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Racial Stereotypes and Whites’ Political Views of Blacks in the Context of Welfare and Crime*

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Theory: Social psychological theories of social stereotyping are used to generate a series of predictions about how and when whites’ stereotypes of African-Americans are likely to bias their evaluations of blacks in the areas of welfare and crime. Hypotheses: The degree to which whites endorse negative stereotypes of blacks not only tends to bias their judgments of black (versus white) welfare recipients and criminal suspects, but also affects the way they respond to counter-stereotypical information about the target. Methods: Regression analysis and analysis of variance of data from a series of survey experiments with 1,841 whites in which the race and other attributes of welfare mothers, welfare recipients, and drug suspects were manipulated. Results: Whites holding negative stereotypes are substantially more likely to judge blacks more harshly than similarly described whites in the areas of welfare and crime policy. We also find that even whites with strongly negative perceptions of blacks respond quite favorably to them when confronted with individuating information that clearly contradicts their stereotype. By way of contrast, respondents who reject negative stereotypes of African-Americans display a remarkable consistency in their responses across both the race and the individuating information of the target.

Introduction

Race remains a divisive issue in American politics, indeed in some ways more than ever. The discord and intensity of feelings over issues like affirmative action and busing are unmistakable. And in the contemporary context one is struck by the strong racial undercurrents that characterize debates on such prominent and emotional issues as crime and welfare. Welfare and crime have become the “hot button” issues of the political landscape because many see them as violative of the sacred values of the work

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RACIAL STEREOTYPES

While a variety of forces are likely to drive whites' attitudes on such issues, few would deny that perceptions of African-Americans comprise an important contributing factor. Whites, we may assume, who continue to negatively stereotype blacks—perceiving them to be "lazy" or "violent"—may be substantially more likely to oppose welfare payments or support "get tough" policies on crime, especially when blacks are the targets of such policies.

In fact, research on social stereotyping in cognitive psychology provides a strong theoretical basis for expecting such linkages. Stereotypes are commonly defined as "cognitive structures that contain the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about human groups" (Hamilton and Trolle 1986, 133). As such, stereotypes are, in Walter Lippmann's (1922) classic phrase, "pictures in the head" which, like any other kind of cognitive generalization, tend to put their imprint on data in the very process of acquiring it. The social cognition literature uses the term theory-driven processing to refer to this strategy whereby cognitive misers develop expectations based on their impression (or theories) of others to direct their attention to information that is consistent with the theory; information that is inconsistent, on the other hand, may tend to be ignored, discounted, or somehow interpreted so that it becomes confirmatory of the initial impression (e.g., Hamilton and Sherman 1994). In this fashion, stereotypes are believed to be remarkably perseverance and strongly determinative of judgments that are related to the stereotype (racial policy judgments, for instance).

The analytical puzzle, however, is that clear evidence of this neat correspondence between stereotype and policy judgment is, at best, tenuous. In a variety of settings, Bobo and Kluegel (1993), Carmines and Sniderman (1992), Terkildsen (1993), and others have found that, while negative stereotypes respond somewhat less generously to blacks and policies targeted to blacks, the relationship may be only modest and, more importantly, highly conditional and dependent on numerous extenuating circumstances. To those (e.g., Locksley et al., 1980) who embrace data-driven models of processing, however, these findings are in no way anomalous. According to this perspective, even individuals with crystallized stereotypes will attend to, and be influenced by, information that is discrepant from the impression. Even one who believes blacks to be dangerous criminals would have a hard time ignoring the reality of, say, Clarence Thomas.

To account for the reality that stereotypes both are (when processing...
is theory-driven), and are not (when data-driven) associated with relevant judgments, continuum or dual process models have been developed (e.g., Fiske and Neuberg 1990; Fiske and Pavelchack 1986). These models regard individuals as generally theory-driven, but with the flexibility to engage in more cognitively taxing data-driven processing when information about the target is clearly inconsistent with the stereotypical expectations. Dual process models therefore predict that stereotype and policy judgment will be less closely linked when individuals are presented with information that clearly runs counter to the stereotype (e.g., Rahn 1993).

It is precisely for this reason that we intensively analyze two subpopulations—those who endorse, and those who reject, negative racial stereotypes—both of which are confronted with counter-stereotypical data of a kind often found in the real world. Much of the extant research focuses on how whites feel about generic blacks and the policies—such as welfare, affirmative action, crime, and so forth—which affect minorities. While the insights from this work are invaluable, we are pleased to be able to exploit data in which the attributes of blacks are experimentally manipulated in order to understand better counter-stereotypical information processing in the explosive context of welfare and crime. Specifically, we ask: what happens when whites who embrace negative stereotypes of blacks are confronted with scenarios in which blacks do not fit the pejorative impression? Does positive individuating information have any impact on their political judgments of blacks? Is it possible to inhibit the impact of negative stereotypes on “hot-button” issues like crime and welfare? And, conversely, how do whites who reject such stereotypes respond in the presence of blacks who are stigmatized and who correspond to quite negative images? Are their more positive views of blacks in the abstract mere window dressing that they quickly abandon when confronted with stigmatized blacks?

We find these questions intriguing because, in the real world, they represent every day confrontations between data and theory. Those with intensely negative images of blacks—who see them as lazy and unmotivated, for instance—doubtless often work alongside African-Americans who, by their presence in the factory or office, have demonstrated that they can, and do, conform to the work ethic. And whites who reject such negative stereotypes must regularly consume media coverage of issues such as welfare and crime in which the dominant images in such coverage strongly suggest that welfare recipients and violent criminals are disproportionately black (Entman 1990, 1992).

Thus, our purposes in this analysis are twofold. First, to determine the extent to which whites’ political evaluations of blacks in the areas of welfare and crime are biased by race, as well as the degree to which racial stereotypes are responsible for this bias. And second, as we investigate the
complexity of this linkage between stereotype and political judgment, to pay particular attention to these two groups—those who embrace and those who reject negative racial stereotypes. Specifically, how do such individuals cope with discrepant information and under what circumstances does theory-driven reasoning become more data-driven? As we shall argue in the conclusions, this is not an arcane question of interest only to psychologists; to the contrary, it has important ramifications in the world of politics as well.

Methodology

In exploring the relationship between race and welfare/crime, one could begin by assessing individuals’ judgments of welfare and crime policies (as well as of welfare recipients and criminals) and then methodically regressing such judgments on measures of racial stereotypes. There are, however, several difficulties with such an approach. First, it does not provide us with a way of estimating racial bias, since the race of the target has not been manipulated. Second, such a strategy does not allow us to separate the impact of the race versus the class of the target. For many whites, stigmatizing characteristics associated with the “underclass” (e.g., being unproductive or aggressive) have become commingled with race (e.g., Franklin 1991; Wilson 1987). Thus, it is necessary to manipulate other stigmatizing characteristics to disentangle the biasing effects of race on whites’ political judgments from the biasing effects of class-related attributes. Finally, the aforementioned strategy does not permit us, in any systematic way, to confront respondents with counter-stereotypical information.

Consequently, we systematically vary both the race and other characteristics of the target. In the series of experiments which follow, utilizing Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology, we ask respondents about both black and white welfare recipients and criminal suspects, randomly varying the potentially stigmatizing information about the subjects (e.g., work history, educational background, aggressiveness) to enable us to separate the effects of race from those of the associated social characteristics. In this way, our design benefits from both the control and internal validity gained from experiments and the generalizability and external validity gained from cross-sectional surveys.

Overview of the Analysis. In the following analysis, we begin with a brief examination of the content of whites’ stereotypes of African-Americans, finding that a nontrivial portion of whites continues to endorse characterization of “most blacks” as lazy and violent. We then turn to our principal objective of investigating the political consequences of racial
stereotypes in a series of survey experiments where whites are asked to evaluate blacks in the context of welfare and crime policy. For each of the three experiments, the strategy of the analysis is, first, to demonstrate the power of racial stereotypes to bias judgments of black (but not white) welfare recipients and criminal suspects in a series of regression-based models, and then to examine more closely the responses of whites with different perceptions of African-Americans to various configurations of counter-stereotypical information.

The Context of Racial Stereotypes

Data and Measures

A national survey, the Race and Politics Survey, was undertaken in 1991, with one of its principal objectives being to assess the political impact of whites' stereotypes of African-Americans. Respondents (N = 2,223) were asked a battery of questions designed to elicit their beliefs about the personal attributes of "most blacks." Guided by the testing framework of Rothbart and Oliver (1993), as modified by repeated pretesting, respondents were asked to rate the degree to which various words or phrases accurately described "most blacks" on a scale from 0 (very good description) to 10 (very inaccurate description). (See the Appendix for further details and a discussion of various measurement issues.)

Whites' Responses to Stereotype Items

Two central dimensions of whites' (N = 1,841) African-American stereotypes are obviously relevant to political judgments of welfare and crime: Black Work Ethic (consisting of the traits lazy, determined, dependable, hardworking, and lack discipline) and Black Hostility (aggressive or violent). To gauge the pervasiveness of negative impressions of blacks along these two dimensions, responses to the stereotype items are presented in Table 1. To simplify the interpretation answers are recoded from 11-point scales to simple 3-point scales indicating whether the direction of the response was "negative" (above the midpoint of 5 for negatively worded traits, below the midpoint for positively worded traits), "positive"

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1 The 1991 National Race and Politics Survey was a nationwide random-digit telephone survey administered by the Survey Research Center at the University of California at Berkeley. Respondents were contacted from February 1, 1991 to November 21, 1991. The number of completed interviews was 2,223 with a response rate of 65.3%. Due to sample limitations, all nonwhite respondents are eliminated from the analysis. Of the 2,223 respondents, 1,942 consented to having an additional mailback questionnaire sent to them and of these, 1,198 actually returned completed questionnaires. Further details on the sample are available from the authors on request.
Table 1. Percentage of Whites Giving Negative, Neutral, and Positive Responses to Racial Stereotype Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotype Item</th>
<th>Negative Response</th>
<th>Neutral Response</th>
<th>Positive Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Work Ethic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy*</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined to Succeed*</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardworking*</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable*</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack Discipline**</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hostility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive or Violent*</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages are based on N’s that range from 1,767 to 1,780.
*Responses to the positively worded items were first reflected so that higher values on all the scales indicate more negative assessments. To simplify the display of responses for this table, the 11-point scales were collapsed into three categories, such that a score of 5 at the midpoint of the original scale is considered a Neutral Response, while Negative Responses are scores above the midpoint (6–10), and Positive Responses are scores below the midpoint (0–4) of the original scale.
**Responses are based on the Likert item, “Most black parents don’t teach their children the self-discipline and skills it takes to get ahead in America.” Negative Responses are those which agree (either strongly or somewhat) with the statement, while Positive Responses are those which disagree (either strongly or somewhat).

than 5 for negative traits, greater than 5 for positive traits), or “neutral” (equal to 5).

Even though positive and neutral responses outnumber negative responses for five of the seven traits, we still find a substantial proportion of whites agreeing that most blacks are lazy (31%), irresponsible (20%), aggressive (50%), and lacking in discipline (60%). In short, although whites with positive images of blacks constitute a plurality of the larger American public, a very sizable number of whites—as many as one in every two—openly endorses frankly negative characterizations of “most” blacks. This distribution of whites’ responses to our stereotype measure is similar to that found in other recent national surveys, such as the 1992 American National Election Study.2

2The postelection interview of the 1992 National Election Survey asked respondents to rate “blacks in general” on two 7-point semantic differential scales (i.e., lazy versus hardworking and prone to violence versus peaceful) which are comparable to the lazy and aggressive/violent scales in the Race and Politics Survey. The percentage of white respondents falling into negative (1–3), neutral (4) and positive (5–7) categories of the two ANES scales are as follows: lazy to hardworking (36.5, 40.4 and 23.1%); violent to peaceful (50.5, 33.3, and 15.9%). While the wording and format of our stereotype items differ from those
Consequences of Stereotypes

The heart of our concern, however, is when and how racial stereotypes influence whites’ political judgments about blacks in the areas of welfare and crime policy, a topic to which we now turn. Our first set of experiments explores the linkage between whites’ racial stereotypes and their attitudes toward welfare and welfare recipients, an ostensibly race-neutral program that has, for many, become charged with racial connotations. How do racial stereotypes affect perceptions of black versus white welfare mothers? Are black welfare mothers more subject to stigmatizing myths of welfare recipients than similarly described whites? To what extent do racial stereotypes account for this racial bias? And how do individuals who accept and reject negative stereotypes respond when confronted with welfare mothers who confirm and challenge their more general impressions of African-Americans?

The ‘‘Welfare Mother’’ Experiment

To answer these questions, we constructed a set of survey experiments which asked respondents to form impressions of ‘‘welfare mothers,’’ variously described in the following pair of survey questions:

1. Now think about a [black woman, white woman] in her early twenties. She is a [high school dropout, high school graduate] with a ten year old child and she has been on welfare for the past year. How likely do you think it is that she will try hard to find a job in the next year—very likely (coded 1), somewhat (2), somewhat unlikely (3), or not at all likely (4)?

2. How likely is it that she will have more children in order to get a bigger welfare check? (very likely [1], somewhat likely [2], somewhat unlikely [3], or not at all likely [4]?)

The rationale of the experiment is to determine whether respondents are more likely to subscribe to popular myths about welfare recipients if the mother is black, and to what extent racial stereotypes are responsible for any such bias. In addition, by independently manipulating the educational status of the mother, we hope to better understand the power of stereotypes to shape impressions in the face of mildly inconsistent individuating information. Having completed high school signifies an effort to improve one’s lot in life (contrary to the lazy stereotype), while dropping out indicates a lack of effort (contrary to the belief that blacks are hardworking). The manipulation of individuating information in this case is not so strong, how-

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used by the NES, it is reassuring that responses appear robust and comparable across the two measures.
ever, as to be clearly inconsistent with prior expectations. The mother, after all, is described as being on welfare, and for many Americans this fact alone is indicative of a lack of effort. Furthermore, there is nothing inherently contradictory about being a high school graduate and simultaneously being on welfare. Thus, we characterize this experiment as one that provides respondents with mildly inconsistent, or mixed, individuating information.

The top panel (A) of Figure 1 displays whites’ responses to the two questions across different descriptions of the welfare mother. Consistent with several survey studies (e.g., Kluegel and Smith 1986), respondents are pessimistic: from 45 to 63% think she is unlikely even to try to find a job and from 58 to 68% expect her to have another child to get bigger welfare checks. But while varying the mother’s educational status generates different assessments (with more negative judgments for the dropout than the graduates), the differences across racial treatments are small and statistically insignificant. As the rest of Figure 1 makes clear, moreover, the virtual absence of any racial differences is a persistent finding for the remaining experiments, as well. There is little evidence in panels B and C of Figure 1 that the race of the target affects whites’ support for welfare programs (Figure 1.B) or evaluations of a police search of drug suspects (Figure 1.C).

This result, precisely because of the absence of a difference, merits the closest attention. Is the absence of a difference evidence that race has lost its stigmatizing power? More to the point, to what degree are whites’ judgments of black versus white welfare mothers in the current experiment shaped by more global racial stereotypes, vis a vis a variety of other considerations? To answer these questions, assessments of the welfare mother (for each question) were regressed on the two racial stereotypes (black work ethic and black hostility), and a variety of “control” variables, including core beliefs and values (social intolerance, conformity, individualism, and anti-Semitism), political predisposition (ideology, party ID, political sophistication), and several sociodemographic variables (education, gender, age, income, and living in the deep South), the measurement of which is described in the Appendix. These OLS results are reported in Table 2.

In both tables, the noteworthy findings are the substantial coefficients

\(^3\)The regression model implicitly assumes, consistent with the prevailing wisdom in the area (e.g., Bobo and Kluegel 1993), that racial stereotypes are causally prior to political judgments—an assumption consistent with findings that such general beliefs are acquired in early childhood, whereas political attitudes are formed in late adolescence and early adulthood (e.g., Sears 1975). We also consider global racial stereotypes, which are general dispositions, to be logically prior to more specific political judgments. On the other hand, causal assumptions are not absolutely crucial to our analysis, which is designed to show the conditions under which stereotypes are, and are not, connected to political judgments.
Figure 1. Marginal Responses to Survey Experiments, Whites Only

**A. Welfare Mother Experiments:** Assessments of welfare mother described as: [black; white], [high school dropout; high school graduate]

Likely to try hard to find a job?  Likely to have kids to get bigger welfare check?

![Graph showing responses to welfare mother assessments](image)

**B. Welfare Policy Experiment:** Favor welfare programs to help: [blacks; new immigrants from Europe] ... [with trouble; who want to work]?

![Graph showing favorability of welfare programs](image)

**C. Police Search Experiment:** Drug search is reasonable for suspects described as: two young [black; white] men [using foul language; well-dressed and well-behaved]?

![Graph showing responses to police search](image)


*Note: Percentages are based on the first two response categories of 4-point scales (e.g., very likely + somewhat likely, etc.). None of the percentage differences across similarly described blacks versus whites are significant at the .05 level.*
### Table 2. Regression Analysis of Assessments of Welfare Mother on Racial Stereotypes across Different Descriptions of Target

#### Table 2.A. Likely to try hard to find a job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Stereotypes</th>
<th>Black Dropout</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF WELFARE MOTHER</th>
<th>Black Graduate</th>
<th>White Dropout</th>
<th>White Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Work Ethic</td>
<td>.034** (.009)</td>
<td>.006 (.008)</td>
<td>.013 (.008)</td>
<td>.003 (.009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hostility</td>
<td>.019 (.013)</td>
<td>.021 (.013)</td>
<td>.006 (.012)</td>
<td>-.013 (.013)</td>
<td>-.067 (.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²/Adj R²</td>
<td>.149 (.118)</td>
<td>.160 (.129)</td>
<td>.092 (.062)</td>
<td>.069 (.035)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>398</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2.B. Likely to have another child to get a bigger welfare check?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Stereotypes</th>
<th>Black Dropout</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF WELFARE MOTHER</th>
<th>Black Graduate</th>
<th>White Dropout</th>
<th>White Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Work Ethic</td>
<td>-.037** (.008)</td>
<td>-.015 (.010)</td>
<td>-.014 (.008)</td>
<td>-.005 (.010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hostility</td>
<td>.009 (.012)</td>
<td>-.016 (.013)</td>
<td>-.026* (.012)</td>
<td>.006 (.013)</td>
<td>.031 (.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²/Adj R²</td>
<td>.235 (.207)</td>
<td>.159 (.190)</td>
<td>.152 (.180)</td>
<td>.120 (.151)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>395</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** 1991 Race and Politics Survey.

**Note:** Entries in left-hand columns are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; standardized coefficients in right-hand columns. Lower values on the above variables indicate: predict welfare mother is likely to try to find a job, likely to have more children to get a bigger welfare check and rejection of negative stereotypes. Coefficients are also controlled for various political predispositions (social intolerance, conformity, anti-Semitism, partisan and ideological identifications, and political sophistication) and sociodemographic characteristics (education, gender, age, income, and residing in the Deep South).

*p < .05; **p < .01.
for the Black Work Ethic stereotype when the mother is a black dropout (upper left-hand cells of both tables). Thus, whites who question the commitment of most blacks to the work ethic are much less likely to think that the black dropout will try to find a job in the next year (\(b = .034, \beta = .257\) in Table 2.A) and are more likely to expect her to have another child to get a bigger welfare check (\(b = -.037, \beta = -.287\) in Table 2.B).

Clearly, the relationship between racial stereotypes and perceptions of welfare mothers is a conditional one, appearing selectively for some stereotypes and experimental conditions, but not others.\(^4\) First, racial stereotypes are important only when making assessments of black, not white, welfare mothers. People tend to rely, moreover, on stereotype dimensions that are most relevant to the task at hand: assessments of welfare mothers are closely tied to beliefs concerning blacks' commitment to the work ethic, but rarely—and never strongly—to a less relevant trait like hostility.

Plainly, racial stereotypes shape impressions of welfare mothers in theoretically explicable ways, even in the face of stringent controls for a variety of other variables. But what light do these results throw on the puzzle with which we began—namely, the absence of a difference in judgments of black and white mothers? Why do racial stereotypes shape responses to the question when black high school dropouts are mentioned (Table 2), but, overall, there is little percentage difference in the way whites respond to black versus white welfare mothers (Figure 1.A)?

The answers to these questions lie in the different ways that whites with varying expectations of blacks react to the race (and the educational status) of the welfare mother. Accordingly, we now analyze how whites who accept and reject negative racial stereotypes respond to individuating information that either confirms or contradicts the stereotype. Table 3 displays the differences in whites' assessments of the welfare mother depending on their placement on the Work Ethic scale, showing the mean and percentage responses to the items for whites who accept the negative stereotype (i.e., scored in the top third of the scale) versus those who reject the negative characterization of blacks as lazy (bottom third of the Work Ethic scale). Treatment differences across the race and the educational sta-

\(^4\)The coefficients for the Black Work Ethic variable are significantly different from one another at the .05 level or less across the race of the welfare mother (columns 1 and 2 versus 3 and 4) and between black dropout and black high school graduate conditions (column 1 versus 2). Significance tests were conducted by pooling the data for all four experimental conditions and including appropriate interaction terms representing Black Work Ethic times the race and educational status dummy variables. We report the separate regressions (instead of the interactive models estimated with pooled data) in Table 2 because they are more informative and allow the effects for all the variables to vary across experimental conditions (not just Black Work Ethic).
### Table 3. Responses to Different Descriptions of Welfare Mother among Whites Accepting and Rejecting Negative Racial Stereotypes

#### Table 3.A. Welfare Mother [description] is likely to . . . try really hard to find a job in the next year?

| Description of Welfare Mother | Accept Neg. Stereotype | | | Reject Neg. Stereotype | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|
|                               | %Likely | Mean | N  | %Likely | Mean | N  |
| Black dropout                 | 32.3%  | 2.976 | (127) | 67.1%  | 2.179 | (140) |
| Black graduate                | 51.1   | 2.610 | (141) | 70.1   | 2.150 | (127) |
| White dropout                 | 40.1   | 2.841 | (157) | 49.6   | 2.558 | (129) |
| White graduate                | 60.9   | 2.397 | (151) | 62.1   | 2.207 | (116) |
| Diff. Bl – Wh dropout         | −7.8%  | .135* | | 17.5%  | −.379* | |
| Diff. Bl – Wh graduate        | −9.8   | .213* | | 8.0    | −.057 | |
| Diff. Bl drop – Bl grad       | 18.8   | .366* | | 3.0    | .029  | |
| Diff. Wh drop – Wh grad       | 20.8   | .444* | | 12.5   | .351* | |

#### Table 3.B. Welfare Mother [description] is likely to . . . have another child to get a bigger welfare check?

| Description of Welfare Mother | Accept Neg. Stereotype | | | Reject Neg. Stereotype | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|
|                               | %Likely | Mean | N  | %Likely | Mean | N  |
| Black dropout                 | 81.9%  | 1.748 | (127) | 52.9%  | 2.529 | (136) |
| Black graduate                | 74.3   | 1.986 | (140) | 44.4   | 2.595 | (126) |
| White dropout                 | 82.1   | 1.949 | (156) | 50.8   | 2.460 | (126) |
| White graduate                | 60.3   | 2.265 | (151) | 51.3   | 2.522 | (115) |
| Diff. Bl – Wh dropout         | −.20%  | −.201*| | 2.1%   | .069  | |
| Diff. Bl – Wh graduate        | 14.0   | −.279*| | 6.9    | .073  | |
| Diff. Bl drop – Bl grad       | 7.6    | −.238*| | 8.5    | −.066 | |
| Diff. Wh drop – Wh grad       | 21.8   | −.316*| | 1.5    | −.062 | |


Note: Means are computed on 4-point scales ranging from very likely (1) to very unlikely (4); percentages based on first two categories (i.e., very likely + somewhat likely).

*Indicates differences run in unexpected direction, with those accepting negative stereotypes offering more positive evaluations of black than white targets.

*Indicates means are significantly different from one another (p < .05) using ANOVA contrast analysis.
tus of the welfare mothers are presented in the bottom rows of the table for each of the two groups of respondents.

Why does manipulating the race of the welfare mother make no difference overall (graph in Figure 1.A), while it appears to be very important in activating the use of stereotypes in the regression analysis (Table 2)? Comparing in Table 3.A across alternative targets of judgment, the answer to the puzzle is clear. Those with negative characterizations of blacks judge black targets more harshly than white targets, while those who reject negative characterizations of blacks tend to judge blacks more positively than they judge whites. Thus, the reason there are no treatment differences for the full sample (i.e., Figure 1.A) is that these two diverging biases cancel out overall.

More interesting, for our purposes, is the substantive interpretation given to the responses of these two groups. Among whites who see blacks as lazy, we find that black welfare mothers are consistently judged more harshly than whites with a similar educational background. Blacks, more so than whites, are not expected to look for a job and are expected to have "another child to get a bigger welfare check." While the impact of the mother's educational status plays a slightly larger role in affecting such judgments, the important finding is that even when individuating information runs counter to the negative stereotype—when the mother completes high school—negative expectations continue to affect judgments. For negative stereotypers, the impact of race and the individuating information (educational status) on evaluations is clearly additive: the discriminatory bias against the black welfare mother is roughly the same whether the mother completes high school or not.

Thus, black welfare mothers who are high school dropouts have two strikes against them—being black and failing high school. Those who finish high school, according to whites who assume blacks are lazy, still have an important character deficit—being black. For by virtue of being black, welfare mothers are more likely to be treated to an assortment of stigmatizing myths about welfare recipients. In short, when mildly discrepant individuating information is presented to negative stereotypers, their stereotypes are not interrupted or undercut; rather, their tendency to hold black welfare mothers to a racially discriminatory double standard is roughly the same even in the face of positive information about the target.

The contrast with whites who reject negative stereotypes is striking, for their dominant pattern is the consistency of their reactions even in quite different settings. Whites are just as likely to say that a black high school dropout will really try to get off welfare by looking for a job as a black high school graduate.

How should this consistency be interpreted? Do whites with a more
positive image of blacks simply attach no importance to graduation as a predictor of social behavior? Plainly not. As the second cell of Table 3(A) documents, it matters whether a white woman on welfare has graduated from high school: 62% of them believe that a white graduate will try to get off welfare, as compared to 49.6% who believe the same about a white dropout. This differential reaction—assigning a weight to graduating for white, but not black, women—is evidence, we suggest, of the sensitivity of whites who reject negative stereotypes to the continuing danger of stigmatizing blacks. Even in circumstances that would permit a negative response to a black, they give no evidence of “taking the bait.” In other words, whites who reject negative stereotypes in the abstract also respond more positively to blacks in a specific setting, regardless of whether the blacks in question exhibit socially desirable characteristics such as completing high school, presumably while raising a child, or socially stigmatizing characteristics such as dropping out of high school. The more positive view they express of blacks in the abstract does not appear to be mere window dressing.

*The ‘‘Welfare Policy’’ Experiment*

Conceptually, racial stereotypes may be regarded as a readily accessible summary of the prototypical black: if negative, a picture of the flaws of blacks; if positive, a picture of their virtues. From a public policy perspective though, what counts is not the pictures people carry in their minds, but the impact of such beliefs on support for policies that affect blacks. And, as we shall show, this impact hinges heavily on whether targets are consistent with stereotypical expectations. Our next experiment accordingly focuses on support for welfare programs. Our primary aim in the welfare policy experiment is to determine what difference both the race and the work history of the recipient makes. The design is similar to the previous experiment, involving two randomized variations in question wording. Specifically, one half of the respondents was asked its opinion of a welfare program “specially designed to help blacks” whereas the other half was asked its view of exactly the same program but instead directed to help “new immigrants from Europe,” who are presumably white. In addition, and quite independently, one half of the respondents was told that the beneficiaries of the program were “people who have shown that they want to work their way out of their problems.” In contrast, the other half of respondents was told that they were “people who have had trouble hanging onto their jobs.” All respondents, after hearing different descriptions of the program, were asked whether they were strongly in favor (coded 1), somewhat in favor (2), somewhat opposed (3), or strongly opposed (4) to a welfare program in the described circumstances.
Not only do we change the attitude object (from welfare recipient to welfare policy) in this experiment, but we also increase the level of discrepancy between stereotype and individuating information. For while the information in the welfare mother experiment is only modestly discrepant with the perception of laziness, "wanting to work their way out of their problems" is more unambiguously at odds with the trait of laziness. By increasing the level of discrepancy, we expect the impact of individuating information to be more pronounced, relative to the moderately discrepant condition found in the welfare mother experiment.

As indicated earlier, the graph in Figure 1.B suggests that support for welfare among whites is essentially "color-blind," since welfare support is affected by the work history of the recipient (with higher support for those wanting to work than for those with trouble holding onto a job) but not by their race. A substantially different interpretation, though, is suggested by examining Table 4.A, which displays the OLS results generated from regressing the welfare support attitudes in the four experimental conditions on the same stereotype, attitudinal, and demographic variables used to predict responses to the Welfare Mother experiment in Table 2. Clearly, when whites evaluate welfare for black—but not immigrant—recipients, their decision to support welfare is heavily colored by their racial stereotypes. Even in the face of stringent controls for a variety of other variables, the work ethic stereotype measures are consistently strong predictors of welfare support for black recipients.

The analysis also indicates that stereotypic expectations interact with information about past work experience in shaping welfare policy support. When black recipients have a poor work record, the Work Ethic variable is strongly positive, indicating that those perceiving blacks as lazy are substantially less supportive of welfare. The relationship is reversed, however, when blacks are described as wanting "to work their way out of their own problems;" now whites who regard blacks as lazy are far more supportive of welfare.5

To analyze the interaction between stereotypic expectations and individuating information in influencing welfare support, Table 4.B contrasts the reactions of whites who see blacks as lazy (i.e., score in the upper third of the Work Ethic scale) with those who reject such a characterization (i.e., score in the bottom third of the scale). Among whites with a negative image

5The coefficient for Black Work Ethic varies significantly (at the .05 level or less) across both the race and the work history of the proposed welfare recipient (i.e., across columns 1 and 2 versus 3 and 4 and across columns 1 versus 2), as indicated by a regression analysis of the pooled data including appropriate interaction terms for Black Work Ethic times the race and work history dummies.
of blacks, support for welfare hinges heavily on the beneficiary. When the
target fits their stereotypical expectations (i.e., blacks with a troubled work
history), they are substantially less likely to favor welfare programs for
blacks (46.8% are in favor) than for immigrants who have the same troubled
history (61.7%)—a clear-cut instance of a racially discriminatory double
standard. But when blacks are at odds with these stereotypes, whites' sup-
port shoots up to 92.8%, as compared to 71.9% for European immigrants
who are similarly described as "people who have shown they want to
work." From the perspective of whites with a disparaging view of blacks,
then, blacks who try hard are an exception, and in consequence, deserve
to be treated exceptionally well.6

Should we celebrate the fact that individuals with a jaundiced view of
African-Americans can be persuaded to "go overboard" in their support
of welfare for "hardworking" blacks? Certainly not. For while we might
take heart in finding that negative stereotypes are discounted in the face of
clearly inconsistent individuating information, we must remember that the
dominant "picture in the head" of stereotyping whites is of blacks who
have problems keeping jobs. And as revealed in the welfare mother expe-
ri ment, unless the individuating information presented about blacks clearly
contradicts the negative stereotype (mildly discrepant individuating infor-
mation did not undermine the negative stereotype in the welfare mother
experiment), blacks are subject to a punitive or discriminatory response.
On the other hand, these results do suggest that it is possible to inhibit
negative stereotypes from affecting political judgments. Since negative ste-
reotypes have proven remarkably tenacious in resisting change, inhibition
may be one of the few practical means of interrupting stereotypical reason-
ing from biasing political judgments in the explosive context of welfare
policy.

The implications of this important result will be explored more fully
in the conclusions. For now, we focus on a very different pattern displayed
by whites who reject negative characterizations of blacks (cell 2 in Table
4.B). As in the welfare mother experiment, there is a slight (though statisti-
cally insignificant) tendency for these individuals to favor blacks over simi-
larly described immigrants. The dominant pattern, however, is one of uni-
form support for government assistance, regardless of the beneficiary.
Those rejecting stereotypes are, for example, as likely to favor assistance
for blacks as for new European immigrants. Even more impressive, they
are as likely to back assistance for blacks with a troubled work history
(82.3% favor) as for blacks wanting to work out their problems (84.9%

6Possible explanations for this result, which recurs in the drug search experiment dis-
cussed below, are explored in the conclusions.
### Table 4. Welfare Policy Experiment

**Table 4.A. Regression Analysis of Support for Welfare Program on Racial Stereotypes across Different Descriptions of Recipients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Stereotypes</th>
<th>Blacks with Trouble</th>
<th>Blacks Who Work</th>
<th>Immigrants with Trouble</th>
<th>Immigrants Who Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>(b) (se) Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Work Ethic</td>
<td>.029** (.013) .210</td>
<td>-.025* (.011) -.227</td>
<td>.007 (.012) .066</td>
<td>-.010 (.012) -.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hostility</td>
<td>.005 (.019) .024</td>
<td>.024 (.017) .144</td>
<td>.023 (.017) .134</td>
<td>.031 (.018) .175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²/Adj R²</td>
<td>.253 .197</td>
<td>.114 .041</td>
<td>.165 .088</td>
<td>.161 .088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>199 185</td>
<td>176 177</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Entries in left-hand columns are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; standardized coefficients in right-hand columns. Lower values on the above variables indicate: favor welfare programs and rejection of negative stereotypes. Coefficients are also controlled for various political predispositions (social intolerance, conformity, anti-Semitism, partisan and ideological identifications, and political sophistication) and sociodemographic characteristics (education, gender, age, income, residing in deep South).  
* *p < .05; **p < .01.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Group</th>
<th>%Favor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%Favor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks with trouble</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>2.684</td>
<td>(79)</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>1.952</td>
<td>(62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks who work</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>1.536</td>
<td>(69)</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>1.604</td>
<td>(53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants with trouble</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>2.426</td>
<td>(47)</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>2.083</td>
<td>(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants who work</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>2.078</td>
<td>(64)</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>1.707</td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diff. Bl—Im. trouble</td>
<td>−14.9%</td>
<td>.258*</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>−.131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diff. Bl—Im. work</td>
<td>20.9*</td>
<td>−.542*</td>
<td></td>
<td>−3.0</td>
<td>−.103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diff. Bl trouble—Bl work</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>1.148*</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>.348*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diff. Im trouble—Im work</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>.348*</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>.376*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Means are computed on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly favor (1) to strongly oppose (4); percentages based on first two categories (i.e., strongly favor + somewhat favor).

*Indicates differences run in unexpected direction, with those accepting negative stereotypes offering more positive evaluations of black than white targets.

*Indicates means are significantly different ($p < .05$) using ANOVA contrast analysis.
favor). This pattern of findings is consistent with those uncovered in the welfare mother experiment: whites who reject negative stereotypes in the abstract respond more positively to blacks in a specific setting, even in circumstances that would permit a negative response to a black.

The Drug Search Experiment

The crucial result of the welfare policy experiment is that whites with a negative image of blacks react very differently to black targets depending on whether individuating information runs contrary to, or is consistent with, their stereotypical expectations of blacks. But confidence and dependability go hand in hand: a result obtained with different measures in different settings bolsters faith in the results.

The drug search experiment is constructed to replicate the welfare policy experiment, now focusing on the role of stereotypes in the domain of criminal justice. Several researchers have made the forceful argument that crime in the United States has become a racially charged issue, due to statistics showing violent crime to be a greater problem in black neighborhoods, the exaggerated media portrayals of blacks as violent criminals (Entman 1992; Peffley, Shields, and Williams 1996), and the political rhetoric of politicians who often talk about crime in racially coded language (e.g., Edsall and Edsall 1991; Jamieson 1992). How does the apparently widespread belief that blacks are "aggressive or violent" bias judgments of blacks in the criminal justice domain, and how does stereotypic knowledge interact with inconsistent individuating information?

We investigated these and other questions by examining whites' responses to the Drug Search Experiment, where respondents were asked the following question:

Now consider an instance where the police see two young [black, white] men about 20 years old. They are [using foul language, well-dressed and well-behaved] and walking very near a house where the police know drugs are being sold. The police search them and find that they are carrying drugs. Do you think this is definitely a reasonable search (coded 1), probably a reasonable search (2), probably not a reasonable search (3), or definitely not a reasonable search (4)?

Because the race and the behavior of the men are independently randomized, one quarter of the time the two men are black and using foul language—obviously the deliberately inflammatory condition—and so on. Recall from the graph in Figure 1.C that, consistent with the other experiments, the race of the men does not have a major impact on judgments of
whether the search was reasonable or not. However, as before, the regression results displayed in Table 5.A tell a different story.

As seen in the first row of coefficients, while the influence of racial stereotypes is not quite as strong here as in the Welfare Mother or Welfare Policy experiments, we find that individuals endorsing the Hostility stereotype are more likely to approve of the police search when the suspects are black and using foul language. Thus, in a different content domain we find results paralleling those from prior experiments: the more relevant stereotype dimension (in this case, black hostility) is used to shape political judgments.\footnote{The coefficient for Black Hostility varies significantly (at the .05 level or less) across both the race and the behavior of the men (i.e., across columns 1 and 2 versus 3 and 4 and across columns 1 versus 2), as indicated by a regression analysis of the pooled data including appropriate interaction terms for Black Hostility times the race and behavior dummies.}

Table 5.B presents the reactions of whites who accept and reject the perception of blacks as hostile. How does individuating information interact with the Hostility stereotype for whites who negatively view blacks (i.e., score in the top third of the Hostility scale). Plainly, being "well-dressed and well-behaved" is incompatible with the picture of criminality; the discrepancy between stereotype and individuation is comparable in this case to that of the prior (i.e., welfare policy) experiment. Predictably, then, the police search experiment strikingly corroborates the welfare policy experiment: whites with a negative image of blacks, when confronted with blacks who confirm their stereotype, utilize a discriminatory double standard in judging the police search more favorably for blacks than for similarly described whites. And when blacks depart from expectations, these same whites are now more disapproving of the police search for "well-dressed and well-behaved" blacks than for whites described in exactly the same manner. Once again, individuating information that clearly contradicts the negative stereotype prompts such individuals to "bend over backwards" in departing from a stereotyped response.

Also in keeping with the previous two experiments are the responses of whites who reject the negative stereotype. As Table 5.B shows, their response is very nearly invariant regardless of the race or the behavior of the "suspects." Thus, 50.6% of whites with a positive image of blacks feel that the police search was reasonable when the blacks were using foul language—the deliberately inflammatory condition—as compared to 47% when the black men were "well-dressed and well-behaved."

**Conclusions**

Thanks to recent national surveys, we know a great deal about the content of whites' stereotypes of African-Americans, as well as the com-
### Table 5. Analysis of Police Search Experiment

#### Table 5.A. Regression Analysis of Evaluations of Police Search on Racial Stereotypes across Different Descriptions of Suspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Stereotypes</th>
<th>Blacks Using Foul Language</th>
<th></th>
<th>Blacks Well-Behaved</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Whites Using Foul Language</th>
<th></th>
<th>Whites Well-Behaved</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td>b (se) Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Work Ethic</td>
<td>-.006 (-.007) -.044 (.007)</td>
<td>-.005 (.007) -.034 (.007)</td>
<td>-.001 (.006) -.007 (.008)</td>
<td>-.004 (.008) -.030 (.007)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hostility</td>
<td>-.051** (.019) -.151 (.019)</td>
<td>-.004 (.019) -.11 (.019)</td>
<td>-.021 (.019) -.057 (.021)</td>
<td>-.015 (.021) -.037 (.019)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²/Adj R²</td>
<td>.282 (.256)</td>
<td>.187 (.157)</td>
<td>.209 (.181)</td>
<td>.176 (.147)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>414</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Entries in left-hand columns are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; standardized coefficients in right-hand columns. Lower values on the above variables indicate: police search reasonable and rejection of negative stereotypes. Coefficients are also controlled for various political predispositions (social intolerance, conformity, anti-Semitism, partisan and ideological identifications, and political sophistication) and sociodemographic characteristics (education, gender, age, income, residing in deep South).

* *p < .05; **p < .01.*
Table 5.B. Evaluations of Police Search across Whites Who Accept and Reject Negative Stereotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Suspects</th>
<th>Accept Neg. Stereotype</th>
<th>Reject Neg. Stereotype</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Reason</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks using foul language</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
<td>1.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks well-behaved</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>2.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites using foul language</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>2.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites well-behaved</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>2.104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\text{Diff. Bl} - \text{Wh foul lang.} = 12.5\% \quad - .333^{*}
\]
\[
\text{Diff. Bl} - \text{Wh well beh.} = -10.9^{*} \quad .200^{**}
\]
\[
\text{Diff. Bl foul} - \text{Bl behaved} = 24.0 \quad -.594^{*}
\]
\[
\text{Diff. Wh foul} - \text{Wh behaved} = .6 \quad -1.86
\]


Note: Means are computed on a 4-point scale ranging from search definitely reasonable (1) to definitely not reasonable (4); percentages based on first two categories (i.e., definitely + possibly reasonable).

*Indicates differences run in unexpected direction, with those accepting negative stereotypes offering more positive evaluations of black than white targets.

*Indicates means are significantly different ($p < .05$) using ANOVA contrast analysis.
plex connection between images of generic blacks and support for various racially-relevant programs. What is missing from this picture, however, is a better understanding of how whites with different expectations of African-Americans respond to counter-stereotypical information in the explosive contexts of welfare and crime. Through the use of computer-assisted survey technology, we manipulated both the race and other attributes of welfare recipients and drug suspects to: (1) assess the power of racial stereotypes to bias political judgments of black (versus white) targets, and (2) examine how two groups of whites—those who embrace and those who reject negative racial stereotypes—respond to blacks who confirm and challenge their more general impressions of African-Americans.

Whites who embrace negative stereotypes provide some of the more theoretically interesting but morally distressing results. Under most circumstances, their judgments are clearly theory-driven. When responding to scenarios of blacks who confirm (or only mildly disconfirm) their negative expectations—welfare mothers, welfare recipients with poor work histories, or drug suspects using foul language—such respondents consistently display a discriminatory double standard, such that they offer far more harsh judgments of blacks than of similarly described whites. Importantly, inasmuch as the experiments manipulate both the race and stigmatizing “class”-related characteristics of the targets, the racial bias of negative stereotypes is clearly independent of (or in addition to) any class bias displayed by these respondents. Plainly, cultural conservatives will find sympathetic audiences among this group, as long as they frame their antiwelfare and law-and-order policies as essential for the purpose of regulating undeserving and lawless minorities.

The responses of the negative stereotypers confronted with counter-stereotypical individuating information clearly depends on the degree of the discrepancy between information about the target and negative expectations about blacks. Modest discrepancies, as in the welfare mother experiments, failed to inhibit the impact of negative stereotypes. In the welfare policy and police search experiments, however, where the level of discrepancy between information and stereotype is more pronounced, favorably described blacks are judged far more approvingly than the white counterparts, with almost consensual support of welfare for blacks who “work their way out of their problems” among negative stereotypers. In short, even whites with strongly negative perceptions of blacks respond quite favorably to them when confronted with individuating information that cleanly contradicts their stereotype.

Why do these whites seem to “bend over backwards” on behalf of nonstigmatized blacks? This tendency toward overcorrection is consistent
with a veritable grab bag of models in psychology designed to explain contrast effects (e.g., Manis, Biernat, and Nelson 1991; Martin, Seta, and Crella 1990; Shwartz and Bless 1992) which arise when people are confronted with targets who diverge from their prior expectancies (for an application to racial bias of political candidates, see Sigelman et al. 1995). A more politically compelling explanation, for our purposes, however, draws on models of impression formation by Fiske and associates (e.g., Fiske and Neuberg 1990), which assume perceivers often rely on category subtypes to evaluate individuals who do not fit more global categories. Positive racial subtypes of especially hardworking or well-behaved blacks (e.g., the businessman black) may exist alongside negative global categories (e.g., lazy or violent), with subtypes being reserved for the few exceptions that “prove the rule.” Such subtyping may also allow negative stereotypers to deny, in a sense, their own prejudice by being able to conceptualize “good” blacks while simultaneously disparaging most others.

Clearly, the architects of the Republican campaign to sell Clarence Thomas to the county during his Senate confirmation hearings understood this tendency toward overcompensation well and employed it for purposes of political manipulation, with powerful results. Realizing that focusing on Thomas’s conservative ideology would ignite the liberal opposition, the strategists in the White House emphasized his “biography”—how he was born in Pin Point, Georgia, pulled himself up by his bootstraps, worked extremely hard, and so on. Despite the fact that the story was greatly exaggerated (even mythical), this “Pinpoint strategy” was extremely effective in selling Thomas to socially conservative whites, who continue to hold Thomas up as an atypical model while at the same time disparaging most blacks for failing to measure up (Mayer and Abramson 1994).

By way of contrast, respondents who reject negative stereotypes of African-Americans display a remarkable consistency in their responses across both the race and the individuating information of the target. While there is a slight (though rarely significant) tendency for these whites to respond more generously toward black welfare recipients or criminal suspects than toward similarly described whites, the dominant pattern is the consistency of their responses, regardless of whether the blacks in question exhibit socially desirable attributes (are high school graduates, are well-

---

8While our data do not allow us to choose between contrast and subtyping explanations, one advantage of the subtyping explanation, in our judgment, is that it views overcompensation as a habitual response on the part of negative stereotypers (similar to the familiar refrain, “I’m not prejudiced, but . . .”), whereas contrast effects tend to resemble transitory and artifactual response biases.
behaved and well-dressed, are working hard to improve their lives) or display socially undesirable attributes (are high school dropouts, use foul language, have trouble hanging on to their jobs). ⁹

Importantly, this consistency does not appear to be due to social desirability pressures of impression management. In fact, the randomized experiments are designed in part to "smoke out" the prejudices even of self-proclaimed racially tolerant subjects. And we found that a substantial number of such whites, even when given the ammunition that blacks are "drop outs" or use "foul language" or have a history of work problems, do not take advantage of the opportunity to respond negatively. ¹⁰

Another more likely possibility, in our view, is that people who reject negative racial stereotypes genuinely do not want to disparage blacks. The position is consistent with the experimental work of Devine and her colleagues (Devine 1989; Devine et al. 1991), which indicates that "those who report being low in prejudice actually are low in prejudice" (1989, 195). Neither we nor Devine, however, suggest that whites who reject racial stereotypes never engage in prejudicial responses toward blacks. Rather, the responses of such individuals are likely to depend on whether they are able to consciously control their responses. According to Devine, when people who reject negative stereotypes are unconsciously "primed" to think about negative cultural stereotypes of blacks, they are as susceptible to racially intolerant responses as are individuals who accept negative stereotypes. The important point is that under most circumstances, such individuals are likely to avoid prejudice and even actively reject stigmatizing responses (e.g., when race becomes an issue in a political campaign). Yet, there are many circumstances under which negative cultural stereotypes may be unconsciously activated (for instance, when crime and welfare are discussed in racially-coded language) and these are equally worrisome. Quite likely, the producers of the infamous "Willie Horton" ad employed against Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis in 1988 understood this principle fully (e.g., Jamieson 1992).

Our results also have important implications for the power of individuating information to inhibit the racial beliefs of negative stereotypers. Given the dim chances of ever actually changing such stereotypes (e.g., Hamilton

⁹As a barometer of their consistency, these respondents evidence an average percentage difference (across the four experiments) of only 4.3% between judgments of stigmatized versus nonstigmatized black targets. Among those holding negative stereotypes, the average difference between stigmatization groups is 24.1%.

¹⁰We sought to control, moreover, for social desirability biases in another way. Regardless of how whites rejecting negative stereotypes score on the eight-item Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Index (Crowne and Marlowe 1964), their responses were consistent across the experimental conditions.
and Sherman 1994), individuating information that cleanly contradicts extant beliefs may be one of the few feasible means for “decoupling” racial stereotypes from welfare and crime policy judgments, as was demonstrated in the welfare policy and police search experiments. Clearly, vivid anecdotes that deviate from our general beliefs can go a long way toward mitigating the power of stereotypes and other sources of base-rate information (e.g., Nisbett and Ross 1980). Just as President Reagan excelled at using “Horatio Alger” anecdotes to demonstrate that poverty and drug abuse were not the problems of the federal government (e.g., Pratkanis and Aronson 1991, 131–3), President Clinton has often used vivid, personal anecdotes of successful (black) welfare mothers being helped by the federal government to get off the public dole. In this respect, then, our results are consistent with studies that show that popular support for a given policy depends on the way that policy is framed. Just as income-targeted policies engender more support than race-targeted policies, in part because they suppress the activation of negative racial stereotypes (e.g., Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Sniderman and Piazza 1993), personal, vivid anecdotes that are counter to stereotype may also suppress (or even reverse) racial biases in evaluating policies that benefit African-Americans.

The likelihood of this happening in the current environment, however, is slight, given political discourse that discusses welfare and crime in racially-coded terms and media coverage that portrays welfare recipients and criminal suspects as black. Stereotype inhibition requires sufficiently powerful and plentiful contrary examples so that whites have enough anecdotes in their minds that problems such as welfare and crime do not immediately and automatically suggest the involvement of African-Americans. Regrettably, however, blacks face a double problem in this regard. First, welfare recipients and criminals are far too often portrayed as black in the media and, second, the media focus far more often on atypical blacks in stigmatizing context. Thus, while stereotypes can, and doubtless are, often inhibited by information that undercut the stereotype, this type of information is far from abundant in our culture. Given the manner in which race is linked with welfare and crime in the current political environment, therefore, it is likely that public attitudes on these issues will continue to be biased by the racial stereotypes prevalent in the culture.

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APPENDIX
Survey Measures

I. Racial Stereotypes. Scales were formed to measure two central dimensions of whites' stereotypes of African-Americans: Blacks Work Ethic (Cronbach's α = .765 for the items Lazy, Determined to Succeed, Dependable, Hardworking, and Lack Discipline) and Black Hostility (Aggressive or Violent), which were found to tap distinct dimensions of whites' beliefs about African-Americans (r between the two dimensions is .45) and in preliminary analyses were found to play a significant, nonredundant role in predicting various policy attitudes in the survey, especially attitudes toward crime and welfare. Both scales are coded so that higher values indicate more negative assessments of 'most' blacks.

All of the stereotype items except one (Lack Discipline) are based on the following item: "Now I'll read a few words that people sometimes use to describe blacks. Of course, no word fits absolutely everybody, but as I read each one, please tell me, using a number from 0 to 10, how well you think it describes blacks as a group. If you think it's a very good description of most blacks, give it a 10. If you feel a word is a very inaccurate description of most blacks, give it a 0." Lack Discipline in based on the Likert statement, "Most black parents don't teach their children the self-discipline and skills it takes to get ahead in America," where responses to the 4-point scale are also coded such that higher values indicate more negative assessments of most blacks (i.e., agreement with the statement).

Our measurement strategy is tied to our theoretical interest in uncovering the impact of racial stereotypes, as cognitive expectancies, on political judgments about blacks. Others have used stereotype items for different purposes. Bobo and Kluegel (1993), for example, subtract ratings of "whites in general" from ratings of "blacks in general" on five 7-point semantic differential scales (e.g., hardworking—lazy, violence-prone—not violence-prone, unintelligent—intelligent, etc.) to measure "prejudice," a concept which they argue involves attributing less positive characteristics to blacks than whites. Because we are more interested in stereotypes as cognitions (i.e., cognitive expectancies about the traits and behaviors of social groups) than as prejudice (which has traditionally been defined as an affective predisposition toward a group), our focus is on how separate stereotype dimensions of African-Americans—unconfounded by stereotypes of other groups—influence political evaluations of blacks. Thus, combining different stereotype dimensions or subtracting ratings of other groups would, for our purposes, only muddy the conceptual and empirical waters, especially since other studies have found that the impact of stereotypes of blacks on political evaluations was unaffected by stereotypes of whites (Terkildsen 1993). We control for more general forms of ethnocentrism (and other possible confounds) in our analyses of the consequences of racial stereotypes by including measures of Social Intolerance, Conformity, and Anti-Semitism as control variables.

II. Social and Political Variables. In the regression analyses in Tables 3 through 6, we include a variety of social, political, and attitudinal variables in the analysis to remove any obvious sources of spurious covariance between racial
stereotypes and our dependent variables. *Party identification* and *ideological self-placement* are measured using the standard 7-point scales. Household *income* is categorized in increments of 10 thousand dollars per year. "South" is a dummy variable where 1 represents the "Deep South" (the 11 Confederate states) and 0 represents the "Nonsouth." The *Education* variable categorizes respondents into groups of eighth grade or lower, some high school, high school graduates, some college, college graduates, and some graduate work or a graduate degree. *Political Sophistication* is a summed index based on a respondent's ability to place correctly the political parties on three issues (reducing unemployment, reducing rich/poor income differences, and permitting school prayer); to identify oneself as a liberal, moderate, or conservative; and to respond accurately to two factual questions (knowing that there are nine Supreme Court justices and that presidents can serve a maximum of two terms).

III. *Core Beliefs and Values.* Additionally, we incorporate various measures of basic values that have been linked with stereotypes, policy attitudes, or both, in prior research.

A. Individualism. Found to play a role in shaping attitudes toward welfare and affirmative action (e.g., Kinder and Sear 1981; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lipset and Schneider 1978), a measure of Individualism (Cronbach's $\alpha = .444; r = .285$) was formed by summing ratings to two value scales ("Self-reliance—having everybody stand on their own two feet" and "Emphasizing individual achievement and excellence on the job") from a larger battery of value items where respondents were asked to rate various value statements on a scale from 0 (one of the least important values) to 10 (one of the absolutely most important things to you). Consistent with prior research (Sniderman and Piazza 1993), correlations between racial stereotypes and Individualism and Ideology are minimal (e.g., r's between Black Work Ethic and Individualism and Ideology are .12 and .13, respectively).

B. Ethnocentrism. A more generalized form of ethnocentrism may shape negative views of African-Americans, as well as welfare recipients and criminal suspects (Adorno, et al. 1950; Altemeyer 1988; Snyder and Ickes 1985). Thus, measures of three different constructs presumed to reflect different aspects of ethnocentrism—social intolerance, conformity, and anti-Semitism—were included in the analysis.

1. *Social Intolerance* (Defined by Hurwitz and Peffley [1992] as an unwillingness to accept, or "put up with" individuals or groups with different values, appearances, and behaviors) (Cronbach's $\alpha = .363$) was measured with two 11-point scales from the value battery ("Tolerating different beliefs and lifestyles" and "Allowing people to speak out for ideas that most people disagree with") and two 4-point Likert items ("We should be more tolerant of different groups in society, even if their values and behavior are very different from ours," and "Groups with very different ideas and values should try their best to fit in with the rest of society").

2. *Conformity* (Defined here as a desire for an orderly world in which people
APPENDIX (continued)

obey authority and adhere to convention) has been linked to a rejection of social and political outgroups (e.g., Feldman 1989; Hurwitz and Peffley 1992; Kohn 1977), insofar as conformists are expected to view unconventional outgroups (such as minorities) as a threat to the established order. The Conformity index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .711$) was assessed with three 11-point scales from the value battery (“Preserving the traditional ideas of right and wrong,” “Respect for authority,” and “Improving standards of politeness in everyday behavior”) and three 3-point childhood value priorities (“Independence or Respect for elders,” “Obedience or self-reliance” and “Curiosity or good manners”).

3. Finally, to include a more direct expression of at least one possible form of misanthropy, we included a four-item Anti-Semitism (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .775$) scale in our equations, measured by summing responses to the following Likert statements, “Most Jews are more willing than other people to use shady practices to get ahead in life,” “Most Jews believe that they are better than other people,” “Most Jews in general are inclined to be more loyal to Israel than to America,” and “Most Jews don’t care what happens to people who aren’t Jewish.”

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