), and race (1 = White, 2 = Black or African American, 3 = Asian, 4 = Middle Eastern, 5 = Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 6 = American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 7 = Other). The following dummy variables were then created: Whites, Blacks, and Other race. Further, ethnicity was measured via the following options: Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (1 = yes, 2 = no) and then dichotomized (0 = Non-Hispanic, 1 = Hispanic).

In an effort to control for cultural differences in knowledge and opinions about white-collar crime, the region where the respondents grew up was also included (1 = North, 2 = East, 3 = South, 4 = West, 5 = Midwest, 6 = Other) and then dummy coded (1 = Northeast, 0 = Other)¹.

¹ ANOVAs between all six groups yielded statistically significant differences both in knowledge and opinion about white-collar crime for subjects from the North and from the East, which might be due to the industrial and financial history of Northeastern states.

Also included was participants' current residence (1 = A large central city (over 250,000), 2 = A medium size central city (50,000 to 250,000), 3 = Suburb of a large central city, 4 = Suburb of a medium size central city, 5 = An unincorporated area of a large central city (e.g., township, division, 6 = An unincorporated area of a medium central city, 7 = A small city (10,000 to 49,999), 8 = A town or village (2,500 to 9,999), 9 = An incorporated area less than 2,500 or an unincorporated area (1,000 to 2,499), and 10 = Open country within larger civil divisions (e.g., township, division). This variable was then dummy coded (0 = Rural, 1 = Urban).

Again, household income (1 = Under \$10,000, 2 = \$10,000-\$19,999, 3 = \$20,000-\$29,999, 4 = \$30,000-\$39,999, 5 = \$40,000-\$49,999, 6 = \$50,000-\$69,999, 7 = \$70,000-\$89,999, 8 = \$90,000-\$119,999, 9 = \$120,000-\$149,000, and 10 = More than \$150,000), and completed education (1 = Grade school or less, 2 = Some high school, 3 = High school graduate, 4 = 1 or more years of technical, vocational, or trade school, 5 = Some college, 6 = College graduate, 7 = 1 or more years of graduate, law, or medical school, and 8 = Advanced degree (e.g., Master's, Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.) were also included.

Further, a measure of profession seemed warranted. Recall that in previous studies, criminal justice elites did not consider harsh penal sanctions to be the most effective way to deal with such a complex phenomenon as white-collar crime (Cole, 1983; Frank et al. 1989; Hartung, 1953; McCleary et al., 1981). Measures of employment status and occupation were also included to determine whether individuals in different lines of work shared such opinion. Employment status was measured by asking subjects whether they were disabled, employed full-time, employed part-time, self-employed, or unemployed (including students, homemakers and retirees), and then dummy coded (0 = Not employed full-time, 1 = Employed full-time), Respondents were then asked which option best described their occupation. Importantly, to avoid

long response options the question was deliberately left open-ended. The coding system of the 2010 US census was subsequently used to provide a comprehensive measure of occupation.²

Moreover, political ideology was also included as they could potentially affect the subjects' perception of seriousness of elite deviance, particularly at the corporate level. More specifically, conservative subjects might support elements of neoliberal economics such as market deregulation, which has been shown to facilitate the commission of certain white-collar crimes (see, e.g., Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Rosoff, Pontell & Tillman, 2010). Such support, in turn, might lead them to overlook corporate crime. Conversely, those leaning toward the left end of the political spectrum might have had greater exposure to information about elite deviance through their favorite media source and be more critical of it. Political ideology was measured by asking the respondents to describe their personal social and political views (1 = Very liberal, 2 = Liberal, 3 = Somewhat liberal, 4 = Somewhat conservative, 5 = Conservative, and 6 = Very conservative). Political affiliation was measured via the following: "Republican Party", "Democrat Party", "Independent Party", "Reform Party", "Other", "I am not registered", and "I do not identify with any political party". The following dummy variables were then created: "Republican", "Democrat", "Other party", and "No party".

Lastly, because it is possible that one's religious affiliation might influence personal opinions regarding the ethicality of corporate crime, the subjects were asked which religion, if any, they identified with (1 = Catholicism, 2 = Protestantism, 3 = Judaism, 4 = Buddhism, 5 = Islam, 6 = Hinduism, 7 = Other, and 8 = None). Based on the respondents' answers, the

² ANOVAs and correlational analyses between profession, other predictors and all dependent variables yielded no significant pattern. The problem lies in the crude way in which the occupation variable was measured. Answers were for the most part ambiguous and difficult to code. For example, it was impossible to determine what "manager" referred to without any reference to the subjects' line of work. Consequently, it was decided that the occupation variable should be dropped from the analyses.

following dummy variables were then created: “Catholic”, “Protestant”, “Other religion”, and “No religion”. Further, those subjects who identified themselves as Protestant were asked to choose a particular denomination (1 = Baptist, 2 = Assembly of God, 3 = Church of Christ, 4 = Lutheran, 5 = Methodist, 6 = Presbyterian, 7 = Episcopalian, and 8 = Other). Based on previous classifications (e.g., Cochran & Beeghley, 1991; Smith, 1990), participants’ answers were then included into one of the following dummy-coded categories: “Conservative Protestant” (i.e., Baptists, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, and other), “Moderate Protestant” (i.e., Lutherans and Methodists), and “Liberal Protestant” (Presbyterians and Episcopalians).

Attribution Style

Because societal response might be determined by perceptions of the offender’s motives as much as by the nature of the crime itself, controlling for attribution styles seemed warranted. Attribution theory (Heider, 1958) addresses how people explain their own behavior and the behavior of others. Behaviors are generally attributed to two different causes: internal (dispositional) or external (situational). Research suggests that those who employ a dispositional attribution style consider that criminals choose to commit crime, which makes them morally culpable and, in turn, leads to more severe sentence options. Conversely, those who employ a situational attribution style tend to blame the system and view criminals as the victims of external social forces, which makes them less morally culpable and, in turn, leads to more lenient sentence options (Blatier, 2000; Carroll, 1978; Cochran, Boots, & Heide, 2003; Cullen, Clark, Cullen, & Mathers, 1985; Debuyst, 1985; Grasmick & McGill, 2004).

Applied to the present study, attribution theory might explain respondents’ choice of societal response to the three white-collar crime scenarios involving harmfulness. The participants were presented with a series of items measuring both dispositional and situational

attribution styles. Those items that measure the dispositional attribution style focus on the personal motive and characteristics (Wheeler et al., 1979) of the offender. They include “Most white-collar offenders are greedy individuals”, “Most white-collar offenders have bad characters and no personal ethics because they place profit above public safety”, “Most white-collar offenders choose to violate the law when the perceived benefits of their actions outweigh the perceived costs” and “Most white-collar offenders have the inability to control themselves”.

Conversely, those items that measure the situational attribution style focus on the business/environment type motivation (Wheeler et al., 1979), that is, systemic pressures or forces acting upon the offender. They include “Most white-collar offenders’ business environment promotes competition and encourages the commission of white-collar crimes”, “Most white-collar offenders are pressured/coerced by their superiors to reach business goals”, “Most white-collar offenders have a fiduciary responsibility (i.e., a legal or ethical relationship of trust) to their company’s shareholders”, and “Most white-collar offenders are otherwise law-abiding citizens who do not think that their business practices are really wrong”. The participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with each of these items. Response options for all these Likert-type items were as follows: 1 = “Strongly agree”, 2 = “Somewhat agree”, 3 = “Somewhat disagree”, and 4 = “Strongly disagree”.

The first four items tapping dispositional attribution were entered into a principal components factor analysis from which a single factor solution best fit these data (eigenvalue = 1.73). This factor explained 43.2 percent of the variation among those items and produced factor loadings from .22 and .78. After discarding the low self-control item, factor loadings from .65 and .8 emerged. Nevertheless, the Cronbach’s alpha reliability for this additive scale is .61,

which is under the commonly accepted threshold of .7 indicating a moderately reliable scale (Nunally, 1978).

The second four items tapping situational attribution did not fare any better. Once again a single factor solution best fit these data (eigenvalue = 1.51). This factor explained 37.7 percent of the variation among those items and produced factor loadings from .54 and .75. After dropping the fiduciary item, factor loadings from .62 and .74 were produced. However, the Cronbach's alpha reliability for this additive scale is .44, substantially lower than what would be considered acceptable.

Unnever and colleagues (2010) have suggested that people may not fall into either one category and might in fact evince both dispositional and situational attribution styles depending on the type of crime presented to them. Thus, using a bipolar scale (i.e., with dispositional items on one end and situational items on the other) or two separate scales simultaneously may not be the best way to measure complex opinions about crime. Consequently, attribution was measured via eight different variables, each reflecting a potential cause people regard white-collar crime as resulting from. In the tables presented in chapter 4 and 5, these variables are designated as "greed", "moral", "control", "choice", "influence", "fiduciary", "pressure", and "no wrong".

Knowledge about White-Collar Crime

Knowledge about elite deviance was measured via a two-pronged approach. More specifically, the instrument included measures of both subjective and objective knowledge. Again, since most Americans have been shown to rely on the news media as their main source of information (Dowler, 2003; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Surette, 1998), and because white-collar crime is not as widely reported as street crime (Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et

al., 1991; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006), there might be a considerable gap between the participants' perceived and actual knowledge about elite deviance.

Subjective knowledge

Subjective knowledge was measured several ways. First, respondents were asked to self-assess the degree to which they felt they were informed about white-collar crime (1 = Not informed, 2 = Somewhat informed, 3 = Informed, 4 = Very informed). Importantly, the participants were also asked about their primary sources of information (1 = Television news stations, 2 = Radio news stations 3 = Newspapers, 4 = Magazines, 5 = Books, 6 = Internet, and 7 = Other). Based on the subjects' answers, the following dummy variable was then created (0 = traditional media, 1 = Internet). Second, subjects were asked whether they previously had been exposed to relevant information about white-collar crime, and if so what medium they used to educate themselves (1 = College course, 2 = Movie/TV series, 3 = Documentary, 4 = Television news report, 5 = Newspaper article, 6 = Book, 7 = Other, and 8 = I have not been exposed to such information). Lastly, participants were asked how confident they felt about their answers to an objective knowledge questionnaire (1 = Not at all confident, 2 = Somewhat confident, 3 = Confident, and 4 = Very confident). This questionnaire is described in greater detail in the following section.

Objective knowledge

Objective knowledge was measured via a 10-item questionnaire that includes multiple-choice and true or false questions largely derived from the bank of test items developed for Rosoff, Pontell and Tillman's text *Profit Without Honor: White-Collar Crime and the Looting of America* (2010). One caveat when developing valid and reliable measures of public knowledge is to craft questions that are reasonably understandable to a large number of people with response

options that are not too specific. Rosoff and colleagues' test bank was originally supposed to be administered to students enrolled in a college course on white-collar crime. As such, it may not work well with a more heterogeneous population with probably little previous exposure to relevant information about elite deviance. To address this problem, only those items that tapped broad dimensions were selected while those that focus on specific examples and use precise figures in their response options were deliberately excluded. Moreover, several questions and answer options had to be rephrased to make them more accessible to a non-educated audience. This questionnaire taps ten different dimensions of elite deviance.

1) Meaning of the term "White-Collar" Crime

The first dimension is the meaning of white-collar crime. It is not at all certain that the public even knows and understands Sutherland's implicit reference to upper class professionals. This dimension was measured by asking respondents about the origin of the term (response options include "The types of victims", "The occupations of the perpetrators", and "The offenders' association with religion").

2) Financial Cost

The second dimension is the financial cost of elite deviance, which was measured by asking respondents how much they thought street crime cost the American public compared to white-collar crime. Response options included "Significantly less", "Somewhat less", "The costs are about the same", "Somewhat more", and "Significantly more". As previously mentioned, research indicates that street crime costs approximately \$18 billion to the public while the financial impact of white-collar crime on society due to fraud and various medical costs resulting from workplace injuries and illnesses (due to corporate negligence) and environmental pollution

exceeds a trillion dollars every year (Knowlton et al., 2011; Landrigan et al., 2002; Leigh et al., 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Rebovich & Jiandani, 2000; Reiman & Leighton, 2010).

3) Harmfulness

The third dimension is elite deviance's harmfulness and was measured by asking subjects how likely street crimes like assaults, murders, and muggings were to injure or kill people compared with white-collar crime. Response options were: "Significantly less likely", "Somewhat less likely", "As likely", "Somewhat more likely", and "Significantly more likely". Again, research indicates that the physical danger caused by elite deviance greatly exceeds that of street crime (Herbert & Landrigan, 2010; Kramer, 1984; Langrin, 1988; Leigh, 2010; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Reiman, 1998; Reiman & Leighton, 2010; Starfield, 2000). As previously mentioned, white-collar crime may harm or injure over 8,986,000 people every year and lead to the untimely death of another 283,600 people, that is, more than 20 times as many as street crime.

4) Legal Immunity

The fourth dimension is the relative legal immunity enjoyed by white-collar offenders compared with street criminals, and was measured by asking subjects how likely they believed someone who committed a street crime like burglary and stole \$1000 was to be convicted and to receive a similar sentence as someone who committed a white-collar crime like fraud and stole \$1000. Response options were: "Significantly less likely", "Somewhat less likely", "As likely", "Somewhat more likely", and "Significantly more likely". Again, research suggests that white-collar offenders are more likely to avoid criminal convictions and to receive more lenient sentences compared to those imposed upon street criminals (Calavita, Tillman, & Pontell, 1997; Maddan et al., 2011; Tillman & Pontell, 1992). Although recent research suggests a toughening

of white-collar crime prosecution (Payne, Dabney, & Ekhomu, 2011), individual offenders are still easier targets than are business organizations, possibly because establishing criminal intent for a corporation is a difficult task (Ashforth et al., 2008; Gottschalk, 2012).

5) Reckless Disregard

The fifth dimension is reckless disregard. While corporations typically escape convictions of purposeful intent to cause harm, they can be found guilty of engaging in acts they know to be dangerous while ignoring potential harmful consequences (Treiman, 1981). Reckless disregard was measured by asking respondents whether the following narrative was true or false: “Although Ford knew their Pinto model’s gas tank represented a safety defect, they chose not to invest in an inexpensive and safer design, reasoning that it would be cheaper to pay out expected wrongful death lawsuits. As a result, several people died in fiery crashes.” The answer is “true”.³

6) Medical Crime

The sixth dimension is medical crime and was measured by asking participants how many people in the U.S. they believed died from medical malpractice each year compared with criminal homicides. Response options included the following: “More”, “An equal number”, and “Fewer”. Recall that approximately 14,000 people die from homicide annually (UCR, 2010). Conversely, the empirical literature estimates that 225,000 victims die each year from medical crime (Starfield, 2000).

³ The car manufacturer giant avoided a sentence for criminal homicide by paying millions of dollars in compensatory and punitive damages after its refusal to redesign a defective fuel tank on the Pinto model had led to several deaths by burning in rear-end collisions. Such choice was the result of a risk/benefit calculation based on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s estimate for the dollar value of human life. Based on the numbers Ford used, the cost to implement the design change would have been \$137 million, almost three times as much as the \$49.5 million in compensation for deaths, injuries, and car damages. Ironically, though, it would have cost Ford a mere \$11.00 per vehicle to fix the problem (Leggett, 1999).

7) Human Trafficking

The seventh dimension is human trafficking in the United States. Subjects were asked whether they believed the statement “Human trafficking is more common in underdeveloped countries than in developed nations” was true or false. While the public may associate human trafficking with squalid living and working conditions in U.S. company-owned Southeast Asian sweatshops, the existence of domestic slavery among foreign workers on American soil has been documented.⁴

8) State-Corporate Crime

The eighth dimension is state-corporate crime and was measured by presenting subjects with the following statement and asking them whether they believed it was true: “Private American military companies have been accused of engaging in a number of human rights violations including the abuse and torture of detainees, shootings and killings of innocent civilians, destruction of property, and sexual harassment and rape”. The same statement can be found on the Amnesty International website to illustrate allegations of involvement in human rights violations such as torture at the American prison camp of Abu Ghraib, Iraq and the 2007 shootings of Iraqi civilians in Nisoor Square by private U.S. security contractor Academi (formerly Blackwater), which resulted in 17 deaths and 24 people injured.

⁴ For example, Berkeley’s Human Rights Center and the Washington D.C.-based, anti-slavery group Free the Slaves have evidenced illegal practices in over 90 American cities ranging from prostitution and sex services to forced labor (Gilmore, 2004). R&A harvesting, a farm labor contractor, used threats of violence to force 700 Mexican and Guatemalan workers to labor as Florida citrus pickers for little or no pay (Bales, 2004). Further, the “Boot the Bell” campaign, started by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), forced the fast food giant Taco Bell and parent company Yum Brands to ensure a minimum wage for tomato pickers, adopt a zero tolerance policy for slavery and to establish an “enforceable code of conduct” (Bales, 2004). McDonald’s followed but Burger King resisted until it was revealed that a private security firm owner hired by the chain had infiltrated the CIW (Soodalter & Bales, 2009).

9) Toxic Dumping

The ninth item taps the environmental crime dimension and asked participants to determine whether they believed landfills and toxic waste disposal sites were most likely to be located near African American communities (response options included “true” and “false”). As previously mentioned, research indicates that those sites do tend to be found close to disadvantaged, predominantly African American neighborhoods with very limited legal recourse (Lynch, 2004; Pueschel, Linakis, & Anderson, 1996; Roderick, 1992; Wargo, 1998; Colborn, Dumanoski, & Myers, 1997; Needleman et al., 1996; Pihl & Ervin, 1990; Dietrich et al., 2001; Lynch & Stretesky, 2001; 2004; Denno, 1990; Barnette, 1999).

10) Toxic Emissions

The tenth and final item also taps environmental crime by asking respondents whether they believed it was true that current levels of toxic emissions had not been reduced as much as they easily could have been (response options include “true” and “false”). A relatively new paradigm concerned with the impact of environmental crime, green criminology (Benton, 1998; Frank & Lynch, 1992; Groombridge, 1998; Lane, 1998; Lynch, 1990; Lynch & Stretesky, 2003; South, 1998; South & Beirne, 2006) interprets America’s refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol (an international treaty pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions), or to invest in modern, sustainable forms of energy (e.g., solar roofing in Florida) as being driven by corporate interests, simply because these progressive ventures are deemed financially detrimental to American corporations.

Each correct answer to those ten items was entered into an overall knowledge scale so that a percentage of correct answers could be calculated. The intent was to attribute a percent score to subjects, as would be the case if they had taken a test based on a 100-point grading

scale. As with subjective knowledge, the following grading policy was used: 90-100 = “Very informed”, 80-90 = “Informed”, 70-80 = “Somewhat informed”, and below 70 = “Not informed”. Further, a measure of “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence was provided. White-collar “myth” variables were created whenever subjects felt either “confident” or “very confident” about their answer to a knowledge item even though they chose the wrong response option. Similarly, white-collar “truth” variables were created each time participants picked the correct answer to a knowledge item while feeling “confident” or “very confident” about it. Subjects who felt “not confident” or only “somewhat confident” about their response yet answered correctly are hereupon classified as “lucky guessers”. Conversely, those who answered incorrectly while feeling either “not confident” or “somewhat confident” are arbitrarily referred to as “honestly uninformed”. Table 1 presents the classification of subjects based on the 2X2 cross-tabulation of answer correctness and confidence.

Table 1. Classification of Subjects Based on the 2X2 Cross-Tabulation of Answer Correctness and Confidence (N= 408)

		<i>Answer Correctness</i>	
		Yes	No
<i>Answer Confidence</i>	Yes	“Truth” Accepters	“Myth” Adherers
	No	Lucky Guessers	Honestly Uninformed

Sentiments about White-Collar Crime

The amount and quality of knowledge about elite deviance may help fashion public opinion regarding crimes of the powerful. As previously mentioned, while early research suggested that white-collar offenses such as fraud were not viewed as serious by the public as

violent crimes like robbery (Geis, 1973; Rossi et al., 1974; Sutherland, 1949; Wheeler et al., 1988), studies that provided respondents with examples of corporate wrongdoings involving injury or death have found support for more severe sanctions against such crimes (Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010; Holtfreter et al., 2008). These findings indicate that an informed audience might view white-collar crime more negatively than do uninformed citizens.

Public opinion about elite deviance was measured in several ways. First, the subjects were presented with a series of items derived from the 2010 National Public Survey on White-Collar Crime (Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010). These items consisted of eleven⁵ short scenarios involving two street crimes (i.e., burglary and assault) and nine different types of white-collar crime. The first of these scenarios described a burglar stealing \$10,000 worth of jewelry from a private residence while the owner was away on vacation. The second one tapped embezzlement by describing a bank teller befriending a customer and stealing \$10,000 out of his personal account over the course of two years. The third scenario described identity theft by a computer hacker who stole personal patient information from a healthcare clinic's database and then sold this information to a third party for \$10,000.

Scenario number four dealt with false charges added by a large manufacturing company to an invoice, costing a small business owner \$10,000. In scenario number 5, robbery and assault were described with someone attempting to rob several joggers in the park, and - despite the robbery being foiled - the joggers sustaining non-fatal injuries and receiving treatment at the hospital. Scenario number six described hacking, with an individual sending out viruses on the Internet and infecting many personal computers with software that allowed the hacker to

⁵ The National White-Collar Crime Center survey originally included 12 scenarios, one of which described overbilling ("A company overbills another company it supplies with heavy equipment, making an extra \$10,000 in unwarranted profits."). This last variable was inadvertently omitted in the present study.

distribute millions of spam. A pharmaceutical company falsely advertising as safe an anti-depressant drug it knew to be unsafe was described in scenario number seven; importantly, it was indicated that the drug was later found to be related to a string of random violent acts, costing the lives of several people.

Espionage was introduced in scenario number eight, with a former employee of a U.S. defense contractor selling nuclear secrets and other classified information he acquired during his employment to foreign governments. The ninth scenario tapped market rigging by describing a Wall Street financial firm that conspired to manipulate the precious metals market, profiting at the expense of other traders and owners of precious metals who were unaware of the price-fixing scheme. In the tenth scenario, counterfeiting was introduced by describing a person selling a counterfeit antique bracelet on an online auction site, misrepresenting its true value and making an extra \$1,000. Lastly, insurance overcharge was the main topic in the eleventh scenario; more specifically, an insurance agent was described as selling an insurance policy at an inflated price to an unsuspecting customer and pocketing an extra \$20,000.

Participants were then asked to compare the seriousness of each offense described in these scenarios with someone stealing a parked car worth \$10,000 (1 = Much less serious, 2 = Somewhat less serious, 3 = About as serious, 4 = Somewhat more serious, and 5 = Much more serious). Interestingly, with the exception of counterfeit sales, previous respondents rated these scenarios as being more serious than motor vehicle theft (Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010). These results tend to indicate that, when presented with several concrete examples of elite deviance, the people's level of indignation about white-collar crimes might increase relative to traditional crime. As such, they merit replication.

However, it could also be that the baseline crime scenario was not shocking enough. Perhaps a violent - instead of property - street crime would have invited a lower degree of perceived seriousness for the various white-collar crime scenarios. Recall that the National Public Survey on White-Collar Crime proposed to measure respondents' perceived offense seriousness by contrasting the abovementioned scenarios with a single baseline vignette describing a property crime (i.e. motor vehicle theft). With the exception of robbery (which only resulted in injuries) and false drug label, all the other scenarios described financially costly but not physically harmful offenses. This could explain why subjects only rated three of them as much more serious than the baseline scenario. To remedy this limitation, participants were also asked to read another five vignettes partly derived from Kennedy's ethics scenarios (2010), some describing violent street crimes and others harmful white-collar crimes.

Street crime scenarios included homicide ("Someone attempts to rob a couple while they are walking back to their car at night. The husband tries to disarm the attacker, but is shot by him. He later dies of his injuries."), and forcible rape ("Someone breaks into a dorm at night and forcibly rapes a female student."). Harmful white-collar crime scenarios included consumer safety violations endangering children ("Because of cost reductions, the materials used by a company to build a popular toy will present a potential hazard to the product's users. The company decides to manufacture and distribute the toy regardless of the risks."), illegal toxic waste disposal ("In order to increase profits and meet production goals, a manufacturing company uses production processes that allow for the release of pollutants into the water and air and exceed legal limits. Several people become seriously ill as a result."), and denial of risk and peril by failing to enforce safety measures on the workplace and to take responsibility for employees' toxic contamination ("A mining company fails to ensure safety measures such as

proper ventilation and the use of masks, goggles and gloves among its workers, and covers up evidence regarding the link between asbestos exposure and lung cancer deaths.”).

For each scenario, the respondents were asked to rate the seriousness of the offense (1 = Not very serious, 2 = Somewhat serious, 3 = Serious, and 4 = Very serious), decide how the case should be handled (1 = By some non-legal means, 2 = In a non-criminal court, 3 = In a criminal court), and determine the proper societal response (i.e., punishment) to them. Response options included fine, financial compensation for the victims, or imprisonment. Finally, subjects were also asked to choose specific dollar amounts for monetary sanctions via a 5-point ordinal scale (0 = No fine/compensation, 1 = Under \$100,000, 2 = \$100,000-\$499,000, 3 = \$500,000-\$999,999, 4 = Above \$1,000,000) as well as the number of years for incarceration via a 7-point ordinal scale (0 = No prison, 1 = 1-5 years, 2 = 6-10 years, 3 = 11-20 years, 4 = 21-30 years, 5 = 31-40 years, 6 = 41 years-life).

Data Analytic Plan

The first research question asks two different things: (1) Whether the public is informed about elite deviance, and (2) the extent to which it is. To answer these questions, the percentage of correct answers to the objective knowledge questionnaire will first be compared to the aforementioned total knowledge index. As previously mentioned, a percent score of 70 or below will indicate a lack of information. Descriptive statistics will also be used to describe the distribution of correct answers for each of the ten knowledge questionnaire items.

The second research question asks to compare objective and subjective knowledge about white-collar crime. Any discrepancy between perceived and actual levels of information will be revealed by comparing the number of correct answers to the objective knowledge questions with two measures of subjective knowledge: (1) Subjects' answers to the question asking how

informed they felt they were about elite deviance, and (2) their answers as to how confident they were that they answered the knowledge items correctly. Further, respondents' primary sources of information will be correlated with objective knowledge to determine which types of media have the highest educational value relative to white-collar crime.

Examining subjects' answers to the ten dimensions of elite deviance tapped by the knowledge questionnaire will answer the third research question asking whether the public holds common "myths" about elite deviance like it does regarding street crime. More precisely, statistically significant variation in the answers will indicate that knowledge about these issues is normally distributed among the American people. However, if the distribution is skewed toward incorrect answers, it could be that a majority of respondents share certain misconceptions about white-collar crime. Once again, the term "myth" refers to more than a simple assumption and involves a certain amount of confidence that a particular belief is true. As previously mentioned, white-collar crime "myths" will be operationalized as every knowledge item that subjects answered incorrectly while feeling confident that they were right. Descriptive statistics will be used to determine which dimensions of the knowledge questionnaire seem to be popular "myths" about elite deviance.

The fourth research question as to whether public information about elite deviance has specific sociodemographic correlates will be answered via simple bivariate zero-order correlations between the objective knowledge variable and the abovementioned sociodemographic characteristics including gender, age, race/ethnicity, education level, employment status, household income, area of residence, region where the subjects grew up, political ideology, religious affiliation, source of information, and attribution style (i.e.,

dispositional [attributing guilt to the offender] or situational [attributing guilt to external factors]).

Finally, the fifth research question as to whether knowledge about white-collar crime is correlated with attitudes towards elite deviance will be answered by correlating objective knowledge with several measures of opinion: 1) Perceived seriousness of financially costly and harmful white-collar crimes, as well as violent and property street crimes, and 2) respondents' punitiveness. Punitive scales include choice of prosecutorial process (i.e., by some non-legal means, in a non-criminal court, or in a criminal court) for the perpetrators, choice of punishment (i.e., fine, monetary compensation, or prison), and punishment severity (i.e., amounts in dollars for the monetary sanctions and number of years in prison).

CHAPTER FOUR: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of statistical analyses and provides answers to each of the five research questions. As previously mentioned, those questions include (1) the extent of public knowledge about elite deviance, (2) whether a gap exists between subjective (perceived) and objective (actual) knowledge, (3) the existence of popular “myths” about elite deviance, (4) the correlates of knowledge about white-collar crime, and (5) whether such knowledge is correlated with attitudes towards elite deviance. Such attitudes comprise (a) participants’ perceived seriousness of financially costly and harmful white-collar crimes as well as property and violent street crimes, and (b) respondents’ punitiveness, including choice of prosecutorial process and punishment (i.e., monetary compensation, fine, and/or prison sentence), and punishment severity.

Public Knowledge about Elite Deviance

Subjective vs. Objective Knowledge

The first two research questions pertain to the extent of lay knowledge about white-collar crime. In other words, how much does the American public really know about elite deviance? Further, is there a gap between participants’ perceived and actual knowledge? To answer these questions, participants were first asked to self-assess their level of familiarity with the topic. Subsequently, a measure of actual knowledge about white-collar crime was provided via a 10-

item multiple-choice and true/false questionnaire, which then served as a 100-point knowledge scale. Again, the following grading policy was used: 90-100 = “Very informed”, 80-90 = “Informed”, 70-80 = “Somewhat informed”, and below 70 = “Not informed”. As is evident in Table 2 (which compares percent subjective and objective knowledge about white-collar crime), respondents tended to overestimate their actual level of information about elite deviance. While 75.5% were found to be “not very informed” about the subject, only 12.5% clearly admitted lacking knowledge in this area. Further, whereas 73.5% estimated being “somewhat informed”, a mere 14.7% objectively deserves to be referred to as such. It should be noted, however, that a mere 14% estimated being either “informed” or “very informed”. These findings suggest that although participants overestimated their true level of knowledge about white-collar crime, they did not feel confident enough to rate their knowledge of elite deviance highly.

Table 3 provides a more in-depth report of participants’ objective knowledge about white-collar crime by presenting the percentage of subjects with scores on the overall knowledge scale. Recall that based on the classification that was adopted in this study, a score of at least 70% (i.e., 7 correct answers) was necessary to be deemed “somewhat informed”. Only about one fourth of the sample scored above that cut-off point. Further, only 7.4% answered enough questions correctly to be considered “informed” and a mere 2.4% were found to be “very informed” about elite deviance. Since respondents were found to be, at best, superficially informed about white-collar crime, understanding their primary source of information seemed warranted. Eighty-one point one percent cited the Internet as their medium of choice for keeping informed of important issues, far above television news stations (15%) and other traditional forms of media. However, when asked whether they had

been previously exposed to relevant information about white-collar crime, only 3.2% mentioned the Web as their prior source of knowledge. Instead, 38.5% reported having received some form of information about the subject by watching television news reports, 12% by reading newspaper articles, 10.3% by watching documentaries, 9.3% by watching movie/TV series, and only 6.6% by taking a college course. Further, 18.1% admitted having never received any form of information about white-collar crime.

As previously mentioned, white-collar crime is generally underreported by the news media compared with street crime (Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et al., 1991; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Lynch, Nalla & Miller, 1989; Lynch, Stretesky & Hammond, 2000). Admittedly, so little time allotted to the coverage of elite deviance may not suffice to thoroughly educate television audiences about this multi-faceted social issue. Since a majority of participants rely on TV news reports as their main source of information about white-collar crime, their apparent lack of knowledge about the topic is therefore not at all surprising. What remains to be seen is whether subjects were more informed about certain aspects of elite deviance than others, and whether their level of confidence in their answers to questions tapping those specific dimensions matched their degree of knowledge.

Recall that this study's conceptualization of knowledge relies on a fourfold classification based on the intersections of answer correctness and confidence: (1) "Truth" accepters (i.e., answered questions both correctly and confidently), (2) lucky guessers (i.e., answered questions correctly but not confidently), (3) "myth" adherers (i.e., answered questions incorrectly but confidently), and (4) honestly uninformed (i.e., answered questions incorrectly and without confidence). Table 4 presents the percentage of subjects falling in each of these four categories along with the mean score on the overall knowledge scale, and

percent correct, percent incorrect and percent confident on the ten items that comprise it. The following is a description of these data.

Percent Correct

The second column in Table 4 presents the mean score on the overall knowledge scale and the percent correct on the ten items that comprise it. With an average overall score of 54.9 out of 100, the sample in this study was far from reaching the cut-off point of 70 meant to represent “somewhat informed” subjects. Nevertheless, it appears that participants’ level of knowledge varied greatly depending on which aspects of the topic they were addressing. For example, a large proportion (89.2%) of respondents correctly indicated that the term “white-collar crime” is based on the occupation of the perpetrators. However, only 23.8% answered that street crime costs significantly less to the American public than does white-collar crime. Interestingly, very few (3.2%) estimated that statistically, street crimes like assaults, murders, and muggings are significantly less likely to injure or kill people than is white-collar crime. Further, only a third (32.8%) indicated that someone who commits a street crime like burglary and steals \$1,000 is significantly more likely to be convicted than someone who commits a white-collar crime like fraud and steals the exact same amount of money.

Moreover, while a large percentage (75.5%) deemed the description of the Ford Pinto case accurate, only 38.2% seemed to agree that more people in the U.S. die each year from medical malpractice than from criminal homicide. In addition, although less than a third (30.9%) correctly indicated that the statement pertaining to human trafficking was false, 66.7% got the toxic dumping question right. Lastly, an overwhelming majority of respondents correctly answered those questions that tapped the dimensions of state-corporate

crime (91.2%) and toxic emissions (97.1%). Though necessary, participants' correct responses are nonetheless not sufficient to provide evidence of knowledge about white-collar crime. Only by comparing subjects' answers to how confident they felt about them can we (1) provide a valid indicator of knowledge (Hunt, 2003) and (2) determine which of the four abovementioned categories to which subjects belong (i.e., "truth" accepters, lucky guessers, "myth" adherers, and honestly uninformed).

Percent Confident

The fourth column in Table 4 presents participants' percent confident in their answers to the knowledge scale. Interestingly, subjects were not very confident about their choices, even when they did respond correctly. Recall that the average overall score on the knowledge scale was 54.9. Comparatively, the average overall level of confidence was only 49.9. A closer look at each individual item reveals further gaps. While 89.2% of the sample correctly answered the question pertaining to the meaning of the term "white-collar crime," fewer subjects (71.8%) felt confident about their choice. Similarly, subjects evinced little confidence in their answer to the item that tapped reckless disregard (30.1%) compared to the 75.5% who chose the right answer. A similar finding is echoed in the question about medical crime. More specifically, while 38.2% picked the correct answer, only 25.7% felt confident about their choice.

Moreover, compared to the 91.2% who correctly indicated as true the statement that private American military companies have been accused of engaging in a number of human rights violations, only 61.2% were confident in their answer. Likewise, while 66.7% correctly answered the question that asked whether landfills and toxic waste disposal sites are more likely to be located near African American communities, only 39.2% were confident

about their choice. Further, while almost three fourth of the sample (74.8%) were confident in their answer to the question that asked whether toxic emissions could be reduced much more if industries agreed to employ appropriate technologies, a much larger percentage (97.1%) answered that question correctly.

Nevertheless, a reverse gap between answer correctness and confidence could be observed in regard to four items. More precisely, whereas only 23.8% seemed to agree that white-collar crime is significantly more financially costly to society than is street crime, a somewhat larger percentage (27.7%) felt confident in their answer. A similar gap emerged with the item that tapped the legal immunity of white-collar offenders compared to street criminals. More precisely, while a mere 32.8% found the right answer, 58.5% were positive about their choice. Likewise, while 43.4% were certain that they answered the item that tapped human trafficking correctly, only 30.9% actually did. The greatest gap that could be observed had to do with the item tapping the harmfulness of elite deviance. Whereas very few (3.2%) subjects correctly indicated that white-collar crime claims more lives annually than does street crime, 66.2% of the sample were certain that they chose the correct answer. This outstanding discrepancy suggests that participants in this study had difficulty ascribing the concept of physical harm to crimes of the powerful.

Two important findings emerge from this analysis. First, as far as knowledge is concerned, participants seemed more informed about certain dimensions of white-collar crime than they are about others. More specifically, a majority of respondents were familiar with the term “white-collar crime” and its actual meaning. Further, subjects were found to be quite knowledgeable about some of the harmful activities that some corporations undertake (e.g., reckless disregard for customers’ safety, human rights violations in occupied countries,

and reluctance to implement pollution-reducing policies). Nevertheless, respondents were less likely to acknowledge the overwhelming physical harmfulness of white-collar crime compared to street crime, and tended - albeit to a lesser degree - to underestimate the former's considerable financial burden on society. Similarly, respondents were reluctant to recognize the fact that medical crime claims more lives every year than do criminal homicides, or to realize that white-collar offenders are statistically more likely than street criminals to avoid criminal prosecutions.

Second, except for a few items (tapping the harmfulness of elite deviance, the relative legal immunity of white-collar offenders, human trafficking in developed nations and - to a lesser degree - the financial cost of white-collar crime), the percentage of questions answered confidently was systematically lower than that of correct answers. This finding suggests that respondents may not be familiar enough with the subject and might have chosen the right answers by chance alone. The next step is thus to determine the percentage of participants who qualify as "truth" accepters rather than lucky guessers.

"Truth" Accepters vs. Lucky Guessers

Columns 5 and 6 in Table 4 present the percentage of "truth" accepters and lucky guessers, respectively. Once again, while this classification refers to subjects who answered correctly, the main difference between these two categories lies in how confident participants felt about their answers. Phrased differently, whereas "truth" accepters responded both correctly and confidently, lucky guessers did not evince such confidence and may have picked the right answers by chance alone. First of all, the overall percentage of "truth" adherers (32.8%) is larger than that of lucky guessers (22.1%). That is, the proportion of subjects who answered correctly while feeling confident about their choice was generally

greater than that of participants who chose the right answers as a result of a guess. Such gap is particularly noticeable in regard to the items tapping the meaning of the term “white-collar crime” (66.9% of “truth” adherers vs. 22.3% of lucky guessers), legal immunity (27.2% vs. 5.6%, respectively), state corporate crime (60.3% vs. 30.9%), and toxic emissions (73.8% vs. 23.3%).

However, the gap is reversed with the items tapping reckless disregard (27.5% of “truth” accepters vs. 48% of lucky guessers), medical crime (13.2% vs. 25%), human trafficking (11% vs. 19.9%), and toxic dumping (31.4% vs. 35.3%). That is, for these items, it appears that luck more than actual knowledge can explain correct answers. Discrepancies are nevertheless far less visible with the items that tapped the financial cost (13.7% vs. 10.1%) and harmfulness (2.7% vs. 0.5%) of elite deviance. Recall that participants scored particularly poorly on the question pertaining to the greater physical harmfulness of elite deviance compared to street crime (only 3.2% answered it correctly). However, 66.2% were confident about their answer, a finding consistent with the “myth” adherence taxon used in this study. The next step is therefore to distinguish “myth” adherers from those subjects who were honestly uninformed.

“Myth” Adherers vs. Honestly Uninformed Subjects

The third research question asks whether the American public adheres to “myths” about white-collar crime as it does with street crime. Again, “myth” adherence in this study is operationalized as an incorrect answer held with confidence. Columns 7 and 8 of Table 4 present the percentage of “myth” adherers and honestly uninformed subjects, respectively. The overall proportion of respondents who gave incorrect answers without feeling confident about their choice (28.6%) was greater than that of respondents who adhered to “myths”

(16.5%). Such gap was larger for those items that tapped the financial cost of white-collar crime (62.2% vs. 14%), legal immunity (42% vs. 25.2%), reckless disregard (21.8% vs. 2.7%), medical crime (49.3% vs. 12.5%), and toxic dumping (25.5% vs. 7.8%), and smaller in regard to state corporate crime (7.8% vs. 1%), the meaning of the term “white-collar crime” (5.9% vs. 4.9%), human trafficking (36.7% vs. 32.4%), and toxic emissions (1.9% vs. 1%). However, the gap was reversed with the item that tapped the harmfulness of elite deviance; more specifically, the percentage of subjects who gave a wrong answer while stubbornly sticking to their positions was almost double that of participants who answered incorrectly yet with no confidence (63.5% vs. 33.3%, respectively).

It therefore appears that the crux of the concept of “myths” about white-collar crime lies within the dimensions of harmfulness, human trafficking, and legal immunity. One may already discern two interesting patterns from these findings. First, an important number of subjects seem to share a deeply rooted notion that elite deviance represents more of a financial threat to society than a physical one. Second, some answers suggest trust in the institutions of the American criminal justice system belied by subjects’ reluctance to admit that U.S. corporations, though believed to engage in unethical acts abroad, can do the same in the United States with relative impunity. These conjectures will be more thoroughly discussed in chapter six.

Conclusion

In summation, it appears that participants in this study may not be sufficiently knowledgeable about elite deviance. On average they scored well below the cut-off point meant to represent “somewhat informed” respondents. Further, the gap between correct answers and actual “truths” about white-collar crime suggests a lack of confidence among

participants in their knowledge about the subject. In fact, while they overestimated their actual level of information about elite deviance, few of them considered themselves very informed, and almost one fifth of the sample confessed to having never received any kind of information about it. Lastly, the existence of popular “myths” about white-collar crime is seemingly supported by respondents’ reluctance to acknowledge the greater harmfulness of elite deviance over street crime and - to a certain extent - that specific white-collar offenses believed to be more common in underdeveloped nations can be committed in America with little to no legal repercussion. Now that a measure of public knowledge about white-collar crime has been established, determining its correlates seems warranted as it is uncertain which specific demographic variables may be associated with either the acceptance of “truths” or the adherence to “myths” regarding elite deviance.

Correlates of Knowledge about Elite Deviance

The fourth research question asks what are the correlates of knowledge about white-collar crime. Table 5 presents the results of one-way between subjects ANOVAs in the effect of sociodemographic predictors of knowledge about white-collar crime, “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence. F-tests and effect sizes (eta squared) are reported. Analysis of variance showed significant differences in knowledge about elite deviance in regard to the region where subjects grew up [$F(4, 403) = 2.44, p < .05, \eta^2 = .024$], their level of education [$F(6, 401) = 4.48, p < .000, \eta^2 = .06$], their political ideology [$F(5, 402) = 2.87, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$], their religious affiliation [$F(7, 400) = 2.57, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$], as well as attribution of blame to choice [$F(3, 404) = 2.99, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$] and to outward influences [$F(3, 404) = 5.84, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$]. However, the eta squared statistics indicated small to moderate effect sizes.

Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's test failed to find any statistically significant mean group differences for the region where subjects grew up and attribution of blame to choice. Subjects who held an advanced degree ($M = 6.27$, $SD = 1.46$) were found to be more knowledgeable about white-collar crime than those who only completed high school ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.37$), one or more years of technical, vocational, or trade school ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.61$), and some college ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.52$). Further, participants who identified as "very liberal" ($M = 6.02$, $SD = 1.57$) were statistically more knowledgeable about elite deviance than were "somewhat conservative" subjects ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.47$). In addition, Protestant respondents ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.56$) were less knowledgeable about white-collar crime compared to subjects who reported belonging to no religion ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.54$). Lastly, those who strongly agreed that white-collar crime is mainly the result of business environmental influences ($M = 5.96$, $SD = 1.52$) were more knowledgeable than subjects who somewhat agreed ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 1.54$), somewhat disagreed ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.45$) and strongly disagreed ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.52$).

With respect to "truth" acceptance, significant differences were found as far as subjects' level of education [$F(6, 401) = 3.47$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .05$], political views [$F(5, 402) = 4.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$], political affiliation [$F(5, 402) = 2.91$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$], as well as attribution of blame to low self-control [$F(3, 404) = 4.33$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$] and to outward influences [$F(3, 404) = 5.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$]. However, it should be noted that eta squared statistics once again indicated only small to medium effect sizes. Tukey post hoc comparisons showed that subjects with an advanced degree (e.g., master's, Ph.D., M.D., J.D., etc.) were more likely to accept "truths" about elite deviance ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.99$) than were those who only completed high school ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.77$) and one or more years of

technical, vocational, or trade school ($M = 3.58, SD = 1.68$).

Moreover, participants who identified as “very liberal” were more likely to be “truth” accepters ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.85$) than were all other subjects. Further, Republicans were less likely to accept “truths” ($M = 2.75, SD = 1.67$) compared with Independents ($M = 3.75, SD = 1.92$). In addition, those who somewhat disagreed with the notion that white-collar crime results from low self-control were less likely to be “truth” accepters ($M = 2.86, SD = 1.62$) than were those who strongly disagreed ($M = 3.56, SD = 1.95$) and somewhat agreed ($M = 3.58, SD = 1.97$). Lastly, those who strongly agreed that elite deviance is a consequence of negative business environment influences were more likely to accept “truths” ($M = 3.87, SD = 1.92$) compared to those who somewhat disagreed ($M = 3.03, SD = 1.83$) and somewhat agreed ($M = 3.08, SD = 1.75$).

In regard to “myth” adherence, significant group differences were found for race [$F(6, 401) = 3.24, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$], but post hoc comparisons could not be performed due to one category (“Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander”) having less than two cases. An independent sample t test using the dichotomized variable “White” showed a significant difference, $t(406) = -2.65, p < .01$, with white subjects ($M = 1.56, SD = .128$) being less likely than their non-white counterparts ($M = 2.00, SD = .165$) to adhere to “myths” about elite deviance. However, Cohen’s effect size ($d = .30$) suggested modest practical significance. Similar differences emerged in regard to the region where subjects grew up [$F(4, 403) = 2.93, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$]. More specifically, “myth” adherence was higher among subjects who grew up in northern states ($M = 2.06, SD = 1.43$) than among those who grew up in the Midwest ($M = 1.25, SD = .98$). Although small but significant differences emerged for income [$F(9, 398) = 2.41, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$], post hoc comparisons using Tukey’s test

failed to find any mean group differences.

Significant differences emerged in regard to the type of information source that subjects used [$F(6, 401) = 2.63, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$]. Once again, post hoc comparisons could not be completed due to several groups having less than two cases. An independent samples t test using the dichotomized variable “Internet” yielded a significant difference, $t(406) = -3.15, p < .01$, with web users ($M = 1.55, SD = 1.29$) being less likely to adhere to “myths” about elite deviance than are those who relied on traditional media ($M = 2.09, SD = 1.63$). Cohen’s effect size ($d = .37$) suggested moderate practical significance. Further differences emerged for attribution of blame to outward influences [$F(3, 404) = 4.39, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$]. More precisely, subjects who strongly disagreed that the commission of elite deviance is encouraged by white-collar offenders’ business environment ($M = 2.49, SD = 1.70$) were more likely to be “myth” adherers than all other subjects.

Finally, small but significant mean group differences could be observed for attribution of blame to pressure to succeed [$F(3, 404) = 2.68, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$]. More specifically, those who strongly disagreed that white-collar offenders are coerced by their superiors to reach business goals ($M = 2.53, SD = 1.77$) were more likely than all other participants to adhere to “myths”. Taken together, these results suggest small yet statistically significant differences in knowledge about white-collar crime as well as in the acceptance of “truths” and adherence to “myths” about elite deviance. As such, they warrant further investigation.

Table 6 presents zero-order correlations between sociodemographic characteristics, knowledge about elite deviance, “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence. Correlation coefficients reported are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s ρ

when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors. Importantly, it should be noted that the majority of the correlations failed to attain statistical significance. Further, significant associations tended to be weak (i.e., less than +/- 0.20). Although no difference was found for gender in terms of overall knowledge about white-collar crime, statistically significant differences emerged for “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence. More specifically, men were not only more likely to accept “truths” ($r = .127$) but also to adhere to “myths” ($r = .160$). Recall that “truths” and “myths” were operationalized as subjects’ confidence in correct or incorrect answers, respectively. It therefore appears that males were more confident in their response choices than were their female counterparts who showed more reservation. These findings are concordant with previous research suggesting that women tend to express less confidence in their self-assessments (Clark & Zehr, 1993; Smith, Morrison, & Wolf, 1994), whereas men evince greater belief in their scholarly abilities (Sax & Harper, 2007). As for race, Whites were more knowledgeable ($r = .154$) and less likely to adhere to “myths” ($r = -.131$) while Blacks ($r = .114$) were more likely to adhere to them. Further, Hispanics were less likely to accept “truths” than non-Hispanics ($r = -.110$). Moreover, education was positively correlated with knowledge ($r = .219$) and “truth” acceptance ($r = .175$).

Statistically significant relationships were also found for political ideology. Recall that measures of political views and affiliation were included as potential correlates of knowledge about white-collar crime due to the fact that right-wing politics tends to support elements of neoliberal economics such as market deregulation, which has been shown to facilitate the commission of certain white-collar crimes (see, e.g., Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Rosoff, Pontell & Tillman, 2010). In turn, such attitudes may lead conservatives to

discard information that equates corporations with street criminals. As expected, more politically conservative subjects and Republicans were less knowledgeable about white-collar crime ($r = -.158$ and $.113$, respectively) and less likely to accept “truths” ($r = -.142$ and $-.129$, respectively). Results for conservative Protestants mirror those findings. More specifically, they were also less knowledgeable ($r = -.142$) and less likely to admit “truths” about elite deviance ($r = .142$). In fact, subjects who reported not having any religion were more knowledgeable ($r = .140$) and more likely to accept “truths” ($r = .118$).

Perhaps more interestingly, those who selected the Internet as their main source of information relative to other traditional media were less likely to adhere to “myths” ($r = -.155$). Such finding suggests that the Web represents a formidable educational platform, at least for active Internet users. From social networks to non-profit organizations disclosing classified information (e.g., WikiLeaks), websites may provide their users with a wider variety of sensitive topics than do official news media, which are usually owned by corporations and sometimes serve a specific political agenda.

The results are more ambiguous in regard to attribution of blame. While those subjects who believed that white-collar crime is the result of low moral standards were both more knowledgeable ($r = .140$) and more likely to accept “truths” about elite deviance ($r = .118$), similar findings were found among those participants prone to believe white-collar offenders are otherwise law-abiding citizens who see no wrong in their actions ($r = .182$ and $.151$, respectively). Similarly, respondents who agreed that pressure to succeed causes elite deviance (i.e., a situational attribution style) were also found to be more knowledgeable about the topic ($r = .119$).

In summation, despite very weak correlation coefficients no greater than ± 0.20 and

most failing to attain statistical significance, it appears that respondents' gender, race/ethnicity, income, education, political ideology, religious affiliation, source of information, and attribution style were associated with their level of general knowledge about white-collar crime, as well as their "truth" acceptance and "myth" adherence. Having established generally what participants *know* about elite deviance, what remains to be seen is how they *feel* about it. In other words, what are respondents' attitudes and opinions about white-collar offenses and their perpetrators? How serious do they perceive those acts to be relative to street crime? Moreover, what do they believe is the appropriate societal response (i.e., how should society punish such offenders)? Further, do the same sociodemographic variables predict both knowledge and sentiments about white-collar crime? Lastly, are there any associations between subjects' knowledge, "truth" acceptance, and "myth" adherence, and their perceived seriousness of and punitiveness about elite deviance?

Opinions about Elite Deviance

Perceived Seriousness

The fifth and last research question asks whether knowledge about white-collar crime is correlated with attitudes towards elite deviance. In order to answer this question, one must first identify such sentiments. An important attitude about white-collar crime is respondents' perceived seriousness of such activities. The third National Public Survey on White-Collar Crime (Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010) features a valid measure of perceived seriousness of elite deviance and street crime. Its results are used in the present study for comparative purposes. Table 7 presents mean crime seriousness scores for white-collar and street crime compared with motor vehicle theft in the National White-Collar Crime Center Survey and the

present study⁶. Several findings are noteworthy. First of all, perceived seriousness was lower in this dissertation's sample than among the participants of the National White-Collar Crime Center's survey ($M = 3.9$ and 4.2 , respectively). That is, with the exception of espionage ($M = 4.8$), subjects in the present study rated all scenarios as less serious than did those in the Huff and colleagues' sample.

The largest discrepancy between both samples was observed with the scenario describing a hacker who infects computers with spam (mean difference = 1.2). Subjects in the National Public Survey on White-Collar Crime: (1) only rated counterfeit sales ($M = 2.9$) as equally serious as motor vehicle theft, (2) rated burglary ($M = 3.7$), invoice charges ($M = 3.8$), and hacking ($M = 3.9$) as somewhat more serious, and (3) considered embezzlement ($M = 4.1$), identity theft ($M = 4.3$), robbery ($M = 4$), false drug label ($M = 4.8$), espionage ($M = 4.8$), market rigging ($M = 4.3$) and insurance overcharge ($M = 4.4$) as much more serious. Conversely, in the present study, participants: (1) considered both hacking ($M = 2.7$) and counterfeit sales ($M = 2.3$) less serious offenses than stealing a parked car worth \$10,000, (2) considered that burglary ($M = 3.2$), embezzlement ($M = 3.7$), identify theft ($M = 3.9$), invoice charges ($M = 3.5$), robbery ($M = 3.6$), and insurance overcharge ($M = 3.7$) were only somewhat more serious, and (3) recognized only false drug labeling ($M = 4.7$), espionage ($M = 4.8$), and market rigging ($M = 4.2$) as much more serious issues.

Despite their relatively lenient rating of crime seriousness, it is important to note that subjects in the present study deemed false drug labeling, espionage, and market rigging as more serious offenses than a violent crime such as robbery that resulted in victims' hospitalization. Such attitudes might be a corollary to the acceptance of "truths" about elite

⁶ Tests of statistical difference between the two samples could not be run due to the NW3C's survey not reporting standard deviations.

deviance. Recall that “truth” accepters were more likely to accept information relative to state-corporate crime and the kind of unethical activities some large, powerful firms are alleged to engage in (e.g., environmental pollution, violating human rights in invaded countries, etc.). In fact, hostility toward organizational and high-status rather than individual and non-status offenders in this study’s sample mirrors the National White-Collar Crime Center’s findings. That is, in both samples, scenarios that described the unlawful activities of corporations or high-status offenders (i.e., false drug label, market rigging, espionage, etc.) were rated more negatively than those that depicted relatively powerless individuals (i.e., hacking, counterfeit sales, etc.). In summation, it can be said that, despite being less critical of crime in general (a finding to be discussed in chapter six), subjects in this dissertation rated various instances of white-collar crime more negatively than they did street crime.

How do such attitudes hold when comparing white-collar crimes with more harmful street crimes? Table 8 presents the results of paired samples *t*-tests to compare mean perceived seriousness of scenarios describing both physically injurious white-collar crimes (i.e., knowingly manufacturing a potentially dangerous toy, releasing deadly pollutants in a river, and knowingly exposing workers to asbestos) and violent street crimes (i.e., murder and forcible rape). All scenarios have a mean above 3.00, which is the score meant to represent “serious” offenses. As could be expected, homicide ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.36$) and forcible rape ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.24$) were perceived to be more serious than the white-collar crimes described. More precisely, the mean for the murder scenario was statistically higher than those for the defective toy vignette ($t = 12.10$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.60$), the deadly pollutants scenario ($t = 11.50$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.57$), and the asbestos exposure scenario ($t = 6.68$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.33$). Similarly, rape was statistically perceived as more serious than consumer safety

violation ($t = 13.12, p < .01, d = 0.65$), toxic dumping ($t = 12.89, p < .01, d = 0.64$), and reckless endangerment of employees ($t = 8.13, p < .01, d = 0.40$). In all cases, Cohen's effect sizes suggested small to moderate practical significance. Conversely, the means for the two street crime scenarios were the only ones to not statistically differ from one another.

Of the three harmful white-collar crime scenarios, the one describing the deliberate manufacturing of a defective toy ($M = 3.43, SD = 0.76$) was considered less serious than the toxic dumping scenario ($M = 3.51, SD = 0.64, t = -1.98, p < .05, d = -0.10$) and the asbestos exposure scenario ($M = 3.72, SD = 0.52, t = -7.76, p < .01, d = -0.38$). However, Cohen's effect sizes were this time smaller. Similarly, releasing deadly pollutants was considered less serious than the reckless endangerment of employees ($t = -7.07, p < .01, d = -0.35$). This should come as no surprise since the defective toy scenario only alluded to a potential risk whereas the toxic dumping vignette referred to people falling "seriously ill", and the words "cancer" and "deaths" were mentioned in the asbestos exposure scenario. Perhaps a clearer mention of harm resulting from consumer safety violation might have invited higher perceived seriousness.

Still, the forcible rape scenario was judged more negatively than all three examples of white-collar crime, including the asbestos exposure vignette in which employees die from a lethal disease contracted in the workplace. This is surprising since, despite the violent nature of sexual assault, no mention of death was made. It is possible that contextual details influenced respondents' attitudes. The rape victim was assaulted in her own bedroom, which might have made the crime appear even more frightening. Because delayed victimization is a common characteristic of white-collar crime (e.g., work-related diseases may take years before being diagnosed and attributed to one's professional activity), elite deviance may not

elicit the same amount of shock and fear, which might in turn explain this study sample's lower level of perceived seriousness of such offenses. It is not certain, however, whether similar differences exist in punitiveness.

Punitiveness

The second attitude about elite deviance measured was subjects' level of punitiveness for the abovementioned harmful white-collar offenses compared with the two violent street crimes. Measures of punitiveness included (a) choice of prosecution process (i.e., by some non-legal means, in a non-criminal court, or in a criminal court), (b) punishment for their perpetrators (i.e., fine, monetary compensation, and/or prison) and (c) sentence severity (i.e., in dollar amounts and/or number of years in prison). Table 9 presents the results of paired samples *t*-tests to compare subjects' choice of prosecutorial process for white-collar crime and street crime. First of all, no subject chose the non-legal means alternative for any of the five scenarios. Conversely, homicide was the only scenario for which every participant recommended the perpetrator be tried in a criminal court ($M = 3.00, SD = 0.00$).

In fact, the murder scenario was the only one to be statistically different from all other instances of crime described, including white-collar offenses such as consumer safety violation ($M = 2.74, SD = 0.47, t = -11.13, p < .01, d = 0.55$), toxic dumping ($M = 2.70, SD = 0.51, t = 11.90, p < .01, d = 0.59$), and asbestos exposure ($M = 2.71, SD = 0.50, t = 11.75, p < .01, d = 0.58$), but also - although to a lesser degree - forcible rape ($M = 2.99, SD = 0.99, t = 2.01, p < .05, d = 0.10$). Further, subjects were statistically more likely to recommend a harsher prosecution process for the rapist than they were for white-collar offenders in the toy scenario ($t = 10.37, p < .01, d = 0.51$), the deadly pollutants scenario ($t = 11.39, p < .01, d = 0.56$), and the asbestos exposure scenario ($t = 11.34, p < .01, d = 0.56$). Nevertheless, there

was no statistical difference between subjects' choice of prosecutorial process for these three white-collar crimes. It therefore appears that relative consensus emerged in this study's sample regarding the best way to try white-collar and street offenders. That is, participants were more inclined to select a non-criminal court for the perpetrators of offenses they perceived to be less serious than murder and forcible rape.

Similar differences emerged when asking subjects how much, if any, of a fine should be imposed to the offenders in each scenario. Table 10 presents the results of paired samples *t*-tests to compare subjects' choice of fine amount for white-collar crime and street crime. Once again, murder ($M = 2.25, SD = 1.75$) and rape ($M = 0.35, SD = 0.96$) did not statistically differ from one another. While means for both street crimes are well under 1.00 - i.e., the score meant to represent a fine under \$100,000 - white-collar offenses such as selling customers a hazardous product ($M = 1.83, SD = 1.72$), dumping toxic waste above the legal limit ($M = 2.25, SD = 1.75$), or being negligent in implementing proper safety measures in the workplace and denying risk and peril ($MD = 1.78, SD = 1.82$) elicited average fine amounts ranging between \$100,000 and \$499,000. Large and statistically significant differences were found between the murder scenario and those that described the defective toy ($t = -16.99, p < .01, d = -0.84$), deadly pollutants ($t = -21.51, p < .01, d = -1.06$), and asbestos exposure ($t = -15.77, p < .01, d = -0.78$).

Similar differences were found between rape and consumer safety violation ($t = -17.44, p < .01, d = -0.86$), toxic dumping ($t = -21.68, p < .01, d = -1.07$), and the reckless endangerment of employees ($t = -16.99, p < .01, d = -0.84$). While the defective toy scenario slightly differed from the deadly pollutants one ($t = -5.21, p < .01, d = -0.26$), it was not statistically different from the asbestos vignette. Conversely, the work-related disease

scenario elicited a smaller fine amount compared with the toxic dumping scenario ($t = -5.53$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.27$). In short, it seems subjects were more inclined to choose a higher fine amount against white-collar offenders (particularly the company responsible for polluting over the legal limit) than they were against the murderer and rapist.

Slightly similar findings emerged when asking subjects how much, if any, of a monetary compensation should be granted to the victims and their families. Table 11 presents the results of paired samples t -tests to compare subjects' choice of compensation amount for white-collar crime and street crime. As was the case with fine, a majority of respondents did not consider such form of punishment adequate when dealing with offenders described in the murder and forcible rape scenarios. More specifically, the means for homicide ($M = 0.97$, $SD = 1.52$) and rape ($M = 0.77$, $SD = 1.30$) did not even reach the cut-off point of 1.00 that indicates the first range of amount (i.e., anything under \$100,000).

While means for both street crimes only slightly differed from one another ($t = 3.90$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.19$), larger statistical differences emerged between those offenses and all three instances of elite deviance. Subjects were less inclined to recommend monetary compensation in the homicide scenario than they were in the defective toy scenario ($t = -7.00$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.35$), the deadly pollutants scenario ($t = -9.72$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.48$), and the asbestos exposure vignette ($t = -15.73$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.78$). Similarly, participants were less prone to support a high monetary compensation amount against the rapist than they were against those responsible for violating consumer safety ($t = -10.18$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.50$), polluting over the legal limit ($t = -13.04$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.64$), and lying to their employees regarding the risk of contracting lethal diseases in the workplace ($t = -19.16$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.95$).

Consensus did not emerge regarding the appropriate punishment against white-collar crime. More specifically, while the mean for the asbestos exposure scenario ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.54$) is above the cut-off point meant to represent a monetary compensation amount ranging between \$100,000 and \$499,000, those for the defective toy scenario ($M = 1.58$, $SD = 1.48$) and toxic dumping ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.59$) are below that threshold. In fact, the mean for the asbestos vignette statistically differed from those for the consumer safety scenario ($t = 10.71$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.53$) and the deadly pollutants scenario ($t = 7.30$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.36$). Further, the defective toy scenario invited a slightly less monetary compensation amount than did the toxic dumping vignette ($t = -3.35$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.17$).

In summation, whereas toxic dumping elicited higher fine amounts than did all other crime scenarios, respondents in this study were more inclined to recommend higher monetary compensation against those responsible in the asbestos exposure vignette. While supporting greater economic sanctions against white-collar crime than street crime seems logical, what remains to be seen is whether respondents were prone to punish white-collar offenders and street offenders with equally long prison sentences.

Table 12 presents the results of paired samples *t*-tests to compare mean prison sentence severity for white-collar crime and street crime. In other words, does the nature of the crime described in each scenario (i.e., elite deviance or traditional offense) influence subjects' decision regarding how much, if any, prison time the perpetrators should serve? Although not originally given as a response option, capital punishment is nonetheless included here since a few subjects were punitive enough to require a death sentence for murder ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.63$), corporate negligence and denial of risk and peril in the case of asbestos exposure ($M = 1.35$, $SD = 1.79$), and rape ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.57$). Such

recommendation belies a lack of knowledge about the criminal justice system since sexual assault is no longer punishable by death.

Once again, both street crimes elicited longer prison sentence lengths ranging between 11 and 30 years than did white-collar crimes for which the average prison sentence did not exceed 5 years. Compared with homicide, a majority of respondents did not perceive incarceration as the appropriate punishment for the offenses involving the defective toy ($M = 0.84$, $SD = 1.18$, $t = -40.20$, $p < .01$, $d = -1.99$), illegal toxic dumping ($M = 0.94$, $SD = 1.32$, $t = -38.32$, $p < .01$, $d = -1.90$), and even lying about the link between unprotected asbestos exposure and lung cancer ($t = -29.45$, $p < .01$, $d = -1.46$). Further, Cohen's effect sizes suggested large practical significance.

Mean prison sentence severity was also statistically higher in the murder scenario than in the rape vignette ($t = 16.75$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.83$), although the difference is less pronounced than with white-collar offenses. Rape invited higher prison sentence severity than did consumer safety violation ($t = 26.39$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.31$), toxic dumping ($t = 24.79$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.23$), and the reckless endangerment of employees ($t = 18.13$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.90$). Further differences emerged between the three instances of elite deviance, with the defective toy scenario eliciting less prison severity than the asbestos exposure vignette ($t = -5.90$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.29$), but not statistically differing from the deadly pollutants scenario. Conversely, toxic dumping invited a shorter prison sentence than did the reckless endangerment of employees ($t = -5.48$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.27$).

Conclusion

To conclude, respondents were generally less punitive about elite deviance than they were regarding street crime. Phrased differently, they were more likely to perceive murder

and forcible rape as offenses of greater seriousness to be prosecuted in a criminal court and punished with longer prison terms compared with all three examples of white-collar crime. Such findings hold after controlling for harm intensity. For example, even the scenario that described a corporation failing to protect its workers from dangerous toxic contamination and denying its responsibility when they develop and die from fatal diseases contracted in the workplace met with less popular disapproval than did sexual assault, regardless of the fact that no mention was made of the rape victim dying.

Further, while subjects tended to consider economic sanctions such as fine and monetary compensation more appropriate punishments against elite deviance, it is noteworthy that no scenario describing white-collar crimes generated mean financial penalties even close to the maximum amount range (i.e., \$1,000,000 and above). Despite their relative lack of knowledge about the issue (and particularly in regard to corporate offenders' greater legal immunity compared with street criminals), perhaps some subjects were already aware of the difficulty in prosecuting and punishing a firm. Companies are shielded by their employees whom bankruptcy and dissolution would impoverish, causing tremendous unpopularity for the prosecutor and judge and therefore possibly jeopardizing their reelection. In addition, corporations have the power and financial means to avoid criminal prosecution by reaching financial settlements with victims' families. Moreover, as previously mentioned, corporations are monitored and more likely to be dealt with by administrative and regulatory agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Maybe those subjects more inclined to accept "truths" about elite deviance were also more likely to recognize these obstacles and, unenthusiastically, to

not recommend sanctions that they believe would be ineffective. The next logical steps are thus to determine (a) if the sociodemographic correlates of the attitudes under investigation (i.e., perceived seriousness and punitiveness) match those of knowledge, acceptance of “truths” and adherence to “myths” about white-collar crime, and (b) and whether such knowledge in turn influences public sentiments towards elite deviance.

Sociodemographic Correlates of Perceived Seriousness

Table 13 presents the sociodemographic correlates of perceived seriousness of the National White-Collar Crime Center scenarios compared with motor vehicle theft. As was the case for associations between these correlates and knowledge, “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence, statistically significant correlation coefficients are both scarce and weak. Overall, men - relative to women - rated embezzlement ($r = -.139$), identity theft ($r = -.102$), false charges ($r = -.184$), counterfeit sales ($r = -.104$), and insurance overcharge ($r = -.160$) as less serious than motor vehicle theft, and only found market rigging ($r = .105$) to be a more serious offense. While market rigging can hypothetically affect a lot more people, it is surprising to note that robbery - which led to victim’s hospitalization - did not attain statistical significance.

As one might expect, age was positively associated with robbery ($r = .222$), hacking ($r = .192$), false drug label ($r = .144$), espionage ($r = .128$), and counterfeit sales ($r = .128$). That is, older subjects were more inclined to consider these offenses to be of greater seriousness compared with motor vehicle theft. Few differences could be found between races. More specifically, while Whites deemed hacking ($r = -.131$) and counterfeit sales ($r = -.102$) to be less serious than stealing a car, Blacks considered hacking ($r = .142$) to be a more serious offense. Such discrepancy may be explained by racial gaps in criminal involvement.

Whereas African Americans are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system for street offenses, Whites - who enjoy greater educational and professional opportunities - are more likely to engage in elite deviance (Barkan, 2012). It is therefore possible that Blacks harbor more hostile feelings for crimes of greed (which they are statistically excluded from) than they are for crimes of need.

Though still premature and requiring further investigation, the hypothesis that social inequalities may predict attitudinal differences in regard to perceived seriousness of elite deviance also finds support with the variable measuring subjects' annual household income. More specifically, respondents with higher income levels only found burglary ($r = .118$) and robbery ($r = .098$) - i.e., the only two street crimes of the list - to be more serious than stealing a car. Similarly, those subjects currently employed rated burglary ($r = .103$) but not hacking ($r = -.122$) as being more serious than auto theft. Such choices could be due to a perception that, unlike their unemployed counterparts, spending most of the day away from home and being expectedly more affluent puts them at a higher risk of being burglarized, a notion that may elicit more fear than spam and viruses.

Analogously, hacking was considered less serious than motor vehicle theft by members of other political parties, by subjects with no religious affiliation, and by those who reported the Internet as their medium of choice ($r = -.112$, $-.115$, and $-.102$, respectively). Further, those subjects who grew up in the Northeast only rated false charges ($r = .101$) as more serious than motor vehicle theft. Interestingly, more conservative respondents evinced lower perceptions of seriousness for the false drug label scenario ($r = -.122$). Similarly, conservative Protestants were less inclined to recognize market rigging ($r = -.144$) as more serious an offense than auto theft, unlike counterfeit sales ($r = .144$).

These findings are puzzling. Recall that the market-rigging scenario described a Wall Street financial firm that conspires to manipulate the precious metals market, profiting at the expense of other traders and owners of precious metals who are unaware of the price-fixing scheme. Conversely, the counterfeiting scenario described a person selling a counterfeit antique bracelet on an online auction site, misrepresenting its true value and making an extra \$1,000. While no dollar amount was given for the market-rigging scheme, the resulting losses for traders and owners could be expected to be significantly higher than the \$1,000 made by the counterfeiter. How then can the conservative Protestants preference that deemed the former to be less serious and the latter more serious than motor vehicle theft be explained? Perhaps the historical link between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism (Weber, [1905] 2002) can account for such tolerance toward the competitiveness displayed by the Wall Street firm compared with the sale of a fake bracelet, an offense that any petty street thief could engage in. Conversely, those subjects with other religions rated embezzlement ($r = .122$) as being more serious than car theft while those with no religious affiliation at all found hacking ($r = -.115$) and counterfeiting ($r = -.108$) to be less serious than the baseline scenario.

A similar finding can be observed among those subjects who used the Internet over other traditional media as their primary source of information. More precisely, these subjects found hacking ($r = -.102$), counterfeit sales ($r = -.137$) and insurance overcharge ($r = -.135$) to be less serious than car theft. Recall that Internet users were statistically less likely to espouse “myths” about white-collar crime. It could be that, being aware of more serious cases of elite deviance (e.g., state-corporate crime, human trafficking, etc.), they found these white-collar offenses to pale in comparison.

Lastly, a number of differences in perceived seriousness of crime were observed in regard to attribution style. More specifically, those participants inclined to believe that such offenses are the result of greed were more likely to consider identity theft, false drug label, espionage, counterfeit sales and insurance overcharge as more serious offenses than car theft ($r = .110, .212, .131, .124$ and $.124$, respectively). These results are mirrored among those respondents who attributed white-collar crime to bad moral character in regard to false drug label, espionage, market rigging and counterfeit sales ($r = .177, .113, .126$, and $.124$, respectively). Likewise, those more inclined to attribute elite deviance to a rational choice selected identity theft, false drug label, and market rigging as more serious offenses than motor vehicle theft ($r = .098, .195$ and $.121$, respectively).

Those who attributed white-collar crime to business environmental influences and to a fiduciary responsibility to shareholders both rated embezzlement ($r = .140$ and $.104$), identity theft ($r = .117$ and $.123$), false charges ($r = .105$ and $.102$), false drug label ($r = .104$ and $.137$), market rigging ($r = .220$ and $.129$), and insurance overcharge ($r = .121$ and $.099$) as more serious offenses. It should be noted, however, that the latter group of subjects also rated robbery ($r = .103$) and espionage ($r = .162$) as being more serious than car theft. Further, those more inclined to attribute elite deviance to pressure to succeed selected embezzlement ($r = .240$), identity theft ($r = .188$), false charges ($r = .239$) and market rigging ($r = .177$) as more serious than car theft.

Participants who evinced a more situational attribution style were less likely to perceive white-collar crime scenarios as more serious than car theft. More precisely, those more inclined to believe white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions were less likely to rate embezzlement ($r = -.109$) as a serious offense. However, the attribution of blame to low

self-control is more equivocal. More specifically, those inclined to believe white-collar offenders simply lack the ability to refrain from crime were less likely to rate false drug label ($r = -.102$) and espionage ($r = -.128$) as serious offenses compared with car theft. It is therefore unclear whether low self-control in this sample was deemed an aggravating or a mitigating factor in the commission of white-collar crime.

In summation, despite weak coefficients, statistically significant correlations were observed between certain sociodemographic variables (including gender, age, race, region where subjects grew up, income, employment, political ideology, religious affiliation, information source, and attribution style) and perceived seriousness of the scenarios used in the National White-Collar Crime Center survey. Overall, it appears the greatest gaps might be due to attitudinal differences toward capitalism. That is, those subjects with higher income levels, religious and political beliefs favorable to free market economics, and who explained elite deviance as the result of external pressures in a competitive environment were less inclined to rate white-collar crime as more serious a problem than street crime.

If differences in politico-religious attitudes create popular dissensus regarding perceived seriousness of elite deviance, such findings should hold even after controlling for harm intensity. Recall that this study's sample was found to be less critical of white-collar crime (even physically harmful offenses such as deadly pollutants release) when presented with examples of violent street crime. Table 14 presents sociodemographic correlates of perceived seriousness of consumer safety violation, illegal toxic dumping, and denial of risk and peril after workers die from unprotected asbestos exposure in the workplace compared with two violent crimes (i.e., murder and forcible rape). As was mentioned earlier, no baseline was used for comparison purposes. Rather, participants were asked to rate the

seriousness of the case on a scale of 1 (not very serious) to 4 (very serious).

Once again, very few correlation coefficients attained statistical significance. Further, such coefficients are - at best - weak to modest in strength. Compared with their female counterparts, men were less inclined to rate toxic dumping ($r = -.130$) and asbestos exposure ($r = -.107$) as serious offenses. There were no differences for gender for other scenarios. Conversely, with the exception of rape, older subjects rated all scenarios as serious crimes. Interestingly, the correlation coefficient for the asbestos vignette ($r = .280$) is even stronger than that for murder ($r = .247$). Subjects with higher income levels were less likely to rate the toxic dumping case a serious crime ($r = -.104$), as were more politically conservative subjects ($r = -.133$) and Republicans ($r = -.146$). Similarly, those subjects belonging to no political party were less inclined to rate the toy scenario as a serious offense ($r = -.108$), even though children were the potential victims.

The only other statistically significant associations were found with information source and attribution style. More specifically, those subjects who named the Internet as their medium of choice were less likely to rate the three physically harmful white-collar crimes as serious offenses ($r = -.137, -.162, \text{ and } -.118$, respectively) relative to those who relied on more traditional news media. While this finding is puzzling, it could be that those subjects were already acquainted with other forms of state-corporate crimes that resulted in much greater harm, which in turn may have influenced their perception of seriousness.

With the exception of rape, those subjects who attributed white-collar crime to greed were more likely to rate every offense described as serious crimes ($r = .179, .117, .188, \text{ and } .147$, respectively). Further, those who attributed blame to low moral character were more likely to rate all five scenarios as serious offenses ($r = .165, .137, .249, .111, \text{ and } .213$,

respectively). Moreover, even those more inclined to believe fiduciary responsibility to shareholders forces otherwise law-abiding citizens to commit white-collar offenses rated all three examples of elite deviance as serious crimes ($r = .175$, $.206$, and $.146$, respectively). Further, those who saw elite deviance as the result of a rational choice were more likely to perceive murder ($r = .114$) and asbestos exposure ($r = .098$) as serious offenses. Lastly, those who explained elite deviance as resulting from pressure to succeed were more inclined to consider the release of dangerous pollutants a serious offense ($r = .098$), whereas those who believed white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions were less likely to consider rape a serious crime ($r = -.099$).

In summation, some showing of a mild form of consensus regarding the perceived seriousness of white-collar crime emerges after controlling for harm intensity. Phrased differently, with the notable exception of age and attribution style, very few differences in perception of offense gravity are discernable. In fact, most statistically significant relationships with white-collar crimes were this time negative, which could be due to their comparison with murder and rape, two street crimes that may cause more fear than safety violations. Nevertheless, it is worth reiterating that more conservative subjects and Republicans were less likely to perceive illegal toxic dumping resulting in serious illness as a serious offense, which once again suggests that political identity may influence perceptions of severity. It is unclear, however, whether subjects' perceived seriousness influences their levels of punitiveness and if the latter varies as a function of the same sociodemographic variables.

Sociodemographic Correlates of Punitiveness

Recall that punitiveness was operationalized as participants' choice of prosecutorial

process, fine, monetary compensation, and/or incarceration, as well as sentence severity (i.e., dollar amounts and number of years in prison). Table 15 presents the sociodemographic correlates of respondents' choice of prosecutorial process for the five scenarios. Again, these choices are of increasing severity. That is, subjects could decide whether the case ought to be dealt with by some non-legal means (e.g., out-of-court financial settlement), in a non-criminal court (i.e., civil court), or in a criminal court.

First of all, the effect for murder was a constant, and 100% of the sample recommended a criminal prosecution for the perpetrator. With respect to white-collar offenses, as was the case before, very few correlation coefficients attained statistical significance. Further, their strength is once again very weak. Men were less inclined to support a severe prosecution style (i.e., in a criminal court) for the firm described in the asbestos exposure scenario ($r = -.139$). Perhaps men were more likely to believe a criminal conviction would not only impact the company and its employees but would also be very difficult to obtain. After all, recall that despite being more likely to adhere to "myths", males were also more inclined to accept "truths" such as white-collar criminals' relative legal immunity compared with street offenders. Conversely, older subjects were more likely to support a harsher prosecution style for those responsible in the asbestos exposure scenario ($r = .124$).

No notable differences could be observed as far as race is concerned. Surprisingly, though, Hispanics were less inclined to demand a severe prosecution process for the rapist ($r = -.170$). It could be that ethnic minorities, whom are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system (Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005; Unnever & Cullen, 2007) but relatively excluded from opportunities to commit white-collar crime, may perceive such gap

as racial discrimination. In turn, perceived injustice might lead them to evince more tolerance for street offenders and increased severity toward elite deviance. In fact, though not statistically significant, all associations between Hispanic subjects and white-collar crime scenarios are positive.

More educated respondents were also less inclined to choose a severe prosecution method for the rapist ($r = -.135$), as were conservative Protestants ($r = -.108$). This last finding is surprising and runs counter to preconceptions regarding religious differences in punitiveness relative to street crime (Grasmick et al., 1993). Subjects from the Northeast were more likely to demand harsher prosecutorial processes against offenders depicted in the illegal dumping and asbestos exposure scenarios ($r = .145$ and $.101$, respectively).

On the other hand, those participants with higher income levels, as well as those who identified as Republicans, were less likely to support criminal prosecution against the offenders in the scenarios describing illegal toxic dumping and asbestos exposure ($r = -.103$ and $-.129$, respectively). More conservative subjects were also less likely to condone harsh prosecutorial processes for these two offenses ($r = -.147$ and $-.111$, respectively). These findings once again buttress the argument that attitudinal differences toward free market economics may influence sentiments about elite deviance. Similarly, those subjects inclined to believe white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions were less likely to require a severe prosecutorial method for decision-makers in the toxic dumping and asbestos exposure scenarios ($r = -.130$ and $-.109$, respectively).

Conversely, those who believed that bad moral character is an important factor of elite deviance recommended harsher prosecutorial processes against offenders described in all three white-collar crime scenarios ($r = .121$, $.133$, $.165$, respectively). Similarly, those

who attributed crimes of the powerful to fiduciary responsibility to shareholders recommended a harsher prosecutorial process against those responsible in the defective toy scenario ($r = .135$), the toxic dumping scenario ($r = .142$) and the asbestos exposure vignette ($r = .155$). With the exception of the toxic dumping scenario, these results are mirrored among those who believed that greed is the root of elite deviance ($r = .098$ and $.104$, respectively). Lastly, those who surmised that white-collar offenders choose their actions were more likely to select a harsher prosecutorial process for those responsible in the asbestos exposure scenario ($r = .098$).

Overall, while absolute consensus was reached in regard to the best way to prosecute the murder case, disparities in punitiveness could be observed for the white-collar crime scenarios. As previously mentioned, perhaps some participants considered a criminal prosecution to be detrimental to business, a hypothesis seemingly supported by right-leaning respondents' leniency. It once again appears that subjects with higher income levels and with political views favorable to capitalism were statistically less likely to recommend that offenders in the white-collar crime vignettes be tried in a criminal court. Still, it is worth reiterating that few statistically significant differences emerge, and those that did were weak.

Though still very weak in strength, more correlation coefficients attained statistical significance when examining the sociodemographic correlates of participants' choice of fine amount (see Table 16). Men were more likely to demand a higher fine against those responsible for illegal toxic dumping ($r = .134$). Such finding is consistent with previous research that found greater levels of retributiveness among men (Bohm, 1992; Gilligan, 1977, 1982).

Likewise, older subjects were more likely to recommend a fine for the asbestos

exposure vignette ($r = .099$). Ambiguous findings emerged for race, occupational status and political affiliations. More specifically, while Whites were more likely to choose a greater fine amount for the toxic dumping scenario ($r = .101$), Blacks were less inclined to do so against those responsible for selling a potentially dangerous toy ($r = -.099$), as did those subjects currently employed ($r = -.097$) and Democrats ($r = -.101$).

Further, subjects from other political parties were more inclined to choose a more severe monetary sanction against toxic dumping ($r = .155$), unlike Democrats ($r = -.136$). Conservative Protestants were less likely to consider a fine a relevant form of punishment against the companies described in the toy and asbestos exposure scenarios ($r = -.109$ and $-.108$, respectively). Moreover, conservative participants were more likely to support a higher fine against the perpetrators in both street crime scenarios ($r = .108$ and $.119$, respectively).

Very few correlation coefficients attained statistical significance in regard to attribution style. More specifically, subjects who believed white-collar offenders have little self-control were more likely to require a higher fine in all five scenarios ($r = .175$, $.116$, $.101$, $.129$, and $.109$, respectively). Those who considered fiduciary responsibility to be a cause of elite deviance selected the same form of sanction for those responsible in the asbestos exposure case ($r = .134$). Other than these, no further statistically significant differences could be found. It might be that participants felt that a fine would be a disservice to the company and hurt its business, and favored a more lenient punishment (i.e., monetary compensation for the victims and their families). Alternatively, they may also have considered that a more severe sanction (i.e., incarceration) would be more appropriate.

Table 17 presents the sociodemographic correlates of participants' choice of monetary compensation amount. Once again, few correlation coefficients attained statistical

significance and their strength is quite weak. All associations between age and white-collar crime scenarios are positive ($r = .118, .182, \text{ and } .183$, respectively). While no difference could be found between Whites and Blacks, subjects of other races were less likely to support this form of punishment against the company responsible for distributing the potentially dangerous toy ($r = -.120$). Further, participants from the Northeast were less inclined to support a monetary compensation in the case of the defective toy scenario ($r = -.098$).

While no major differences could be found for political affiliation - with the exception of subjects of other parties supporting monetary compensation for the victims of illegal toxic dumping ($r = .111$) - a few notable gaps were observed with religious identity. More specifically, moderate Protestants favored this form of sanction for both murder and rape ($r = .133$ and $.117$, respectively) and also for the toxic dumping scenario ($r = .113$). Conversely, subjects who identified with other religions besides Catholicism and Protestantism were less inclined to support monetary compensation for the victims of deadly pollutants ($r = -.107$).

As could be expected, those inclined to blame elite deviance on greed were more likely to support damages for the victims and the families in both the toxic dumping and asbestos exposure scenarios ($r = .121$ and $.138$, respectively). Conversely, those who believed white-collar crime derives from low self-control deemed monetary compensation a fair sanction in all cases, with the exception of the asbestos scenario ($r = .139, .116, .119, \text{ and } .118$, respectively). Further, those inclined to cite fiduciary responsibility to shareholders as a motive for elite deviance supported the payment of damages in all scenarios, except for the release of deadly pollutants ($r = .163, .117, .114, \text{ and } .124$, respectively). Those more likely to agree with the idea that white-collar crime stems from bad moral character only supported

monetary compensation in the asbestos case ($r = .107$). A likely explanation is their perception of white-collar offenders being inherently immoral led them to seek a more severe form of punishment. If this is the case, then positive relationships with prison sentence severity should emerge.

Table 18 presents the sociodemographic correlates of prison sentence severity against white-collar crime and street crime. As was the case before, few correlation coefficients attained statistical significance, and those that did were weak. With the exception of the asbestos exposure scenario, older subjects were once again found to be quite punitive against elite deviance as they supported long prison time for the culprits in the toy and toxic dumping scenarios ($r = .110$ and $.105$, respectively) as they did for the murderer ($r = .166$) and rapist ($r = .109$).

An interesting gap emerged between races. More precisely, while Whites were more likely to demand prison time for the homicide perpetrator ($r = .150$), Blacks and subjects of other races were less inclined to do so ($r = -.099$ and $-.132$, respectively). As previously mentioned, it could be that an acute perception of racial discrimination within the criminal justice among minorities - suggested by their greater likelihood of being convicted and incarcerated (Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005; Unnever & Cullen, 2007) - led them to display more leniency toward street offenders.

Similarly, more educated subjects recommended longer prison time for those responsible in the defective toy scenario ($r = .104$) but not for the rapist ($r = -.131$). Likewise, perhaps because incarceration is after all a tax-financed punishment, the rape scenario did not elicit demand for a harsh prison sentence among employed subjects ($r = -.114$). Moderate Protestants were also less likely to demand a longer sentence length for the culprit in the

murder case ($r = -.103$).

Conversely, more politically conservative subjects and Republicans were inclined to impose a more severe sentence on the murderer ($r = .116$ and $.130$, respectively). With the exception of Catholics supporting prison time for denial of risk and peril in the asbestos exposure scenario ($r = .106$), no notable differences could be found in regard to religion. Further, subjects affiliated with no political party and those who use the Internet as their primary source of information were less inclined to support prison time for manufacturing and selling a potentially dangerous product destined for children ($r = -.144$ and $-.161$, respectively).

In regard to attribution style, the defective toy scenario elicited stronger prison sentence severity among those who attribute white-collar crime to bad moral character ($r = .110$), choice ($r = .109$) and fiduciary responsibility ($r = .101$). Further, the toxic dumping vignette generated greater punitiveness among those inclined to believe greed is the cause of elite deviance ($r = .106$) as well as among those who cite low moral standards ($r = .175$) and fiduciary responsibility to shareholders ($r = .128$) as white-collar crime factors. In addition, those who blamed elite deviance on negative business environmental influences required a longer prison sentence for those responsible in the asbestos exposure scenario ($r = .106$). Conversely, as could be expected, those inclined to believe white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions were also less likely to demand tougher sentences for the culprits in the toxic dumping and asbestos exposure scenarios ($r = -.137$ and $-.114$, respectively).

In summation, few but consistent gaps in punitiveness among this study's subjects could be observed, suggesting significant popular dissensus in societal response to elite deviance. More specifically, older subjects were found to be more punitive both with street

and white-collar offenders. This finding may be in line with the curvilinear relationship between age and punitive attitudes; that is, people may become more punitive as they grow older until they reach a tipping point, whereupon punitiveness starts to decrease (Schwartz et al., 1993). In fact, Rossi and Berk (1997) found that those between the age of 35 and 64 were the most punitive, whereas those under 35 and above 64 years old were the least punitive. Moreover, recall that several studies found that older people tend to view elite deviance as somewhat more serious than conventional violent crime and narcotic offenses (Grabosky, Braithwaite, & Wilson, 1987; Hauber, Toonvliet, & Willemse, 1988). With a mean age of 33.58, this study's sample counted few very young or very old subjects, thus limiting the ability to draw any significant conclusions about the curvilinear findings from prior studies.

Perhaps more interestingly, it is also worth reiterating that men, Whites, those with higher income levels, more politically conservative subjects, Republicans, conservative Protestants, and those who believed white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions were often more lenient in their attitudes towards elite deviance, both in terms of perceived seriousness and punitiveness, compared with street crime. More specifically, Table 14 reports lower perceived seriousness for white-collar crimes among conservative participants and Republicans. Further, Table 15 shows that males, wealthier and right-leaning subjects were less likely to rate harmful white-collar crime scenarios as serious offenses. Moreover, Table 16 suggests that currently employed and politically conservative participants as well as conservative Protestants were less inclined to favor a fine for white-collar offenders. In addition, Table 17 reveals that moderate Protestants were more likely to support compensating the victims and their families, a somewhat lenient choice compared with the harsher sanction options proposed to them. Lastly, Table 18 reports that moderate Protestants

were less inclined to require a long prison sentence for those companies' executives, and that Whites, politically conservative subjects as well as Republicans were more likely to demand prison time for the street offender in the murder scenario. Conversely, those inclined to believe that white-collar offenders are otherwise law-abiding citizens who see no wrong in their actions exhibited greater tolerance for those responsible in the toxic dumping and asbestos exposure scenarios. Importantly, recall that, with a few exceptions, those subjects generally scored poorly on the knowledge questionnaire and were also more likely to adhere to "myths" about white-collar crime. It is therefore possible that knowledge (or lack thereof) about elite deviance might influence general attitudes regarding this social issue.

Table 19 presents zero-order correlations between knowledge about elite deviance, "truth" acceptance and "myth" adherence, and perceived seriousness of the eleven scenarios used in the National White-Collar Crime survey. Though weak in strength, positive associations between knowledge and the false drug label, espionage, and market rigging scenarios were statistically significant ($r = .156, .129, \text{ and } .176$, respectively). These three scenarios - as well as embezzlement, identify theft, and insurance overcharge - were also positively correlated with "truth" acceptance ($r = .128, .155, .158, .120, .107, \text{ and } .101$, respectively). However, no coefficient attains statistical significance in regard to "myth" adherence.

A few statistically significant findings emerged when controlling for more physically injurious instances of elite deviance. Table 20 presents zero-order correlations between knowledge about elite deviance, "truth" acceptance, "myth" adherence and perceived seriousness of the five harmful white-collar crime and street crime scenarios. Knowledge was positively correlated with perceived seriousness of the asbestos exposure scenario ($r = .126$),

as was “truth” acceptance with the toxic dumping and workers’ endangerment vignettes ($r = .101$ in both cases). Conversely, “myth” adherence was negatively associated with perceived seriousness of denial of risk and peril described in the third white-collar crime scenario ($r = -.101$).

Similar findings emerged when comparing knowledge about elite deviance, “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence with participants’ choice of prosecutorial process. Table 21 reveals that those subjects who accepted “truths” regarding elite deviance were more likely to demand harsher prosecution for the company accused of knowingly selling a potentially dangerous toy ($r = .138$). In contrast, “myth” adherers were less inclined to support a harsh prosecution process for the rapist ($r = -.116$).

Although - as is evident in Table 22 - only one correlation coefficient attained statistical significance when comparing knowledge about elite deviance, “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence with respondents’ choice of fine amount, knowledge is once again positively associated with the asbestos exposure scenario ($r = .121$). That is, those subjects who were more knowledgeable about white-collar crime were also more likely to support fining the company responsible for causing the deaths of several of its employees.

Interestingly, Table 23 reveals that subjects with knowledge about elite deviance and “truth” acceptance were more inclined to support monetary compensation for the rapist ($r = .131$ and $.121$, respectively). Further, “truth” believers were more likely to condone such punishment against the perpetrators described in the illegal toxic dumping ($r = .144$). Lastly, Table 24 reports positive associations between knowledge about elite deviance, “truth” acceptance, and prison sentence severity for all three white-collar crime scenarios ($r = .144$, $.110$ and $.124$ for more knowledgeable subjects, and $.139$, $.102$ and $.137$ for “truth”

believers).

Conclusion

In summation, it appears that knowledge about white-collar crime does influence attitudes towards elite deviance. That is, while probably being aware of the numerous challenges inherent in successfully prosecuting a corporation, knowledgeable subjects were nevertheless more likely to perceive the white-collar infractions presented to them as more serious offenses compared with street crimes and to demand harsher sentences against their perpetrators. Conversely, less educated participants and “myth” adherers were generally less critical of elite deviance as a whole and more lenient in their choice of sanctions against it relative to traditional crime. Further, more knowledgeable subjects were found to be those who identified as Whites, with higher education levels, without any religious affiliation, and who used the Internet as their main source of information. In comparison, less knowledgeable participants turned out to be predominantly male, politically more conservative, Republican, conservative Protestant, who relied on traditional media sources rather than the Internet and who attributed white-collar crime to situational rather than dispositional factors.

As previously mentioned, these last sociodemographic variables are usually correlated with greater support for elements of neoliberal economics such as market deregulation, a natural consequence of laissez-faire capitalism that has been shown to facilitate the commission of certain white-collar crimes (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006). It is therefore possible that pro-capitalism attitudes may have led these individuals to discount relevant information about elite deviance and biased their sentiments towards it. In light of such hypothesis, these sociodemographic variables will be further analyzed in chapter five.

Tables

Table 2. Percent Subjective and Objective Knowledge about White-Collar Crime (N=408)

	<i>Percent Subjective</i>	<i>Percent Objective</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Not very informed	12.5	75.5	-63.0
Somewhat informed	73.5	14.7	58.8
Informed	11.3	7.4	3.9
Very informed	2.7	2.4	.30

* $p < .05$.

Table 3. Percentage of Subjects with Scores on the Overall Knowledge Scale (N=408)

<i>Overall Knowledge Score</i>	<i>Percentage of Subjects</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
0	0	0
10	0	0
20	2.8	2.8
30	6.6	9.4
40	16.9	26.3
50	24.0	50.3
60	25.2	75.5
70	14.7	90.2
80	7.4	97.6
90	2.2	99.8
100	0.2	100

Table 4. Percent Correct, Percent Incorrect, and Percent Confident on the Overall Knowledge Scale and the Ten Items that Comprise It, and “Truth” Accepters (N=134), Lucky Guessers (N=90), “Myth” Adherers (N=67), and Honestly Uninformed Subjects (N=117)

	<u>Percent Correct</u>	<u>Percent Incorrect</u>	<u>Percent Confident</u>	<u>“Truth” Accepters</u>	<u>Lucky Guessers</u>	<u>“Myth” Adherers</u>	<u>Honestly Uninformed</u>
Overall	54.9	45.1	49.9	32.8	22.1	16.5	28.6
Meaning of the Term “White-Collar Crime”	89.2	10.8	71.8	66.9	22.3	4.9	5.9
Financial Cost of White-Collar Crime	23.8	76.2	27.7	13.7	10.1	14.0	62.2
Physical Harmfulness of White-Collar Crime	3.2	96.8	66.2	2.7	0.5	63.5	33.3
Legal Immunity (relative to street crime)	32.8	67.2	58.5	27.2	5.6	25.2	42.0
Reckless Disregard (Ford Pinto case)	75.5	24.5	30.1	27.5	48.0	2.7	21.8
Medical Crime (vs. homicides)	38.2	61.8	25.7	13.2	25.0	12.5	49.3
Human Trafficking (in the U.S. vs. abroad)	30.9	69.1	43.4	11.0	19.9	32.4	36.7
State Corporate Crime (private military firms)	91.2	8.8	61.2	60.3	30.9	1.0	7.8
Toxic Dumping (African American communities)	66.7	33.3	39.2	31.4	35.3	7.8	25.5
Toxic Emissions (Reluctance to invest in clean technologies)	97.1	2.90	74.8	73.8	23.3	1.0	1.9

Table 5. One-Way Between Subjects ANOVAs in the Effect of Sociodemographic Predictors of Knowledge about White-Collar Crime, “Truth” Acceptance and “Myth” Adherence (N = 408)

	<i>Knowledge</i>		<i>“Truth” Acceptance</i>		<i>“Myth” Adherence</i>	
	<i>F</i> (df)	η^2	<i>F</i> (df)	η^2	<i>F</i> (df)	η^2
Age	.96 (49, 358)	-	1.16 (49, 358)	-	.89 (49, 358)	-
Race	1.50 (6, 401)	-	1.07 (6, 401)	-	3.24* (6, 401)	.05
Region	2.44* (4, 403)	.02	.90 (4, 403)	-	2.93* (4, 403)	.03
Residence	.85 (9, 398)	-	.67 (9, 398)	-	1.37 (9, 398)	-
Education	4.48* (6, 401)	.06	3.47* (6, 401)	.05	.311 (6, 401)	-
Employed	1.24 (4, 403)	-	1.77 (4, 403)	-	1.89 (4, 403)	-
Income	1.41 (9, 308)	-	.89 (9, 398)	-	2.41* (9, 398)	.05
Pol. Ideology	2.87* (5, 402)	.03	4.16* (5, 402)	.05	1.79 (5, 402)	-
Pol. Affiliation	1.59 (5, 402)	-	2.91* (5, 402)	.03	2.06 (5, 402)	-
Religion	2.57* (7, 400)	.04	1.91 (7, 400)	-	1.35 (7, 400)	-
Information	1.13 (6, 401)	-	.54 (6, 401)	-	2.63* (6, 401)	.04
Greed	.79 (3, 404)	-	1.23 (3, 404)	-	1.08 (3, 404)	-
Moral	.97 (3, 407)	-	1.50 (3, 404)	-	.15 (3, 404)	-
Control	1.56 (3, 404)	-	4.33* (3, 404)	.01	1.42 (3, 404)	-
Choice	2.99* (3, 404)	.02	1.99 (3, 404)	-	.085 (3, 404)	-
Influence	5.84* (3, 404)	.04	5.24* (3, 404)	.04	4.39* (3, 404)	.03
Pressure	2.16 (3, 404)	-	1.69 (3, 404)	-	2.68* (3, 404)	.02
Fiduciary	1.78 (3, 404)	-	2.33 (3, 404)	-	1.87 (3, 404)	-
No wrong	.26 (3, 404)	-	.76 (3, 404)	-	.75 (3, 404)	-

Note. η^2 = effect size.

*p < .05.

Table 6. Zero-Order Correlations between Sociodemographic Characteristics, Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance and “Myth” Adherence (N=408)

	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>“Truth” Acceptance</i>	<i>“Myth” Adherence</i>
Male	.910	.127*	.160**
Age	.031	-.025	-.048
White	.154**	.078	-.131**
Black	-.074	.051	.114*
Other Race	-.087	-.072	-.002
Hispanic	-.086	-.110*	.090
Northeast	-.081	-.083	.065
Urban	-.014	.035	.037
Income	-.036	.076	.091
Education	.219**	.175**	.008
Employed	-.026	.074	.090
Pol. Ideology	-.158**	-.142**	.078
Republican	-.113*	-.129**	.120
Democrat	.017	.021	.026
Other Party	.070	.079	-.120*
No Party	-.013	-.061	-.071
Catholic	-.075	-.070	.029
Cons. Protestant	-.142**	-.142**	.084
Mod. Protestant	-.044	-.003	.002
Lib. Protestant	-.027	-.016	.008
Other Religion	.099	.068	.004
No Religion	.140**	.118*	-.085
Internet	.075	.005	-.155**
Greed	.099	.068	.004
Moral	.140**	.118*	-.085
Control	.075	.005	-.155**
Choice	.065	.087	.037
Influence	.068	.071	-.022
Fiduciary	-.033	-.017	.082
Pressure	.119*	.082	-.024
No Wrong	.182**	.151**	-.097

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 7. Mean Crime Seriousness Scores for White-Collar and Street Crime Compared with Motor Vehicle Theft in the National White-Collar Crime Center Survey and the Present Study (N=408)

	<i>NW3C Survey</i>	<i>Present Study</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Burglary	3.7	3.2	.05
Embezzlement	4.1	3.7	.04
Identity Theft	4.3	3.9	.04
False Charges	3.8	3.5	.03
Robbery	4.0	3.6	.04
Hacking	3.9	2.7	1.2
False Drug Label	4.8	4.7	.01
Espionage	4.8	4.8	.00
Market Rigging	4.3	4.2	.01
Counterfeit Sales	2.9	2.3	.06
Insurance Overcharge	4.4	3.7	.07
Overall	4.2	3.9	.03

Note. A mean of 1 = Much less serious, 2 = Somewhat less serious, 3 = About as serious, 4 = Somewhat more serious, and 5 = Much more serious.

Table 8. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Tests to Compare Mean Perceived Seriousness of White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	Mean (SD)	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>
<i>Toy</i>	3.43 (0.76)	-	-	-	-
<i>Murder</i>	3.91 (0.36)	-12.10**	-	-	-
<i>Pollutants</i>	3.51 (0.64)	-1.98*	11.50**	-	-
<i>Rape</i>	3.94 (0.24)	-13.12**	-1.67	-12.89**	-
<i>Asbestos</i>	3.72 (0.52)	-7.76**	6.68**	-7.07**	8.13**

Note. A mean of 1 = Not very serious, 2 = Somewhat serious, 3 = Serious, and 4 = Very serious.

p* < .05, *p* < .01.

Table 9. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Tests to Compare Subjects' Choice of Prosecutorial Process for White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	Mean (SD)	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>
<i>Toy</i>	2.74 (0.47)	-	-	-	-
<i>Murder</i>	3.00 (0.00)	-11.13**	-	-	-
<i>Pollutants</i>	2.70 (0.51)	1.45	11.90**	-	-
<i>Rape</i>	2.99 (0.99)	-10.37**	2.01*	-11.39**	-
<i>Asbestos</i>	2.71 (0.50)	1.12	11.75**	-0.47	11.34**

Note. A mean of 1 = Non-legal means, 2 = Civil court, and 3 = Criminal court.

p* < .05, *p* < .01.

Table 10. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Tests to Compare Subjects' Choice of Fine Amount for White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	Mean (SD)	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>
<i>Toy</i>	1.83 (1.72)	-	-	-	-
<i>Murder</i>	0.35 (0.98)	16.99**	-	-	-
<i>Pollutants</i>	2.25 (1.75)	-5.21**	-21.51**	-	-
<i>Rape</i>	0.35 (0.96)	17.44**	0.22	21.68**	-
<i>Asbestos</i>	1.78 (1.82)	0.65	-15.77**	5.53**	-16.99**

Note. A mean of 0 = No Fine, 1 = Under \$100,000, 2 = \$100,000-499,000, 3 = \$500,000-1,000,000, and 4 = Above \$1,000,000.

p* < .05, *p* < .01.

Table 11. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Tests to Compare Subjects' Choice of Compensation Amount for White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	Mean (SD)	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>
<i>Toy</i>	1.58 (1.48)	-	-	-	-
<i>Murder</i>	0.97 (1.52)	7.00**	-	-	-
<i>Pollutants</i>	1.85 (1.59)	-3.35**	-9.71**	-	-
<i>Rape</i>	0.77 (1.30)	10.18**	3.90**	13.04**	-
<i>Asbestos</i>	2.42 (1.54)	-10.71**	-15.73**	-7.30**	-19.16**

Note. A mean of 0 = No Compensation, 1 = Under \$100,000, 2 = \$100,000-499,000, 3 = \$500,000-1,000,000, and 4 = \$Above 1,000,000.

p* < .05, *p* < .01.

Table 12. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Tests to Compare Mean Prison Sentence Severity for White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	Mean (SD)	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>
<i>Toy</i>	0.84 (1.18)	-	-	-	-
<i>Murder</i>	4.68 (1.63)	-40.20**	-	-	-
<i>Pollutants</i>	0.94 (1.32)	-1.56	38.32**	-	-
<i>Rape</i>	3.26 (1.57)	-26.39**	16.75**	-24.79**	-
<i>Asbestos</i>	1.35 (1.79)	-5.90**	29.45**	-5.48**	18.13**

Note. A mean of 0 = No prison, 1 = 1-5 years, 2 = 6-10 years, 3 = 11-20 years, 4 = 21-30 years, 5 = 31-40 years, 6 = 41-Life, and 7 = Death.

p* < .05, *p* < .01.

Table 13. Sociodemographic Correlates of Perceived Seriousness of the National White-Collar Crime Center Survey Scenarios Compared with Motor Vehicle Theft (N=408)

	<u>Burglary</u>	<u>Embezzle</u>	<u>ID Theft</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Robbery</u>	<u>Hacking</u>	<u>False Label</u>	<u>Espionage</u>	<u>Market</u>	<u>Counterfeit</u>	<u>Overcharge</u>
Male	-.005	-.139*	-.102*	-.184*	.020	-.003	-.090	-.055	.105*	-.104*	-.160*
Age	.024	-.057	.033	-.007	.222*	.192**	.144**	.128**	.093	.128**	.027
White	-.020	-.048	-.043	-.036	.034	-.131*	.013	.069	.007	-.102*	-.013
Black	-.005	.063	.049	-.011	-.007	.142**	.032	-.028	.004	.020	-.010
Other Race	.001	-.007	-.002	.033	-.026	.091	.004	.000	.030	.069	.002
Hispanic	.037	.017	.020	.037	-.022	-.027	-.059	-.082	-.043	.077	.029
Northeast	.014	.070	.041	.101*	-.002	-.028	-.028	.005	.012	.011	-.049
Urban	.040	.021	-.030	-.009	.057	.004	-.050	-.063	.033	.089	.044
Income	.118*	-.005	.080	-.056	.090	.098*	.059	-.062	-.022	-.050	-.031
Education	-.038	-.010	-.015	-.032	.077	.066	.076	.006	.087	.012	-.024
Employed	.103*	.032	-.058	-.026	-.027	-.122*	-.056	-.034	.003	-.074	-.062
Pol.Ideology	.040	.013	.006	-.041	-.027	-.030	-.122*	.008	-.029	.026	-.042
Republican	.084	-.060	-.009	-.085	.033	.077	.010	.011	-.083	.031	-.040
Democrat	.011	.046	.038	.037	.068	.050	.021	.028	-.013	.031	.035
Other Party	-.077	-.001	-.032	.028	-.096	-.112*	-.029	-.038	.078	-.056	-.005
No Party	-.048	-.016	-.017	-.022	-.069	-.081	-.061	-.039	-.017	-.090	-.056
Catholic	.057	.014	.031	.075	.008	.030	.001	.038	.092	.057	.021
Cons. Prot.	-.053	.019	-.036	.019	-.032	.034	-.038	-.044	-.144*	.144**	-.052
Mod. Prot.	-.049	-.007	.066	-.016	-.004	.043	-.026	-.015	-.048	-.023	.025
Lib. Prot.	.053	-.057	.013	-.014	.056	.058	.032	.044	.019	.046	.021
Other Rel.	-.050	.122*	.032	.085	.055	.024	-.021	.046	.073	-.063	.002
No Religion	.036	-.060	-.069	-.096	-.036	-.115*	.042	-.031	.020	-.108*	-.008
Internet	.051	.031	-.046	-.045	-.033	-.102*	.027	-.006	.047	-.137*	-.145*
Greed	.075	.081	.110*	.045	.026	.041	.212*	.131**	-.064	.124*	.124*
Moral	.087	.038	.062	.000	.069	.028	.177**	.113*	.126*	.051	.124*
Control	-.027	-.010	-.031	-.049	-.061	.026	-.102*	-.128*	-.017	.041	.039
Choice	.004	.035	.098*	.096	.034	.063	.195**	.073	.121*	.044	.088
Influence	-.047	.140**	.117*	.105*	-.014	.040	.104*	.012	.220**	.035	.121*
Fiduciary	.032	.104*	.123*	.102*	.103*	.035	.137**	.162**	.129**	.067	.099*
Pressure	.000	.240**	.188**	.239**	.067	.016	.014	-.051	.117*	.052	.067
No Wrong	-.109*	-.047	.032	.004	.042	.076	-.075	-.089	-.022	.042	-.011

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson's r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman's rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 14. Sociodemographic Correlates of Perceived Seriousness of White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Male	-.077	-.040	-.130**	.032	-.107*
Age	.263**	.247**	.172**	.092	.280**
White	.055	.001	-.023	.070	-.011
Black	-.082	.050	.051	.037	.000
Other Race	.016	.009	-.045	-.063	-.039
Hispanic	-.015	-.065	.025	-.092	.054
Northeast	-.005	.024	.053	.021	.044
Urban	-.085	-.051	-.081	.001	-.091
Income	.037	.030	-.104*	.040	.019
Education	.002	.045	-.022	-.044	.015
Employed	-.084	.035	-.028	-.010	-.061
Pol.Ideology	-.049	.003	-.133**	-.049	-.042
Republican	.009	.008	-.146**	.006	-.007
Democrat	.045	.077	.032	.073	.041
Other Party	-.054	-.085	.081	-.081	-.037
No Party	-.108*	-.088	.068	-.058	-.095
Catholic	-.051	.029	.030	.018	.022
Cons. Prot.	.024	-.040	-.086	-.051	-.025
Mod. Prot.	-.051	.018	-.008	-.030	-.039
Lib. Prot.	.020	.059	.049	-.084	.014
Other Rel.	.079	-.052	.015	.001	.058
No Religion	.005	.061	.014	.081	-.008
Internet	-.137**	.038	-.162**	-.019	-.118*
Greed	.179**	.117*	.188**	.062	.147**
Moral	.165**	.137**	.249**	.111*	.213**
Control	-.012	-.060	-.023	-.029	.008
Choice	.081	.114*	.081	.063	.098*
Influence	-.009	-.073	.056	-.018	.023
Fiduciary	.175**	.080	.206**	.031	.146**
Pressure	.064	.018	.098*	-.010	.042
No Wrong	-.096	.008	-.054	-.099*	-.068

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson's r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman's rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 15. Sociodemographic Correlates of Choice of Prosecutorial Process against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Male	-.008	-	-.083	.000	-.139**
Age	.031	-	.052	-.034	.124*
White	.012	-	-.033	.071	-.082
Black	.006	-	.013	.029	.061
Other Race	-.076	-	.012	.025	.006
Hispanic	.047	-	.028	-.170**	.061
Northeast	.013	-	.145**	.023	.101*
Urban	.066	-	-.053	-.074	-.026
Income	.073	-	-.103*	-.050	-.050
Education	.069	-	-.051	-.135**	-.008
Employed	.099	-	.023	-.002	-.029
Pol.Ideology	-.072	-	-.147**	-.020	-.111*
Republican	-.015	-	-.077	-.021	-.129**
Democrat	.012	-	.052	-.007	.080
Other Party	.000	-	.006	.024	.018
No Party	-.043	-	-.022	.038	-.031
Catholic	-.069	-	.053	-.030	.086
Cons. Prot.	.016	-	-.050	-.108*	-.047
Mod. Prot.	.009	-	.006	-.025	-.004
Lib. Prot.	.005	-	.002	.023	-.072
Other Rel.	-.008	-	-.052	.030	-.025
No Religion	.034	-	.020	.088	.019
Internet	-.080	-	-.078	.016	-.068
Greed	.098*	.	.070	.006	.104*
Moral	.121*	.	.133**	.035	.165**
Control	.000	.	.010	-.054	-.025
Choice	.071	.	.056	.059	.098*
Influence	.039	.	.067	-.009	.048
Fiduciary	.135**	.	.142**	.009	.155**
Pressure	-.008	.	.064	.063	.018
No Wrong	-.033	.	-.130**	.083	-.109*

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson's r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman's rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 16. Sociodemographic Correlates of Choice of Fine Amount against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Male	.033	.028	.134*	.026	.044
Age	.079	.073	-.041	.087	.099*
White	.059	-.006	.101*	-.004	.058
Black	-.099*	.016	-.068	-.039	-.085
Other Race	-.017	-.029	-.054	.025	-.037
Hispanic	.027	.021	-.039	.023	.033
Northeast	-.036	-.062	-.049	-.057	-.061
Urban	-.029	-.013	-.022	-.019	-.015
Income	.084	.008	.065	-.039	.049
Education	-.021	.010	-.057	-.027	.003
Employed	-.097*	-.028	-.047	-.028	-.044
Pol.Ideology	.036	.108*	.078	.119*	.004
Republican	.060	.024	-.020	.076	-.006
Democrat	-.101*	-.069	-.136**	-.068	-.080
Other Party	.058	.052	.155**	.011	.087
No Party	.063	.038	.090	.018	.046
Catholic	.049	.001	-.055	.019	-.004
Cons. Prot.	-.109*	-.023	-.056	.033	-.108*
Mod. Prot.	.015	.092	.069	.041	.064
Lib. Prot.	.049	.034	.026	-.046	.003
Other Rel.	-.040	.049	-.001	.024	-.033
No Religion	.029	-.095	.016	-.059	.047
Internet	-.015	-.095	.047	-.035	-.041
Greed	.009	.013	.072	-.008	.009
Moral	.062	.047	.052	.003	.081
Control	.175**	.116*	.101*	.129**	.109*
Choice	-.012	.029	.002	-.002	.066
Influence	-.056	-.088	-.065	-.059	.014
Fiduciary	.085	.077	.066	.058	.134**
Pressure	-.031	-.043	-.041	-.024	.016
No Wrong	.024	.056	.082	.069	.023

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson's r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman's rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 17. Sociodemographic Correlates of Choice of Monetary Compensation Amount against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Male	.064	.029	-.037	.025	.062
Age	.118*	.041	.182**	.077	.183**
White	.078	.058	.053	.082	-.042
Black	-.021	-.072	-.077	-.082	.057
Other Race	-.120*	-.029	-.078	-.042	-.056
Hispanic	.012	.012	-.005	-.005	.059
Northeast	-.098*	-.090	-.041	-.073	-.067
Urban	-.051	-.041	-.068	-.009	-.080
Income	.066	.025	.041	.018	.058
Education	-.072	-.017	-.061	-.004	-.073
Employed	.087	-.034	.004	.048	.010
Pol. Ideology	-.025	.055	.028	.053	.005
Republican	.023	.004	.002	.049	.022
Democrat	.020	-.056	-.094	-.038	.001
Other Party	-.038	.055	.095	.001	-.018
No Party	.031	-.017	.111*	-.019	.008
Catholic	-.029	-.043	-.022	.013	-.025
Cons. Prot.	.028	-.035	-.058	-.037	.007
Mod. Prot.	.073	.133**	.113*	.117*	.054
Lib. Prot.	-.043	.027	-.064	-.013	-.032
Other Rel.	-.061	-.030	-.107*	.004	-.063
No Religion	-.001	-.038	.059	-.066	.022
Internet	-.062	-.063	-.093	-.027	-.016
Greed	.069	.060	.121*	.048	.138**
Moral	.045	.053	.095	.073	.107*
Control	.139**	.116*	.119*	.118*	.053
Choice	.019	.012	.081	.002	.077
Influence	-.033	-.064	.006	-.056	-.079
Fiduciary	.163**	.117*	.085	.114*	.124*
Pressure	-.047	-.026	-.020	.019	-.030
No Wrong	.028	.013	.021	.018	.067

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson's r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman's rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 18. Sociodemographic Correlates of Prison Sentence Severity against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Male	.023	.040	.015	-.045	-.016
Age	.110*	.105*	.166**	.109*	.094
White	-.039	.150**	-.005	.074	.003
Black	.055	-.099*	-.049	-.048	-.072
Other Race	.017	-.132**	-.012	-.049	.047
Hispanic	-.013	-.012	.071	-.020	.028
Northeast	.010	-.042	.080	-.050	.021
Urban	.042	.006	.017	-.023	.026
Income	.063	.014	-.062	-.067	-.021
Education	.104*	-.058	.039	-.131**	.037
Employed	-.046	-.003	-.005	-.114*	-.035
Pol.Ideology	.003	.116*	-.060	-.006	-.051
Republican	.089	.130**	-.034	.067	-.081
Democrat	.000	-.096	.000	-.029	.021
Other Party	-.069	-.001	.026	-.023	.041
No Party	-.144**	.043	-.056	.032	-.020
Catholic	.008	.018	.092	.012	.106*
Cons. Prot.	.053	-.002	-.015	-.033	-.056
Mod. Prot.	-.085	.036	-.103*	.019	-.062
Lib. Prot.	.021	-.067	-.042	-.016	-.063
Other Rel.	-.036	-.024	-.014	-.032	.037
No Religion	.031	.005	.047	.025	.015
Internet	-.161*	-.050	-.055	-.012	-.080
Greed	.079	.058	.106*	.061	.052
Moral	.110*	.059	.175**	.037	.077
Control	.051	.001	.024	-.066	.012
Choice	.109*	.026	.057	.089	.042
Influence	.078	.058	.093	-.029	.106*
Fiduciary	.101*	.000	.128**	-.005	.060
Pressure	.032	-.047	.036	-.061	.045
No Wrong	-.031	.035	-.137**	.007	-.114*

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson's r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman's rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 19. Zero-Order Correlations Between Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance, “Myth” Adherence and Perceived Seriousness of the National White-Collar Crime Center Survey Scenarios Compared with Motor Vehicle Theft (N=408)

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
Knowledge	-.093	.090	.085	.061	.055	.044	.156**	.129**	.176**	-.056	.032
“Truth”	-.066	.120*	.107*	.047	.083	.020	.128*	.155**	.158**	-.010	.101*
“Myth”	.092	.034	.060	.011	.032	.044	-.076	-.006	-.062	.021	.016

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

1=Burglary
2=Embezzlement
3=Identity Theft
4=False Charges

5=Robbery
6=Hacking
7=False Drug Label
8=Espionage

9=Market Rigging
10=Counterfeit Sales
11=Insurance Overcharge

Table 20. Zero-Order Correlations Between Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance, “Myth” Adherence and Perceived Seriousness of White-Collar Crime and Street Crime (N=408)

	<u>Toy</u>	<u>Murder</u>	<u>Pollutants</u>	<u>Rape</u>	<u>Asbestos</u>
Knowledge	.009	-.074	.086	-.012	.126*
“Truth”	.069	-.084	.101*	-.051	.101*
“Myth”	.012	-.046	-.069	-.035	-.101*

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 21. Zero-Order Correlations Between Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance, “Myth” Adherence and Choice of Prosecutorial Process (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Knowledge	.069	-	.038	.080	.050
“Truth”	.138**	-	.050	.015	.072
“Myth”	.007	-	-.015	-.116*	-.010

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 22. Zero-Order Correlations Between Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance, “Myth” Adherence and Choice of Fine Amount (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Knowledge	.073	.038	.079	.016	.121*
“Truth”	.065	.074	.083	.068	.087
“Myth”	.023	.003	.038	.017	-.023

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 23. Zero-Order Correlations Between Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance, “Myth” Adherence and Choice of Monetary Compensation Amount (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Knowledge	.061	.056	.144*	.131**	.024
“Truth”	.067	.074	.019	.121*	.069
“Myth”	.021	.003	-.076	.017	.052

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 24. Zero-Order Correlations Between Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance, “Myth” Adherence and Prison Sentence Severity (N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Pollutants</i>	<i>Rape</i>	<i>Asbestos</i>
Knowledge	.144**	-.049	.110*	-.027	.124*
“Truth”	.139**	.018	.102*	-.029	.137**
“Myth”	.014	.026	-.033	-.010	-.026

Note. Correlation coefficients reported in all tables are Pearson’s r when using dichotomous predictors and Spearman’s rho when using multinomial nominal and/or ordinal predictors.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS

Preliminary analyses reported in chapter four revealed a series of noteworthy considerations, including a positive relationship between knowledge about elite deviance and sentiments (i.e., perceived seriousness and punitiveness) towards it. Conversely, those subjects who were found to be less knowledgeable, less inclined to accept “truths” and more likely to adhere to “myths” about white-collar crime were also less prone to perceive it as a serious social issue compared with street crime, and were generally more lenient in their prescribed sanctions against it. Further, dissensus in both knowledge and attitudes about elite deviance in this sample was found to stem from sociodemographic differences in gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, socio-economic status, and attribution style. Phrased differently, those who exhibited relatively more tolerance for white-collar offenses tended to be male, younger, white, less educated yet wealthier, and to support the notion that elite deviance results from situational rather than dispositional factors.

Perhaps more importantly, considerable politico-religious divergences were suggested by the lesser likelihood of politically conservative subjects, Republicans and conservative Protestants to rate the instances of white-collar crime presented to them as more serious than traditional offenses and to seek more stringent sanctions against them. As previously mentioned, empirical research has established that these individuals are usually more critical of and punitive

against traditional crime than are their more liberal counterparts (Grasmick et al., 1993; Unnever et al. 2005). Further, they have also been found to be more supportive of free market economic policies (Gallup Poll, 2012), whose deregulation has been showed to facilitate the commission of white-collar crime (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006). The goal of this chapter is to investigate the hypothesis that knowledge and attitudes about elite deviance (i.e., perception of offense gravity and punitiveness) vary as a function of indicators of support for capitalism. To this effect, multivariate regression models were run to determine whether differences found at the bivariate level would persist after a more stringent analysis.

In the following regression models, reference groups include White for race, Republican for political affiliation, and conservative Protestant for religious identity. That is, these three suppressed categories are coded 0 on their respective dummy variables, which allows for comparing their impact on knowledge and sentiments about white-collar crime relative to other races, political parties and religions, with all other variables controlled. In each analysis, standardized regression coefficients (betas) and their corresponding significance levels are presented. Importantly, with no variance inflator factor greater than 4, excessive multicollinearity could not be detected.

Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance and “Myth” Adherence

Table 25 presents the regression analysis summary for sociodemographic predictors of knowledge about elite deviance, “truth” acceptance, and “myth” adherence. These models predicted the outcome with limited success, with adjusted R^2 ranging between .110 and .160. Further, as was the case with correlation coefficients, statistically significant betas are both scarce and weak. Compared to Whites, non-Black subjects who reported belonging to “other racial” groups were less likely to be knowledgeable about elite deviance ($b = -.153$), as were

Hispanics relative to non-Latinos ($b = -.129$).

Conversely, education and belonging to “other” religions or no religion at all (compared with conservative Protestants) significantly increased the likelihood of having knowledge about white-collar crime ($b = .268$, $.162$, and $.159$, respectively). Similar results emerged as far as “truth” acceptance. More specifically, compared to Whites, members of other races were less likely to accept relevant information about white-collar crime ($b = -.118$), as were Hispanics ($b = -.138$), and more politically conservative subjects ($b = -.142$). Once again, however, more educated participants as well as those belonging to other religious groups were more likely to agree with empirically validated facts about elite deviance ($b = .162$ and $.137$, respectively). Lastly, those more likely to adhere to “myths” about white-collar crime were males ($b = .183$) and Blacks ($b = .112$), whereas those less likely to espouse such unfounded beliefs included subjects who used the Internet as their main source of information ($b = -.204$), as well as those inclined to cite negative business environmental influences as a leading cause of elite deviance ($b = -.120$).

In summation, while several associations were no longer statistically significant, a number of sociodemographic divergences persisted after running the regressions. Once again, Whites and better-educated individuals were found to be more knowledgeable about elite deviance, a disparity that may find its root in racial and ethnic gaps in educational attainment (U.S. Census, 2012). Conversely, politically conservative subjects and conservative Protestants proved to be less knowledgeable than their liberal counterparts. It therefore appears that political and religious affiliations supportive of capitalism are also significant predictors of lack of knowledge about elite deviance. What remains to be seen is whether such discrepancies are reflected in subjects’ attitudes about white-collar crime.

Perceived Seriousness of White-Collar Crime vs. Auto Theft

Table 26 presents the regression analysis summary for sociodemographic predictors of perceived seriousness of the National White-Collar Crime Center survey scenarios compared with motor vehicle theft, controlling for knowledge about elite deviance. There was considerable difference in the percentage of variance explained in each model, with adjusted R^2 ranging from .040 to .088. Males were less likely to rate embezzlement as more serious than motor vehicle theft ($b = -.162$), as were those prone to believe that white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions ($b = -.108$), unlike more politically conservative subjects ($b = .158$) and those inclined to blame elite deviance on pressure to succeed ($b = .229$). Identity theft was rated as more serious than car theft by subjects with higher income levels ($b = .134$), and by those who believed that white-collar crime results from negative business environment influences ($b = .077$). Males were also less likely to deem the false charges scenario more serious ($b = -.177$), unlike those inclined to agree with the idea that pressure to succeed causes elite deviance ($b = .200$). Those currently employed evinced less perceived seriousness toward hacking ($b = -.124$), unlike older subjects, Blacks and members of other races ($b = .208, .154, \text{ and } .114$, respectively).

Only those who attributed elite deviance to greed rated the false drug label scenario as more serious than auto theft ($b = .171$). While wealthier subjects rated market rigging as less serious than car theft ($b = -.105$), the perception of offense gravity was reversed among older subjects ($b = .106$), Catholics (again, relative to conservative Protestants, $b = .191$), and those inclined to blame white-collar crime on negative business environmental influences ($b = .142$). Lastly, several significant differences could be observed for the vignette describing counterfeit sales. More specifically, older subjects and urban residents deemed it more serious than the baseline crime ($b = .130 \text{ and } .105$, respectively). Conversely, moderate Protestants rated it as less

serious than did their more conservative counterparts ($b = -.152$), a finding echoed among subjects from other religious groups ($b = -.158$) and those with no religion ($b = -.243$). In summation, compared with their respective counterparts, younger, wealthier as well as politically and religiously conservative participants exhibited less perceived seriousness about these examples of elite deviance than they did toward instances of street crime and petty white-collar crimes.

Slightly similar findings emerged after controlling for the acceptance of “truths” and the adherence to “myths” about elite deviance. Table 27 presents the regression analysis summary for sociodemographic predictors of perceived seriousness of the National White-Collar Crime Center survey scenarios compared with motor vehicle theft, controlling for “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence. As was previously the case, these models do not account for a large percentage of the variance, with adjusted R^2 ranging from .045 to .093. Perhaps because embezzlement is not an organizational offense and profits individual employees rather than the company, it was once again rated as more serious by politically conservative subjects ($b = .160$) as well as those who attributed such crime to pressure to succeed ($b = .234$), but not by those who believed white-collar offenders see no wrong in their practices ($b = -.122$).

While males were less likely to rate identity theft as more serious than car theft ($b = -.108$), those with higher income levels and who blame elite deviance on pressure to succeed deemed it more serious ($b = .117$ and $.171$, respectively). Men were also found to be less critical of false charges ($b = -.190$), unlike those prone to attribute white-collar crime to outward influences ($b = .068$). Several associations reached statistical significance in regard to hacking. More specifically, whereas currently employed respondents found it to be less serious than car theft ($b = -.127$), males, older subjects, Blacks and Hispanics expressed the opposite opinion ($b =$

.059, .211, .149, and .107, respectively). As was the case before, attribution of blame to greed was the sole significant predictor of perceived offense gravity in the false drug label scenario ($b = .174$). Further, subjects who reported higher income levels once again rated market rigging as less serious than car theft ($b = -.115$), unlike older participants ($b = .109$), Catholics (relative to conservative Protestants, $b = .189$), and those prone to attribute white-collar crime to negative business environmental influences ($b = .142$).

Results with respect to counterfeit sales were somewhat different after controlling for “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence. More specifically, while older subjects and urban residents once again rated such offense as more serious than car theft ($b = .129$ and $.106$, respectively), those belonging to other races (compared with Whites) and politically conservative participants shared the same views ($b = .101$ and $.015$, respectively). On the other hand, moderate Protestants were again found to perceive less seriousness than their more conservative counterparts ($b = -.159$), an attitude mirrored by members of other religions ($b = -.168$), those with no religion ($b = -.254$), and males ($b = -.060$).

To conclude, despite weak relationships, these results tend to confirm the few statistically significant differences in perceived offense gravity between younger, wealthier as well as politically and religiously conservative participants and their respective counterparts found in the correlational analysis. We now turn our attention to the five scenarios describing injurious white-collar crimes and violent street crimes.

Perceived Seriousness of Injurious White-Collar Crimes vs. Violent Street Crimes

Table 28 presents the regression analysis summary for sociodemographic correlates of perceived seriousness of white-collar crime and street crime. In an effort to reduce multicollinearity, each scenario comprises two models. Knowledge about elite deviance is

included in model 1 whereas model 2 controls for “truth” acceptance and “myth” adherence.

These models perform relatively better than before, with adjusted R^2 ranging from .037 to .148, but can still be considered weak.

The only differences observed for the vignette describing consumer safety violations (i.e., through the manufacturing and selling of a defective and potentially hazardous toy) included age and situational attribution. More specifically, older subjects were more likely to deem it a serious offense ($b = .213$ and $.214$), unlike those inclined to believe white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions ($b = -.109$ and $-.116$). Age was also a significant predictor of perceived seriousness of murder ($b = .151$ and $.141$), as was believing that elite deviance is caused by bad moral character in model 2 ($b = .116$), contrary to knowledge about white-collar crime ($b = -.137$) and “truth” acceptance ($b = -.148$).

More ambiguous findings emerged in regard to toxic dumping. While politically conservative subjects were expectedly less inclined to rate it as a serious offense in model 1 ($b = -.177$), a similar finding emerged among those who relied on the Internet as their main source of information ($b = -.138$), an unexpected finding. Conversely, those unaffiliated with any political party were more likely than conservative Protestants to perceive the release of deadly pollutants a serious crime in model 1 ($b = .134$), as were those prone to link elite deviance to bad moral character ($b = .187$, also in model 1). Lastly, while males and “myth” adherers were less inclined to rate the asbestos exposure scenario as a serious offense ($b = -0.76$ in model 1 and $-.115$, respectively), older subjects, Hispanics and “truth” accepters evinced higher perceived seriousness in the second model ($b = .212$, $.111$, and $.111$, respectively).

In summation, it appears the largest differences in perceived seriousness of these five crime scenarios were found in regard to age, race/ethnicity, political views and attribution style.

Once again, older subjects were more critical of white-collar crime whereas minority members perceived street crime to be of lesser gravity. These attitudes are reversed with respect to right-leaning subjects as well as those prone to believe white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions. Let us now move on to predictors of subjects' punitiveness.

Choice of Prosecutorial Process

Table 29 presents the regression analysis summary for sociodemographic predictors of choice of prosecutorial process against white-collar crime and street crime. Once again, these models yield low adjusted R^2 ranging from .051 to .059. Further, the models for the murder scenario could not be run, as it was a constant (i.e., every single participants agreed that the murderer should be tried in a criminal court). Whereas subjects who grew up in Northeastern states were more likely to recommend a harsher prosecution style for those responsible in the toxic dumping vignette ($b = .149$ and $.150$), more politically conservative subjects were less punitive ($b = -.211$ and $-.209$), as were those who believed that white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions ($b = -.139$ and $-.143$). Several noteworthy divergences appeared in regard to the appropriate prosecution style for rape. More precisely, older subjects in the second model were less likely to recommend the rapist be tried in a criminal court ($b = -.131$), as were Hispanics ($b = -.154$ and $-.154$), but also more educated participants and “myth” adherers in model 2 ($b = -.177$ and $-.177$, respectively).

The opposite view was held among those with no religious affiliation ($b = .200$ and $.200$), as well as those inclined to believe white-collar offenders are otherwise law-abiding citizens who do not think that their business practices are really wrong ($b = .103$ and $.118$). The latter group and males were also less likely to require that those responsible in the asbestos exposure case be tried in a criminal court ($b = -.106$ in model 2, and $-.120$ and $-.127$, respectively). Once again,

despite few and weak statistically significant relationships, consistent patterns continue to emerge, with right-leaning participants and those more likely to find excuses for elite deviance being less punitive toward white-collar crime relative to street crime.

Choice of Fine Amount

Table 30 presents the regression analysis summary for sociodemographic predictors of choice of fine amount against white-collar crime and street crime. As was previously the case, these models do not perform very well, with adjusted R^2 ranging from .039 to .058. While those currently employed opposed a fine against the company responsible for selling a potentially dangerous toy ($b = -.118$ and $-.129$), the reverse position was observed in regard to religious views, relative to conservative Protestants. More precisely, among those who supported a harsher fine were Catholics ($b = .154$ and $.154$) and liberal Protestants ($b = .113$ and $.113$). Similar results were found among those inclined to blame elite deviance on low self-control ($b = .199$ and $.202$). In fact, the variable measuring attribution to impulsiveness yielded several significant relationships in these models. For example, those individuals prone to accept that white-collar offenders have difficulty controlling themselves were also more inclined to demand a higher fine amount against the murderer ($b = .109$ and $.119$), along with males ($b = .050$ and $.054$), and those disposed to believe white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions ($b = .112$ and $.110$). Similarly, those subjects attributing elite deviance to self-control were more likely to favor a harsher monetary sanction against the company responsible for release deadly pollutants in a river ($b = .107$ and $.108$), as were males ($b = .116$ and $.109$).

Taken together, these results parallel previous divergences in punitiveness. Males, older subjects and those blaming elite deviance on low self-control were found to be the most retributive (at least in their choice of fine amount). Although few differences could be detected

with respect to sanction options for the toxic dumping and asbestos exposure scenarios, conservative Protestants were less likely than other religious groups to support a monetary fine against the company guilty of distributing a potentially harmful toy. It could be that capitalism supporters (weary of the firm's financial well-being) may favor a punishment less harmful to business. This includes either paying damages to the potential victims or their families (as in the Ford Pinto case) or sentencing those responsible to prison. We now turn our attention to these two options.

Choice of Monetary Compensation Amount

Table 31 presents the sociodemographic predictors of choice of monetary compensation amount against white-collar crime and street crime. Once again, these models produced weak adjusted R^2 ranging from .039 to .058. Males were more likely to recommend the payment of damages in the defective toy scenario ($b = .121$ and $.126$), as were older subjects ($b = .117$ and $.118$), currently employed participants ($b = .128$ and $.124$), as well as those blaming elite deviance on low self-control ($b = .102$ and $.107$) and fiduciary responsibility to shareholders ($b = .137$ and $.137$). On the other hand, better-educated subjects deemed monetary compensation an inadequate sanction ($b = -.142$ and $-.130$). Age and blame attribution to low self-control were significant predictors in regard to the toxic dumping scenario ($b = .171$ and $.172$, and $.115$ and $.116$, respectively), as was knowledge about elite deviance ($b = .175$), and with respect to rape ($b = .166$ and $.173$, and $.122$ and $.127$, respectively). Once again, subjects more knowledgeable about white-collar crime were more likely to support such sanction against the rapist ($b = .140$), unlike "myth" adherers ($b = -.008$).

Lastly, the asbestos case created much dissensus in regard to whether paying damages to the victims and/or their families is an appropriate form of punishment. More specifically, those

inclined to support this relatively more lenient sanction included males ($b = .121$ and $.117$), older subjects ($b = .169$ and $.173$), Hispanics ($b = .103$ and $.106$), as well as wealthier subjects in model 1 ($b = .106$). Conversely, those less prone to favor such option were urban residents ($b = -.103$ and $-.103$), better-educated subjects ($b = -.167$ and $-.163$), and those attributing elite deviance to negative business environmental influences ($b = -.109$ and $-.108$).

In summation, older subjects and those blaming low self-control as a leading factor of white-collar crime were once again the most punitive. However, participants with higher education levels were less likely to support monetary compensation against white-collar offenders. Further, no significant differences emerged in terms of political and religious affiliations. It is not certain, however, whether these individuals considered paying damages a more lenient punishment or a financial burden to the company. Being admittedly the harshest form of sanction, prison sentence might yield less equivocal results.

Prison Sentence Severity

Table 32 presents the regression analysis summary for sociodemographic predictors of prison sentence severity against white-collar crime and street crime. Once again, these models yield low adjusted R^2 values that explain between only 5.6% and 6.6% of the variance. Fewer statistically significant differences emerged this time. Compared to Republicans, those subjects affiliated to no political party were less likely to favor a harsh prison sentence against those responsible for distributing a potentially dangerous toy ($b = -.206$ and $-.209$), as were those who used the Internet as their main source of information ($b = -.154$ and $-.151$), a somewhat odd finding given that these individuals were also found to be less likely to espouse “myths” about elite deviance. More expectedly, participants more knowledgeable about white-collar crime and “truth” believers were more inclined to require a longer prison sentence ($b = .135$ and $.127$,

respectively). Lastly, further forms of dissensus emerged with respect to toxic dumping. More specifically, while older subjects and “truth” believers were more inclined to support the incarceration of those responsible for releasing deadly pollutants in a river ($b = .189$ and $.193$, and $.108$, respectively), wealthier subjects as well as those who believe white-collar offenders see no wrong in their actions were more lenient in their decision ($b = -.108$ in model 2, and $-.118$ and $-.123$, respectively).

In summation, the very few statistically significant coefficients bring only partial support to the hypothesis under examination. Although public dissensus in prison sentence severity emerged, it was not due to politico-religious differences. Rather, more knowledgeable subjects and “truth” believers were more inclined to require a harsher prison sentence for the white-collar offenders described in the abovementioned scenarios. Conversely, participants who reported higher income levels and those with situational attribution styles were less likely to recommend a severe prison sentence for such offenses (all expected findings). It is not certain, however, whether such tolerance displayed towards the perpetrators of elite deviance was motivated by lesser perceived fear or, alternatively, disbelief in the effectiveness of the sanctions proposed to them. These results and their implications are further discussed in the sixth and last chapter.

Tables

Table 25. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Predictors of Knowledge about Elite Deviance, “Truth” Acceptance, and “Myth” Adherence (Betas; N =408)

	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>“Truth” Acceptance</i>	<i>“Myth” Adherence</i>
Male	.046	.095	.183***
Age	.048	-.009	-.088
Black	-.070	.051	.112*
Other Race	-.153**	-.118*	.041
Hispanic	-.129**	-.138**	.098
Northeast	-.065	-.059	.058
Urban	-.015	-.009	.013
Income	-.096	.037	.065
Education	.268***	.162**	-.020
Employed	-.028	.085	.092
Pol. Ideology	-.141	-.142*	.021
Democrat	-.035	.000	-.063
Other Party	.053	.125	-.139
No Party	-.025	-.038	-.094
Catholic	.056	.060	-.064
Mod. Protestant	.086	.127	-.084
Lib. Protestant	.003	.010	-.039
Other Religion	.162**	.137*	-.022
No Religion	.159*	.158	-.116
Internet	.074	-.013	-.204***
Greed	.018	.011	.057
Moral	.012	.060	-.052
Control	-.032	-.073	.065
Choice	.098	.038	.005
Influence	.070	.038	-.120*
Fiduciary	.035	.081	.056
Pressure	.095	.083	-.087
No Wrong	.039	.094	.091
Intercept	1.551	-1.135	2.099
Adj. R^2	.160***	.130***	.110***

Note. Reference categories include White for race, Republican for political affiliation, and conservative Protestant for religious identity.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$., *** $p < .001$.

Table 26. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Predictors of Perceived Seriousness of the National White-Collar Crime Center Survey Scenarios Compared with Motor Vehicle Theft, Controlling for Knowledge about Elite Deviance (Betas; N=408)

	<i>Burglary</i>	<i>Embezzle</i>	<i>ID Theft</i>	<i>Charges</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Hacking</i>	<i>False Label</i>	<i>Espionage</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Counterfeit</i>	<i>Overcharge</i>
Male	-.015	-.162*	-.089	-.177*	.062	.060	-.088	-.021	.098	-.055	-.158
Age	.000	-.080	-.025	-.047	.157**	.208**	.062	.074	.106*	.130*	.001
Black	.012	.061	.041	-.019	-.008	.154**	.037	-.021	.028	.005	-.028
Other Race	-.013	-.017	.010	.021	-.050	.114*	.011	.012	.017	.092	.011
Hispanic	.026	.011	.032	.025	-.043	.002	-.038	-.072	-.073	.079	.035
Northeast	.006	.079	.058	.097	.016	-.010	.002	.007	-.005	.012	-.043
Urban	.011	.031	-.037	.007	.052	-.010	-.045	-.037	.048	.105*	.056
Income	.103	.029	.134*	-.013	.087	.072	.007	-.036	-.105*	-.072	-.019
Education	-.078	-.002	-.054	.023	.043	.014	.052	-.029	.060	.008	-.025
Employed	.077	.013	-.063	-.035	-.042	-.124*	-.060	-.034	-.023	-.080	-.065
Pol. Ideology	.018	.158*	.083	.028	-.067	-.117	-.095	.023	.066	.005	.001
Democrat	-.121	.132	.087	.118	-.011	-.133	-.132	.033	.060	.033	.019
Other Party	-.149	.062	.002	.110	-.073	-.122	-.100	-.042	.079	.050	.050
No Party	-.101	.022	-.004	.030	-.060	-.122	-.114	-.035	.023	-.044	-.038
Catholic	.104	-.027	.043	-.003	.026	.010	.044	.097	.191**	-.119	.068
Mod. Prot.	.046	.003	.112	-.027	.024	.001	.021	.010	.080	-.152*	.066
Lib. Prot.	.097	-.057	.034	-.039	.039	.006	.042	.074	.078	-.062	.057
Other Rel.	.017	.088	.039	.040	.059	-.009	-.007	.054	.120	-.158*	.041
No Religion	.152	-.034	.008	-.112	-.002*	-.110	.060	.054	.149	-.243*	.052
Internet	.073	.017	-.023	-.055	.021	-.050	.085	.036	.049	-.102	-.116
Greed	.079	.062	.066	.052	.018	.032	.171**	.080	.067	-.096	.070
Moral	.064	-.023	.004	-.080	.055	-.037	.036	.046	.052	.027	.028
Control	-.036	-.021	-.064	-.055	-.042	.026	-.086	-.089	-.020	.084	.058
Choice	-.036	-.005	.035	.085	-.015	.038	.098	-.044	-.018	.031	.010
Influence	-.022	.088	.077**	.058	-.056	.010	.054	.017	.142**	.053	.099
Fiduciary	-.036	.044	.042	.046	.077	-.036	.065	.132*	.074	.021	.020
Pressure	.034	.229**	.162	.200**	.086	.033	-.005	-.037	.061	.036	-.006
No Wrong	-.079	-.108*	-.019	-.043	.034	.055	-.087	-.045	-.030	.049	-.024
Knowledge	-.062	.083	.091	.041	.010	.051	.095	.114*	.084	-.026	.026
Intercept	3.022	2.196	1.758	2.424	1.846	1.827	3.144	4.135	1.567	2.267	3.156
Adj. R ²	.011	.084**	.040*	.080**	.020	.075**	.088**	.022	.080**	.065*	.019

Note. Reference categories include White for race, Republican for political affiliation, and conservative Protestant for religious identity.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 27. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Predictors of Perceived Seriousness of the National White-Collar Crime Center Survey Scenarios Compared with Motor Vehicle Theft, Controlling for “Truth” Acceptance and “Myth” Adherence (Betas; N=408)

	<i>Burglary</i>	<i>Embezzle</i>	<i>ID Theft</i>	<i>Charges</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Hacking</i>	<i>False Label</i>	<i>Espionage</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Counterfeit</i>	<i>Overcharge</i>
Male	-.031	-.182	-.108*	-.190*	.054	.059**	-.086	-.034	.099	-.060*	-.173*
Age	.005	-.069	-.012	-.038	.161**	.211*	.064	.082	.109*	.129*	.007
Black	.008	.042	.021	-.031	-.013	.149**	.030	-.039	.021	.005	-.039
Other Race	-.017	-.020	.003	.016	-.049	.107*	.008	.012	.015	.101*	.019
Hispanic	.013	.008	.024	.018	-.042	-.004	-.034	-.067	-.070	.088	.044
Northeast	.000	.076	.053	.093	.016	-.014	.003	.008	-.004	.016	-.040
Urban	.010	.030	-.038	.006	.051	-.011	-.045	-.038	.048	.106*	.056
Income	.105	.012	.117*	-.022	.083	.066	-.003	-.054	-.115*	-.071	-.028
Education	-.081	.004	-.043	.029	.040	.027	.062	-.023	.067	-.006	-.035
Employed	.074	-.005	-.080	-.045	-.048	-.127*	-.067	-.052	-.031	-.083	-.078
Pol. Ideology	.014	.160*	.081	.025	-.064	-.123	-.094	.029	.068	.015**	.012
Democrat	-.112	.133	.089	.120	-.009	-.134	-.138	.030	.055	.035	.020
Other Party	-.128	.063	.007	.117	-.073	-.119	-.111	-.054	.069	.044	.043
No Party	-.092	.031	.004	.036	-.056	-.122	-.116	-.030	.022	-.042	-.031
Catholic	.112	-.024	.048	.001	.026	.013	.042	.095	.189**	-.122	.065
Mod. Prot.	.059	.003	.116	-.022	.022	.006	.015	.001	.074	-.159*	.058
Lib. Prot.	.102	-.055	.037	-.037	.040	.007	.040	.073	.076	-.062	.057
Other Rel.	.019	.088	.044	.044	.056	-.002	-.005	.051	.121	-.168*	.031
No Religion	.166	-.029	.018	-.103	-.003	-.102	.057	.049	.145	-.254*	.043
Internet	.090	.040	.002	-.038	.028	-.044	.085	.049	.051	-.103	-.106
Greed	.073	.058	.062	.048	.016	.032	.174**	.079	.069	-.097	.067
Moral	.074	-.025	.004	-.078	.054	-.037	.030	.039	.046	.024	.024
Control	-.046	-.021	-.066	-.058	-.041	.024	-.081	-.082	-.015	.088	.063
Choice	-.040	-.001	.040	.087	-.015	.043	.104	-.039	-.013	.027	.009
Influence	-.011	.098	.090	.068**	-.054	.014	.053	.021	.142**	.050	.100
Fiduciary	-.038	.034	.034	.041	.073	-.036	.063	.123*	.072	.017	.010
Pressure	.044	.234**	.171**	.207	.087	.039	-.007	-.038	.059	.031	-.010
No Wrong	-.085	-.122*	-.031	-.050	.028	.055	-.088	-.057	-.033	.044	-.037
“Truth”	-.073	.109	.088	.033	.036	.008	.091	.158**	.089	.042	.109*
“Myth”	.109*	.074	.081	.067	.027	.011	-.036	.016	-.026	.002	.035
Intercept	2.845	2.227	1.781	2.392	1.835	1.875	3.275	4.234	1.725	2.264	3.191
Adj. R ²	.018	.093**	.045*	.082	.017	.070**	.086**	.031	.079**	.064*	.029

Note. Reference categories include White for race, Republican for political affiliation, and conservative Protestant for religious identity.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 28. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Correlates of Perceived Seriousness of White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (Betas; N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>		<i>Murder</i>		<i>Pollutants</i>		<i>Rape</i>		<i>Asbestos</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Male	-.015	-.027	.022	.035	-.070	-.065	.056	.066	-.076*	-.061
Age	.213**	.214**	.151**	.141*	.085	.084	.075	.070	.216	.212**
Black	-.065	-.070	.039	.059	.064	.063	.032	.042	.033	.033
Other Race	.027	.037	-.022	-.017	-.016	-.013	-.072	-.076	-.010	-.008
Hispanic	.019	.029	-.084	-.084	.046	.054	-.106*	-.112*	.097	.111*
Northeast	.007	.011	.008	.010	.040	.044	.025	.023	.044	.051
Urban	-.082	-.081	-.063	-.062	-.074	-.073	-.009	-.009	-.094	-.093
Income	.066	.064	.006	.027	-.069	-.073	.059	.068	.035	.028
Education	-.038	-.054	.062	.049	.023	.024	-.035	-.032	.001	.008
Employed	-.078	-.086	.036	.055	.004	.001	-.006	.005	-.048	-.049
Pol.Ideology	-.092	-.080	-.089	-.090	-.177*	-.173	-.028*	-.036	-.093	-.089
Democrat	-.016	-.014	.014	.017	.009	.004	-.004	-.003	-.060	-.070
Other Party	.005	-.001	-.025	-.017	.080	.066	-.076	-.068	.003	-.022
No Party	-.087	-.082	-.056	-.060	.134*	.131	-.064*	-.069	-.075	-.084
Catholic	-.092	-.095	.048	.047	.065	.061	.074	.076	-.010	-.019
Mod. Prot.	-.095	-.103	.067	.072	.023	.014	.042	.049	-.029	-.044
Lib. Prot.	-.020	-.020	.046	.046	.091	.089	-.051	-.050	-.010	-.015
Other Rel.	.047	.035	.085	.082	.030	.028	.049	.055	.060	.059
No Religion	-.048	-.059	.017	.016	.028	.019	.126	.132	.001	-.014
Internet	-.064	-.060	.034	.016	-.138*	-.144	.032	.024	-.043	-.058
Greed	.079	.077	.028	.028	.093	.097	.013	.015	.020	.027
Moral	.016	.013	.110	.116*	.187*	.180	.090**	.094	.095	.084
Control	.017	.021	-.025	-.030	-.018	-.011	-.037	-.042	.033	.045
Choice	-.006	-.010	.075	.068	-.042	-.039	.033	.032	.086	.093
Influence	-.038	-.039	-.075	-.082	-.041	-.047	-.024	-.026	-.023	-.034
Fiduciary	.078	.071	.021	.030	.093	.091	.000	.008	.028	.029
Pressure	.059	.054	.090	.087	.063	.058	.033	.036	.014	.005
No Wrong	-.109*	-.116*	-.002	.009	-.067	-.067	-.086	-.077	-.064	-.060
Knowledge	-.019	-	-.137*	-	.053	-	-.046	-	.102	-
“Truth”	-	.069	-	-.148*	-	.075	-	-.099	-	.111*
“Myth”	-	.024	-	-.026	-	-.051	-	-.016	-	-.115*
Intercept	2.984	2.975	3.318	3.249	2.543	2.657	3.772	3.772	2.805	2.984
Adj. R ²	.090**	.092**	.037*	.146**	.146**	.148**	.005	.010	.099**	.107**

Note. Reference categories include white for race, republican for political affiliation, and conservative protestant for religious identity.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 29. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Predictors of Choice of Prosecutorial Process against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (Betas; N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>		<i>Murder</i>		<i>Pollutants</i>		<i>Rape</i>		<i>Asbestos</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Male	-.016	-.019	-	-	-.048	-.052	.012	.038	-.120*	-.127*
Age	.003	.004	-	-	.025	.028	-.124	-.131*	.080	.084
Black	-.004	-.010	-	-	.021	.015	.034	.042	.066	.058
Other Race	-.060	-.052	-	-	.066	.066	.030	.022	.032	.033
Hispanic	.060	.073	-	-	.039	.041	-.154**	-.154**	.074	.076
Northeast	.057	.063	-	-	.149**	.150**	.021	.022	.096	.096
Urban	.059	.060	-	-	-.050	-.050	-.069	-.069	-.036	-.036
Income	.064	.058	-	-	-.075	-.081	-.002	-.002	.001	-.007
Education	.032	.025	-	-	-.056	-.053	-.137*	-.117*	.007	.008
Employed	.013	.004	-	-	.036	.030	.043	.053	-.026	-.034
Pol.Ideology	-.120	-.109	-	-	-.211**	-.209**	.017	.007	-.048	-.045
Democrat	-.082	-.086	-	-	-.106	-.107	-.011	-.022	.114	.114
Other Party	-.008	-.024	-	-	-.043	-.047	-.053	-.063	.122	.118
No Party	-.049	-.049	-	-	-.051	-.050	-.021	-.035	.059	.062
Catholic	-.119	-.126	-	-	.023	.022	.110	.107	.053	.053
Mod. Prot.	-.017	-.030	-	-	.036	.034	.104	.103	.024	.020
Lib. Prot.	-.028	-.031	-	-	.019	.018	.112	.108	-.065	-.065
Other Rel.	-.030	-.039	-	-	-.058	-.058	.102	.114	-.018	-.021
No Religion	-.053	-.068	-	-	.004	.003	.200*	.200*	.028	.026
Internet	-.066	-.067	-	-	-.072	-.067	.000	-.018	-.028	-.020
Greed	.012	.013	-	-	-.007	-.007	.050	.058	-.002	-.003
Moral	.061	.053	-	-	.086	.084	.070	.065	.100	.097
Control	.000	.008	-	-	.015	.017	-.095	-.091	-.017	-.015
Choice	.015	.015	-	-	-.031	-.029	.051	.060	.062	.064
Influence	.017	.012	-	-	.081	.082	-.052	-.061	-.001	.001
Fiduciary	.103	.097	-	-	.096	.093	.013	.024	.087	.082
Pressure	-.033	-.041	-	-	.006	.006	.043	.041	-.004	-.004
No Wrong	-.032	-.039	-	-	-.139**	-.143**	.103*	.118*	-.099	-.106*
Knowledge	.045	-	-	-	.042	-	.077	-	.044	-
“Truth”	-	.115*	-	-	-	.055	-	-.012	-	.069
“Myth”	-	-.030	-	-	-	.006	-	-.117*	-	.016
Intercept	2.363	2.440	-	-	2.844	2.879	2.899	2.924	1.988	2.019
Adj. R^2	-.004	-.004	-	-	.059**	.058**	.051**	.056**	.057**	.058**

Note. Reference categories include white for race, republican for political affiliation, and conservative protestant for religious identity.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 30. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Predictors of Choice of Fine Amount against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (Betas; N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>		<i>Murder</i>		<i>Pollutants</i>		<i>Rape</i>		<i>Asbestos</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Male	.011	.004	.050*	.054*	.116*	.109*	.047	.044	.041	.044
Age	.100	.106	.120	.118	.010	.017	.146*	.146**	.114*	.118*
Black	-.054	-.067	.021	.020	-.070	-.082	-.013	-.019	-.056	-.065
Other Race	-.002	-.006	-.018	-.011	-.048	-.055	.053	.062	-.009	-.015
Hispanic	.035	.034	.041	.054	-.036	-.040	.049	.064	.057	.055
Northeast	-.051	-.053	-.084	-.078	-.050	-.053	-.080	-.073	-.058	-.060
Urban	-.009	-.010	.018	.019	.004	.002	.008	.009	-.008	-.009
Income	.079	.066	-.021	-.025	.089	.076	-.045	-.052	.064	.053
Education	-.042	-.032	.016	.013	-.088	-.075	-.059	-.067	-.057	-.041
Employed	-.118*	-.129*	-.018	-.022	-.037	-.048	-.006	-.015	-.033	-.040
Pol.Ideology	-.059	-.059	.128	.136	.043	.039	.080	.092	-.042	-.047
Democrat	-.163	-.165	.108	.102	.057	.055	-.016	-.019	-.055	-.060
Other Party	-.068	-.072	.108	.090	.137	.137	.001	-.017	.033	.027
No Party	.011	.014	.117	.113	.135	.137	.007	.007	.042	.040
Catholic	.154*	.154*	.027	.020	-.001	.001	-.004	-.011	.066	.066
Mod. Prot.	.093	.091	.064	.052	.085	.086	-.014	-.028	.131	.130
Lib. Prot.	.113*	.113*	.033	.030	.062	.062	-.077	-.079	.039	.038
Other Rel.	.050	.052	.083	.077	.015	.020	.027	.016	.033	.040
No Religion	.137	.139	-.011	-.026	.006	.012	-.035	-.051	.106	.109
Internet	.034	.045	-.049	-.056	.065	.077	.003	.001	.006	.010
Greed	-.055	-.056	-.025	-.022	-.001	-.001	-.097	-.096	-.066	-.064
Moral	.078	.074	.062	.054	.090	.089	-.002	-.011	.096	.092
Control	.199**	.202**	.109*	.119*	.107*	.108*	.110*	.119*	.095	.098
Choice	-.055	-.049	.037	.038	-.041	-.035	.026	.026	.024	.031
Influence	-.073	-.068	-.092	-.100	-.094	-.088	-.037	-.042	-.008	-.007
Fiduciary	.054	.049	.062	.059	.037	.033	.051	.044	.092	.092
Pressure	-.067	-.065	-.096	-.104	-.060	-.055	-.105	-.114*	-.052	-.049
No Wrong	.004	-.003	.112*	.110*	.092	.087	.109*	.102*	.020	.020
Knowledge	.091		.048		.087		.047		.104	
“Truth”		.091		.094		.067		.126*		.067
“Myth”		.016		-.061		.024		-.032		-.023
Intercept	1.330	1.544	-1.295	-1.100	-.424	.587	.151	.319	-.716	-.388
Adj. R ²	.058**	.056**	.039*	.044*	.044*	.040*	.014	.024	.027	.019

Note. Reference categories include white for race, republican for political affiliation, and conservative protestant for religious identity.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 31. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Predictors of Choice of Monetary Compensation Amount against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (Betas; N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>		<i>Murder</i>		<i>Pollutants</i>		<i>Rape</i>		<i>Asbestos</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Male	.121*	.126*	.045	.027	-.021	.001	.046	.042	.121*	.117*
Age	.117*	.118*	.109	.120*	.171**	.172**	.166**	.173**	.169**	.173**
Black	-.039	-.043	-.082	-.098	.016	.013	-.079	-.094	.073	.065
Other Race	-.066	-.070	-.009	-.017	-.018	-.039	-.025	-.031	.001	.001
Hispanic	.023	.025	.030	.018	.046	.036	.000	.000	.103*	.106*
Northeast	-.096	-.095	-.087	-.094	-.029	-.034	-.076	-.077	-.075	-.074
Urban	-.057	-.057	-.024	-.025	-.041	-.042	.013	.012	-.103*	-.103*
Income	.087	.079	.058	.045	.065	.053	.048	.030	.106*	.097
Education	-.142*	-.130*	-.021	-.010	-.107	-.065	-.045	-.028	-.167*	-.163*
Employed	.128*	.124*	-.031	-.045	.047	.048	.055	.041	.058	.050
Pol. Ideology	-.127	-.129	.041	.036	-.021	-.040	.031	.029	-.057	-.055
Democrat	-.022	-.028	.101	.105	-.066	-.077	.033	.028	-.026	-.028
Other Party	-.074	-.083	.129	.140	.014	.008	.022	.013	-.034	-.041
No Party	.024	.021	.060	.069	.103	.092	.016	.017	.005	.006
Catholic	-.065	-.066	-.026	-.019	.011	.014	.018	.018	-.043	-.044
Mod. Prot.	-.004	-.008	.110	.118	.105	.110	.103	.098	.025	.020
Lib. Prot.	-.082	-.084	.024	.027	-.046	-.049	-.028	-.029	-.050	-.050
Other Rel.	-.087	-.083	-.017	-.011	-.076	-.053	.006	.011	-.062	-.063
No Religion	-.120	-.121	-.034	-.019	.049	.063	-.048	-.047	-.020	-.022
Internet	-.019	-.020	-.002	.022	-.027	-.032	.036	.046	.042	.047
Greed	.003	.006	.015	.010	.053	.061	-.009	-.007	.044	.044
Moral	.011	.006	.061	.065	.056	.052	.048	.042	.066	.062
Control	.102*	.107*	.121*	.116*	.115*	.116*	.122*	.127*	.020	.023
Choice	-.007	-.001	.007	.011	.024	.041	.001	.010	.045	.049
Influence	-.047	-.048	-.071	-.057	-.015	-.014	-.066	-.062	-.109*	-.108*
Fiduciary	.137*	.137*	.061	.055	-.017	-.008	.041	.036	.048	.044
Pressure	-.076	-.077	-.066	-.056	-.059	-.052	-.019	-.017	-.050	-.051
No Wrong	.026	.027	.024	.014	.013	.026	.046	.041	.075	.071
Knowledge	.082	-	.057	-	.175**	-	.140*	-	.060	-
“Truth”	-	.062	-	.037	-	.024	-	.124	-	.077
“Myth”	-	-.040	-	.094	-	-.087	-	-.008*	-	-.002
Intercept	.938	1.209	-1.192	-1.288	-.732	-.215	-1.484	-1.185	.544	.717
Adj. R ²	.070**	.066**	.027	.032	.080**	.058*	.037*	.031	.060**	.060**

Note. Reference categories include white for race, republican for political affiliation, and conservative protestant for religious identity.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 32. Regression Analysis Summary for Sociodemographic Predictors of Prison Sentence Severity against White-Collar Crime & Street Crime (Betas; N=408)

	<i>Toy</i>		<i>Murder</i>		<i>Pollutants</i>		<i>Rape</i>		<i>Asbestos</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Male	.027	.029	.045	.035	.030	.027	-.013	-.018	-.015	-.021
Age	.079	.083	.099	.098	.189**	.193**	.063	.064	.051	.058
Black	.094	.083	-.110*	-.109*	-.006	-.016	-.050	-.051	-.052	-.068
Other Race	.058	.054	-.137*	-.124*	.017	.018	-.034	-.032	.065	.066
Hispanic	.024	.028	-.026	-.016	.068	.074	-.006	-.005	.028	.036
Northeast	.043	.044	-.046	-.041	.070	.072	-.056	-.056	.011	.014
Urban	.046	.045	.044	.045	.040	.040	.010	.010	.032	.032
Income	-.020	-.035	.018	.022	-.098	-.108*	-.038	-.038	-.026	-.043
Education	.054	.069	-.047	-.070	.007	.012	-.133*	-.138*	-.031	-.024
Employed	-.053	-.063	.011	.009	-.021	-.031	-.084	-.086	-.057	-.073
Pol. Ideology	-.007	-.007	.049	.062	.013	.017	-.034	-.032	.057	.063
Democrat	-.168	-.175	-.126	-.122	-.022	-.026	-.127	-.125	.105	.099
Other Party	-.104	-.118	-.115	-.118	.029	.017	-.130	-.128	.092	.076
No Party	-.206**	-.209**	-.033	-.028	-.034	-.034	-.061	-.058	.049	.051
Catholic	-.046	-.049	.047	.043	.036	.033	.091	.091	.113	.109
Mod. Prot.	-.124	-.132	.040	.033	-.105	-.113	.057	.057	-.042	-.054
Lib. Prot.	-.033	-.035	-.052	-.051	-.053	-.055	.038	.039	-.034	-.036
Other Rel.	-.061	-.057	.024	.010	-.039	-.041	.027	.024	.022	.019
No Religion	-.012	-.015	.052	.040	.020	.014	.102	.102	.023	.015
Internet	-.154**	-.151*	.008	.008	-.035	-.032	.040	.043	-.098	-.090
Greed	.027	.031	.055	.051	.062	.063	.061	.059	.068	.070
Moral	-.015	-.023	.010	.009	.026	.019	-.008	-.007	-.049	-.059
Control	.013	.021	.006	.009	.025	.032	-.067	-.068	-.006	.003
Choice	.023	.031	.017	.009	-.054	-.050	.054	.052	-.053	-.047
Influence	.075	.074	.106	.103	.103	.102	.022	.023	.103	.104
Fiduciary	.056	.053	-.031	-.037	.062	.057	-.021	-.023	.022	.014
Pressure	.027	.025	-.066	-.073	.052	.049	-.090	-.090	.015	.011
No Wrong	-.013	-.016	.024	.016	-.118*	-.123*	.033	.030	-.144*	-.153*
Knowledge	.135*	-	-.074	-	.083	-	-.020	-	.130*	-
“Truth”	-	.127*	-	.023	-	.108*	-	.000	-	.167*
“Myth”	-	-.042	-	.027	-	-.020	-	.022	-	-.017
Intercept	-.463	-.134	3.807	3.642	-.937	-.699	3.854	3.771	.624	1.092
Adj. R ²	.059**	.056**	.019	.013	.064**	.066**	.000	-.003	.024	.031

Note. Reference categories include white for race, republican for political affiliation, and conservative protestant for religious identity.
p* < .05, *p* < .01.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

A growing body of research has evidenced formidable discrepancies between the harmfulness of street crime and that of elite deviance (Knowlton et al., 2011; Landrigan et al., 2002; Leigh, 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Herbert & Landrigan, 2000; Rebovich & Jiandani, 2000; Reiman & Leighton, 2010). More precisely, while traditional property offenses such as burglary and theft cost the public about \$18 billion each year (UCR, 2010), annual losses due to white-collar crime (including various forms of fraud and health costs caused by work-related injuries and illnesses as well as environmental pollution) exceed a trillion dollars (Knowlton et al., 2011; Landrigan et al., 2002; Leigh, 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006).

The harms associated with elite deviance include physical harm as well. For example, compared with the 14,000 people who lose their lives to murder and negligent manslaughter every year (UCR, 2010), an estimated 300,000 die annually as a result of work-place related accidental injuries due to the company's negligence, illnesses caused by prolonged exposure to toxic chemicals, toxic waste dumping and deadly pollutants, faulty consumer products, nefarious and addictive substances (Herbert & Landrigan, 2000; Leigh, 2011; Lynch & Michalowski, 2006), as well as medical malpractice (Starfield, 2000).

However, in spite of these astounding differences, street crime continues to overshadow elite deviance in the news media (Barak, 1994; Barlow & Barlow, 2010; Ericson et al., 1991;

Lynch & Michalowski, 2006; Lynch, Nalla & Miller, 1989; Lynch, Stretesky & Hammon, 2000), the criminal justice system (Calavita, Tillman, & Pontell, 1997; Maddan et al., 2011; Payne, Dabney, & Ekhomu, 2011; Tillman & Pontell, 1992) and even academia (Lynch, McGurrin & Fenwick, 2004; McGurrin, Jarrell, Jahn & Cochrane, 2013). Surprisingly, scholarly efforts that have investigated societal response to crimes of the powerful have limited their field of inquiry to public opinions about white-collar crime (e.g., Huff, Desilets, & Kane, 2010; Kane & Wall, 2006; Rebovich et al., 2000; Schoepfer, Carmichael & Piquero, 2007, etc.). These studies have provided valuable empirical evidence of a growing concern among Americans regarding the danger posed by elite offenses. Their failure to include a valid measure of lay knowledge about white-collar crime, however, significantly limits our ability to infer the extent to which the public is familiar with the scope and magnitude of this social issue.

The present study sought to address such limitation by providing the first measure of public knowledge about elite deviance. This project was designed to explore five research questions that included (1) the extent of public information about white-collar crime, (2) whether a gap exists between subjective (perceived) and objective (actual) knowledge, (3) the existence of popular “myths” about elite deviance akin to public misconceptions regarding street crime (e.g., crime being rampant, overly violent, etc.), (4) the sociodemographic correlates of knowledge about white-collar crime, and (5) whether such knowledge is associated with attitudes towards elite deviance. Such attitudes comprised (a) participants’ perceived seriousness of financially costly and harmful white-collar crimes as well as property and violent street crimes, and (b) respondents’ level of punitiveness, including their choice of prosecutorial process (i.e., by non-legal means, in a non-criminal court or in a criminal court) and of punishment (i.e.,

monetary compensation, fine and/or prison sentence), and punishment severity (in dollar amount and/or years in prison).

Methodology Followed and Key Findings

The subjects in this study were recruited on Amazon's Mechanical Turk, a web service that coordinates the supply and demand of human intelligence tasks such as social science surveys. Four hundred and eight participants completed an online questionnaire that comprised measures of respondents' (1) sociodemographic characteristics, (2) subjective and objective knowledge about elite deviance, (3) perceived seriousness of white-collar crimes compared with a baseline property crime, (4) perceived seriousness of physically harmful white-collar crimes compared to violent street crimes, as well as punitiveness with choice of prosecutorial process, sentence determination, and sentence severity, and (5) choice of attribution style (i.e., perceptions of white-collar offenders' motives). Statistical analyses of the data collected via this instrument provided the following answers to the five research questions:

1) *Is the public informed about elite deviance? If it is, to which extent are Americans informed about it?*

Overall, participants' level of information about elite deviance was low and erratic. While they seemed knowledgeable about the meaning of the term "white-collar crime", the reluctance of some companies to invest in cleaner forms of energy, the calculated endangerment of consumers for profit, and about corporate human rights violations abroad, they were found to be rather uninformed about medical crime and the relative legal immunity enjoyed by elite offenders compared with street criminals. Further, though prone to recognize the greater financial cost of white-collar crime compared with traditional crime, they had difficulty estimating the true extent of such disparity.

2) Is there a gap between the public's subjective and objective knowledge about white-collar crime?

Subjects tended to overestimate their knowledge about white-collar crime. A comparison of answer correctness and confidence, however, revealed a relative lack of certitude among participants regarding their awareness of the problem, suggesting that the concept of elite deviance and its various dimensions may still be arcane to many Americans. In fact, about 20% of this study's sample admitted having never received any kind of information about it.

3) Does the public hold common "myths" about elite deviance like they do regarding street crime?

Despite their self-doubts regarding their acquaintance with the topic of white-collar crime, respondents were not inclined to acknowledge hard-earned empirical evidence such as the greater physical harmfulness of elite deviance over street crime and to recognize that some elite offenses - which they admit are common in underdeveloped nations (e.g., human trafficking) - can be committed in the United States with little to no legal repercussion for the perpetrators. Such reluctance provides support for the hypothesis that the American public may harbor "myths" about white-collar crime as they do regarding street crime.

4) What are the correlates of knowledge about white-collar crime?

There was significant variation among participants in their level of knowledge about elite deviance, acceptance of "truths" and adherence to "myths" with respect to gender, race/ethnicity, income, education, political ideology, religious affiliation, source of information, and blame attribution style. Despite admittedly small effect sizes, more knowledgeable subjects were found to be those who identified as Whites, with higher education levels, without any religious affiliation, and who used the Internet as their main source of information. In comparison, less

knowledgeable participants and “myth” adherers turned out to be predominantly male, politically more conservative, Republican, conservative Protestant, who relied on traditional media sources rather than the Internet and who attributed white-collar crime to situational rather than dispositional factors.

5) Is knowledge about elite deviance correlated with public opinion regarding white-collar crime?

Knowledge (and lack thereof) was associated with sentiments about elite deviance. More specifically, less knowledgeable subjects (including men, those with higher income levels, more politically conservative subjects, Republicans, conservative Protestants, and those who believed white-collar offenders saw no wrong in their actions) were often more lenient in their attitudes towards elite deviance, both in terms of perceived seriousness and punitiveness, compared with street crime. By suggesting profound politico-religious dissensus in the best way to deal with elite deviance, these findings stand in contrast with several studies on consensus theory which concluded that widespread agreement exists among all members of society about perceived seriousness of and response to crime (Blumstein & Cohen, 1980; Carlson & Williams, 1993; Cullen et al., 1985; Heller & McEwen, 1975; Levi & Jones, 1985; O’Connell & Whelan, 1996; Roth, 1978).

In fact, previous research has shown that politically conservative subjects, Republicans and conservative Protestants tend to be more critical of traditional crime than are their more liberal counterparts and to support tougher policies against street offenders (Grasmick et al., 1993; Unnever et al. 2005). Further, these individuals have been found to evince more support for elements of free market economic policies (Gallup Poll, 2012), whose deregulation has been showed to facilitate the commission of white-collar crime (Lynch & Michalowski, 2006). More

stringent analyses were therefore run to test the hypothesis that perceived seriousness of and punitiveness against elite deviance vary as a function of socio-demographic characteristics indicative of support for capitalism, with limited success. Overall, age was a stronger predictor of dissensus regarding the proper way to address the problem of white-collar crime than were political and religious categories usually associated with pro-capitalism attitudes.

Implications of Findings

To the extent that the sample is representative of the American population, these findings have significant implications. First of all, they suggest that the American public may not be sufficiently informed about crime categories that are statistically more likely to harm them than are traditional offenses. Who is to blame for such lack of information? Surely, the people's overreliance on media outlets more intent to report on street crime (Dowler, 2003; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Surette, 1998) - perhaps due to pressure from corporate governance - does little to educate them about the ubiquity and peril of elite deviance. If such explanation is relevant, how then can we account for the fact that crimes of the poor are still given disproportionate academic attention compared to elite malfeasance (Lynch, McGurrin & Fenwick, 2004; McGurrin, Jarrell, Jahn & Cochrane, 2013), even when tenure guarantees protection to scholars whose research may threaten powerful interests?

Could it be that the subversive political dimension of white-collar crime clashes with conservative beliefs and values of mainstream scholars (Greenberg, 1976; Werkentin, Hofferbert, & Bauerman, 1974)? Arguably, the reluctance of some criminologists to study the interwoven relationships of class, structure, and crime - let alone accept them - may belie psychological contradictions between trust in our capitalist economic system and inconvenient truths about its negative consequences. Recall that subjects in this study whose

sociodemographic characteristics are usually indicative of support for neoliberal capitalism tended to overlook the seriousness of elite deviance and to recommend relatively lenient sanctions against it. While the strength of these relationships was admittedly weak, perhaps a direct measure of pro-capitalism attitudes would have evidenced more robust associations.

In fact, support for capitalism might explain subjects' rather surprising recalcitrance about accepting information relative to the physical harmfulness of white-collar crime. Once again, a majority of respondents perceived the kinds of deleterious activities in which the upper class engages (e.g., consumer safety violation, toxic dumping, preventable work-related diseases, medical crime, etc.) to be less injurious than street crimes such as murder and rape. Hypothetically, supporters of capitalism should have no problem condemning offenses that are usually committed by disreputable and unsuccessful individuals. Conversely, it may be especially difficult for them to reconcile their admiration for economic prosperity with the unsettling reality of American firms sacrificing human lives for profits.

Subjects' resistance to information highlighting the physical harmfulness of elite deviance may also have stemmed from a belief that human rights are a primarily Western construct particular to capitalist societies (Schwab & Pollis, 2000). More precisely, participants' refusal to accept evidence of human trafficking or racial discrimination domestically - as in the case of toxic dumping in African American neighborhoods - suggests the existence of a "myth" that the United States offers greater protection to its citizens against all forms of crime (including elite offenses) compared with non-capitalist nations and dictatorships. Recall that subjects in this sample were critical of U.S. private military corporations such as Academi and willing to accept information pertaining to the damage they inflict abroad in the name of profit. Yet, they were

also less inclined to acknowledge arguments that undermine American notions of justice and equality before the law such as white-collar offenders' relative legal immunity.

If sentiments about elite deviance are partly shaped by pro-capitalism attitudes, one may doubt the effectiveness of scholarly and journalistic efforts meant to increase the dissemination of knowledge about white-collar crime. Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1956) suggests that individuals need to maintain a certain degree of balance between their cognitions (i.e., values, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions) and their behaviors. However, such balance may be threatened by incongruent arguments causing psychological dissonance. More specifically, messages that are both relevant and contradictory with our personal positions or actions may result in mental discomfort. As a result, we strive to remedy any inconsistencies by realigning incongruent messages to make them consistent with our original cognitions (Aronson, 1969; Brehm & Cohen, 1962; Festinger, 1957; Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959; Kiesler & Pallak, 1976; Wickland & Brehm, 1976).

Festinger (1957) proposes three types of cognitive dissonance resolution strategies. The first is to alter the dissonant cognition. This means either accepting the dissonant element and changing one's cognitions or denying its validity and rejecting it. For example, pro-capitalism individuals might dismiss empirical evidence about the greater threat of elite deviance compared with street crime and the relative legal immunity enjoyed by white-collar offenders by invoking methodological flaws, unfounded socialist rhetoric, or inflexible trust in this country's criminal justice system. The second strategy consists in restoring equilibrium by outnumbering the dissonant element with more consonant examples so it no longer creates any dissonance. For instance, the same individuals may retort that in the Ford Pinto case the company's main priority was to maximize profit and not to harm its customers, thereby presenting white-collar offenders

as responsible but not culpable⁷. Finally, the third strategy is to accept the dissonant argument but downplay its importance. This subtler alternative may imply admitting evidence about elite deviance such as ecological damage while at the same time claiming that environmentally harmful behavior is a necessary evil in an otherwise prosperous economic system. If these hypotheses were true, disseminating relevant information about white-collar crime might prove ineffective among those already immune to such arguments.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

This study had several limitations. These notable impediments need to be addressed to inform future research. First of all, the 2010 National White-Collar Crime Center survey included twelve scenarios, one of which described overbilling (“A company overbills another company it supplies with heavy equipment, making an extra \$10,000 in unwarranted profits.”). This scenario was accidentally omitted in this dissertation’s analysis. Such omission, coupled with the fact that Huff and colleagues did not report standard deviations for perceived seriousness of the twelve crimes they asked their participants to compare with auto theft, precluded a test of statistical differences between the 2010 and 2013 surveys.

Another limitation could be the arbitrary taxonomy used to categorize subjects in regard to their level of knowledge about elite deviance (i.e., “truth” accepters, lucky guessers, “myth” adherers, and honestly uninformed). Such typology does not capture the role unconscious knowledge may have played among subjects who seemingly guessed correctly on the knowledge questionnaire. In the field of cognitive psychology, unconscious knowledge is defined as knowledge we have, and could very well be using, but are not aware of (e.g., Dienes, 2008;

⁷ This terminology was used to describe the role played by then French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius in the 1991 infected blood scandal when it was revealed that the government-operated National Center of Blood Transfusion knowingly distributed blood products contaminated with HIV to haemophiliacs in 1984 and 1985.

Augusto, 2010). While this hypothesis is beyond the scope of the present study, future research may want to refine the classification system used here by including measures of metaknowledge (i.e., knowledge about knowledge, Dienes & Perner, 2002) about elite deviance to determine whether “lucky guessers” might actually be already informed about white-collar crime while being unable to specify how they acquired such information.

Replications and extensions of the present study should also strive to develop a much better instrument comprising a greater number of dimensions of elite deviance. The knowledge questionnaire used in this dissertation only included ten items, which is far from providing an exhaustive review of a multifaceted construct like white-collar crime. A more comprehensive scale therefore ought to incorporate multiple examples of economic domination, including more technical and potentially less known offenses (e.g., price-gouging, price-fixing, insider trading, strategic bankruptcy, anti-trust violations, etc.). Additionally, further aspects of medical crime (e.g., medical negligence and malpractice, unnecessary operations, tests, and other procedures, fraudulent billing, etc.) should be covered since it was found that subjects had difficulty admitting its greater physical harm compared with homicides.

Moreover, in view of participants’ reluctance to recognize the fact that U.S. citizens are not necessarily more protected here than is the case in non-democracies and dictatorships, measures of knowledge about government control should include both crimes committed internationally (e.g., destabilizing foreign nations through coups d’état, international law violation, unlawful warfare and war profiteering, etc.), and offenses perpetrated domestically (e.g., crimes of electioneering and usurpation of power, violations of individual civil rights such as illegal surveillance by law enforcement agencies, denials of due process of law, political party infiltration, etc.). Lastly, denial of human rights should also be more thoroughly covered by

incorporating items tapping labor exploitation, sexual harassment, and racial and gender discrimination in the workplace.

Besides its admittedly unrefined measure of information relative to elite deviance, this dissertation was further limited by the non-random sample used to collect data about the American public's knowledge and sentiments about white-collar crime. Far from being truly representative of the overall U.S. population, the sample comprised a disproportionate number of relatively well-educated white citizens. Moreover, those subjects were predominantly Democrats and less likely to identify with any religious affiliation. Lastly, the age group was relatively young, which may both explain respondents' predilection for Internet-related activities and have influenced their definitions and perceptions of elite deviance. Recall although subjects were found to be less critical of crime in general compared with Huff and colleagues' sample, older participants perceived elite offenses to be of greater seriousness and deserving of a more severe punishment. While such finding is in line with the curvilinear relationship between age and perceived seriousness of crime (Schwartz et al., 1993), the restricted age group in the present study impedes our ability to generalize its results.

Further, because of the crude manner in which participants' profession was asked (i.e., via an open-ended question), it was impossible to create a measure of occupation. Such limitation is regrettable since research suggests that occupations that either provide experience about white-collar crime (i.e., attorney, judge, prosecutor, scholar, journalist, etc.) or facilitate its commission (e.g., business executive, medical doctor, etc.) influence perceptions of seriousness of elite deviance (Cole, 1983; Frank et al. 1989; Hartung, 1953; McCleary et al., 1981).

Moreover, controlling for occupational prestige would have been extremely useful in exploring the purported relationship between support for capitalism and attitudes about white-

collar crime. Marx ([1867]1967) defined the structural model of capitalism in terms of one's relationship to the means and modes of production, with those being owned by an elite - the *bourgeoisie* - who maximize their rate of surplus value (i.e., profit) by exploiting and impoverishing the *proletariat* or working class. Even though wealthier respondents were generally less critical of white-collar crime, it could not be determined whether class and power differentials created dissensus regarding the best way to deal with elite deviance since participants' social position with respect to the means and modes of production remained unclear.

Consequently, future research should seek to include a measure of occupational prestige along with other indicators of support for capitalism. Nevertheless, an Internet survey may be poorly suited to attract the elite given the small monetary incentive offered and potentially uncomfortable questions. In summation, although Amazon's Mechanical Turk turned out to be an acceptable way to recruit subjects, a serious application of Marxist theory to the topic of knowledge and sentiments about elite deviance would necessitate a much better proxy for the American public.

In fact, a sample with a wide spectrum of professional activities ranging from lay people, criminal justice experts, and potential elite offenders may even require different questionnaire sections with varying levels of complexity. Pilot testing of the instrument with undergraduate students suggested that several questions had to be rephrased and specific terms omitted or simplified because respondents did not even understand what was being asked. This implies that an instrument with questions of increasing difficulty for every correct answer given might be necessary and that an adaptive computerized assessment system may be a useful alternative to a simple standardized test.

Perhaps the greatest limitation to the present study is the cross-sectional nature of the project. Knowledge and sentiments about white-collar crime were only measured at one given point in time. Although the intent was to examine the effect of knowledge on perceived seriousness of and punitiveness against elite deviance, what remains to be seen is the effect of *exposure* to relevant information on *changes* in such attitudes. Longitudinal studies on the effect of knowledge on sentiments about capital punishment using a one-group pretest-posttest design (e.g., Bohm, 1989, 1990; Bohm et al, 1990, 1991; Bohm & Vogel, 1991, 1994, 2002; Bohm et al., 1993) have evidenced a decrease in support for the death penalty among subjects after taking a course on the subject.

However, Bohm and colleagues (1994) noted that those participants who held retributive attitudes were more likely to be immune to change, perhaps due to cognitive dissonance. While they did not find support for such claim, Cochran and Chamlin (2005) have posited that multiple previous “doses” of information might in fact enhance the effectiveness of a single exposure to the topic. In his study on the impact of ethics education on business students’ perceptions of white-collar crime, Kennedy (2010) suggested that such perceptions could be positively influenced over time through continued education and training. Consequently, future research on the relationship between knowledge and attitudes about white-collar crime should seek to investigate the effect of prolonged education regarding the numerous ramifications of the white-collar crime construct, controlling for pro-capitalist cognitions as potential cognitive dissonance resolution strategies.

To conclude, future replications and extensions of the present study may want to consider a longitudinal design involving a pre-test of knowledge and sentiments about elite deviance (i.e., perceived seriousness and punitiveness) followed by multiple post-tests to study the effect of a

treatment (i.e., exposure to relevant information about white-collar crime) on changes in the dependent variable, controlling for pro-capitalism attitudes. The treatment could consist of onsite and/or online material - including both written and video documents - reporting empirical evidence of the dangers posed by elite deviance. Importantly, it may be wise to ask participants to justify their attitudes about white-collar crime via open-ended questions, particularly if continuous exposure to pertinent information does not result in changes in perceived seriousness and punitiveness.

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire should include a measure of occupational prestige to establish participants' social position in regard to the means and modes of production as defined by Marx. This, coupled with a direct measure of attitudes about capitalism compared with rival economic systems, would help test the hypothesis that knowledge and sentiments about elite deviance vary as function of pro-capitalism attitudes. Nevertheless, ensuring the cooperation of elite membership (particularly in view of the time investment which longitudinal studies require) will necessitate a more ingenious and persuasive recruitment strategy than a nonprobability Internet sampling method, and provide participants with greater monetary compensation. It is not certain, however, which research-funding agency will agree to finance such a project.

Despite evident challenges, there are but a few potential avenues for future research about knowledge and sentiments regarding white-collar crime. The present study was purely exploratory and as such should be considered the first step in a series of research projects meant to unravel the true extent of public information about elite deviance and the effect of awareness programs on perceived seriousness of and punitiveness against pernicious behaviors shrouded in

a veil of respectability. It is the author's hope that this dissertation's modest contribution to the field will encourage similar scholarly efforts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Table A. *Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analyses (N = 408)*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<u>Sociodemographic Control Variables</u>				
Gender	Dummy variable - 0 = Female - 1 = Male	50.2	.5	.5
Age	Years		33.58	11.09
Race	Dummy variables - White* - Black - Other race	79.2 7.8 6.1	.79 .08 .06	.41 .27 .24
Ethnicity	Dummy variable - 0 = Non-Hispanic - 1 = Hispanic	6.9	.07	.25
Region Growing Up	Dummy variable - 0 = Other - 1 = Northeast	36.0	.36	.48
Current Residence	Dummy variable - 0 = Rural - 1 = Urban	64.2	.64	.48
Household Income	10-point ordinal scale (1 = Under \$10,000; 10 = \$150,000 +)		5.07	2.21
Education	8-point ordinal scale (1 = Grade school; 8 = Advanced degree)		5.37	1.35

(Continued on next page)

Table A (Continued).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Employment	Dummy variable - 0 = Not employed full time - 1 = Employed full time	74.3	.74	.44
Political Ideology	6-point ordinal scale (1 = Very liberal; 6 = Very conservative)		2.98	1.25
Political Affiliation	Dummy variable - No party - Republican* - Democrat - Other party	12.5 16.9 46.3 24.3	.12 .17 .46 .24	.33 .37 .49 .43
Religious Identity	Dummy variable - No religion - Catholic - Conservative Protestant* - Moderate Protestant - Liberal Protestant -Other religion	43.6 14.5 13.2 15.7 4.90 8.10	.44 .14 .13 .16 .05 .08	.49 .35 .34 .36 .22 .27
<u>Attribution Style</u>				
Greed	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		3.69	.51
Bad Moral Character	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		3.52	.61

(Continued on next page)

Table A (Continued).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low Self-Control	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		2.19	1.0
Choice	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		3.68	.52
Environmental Influence	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		2.88	.88
Fiduciary Responsibility	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		3.35	.70
Pressure to Succeed	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		2.83	.77
No Wrong	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree)		2.50	.81
<u>Knowledge about Elite Deviance</u>				
Subjective Knowledge	4-point ordinal scale (1 = Not informed; 4 = Very informed)		2.04	.58

(Continued on next page)

Table A (Continued).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Source of Information	Dummy variable - 0 = Traditional media - 1 = Internet	81.10	.811	.39
Previous Exposure to Information about Elite Deviance	0 = Never been exposed 1 = College course 2 = Movie/TV series 3 = Documentary 4 = Television news report 5 = Newspaper article 6 = Book 7 = Internet 8 = Other	18.10 6.6 9.3 10.3 38.5 12.0 1.0 3.2 4.0	4.52	2.09
Objective Knowledge	10-item multiple-choice and true or false questionnaire;			
- Meaning of the term			1.91	.31
- Financial cost			2.4	1.16
- Harmfulness			4.38	1.02
- Legal immunity			3.72	1.25
- Reckless disregard			1.25	.43
- Medical crime			2.02	.89
- Human trafficking			1.31	.46
- State-corporate crime			1.09	.28
- Toxic dumping			1.33	.47
- Toxic emissions			1.03	.17

(Continued on next page)

Table A (Continued).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Answer Confidence	4-point Likert-type confidence scale (1 = Not at all confident; 4 = Very confident)			
- Meaning of the term			3.09	.88
- Financial cost			2.12	.88
- Harmfulness			2.94	.92
- Legal immunity			2.62	.89
- Reckless disregard			2.07	1.05
- Medical crime			1.98	.85
- Human trafficking			2.41	.86
- State-corporate crime			2.80	.96
- Toxic dumping			2.29	.94
- Toxic emissions			3.06	.83
“Truths”	Correct answer + confident or very confident			
- Meaning of the term			.67	.47
- Financial cost			.14	.34
- Harmfulness			.03	.16
- Legal immunity			.27	.44
- Reckless disregard			.27	.45
- Medical crime			.13	.34
- Human trafficking			.11	.31
- State-corporate crime			.60	.49
- Toxic dumping			.31	.47
- Toxic emissions			.74	.44

(Continued on next page)

Table A (Continued).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
“Myths”	Incorrect answer + confident or very confident			
- Meaning of the term			.05	.22
- Financial cost			.14	.35
- Harmfulness			.63	.48
- Legal immunity			.25	.44
- Reckless disregard			.03	.16
- Medical crime			.12	.33
- Human trafficking			.32	.47
- State-corporate crime			.01	.10
- Toxic dumping			.08	.27
- Toxic emissions			.01	.10
<u>Perceived Seriousness</u>				
Perceived Seriousness of White-Collar and Street Crime Compared with Auto Theft	11 scenarios; 5-point ordinal scale (1 = Much less serious; 5 = Much more serious)			
- Burglary			3.2	.64
- Embezzlement			3.7	.80
- Identity theft			3.89	.03
- False charges			3.5	.79
- Robbery			3.59	.07
- Hacking			2.69	.21
- False drug label			4.71	.64
- Espionage			4.80	.52
- Market rigging			4.18	.88
- Counterfeit sales			2.31	.91
- Insurance overcharge			3.87	.85

(Continued on next page)

Table A (Continued).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Perceived Seriousness of White-Collar Crime and Street Crime	5 scenarios; 4-point ordinal scale (1 = Not very serious; 4 = Very serious)			
- Consumer Safety Violations (toy)			3.43	.76
- Murder			3.91	.36
- Toxic Dumping			3.51	.64
- Rape			3.94	.24
- Asbestos Exposure			3.71	.52
<u>Punitiveness</u>				
Prosecutorial Process	3-point ordinal scale (1 = By some non-legal means 2 = In a civil court 3 = In a criminal court)			
- Consumer Safety Violations			2.74	.47
- Murder			3.0	0
- Toxic Dumping			2.69	.51
- Rape			2.99	.09
- Asbestos Exposure			2.71	.50
Fine	5-point ordinal scale (0 = No fine; 4 = Above \$1,000,000.00)			
- Consumer Safety Violations			1.83	1.72
- Murder			.35	.98
- Toxic Dumping			2.25	1.75
- Rape			.35	.96
- Asbestos Exposure			1.78	1.81

(Continued on next page)

Table A (Continued).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coding/Range</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Monetary Compensation	5-point ordinal scale (0 = No fine; 4 = Above \$1,000,000.00)			
- Consumer Safety Violations			1.58	1.48
- Murder			.97	1.52
- Toxic Dumping			1.85	1.59
- Rape			.77	1.29
- Asbestos Exposure			2.42	1.54
Prison Sentence	7-point ordinal scale (0 = No prison; 6 = 41 years-life)			
- Consumer Safety Violations			.84	1.18
- Murder			4.68	1.63
- Toxic Dumping			.94	1.32
- Rape			3.26	1.57
- Asbestos Exposure			1.35	1.79

Note. *Reference categories.

Appendix B: Survey

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Sex
 0. Female
 1. Male
2. What is your age? _____
3. Race
 1. White
 2. Black or African American
 3. Asian
 4. Middle Eastern
 5. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 6. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 7. Other: _____
4. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 1. Yes
 2. No
5. In what region of the country did you grow up?
 1. North
 2. East
 3. South
 4. West
 5. Midwest
 6. Other: _____

6. Which of the following describes the area in which you currently reside?
1. A large central city (over 250,000)
 2. A medium size central city (50,000 to 250,000)
 3. A suburb of a large central city
 4. A suburb of a medium size central city
 5. An unincorporated area of a large central city (e.g., township, division)
 6. An unincorporated area of a medium central city
 7. A small city (10,000 to 49,999)
 8. A town or village (2,500 to 9,999)
 9. An incorporated area less than 2,500 or an unincorporated area (1,000 to 2,499)
 10. Open country within larger civil divisions (e.g., township, division)
7. What is the annual combined income of everyone in your household?
1. Under \$10,000
 2. \$10,000-\$19,999
 3. \$20,000-\$29,999
 4. \$30,000-\$39,999
 5. \$40,000-\$49,999
 6. \$50,000-\$69,999
 7. \$70,000-\$89,999
 8. \$90,000-\$119,999
 9. \$120,000-\$149,000
 10. \$150,000 +
8. How much education have you completed?
1. Grade school or less
 2. Some high school
 3. High school graduate
 4. 1 or more years of technical, vocational, or trade school
 5. Some college
 6. College graduate
 7. 1 or more years of graduate, law, or medical school
 8. Advanced degree (e.g., Master's, Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)
9. What is your employment status?
1. Disabled
 2. Employed full-time
 3. Employed part-time
 4. Self-employed
 5. Unemployed

10. What is your occupation? _____
11. Circle the position that best describes your social and political views.
1. Very liberal
 2. Liberal
 3. Somewhat liberal
 4. Somewhat conservative
 5. Conservative
 6. Very conservative
12. With which political party do you identify?
1. Republican Party
 2. Democratic Party
 3. Independent Party
 4. Reform Party
 5. Other: _____
 6. I am not registered
 7. I do not identify with any political party
13. What religion, if any, do you identify with?
1. Catholicism
 2. Protestantism
 3. Judaism
 4. Buddhism
 5. Islam
 6. Other: _____
 7. None
14. If Protestant, which denomination are you?
1. Baptist
 2. Assembly of God
 3. Church of Christ
 4. Lutheran
 5. Methodist
 6. Presbyterian
 7. Episcopalian
 8. Other: _____

15. What is your primary source of information?
1. Television news stations
 2. Radio news stations
 3. Newspapers
 4. Magazines
 5. Books
 6. Internet
 7. Other: _____
16. Have you previously been exposed to relevant information about white-collar crime? If so, what was your primary source of information?
1. College course
 2. Movie/TV series
 3. Documentary
 4. Television news report
 5. Newspaper article
 6. Book
 7. Other: _____
 8. I have not been exposed to such information
17. How informed would you say you are about white-collar crime?
1. Not informed
 2. Somewhat informed
 3. Informed
 4. Very informed

B. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

18. A. The term “white-collar crime” is based on:
1. The occupation of the victims
 2. The occupations of the perpetrators
 3. The offenders’ association with religion
- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident

19. A. How much does street crime cost the American public compared to white-collar crime?
1. Significantly less
 2. Somewhat less
 3. The costs are about the same
 4. Somewhat more
 5. Significantly more
- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
20. A. Statistically, street crimes like assaults, murders, and muggings are _____ to injure or kill people than/as white-collar crime.
1. Significantly less likely
 2. Somewhat less likely
 3. As likely
 4. Somewhat more likely
 5. Significantly more likely
- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
21. A. Someone who commits a street crime like burglary and steals \$1000 is _____ to be convicted and to receive a similar sentence than/as someone who commits a white-collar crime like fraud and steals \$1000.
1. Significantly less likely
 2. Somewhat less likely
 3. As likely
 4. Somewhat more likely
 5. Significantly more likely

- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
22. A. Although Ford knew their Pinto model's gas tank represented a safety defect, they chose not to invest in an inexpensive and safer design, reasoning that it would be cheaper to pay out expected wrongful death lawsuits. As a result, several people died in fiery crashes.
1. True
 2. False
- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
23. A. Compared to criminal homicides, _____ people in the US die from medical malpractice.
1. More
 2. An equal number of
 3. Fewer
- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
24. A. Human trafficking is more common in underdeveloped countries than in developed nations.
1. True
 2. False

- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
25. A. Private American military companies have been accused of engaging in a number of human rights violations including the abuse and torture of detainees, shootings and killings of innocent civilians, destruction of property, and sexual harassment and rape.
1. True
 2. False
- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
26. A. Landfills and toxic waste disposal sites are more likely to be located near African American communities than white communities.
1. True
 2. False
- B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?
1. Not at all confident
 2. Somewhat confident
 3. Confident
 4. Very confident
27. A. Toxic emissions could be reduced much more if industries agreed to employ appropriate technologies.
1. True
 2. False

B. How confident are you that you answered that question correctly?

1. Not at all confident
2. Somewhat confident
3. Confident
4. Very confident

C. COMPARED WITH SOMEONE STEALING A PARKED CAR WORTH \$10,000, PLEASE INDICATE HOW SERIOUS THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS ARE.

28. A burglar steals \$10,000 worth of jewelry from a private residence while the owner is away on vacation.

1. Much less serious
2. Somewhat less serious
3. About as serious
4. Somewhat more serious
5. Much more serious

29. A bank teller becomes friends with a customer and steals \$10,000 out of his personal account over the course of two years.

1. Much less serious
2. Somewhat less serious
3. About as serious
4. Somewhat more serious
5. Much more serious

30. A computer hacker steals personal patient information from a healthcare clinic's database and then sells this information to a third party for \$10,000.

1. Much less serious
2. Somewhat less serious
3. About as serious
4. Somewhat more serious
5. Much more serious

31. A large manufacturing company adds false charges to an invoice, costing a small business owner \$10,000.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious
32. Someone attempts to rob several joggers in the park. Although they fail to make off with any money, the joggers sustain non-fatal injuries and receive treatment at the hospital.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious
33. A hacker sends out viruses on the Internet and infects many personal computers with software that allows the hacker to distribute millions of spam messages.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious
34. A pharmaceutical company falsely advertises as safe an anti-depressant drug it knows to be unsafe. The drug is later found to be related to a string of random violent acts, costing the lives of several people.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious

35. A former employee of a U.S. defense contractor sells nuclear secrets and other classified information he acquired during his employment to foreign governments.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious
36. A Wall Street financial firm conspires to manipulate the precious metals market, profiting at the expense of other traders and owners of precious metals who are unaware of the price-fixing scheme.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious
37. A person sells a counterfeit antique bracelet on an online auction site, misrepresenting its true value and making an extra \$1,000.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious
38. An insurance agent sells an insurance policy at an inflated price to an unsuspecting customer and pockets an extra \$20,000.
1. Much less serious
 2. Somewhat less serious
 3. About as serious
 4. Somewhat more serious
 5. Much more serious
- D. READ THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

39. Because of cost reductions, the materials used by a company to build a popular toy will present a potential hazard to the product's users. The company decides to manufacture and distribute the toy regardless of the risks.
- A. How serious do you think the offense is?
1. Not very serious
 2. Somewhat serious
 3. Serious
 4. Very serious
- B. How should a case such as this be handled?
1. By some non-legal means
 2. In a non-criminal court
 3. In a criminal court
- C. Choose the punishment you feel most appropriate and designate the amount of punishment (circle all that apply and, if circled, record the appropriate fine or punishment amount):
1. Fine / Fine Amount: \$ _____
 2. Victim's compensation / Compensation Amount: \$ _____
 3. Imprisonment / Length of Sentence: _____
40. Someone attempts to rob a couple while they are walking back to their car at night. The husband tries to disarm the attacker, but is shot by him. He later dies of his injuries.
- A. How serious do you think the offense is?
1. Not very serious
 2. Somewhat serious
 3. Serious
 4. Very serious
- B. How should a case such as this be handled?
1. By some non-legal means
 2. In a non-criminal court
 3. In a criminal court

- C. Choose the punishment you feel most appropriate and designate the amount of punishment (circle all that apply and, if circled, record the appropriate fine or punishment amount):
1. Fine / Fine Amount: \$ _____
 2. Victim's compensation / Compensation Amount: \$ _____
 3. Imprisonment / Length of Sentence: _____
41. In order to increase profits and meet production goals, a manufacturing company uses production processes that allow for the release of pollutants into the water and air and exceed legal limits. Several people become seriously ill as a result.
- A. How serious do you think the offense is?
1. Not very serious
 2. Somewhat serious
 3. Serious
 4. Very serious
- B. How should a case such as this be handled?
1. By some non-legal means
 2. In a non-criminal court
 3. In a criminal court
- C. Choose the punishment you feel most appropriate and designate the amount of punishment (circle all that apply and, if circled, record the appropriate fine or punishment amount):
1. Fine / Fine Amount: \$ _____
 2. Victim's compensation / Compensation Amount: \$ _____
 3. Imprisonment / Length of Sentence: _____
42. Someone breaks into a dorm at night and forcibly rapes a female student.
- A. How serious do you think the offense is?
1. Not very serious
 2. Somewhat serious
 3. Serious
 4. Very serious

- B. How should a case such as this be handled?
1. By some non-legal means
 2. In a non-criminal court
 3. In a criminal court
- C. Choose the punishment you feel most appropriate and designate the amount of punishment (circle all that apply and, if circled, record the appropriate fine or punishment amount):
1. Fine / Fine Amount: \$ _____
 2. Victim's compensation / Compensation Amount: \$ _____
 3. Imprisonment / Length of Sentence: _____
43. A mining company fails to ensure safety measures such as proper ventilation and the use of masks, goggles and gloves among its workers, and covers up evidence regarding the link between asbestos exposure and lung cancer deaths.
- A. How serious do you think the offense is?
1. Not very serious
 2. Somewhat serious
 3. Serious
 4. Very serious
- B. How should a case such as this be handled?
1. By some non-legal means
 2. In a non-criminal court
 3. In a criminal court
- C. Choose the punishment you feel most appropriate and designate the amount of punishment (circle all that apply and, if circled, record the appropriate fine or punishment amount):
1. Fine / Fine Amount: \$ _____
 2. Victim's compensation / Compensation Amount: \$ _____
 3. Imprisonment / Length of Sentence: _____
- E. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE WITH EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS.

44. Most white-collar offenders are greedy individuals.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
45. Most white-collar offenders have bad characters and no personal ethics because they place profit above public safety.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
46. Most white-collar offenders have the inability to control themselves.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
47. Most white-collar offenders choose to violate the law when the perceived benefits of their actions outweigh the perceived costs.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
48. The business environment of most white-collar offenders encourages the commission of white-collar crimes.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
49. Most white-collar offenders have a fiduciary responsibility (legal or ethical relationship of trust) to their company's shareholders.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree

50. Most white-collar offenders are pressured/coerced by their superiors to reach business goals.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

51. Most white-collar offenders are otherwise law-abiding citizens who do not think that their business practices are really wrong.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Appendix C: Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

IRB Study # **Pro00009714**

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This document tells you about this research study. We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called:

Public Knowledge and Sentiments About Elite Deviance

The person who is in charge of this research study is Cedric Michel. This person is called the Principal Investigator. The research will be done by administering a survey to Mechanical Turk workers such as you.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine public knowledge and attitudes about white-collar crime. You are being asked to participate because Mechanical Turk workers are representative of the American public.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your background (sex, race, age, etc.), your knowledge about white-collar crime, how serious you perceive it relative to street crime, what you think white-collar offenders' motives are, as well as your sentence preferences for a variety of offenses including several types of white-collar crime. Completion time should not exceed 20 minutes.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION/WITHDRAWAL

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. However, please note that payment will be denied if you stop taking part in this study or do not complete this survey.

BENEFITS

We are unsure if you will receive any benefits by taking part in this research study.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORT

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

COMPENSATION

You will be paid \$2.00 to complete this survey.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. Your answers will be stored securely on servers. Individual accounts are password protected and only statistical aggregation of these data summarizing findings from this study will be published or shared with the public. Finally, in accordance with USF procedures, all research data will be kept for a minimum of 5 years after the Final Report is approved by the IRB.

However, certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, the Advising Professor, and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. These include:
 - o The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the staff that work for the IRB. Other individuals who work for USF that provide other kinds of oversight may also need to look at your records.
 - o The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

We may publish what we learn from this study. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are. If you agree please proceed with the survey.

Cedric Michel, M.A

Doctoral Candidate

cmichel@usf.edu

Department of Criminology

University of South Florida

Tampa, FL 33620

Division of Research Integrity & Compliance

ARC Help Desk (eIRB, eCOI, eIACUC): (813) 974-2880 - E-Mail: rsch-arc@usf.edu

Mail: 12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd, MDC35, Tampa, FL 33612-4799

Appendix D: IRB Approval Letter



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

3/26/2013

Cedric Michel, M.A.
Criminology
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
MHC 1110
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: **Expedited Approval for Amendment**
IRB#: Ame1_Pro00009714
Title: Public Knowledge and Sentiments About
Elite Deviance

Dear Mr. Michel:

On 3/25/2013, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** your Amendment. The submitted request has been approved for the following:

1. Deletion of Kathleen Heide as key personnel
2. The study is now funded by the PI's Department, Criminology: \$100 to help pay subjects
3. Hillsborough County 13th Judicial District court in Tampa, FL (George E. Edgecomb courthouse) deleted as a study site.
4. Revised protocol, v2 dated 3/21/13
5. Change in inclusion/exclusion criteria: Population will include men and women 18 years and up rather than between the ages of 18-70.
6. New anticipated end date of 6/1/13
7. Revised survey, v2 dated 3/21/13
8. Change in procedures: Addition of online survey on Amazon's Mechanical Turk.
9. Change in compensation: Participants will be paid \$2.00 to complete the online survey
10. Waiver of documentation of informed consent for online survey
11. New online consent form, v2 dated 3/21/13.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Study Protocol #2, 03/21/2013
Tracked changed copy of revised protocol

Consent Document(s)*:

Online consent form, v2 dated 3/21/13

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Schinka, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board