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## Support for Social Programs: Effects of Class, Race, Political Ideology, and Poverty Beliefs

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SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS: EFFECTS OF CLASS, RACE, POLITICAL  
IDEOLOGY, AND POVERTY BELIEFS

by

JOHN EDWIN ROLLER, III

(Under the Direction of Ted M. Brimeyer)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the main factors affecting support for social programs: class, race, political ideology, and beliefs about poverty. Using ordinary least squares regression (OLS) and bivariate correlation models, I examine how racial priming influences blacks' and whites' support for social programs such as welfare and unemployment. The premise of a racial primer is that people's racial attitudes or beliefs, overt or hidden, will be enhanced when reading information that confirms their attitudes or beliefs. While the racial primers did not directly influence support for social programs, they did moderate the independent variables' affect on the levels of support for social programs. I also found that racial attitudes significantly influenced support for social programs across all five of the dependent variables used in this study; positive and negative attitudes of welfare, support for extreme and assistive intervention methods, and fear of losing status to minorities. Finally, this research offers a renewed interest in direct and hidden prejudices held by both blacks and whites.

INDEX WORDS: Race, Stratification, Political ideology, Poverty, Individualism, Structuralist, Symbolic racism, Coded racism, Social programs, Welfare

SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS: EFFECTS OF CLASS, RACE, POLITICAL  
IDEOLOGY, AND POVERTY BELIEFS

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Master of Arts

by

JOHN EDWIN ROLLER, III

2009



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The United States of America has a staggering amount of wealth compared to other countries. Despite this wealth, poverty remains a persistent problem, especially for racial and ethnic minorities. While only 8.4 percent of whites live in poverty, 24.6 percent of African Americans, 24.4 percent of Native Americans, and 22.2 percent of Latinos live in poverty (Aguirre and Turner 2007). These disparities have remained despite policies that are designed to alleviate poverty. Research shows that race plays an important role in support for social programs. But, research has provided little evidence of strong racial attitudes and suggests that a more subtle form of symbolic racism influences people's level of support for social service programs such as welfare, affirmative action, and subsidized housing. Arguments for social policies that are color-blind may contain hidden racial agendas, called "racial politics in disguise" (Gilens 1996:593). Gallagher (2003:26) writes, "Colorblindness hides white privilege behind a mask of assumed meritocracy while rendering invisible the institutional arrangements that perpetuate racial inequality." A color-blind society is based on policies of equality and individualistic efforts and hinders social programs from assisting minority groups. Advocates of a color-blind society argue that everyone has the opportunity to succeed and therefore should be able to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps (Gallagher 2003). The color-blind perspective acknowledges the institutional practices that promote racial inequalities such as residential segregation, unequal loan policies, differential police stops, divergent medical care and schooling, variation in criminal sentencing and administration of the death penalty, but those who adhere to it claim that these cannot be



explained by racism (Brown et al. 2003). The color-blind society consists of a rhetoric of equality, but this becomes a tool used to vote down policies that are designed to intervene or change the fate of the poor. Is the lack of empathy toward the poor based on principles or prejudices? Gallagher (2003:35) writes, “Colorblindness allows whites to believe that segregation and discrimination are no longer an issue because it is now illegal for individuals to be denied access to housing, public accommodations or jobs because of their race.” In a similar vein Forman (2004:44) describes racial apathy as a “lack of feeling or indifference toward societal, racial, and ethnic inequality and a lack of engagement with race-related social issues.”

In addition to racial prejudices, whether overt or symbolic, researchers have found that support for social programs may be influenced by socioeconomic status (SES), political ideology, and beliefs about the causes of poverty. The present study will add to this discussion by presenting a survey coupled with a racial primer, a passage that references a racial poverty statistic. The premise of a racial primer is that people’s racial attitudes or beliefs, overt or hidden, will be enhanced when reading information that confirms their attitudes or beliefs. If a participant is exposed to a passage that cites poverty statistics for either their own or another race, I expect to find an influence on the aforementioned variables. In other words, if whites feel that blacks make up a large proportion of welfare recipients and should not be helped, there will be a marked decrease in their level of support for social programs after reading a primer confirming their beliefs.

Additionally, past research has focused predominantly on white support for social programs such as welfare, homelessness, or affirmative action policy (Bobo and Kluegel

1993; Gilens 1996; Kluegel and Smith 1983; Smith 1998). This study investigates the attitudes of both black and white respondents and whether the factors that are related to support for social programs differs for blacks and whites. This research examines three questions:

1. Is support for social programs affected by racial priming?
2. Do the effects of SES, political ideology, and poverty beliefs on people's support for social programs change due to racial priming?
3. Do the effects of SES, political ideology, and poverty beliefs on people's support for social programs differ by race?

## CHAPTER 2

### FOUR PERSPECTIVES IN DETERMINING SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS

The level of support for social assistance is influenced by ideas of personal responsibility, SES, adherence to political ideologies, and racial beliefs.

#### *Individualism and Structuralism*

People who adhere to individualist beliefs about poverty assign personal causality when analyzing the shortcomings of oneself and others. Impoverished people are seen as being responsible for their own social position. Placing the responsibility of well-being with the individual removes communal obligations and mandates little support for social service programs. Individualistic attributions are particularly strong in the American belief system in regards to poverty (Kluegel and Smith 1983; Lee, Jones, and Lewis 1990). This Puritan legacy is centered not only in a strong work ethic, but also considers hard work to be a moral value with harsh judgment for those who fail to succeed (Shipler 2004). Zucker and Weiner (1993) note that anger towards the poor and rejection of government intervention policies result when the poor are held personally responsible and blamed for their status in life (cited by Ng and Allen 2005).

In contrast, others support the idea that poverty is due to the inadequate opportunities and inequalities produced by the economic and political structures. Structuralism is the belief that an individual's well-being is dependent on the economic and social systems such as wages, schools, and discrimination (Hunt 2004). Prior research suggests that structuralist challenges to individualism may be more dominant during times of social or economic strain. Hunt (2002) emphasizes the importance of structuralist beliefs in a layered effect; the structuralist constraints do not replace the existing attributions of individualism but coexist with them. Bobo (1991:88) writes,

“Individualistic priorities lead some people to oppose redistributive policies whereas social responsibility priorities lead others to support government efforts to reduce racial and economic inequality.”

The interplay of the individualist and structuralist causes of poverty are evident throughout past research and prove difficult to completely separate. David Shipler (2004:5-6) writes:

It is difficult to find someone whose poverty is not somehow related to his or her unwise behavior—to drop out of school, to have a baby out of wedlock, to do drugs, to be chronically late to work. And it is difficult to find behavior that is not somehow related to the inherited conditions of being poorly parented, poorly educated, and poorly housed in neighborhoods from which no distant horizon of possibility can be seen.

Shipler (2004) reminds us that these two different perspectives are very influential on how people think about poverty. This dichotomy is extremely relevant in the current economic crisis. The mortgage crisis has been linked to banks' faulty lending methods and the improper spending behavior of the consumers resulting in proposed bail-outs for both individuals and the banking system. Based on the previous research, it can be hypothesized that:

***Hypothesis 1a: People who hold strong individualist beliefs about poverty will show greater opposition to social programs.***

***Hypothesis 1b: People who hold strong structuralist beliefs about poverty will show greater support for social programs.***

*Class*

Self-interest theory suggests that internalized group identification will generate a belief structure that perceives distributive justice based on a sense of personal/group benefit (Tajfel 1981). When economic assistance is distributed in a manner that targets a particular minority group, there is an increase in conflict between the targeted and non-targeted groups (Kluegel and Smith 1983; Smith 1998). Opposition to race conscious programs such as affirmative action may be attributed to self-interest. When groups do not benefit from policies and are required to help fund them through taxation or other means, there will be little or no support for the policies (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Gilens 1996; Smith 1998; Wilson 1987). These views of self interest have commonly been viewed in terms of race but they may also apply to SES. Economic self-interest explanations are widely accepted in terms of support for social service programs. The wealthy perceive social programs as tax obligations without personal benefit. Support for programs such as welfare is more likely to be found among lower income Americans (Bobo 1991; Gilens 1996; Kluegel and Smith 1983). Those higher in SES are more supportive of inequality (Bobo 1991). Based on the previous research, it can be hypothesized that:

***Hypothesis 2a: People of higher SES will show less support for social programs.***

In addition to their current economic situation, people may be influenced by their past economic experiences. Wallace and Junisbai (2004) examined the experience of economic hardship and the development of class consciousness. They found that people's past experiences were related to their current beliefs. It is not a far stretch to

believe that people who may have benefited as recipients of government aid would also be affected by their experiences.

***Hypothesis 2b: People who have received economic assistance from the government will show greater support for social programs.***

#### *Political Ideology*

Political values may also be an influential factor in determining support for social programs. Conservatives believe the poor lack motivation to succeed and therefore are less inclined to support social programs. Liberals are much more inclined to acknowledge the role that historical forces have on poverty and support policies that provide services to the poor. Political conservatives hold beliefs centered on equality and view poverty as fair, whereas political liberal ideologies mandate support for the unfair conditions of unemployment and poverty (Ng and Allen 2005). For example, Lee, Jones, and Lewis (1990) found a strong relationship between conservative values and lack of support for measures to assist the homeless in comparison to liberals who supported social programs to aid the homeless. Cook and Barrett (1992) found conservatives are more likely to oppose welfare than liberals. Based on the previous research, it can be hypothesized that:

***Hypothesis 3: People with a liberal political ideology will show greater support for social programs.***

#### *Racial Affect and Symbolic Racism*

Racial affect is a process in which decisions are based primarily on attitudes of racial preferences and prejudices. These decisions are sometimes made in the face of contradictory information. The effects of race on support for social support programs are

not equally distributed between racial groups. Previous research suggests that the racial affect is much stronger for whites than for blacks (Bobo 1991; Kluegel and Smith 1983; Smith 1998). When policy targets a particular group based on race, history demonstrates that this is seen as a direct obstacle to the distribution of resources. Beliefs concerning blacks' commitment to the work ethic were found to be the most significant dimension influencing white attitudes about welfare (Gilens 1995).

Gilens (1996) notes the discrepancy between actual and perceived rates of poverty. In 1995, the Census data showed that 28 percent of blacks lived in poverty. This stands in sharp contrast to whites' perceptions that 51 percent of blacks lived in poverty (Gilens 1996). This racial perception may have a significant effect on support for social services (Gilens 1996). Gilens also suggests that this false perception is a better predictor of whites' opposition to welfare than other previously cited factors such as self-interest and individualist beliefs.

Additionally, these racial attitudes have a spill-over effect that leads many "white Americans who support spending for education, health care, and the elderly to oppose means-tested programs aimed exclusively at the poor" (Gilens 1995:995). Gallagher (2003:23-24) notes a distinct difference on views held by whites and blacks in regards to their support for "affirmative action, the perceived fairness of the criminal justice system, the ability to acquire the 'American Dream' and the extent to which whites have benefited from past discrimination." Smith (1998) found that race/ethnicity was a strong factor for determining who will and who will not support certain collegiate affirmative action initiatives. Competition for political, social, and economic resources generates political hostilities between racial groups (Glaser 2001). Glaser (2001) found that

preferential minority college admission programs were highly opposed by well-educated whites.

These findings of white opposition to social programs do not correlate with measures of strong racial attitudes. While the more obvious form of racism remains insignificant, studies do find racial affect evident in research. For example, Hodson, Hooper, Dovidio, and Gaertner (2005) studied the effects of race on legal decisions. Eighty-five white participants were given cases to read in which the race of the defendant (black or white) and admissibility of the evidence (admissible or inadmissible) were changed. When the defendants in the study were black, white jurors were more likely to allow inadmissible evidence to influence their decisions. When the information was deemed inadmissible, white participants judged black defendants with higher rates of guilty verdicts, recommended harsher sentencing, considered them more likely to re-offend, and rated them less likely to be rehabilitated than white defendants. There were no differences found between the black and white defendant judgments when the evidence was considered admissible. Importantly, the “jurors” ratings of guilt were not related to their scores on the Modern Racism Scale, a measure of strong racial attitudes. This finding suggests that the discriminatory behavior occurs only when it can be justified on non-racial grounds.

Stronger racial attitudes have been transformed into what has become known as symbolic or coded racism. Symbolic racism can be seen in the antagonistic attitudes of whites toward blacks’ demands for racial equality, resentment of race conscious programs, and denial of the existence of discrimination (Smith 1998). Based on the previous research, it can be hypothesized that:



*Hypothesis 4a: Racial attitudes will not be related to support for social programs.*

*Hypothesis 4b: Racial priming will influence the level of support for social programs.*

*Hypothesis 4c: The racial primer will moderate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.*

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

In order to answer the research questions, a survey was used to gather data on poverty beliefs, SES, political ideologies, race, and support for social programs. For this project, I used a convenience sample consisting of all Introduction to Sociology classes (SOC1 1101) at Georgia Southern University, a unit of the University System of Georgia and one of two regional state universities. Introductory sections in sociology are comprised of students from diverse political, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The faculty members assigned to teach the courses were contacted and asked to allow their students to participate in the study. Surveys were given to respondents at the beginning of class. Data gathering procedures were approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. Students anonymously completed one of three versions of a questionnaire that included a passage that referenced statistical information about poverty. The first passage referenced whites, the second referenced blacks, and a third passage contained no racial references (Appendix A). The three different primer passages were evenly distributed throughout the sample with 33.6 percent receiving the primer that referenced blacks in poverty, 31.3 percent receiving the primer that referenced whites in poverty, and 35.1 percent receiving the primer that made no racial reference.

I received completed surveys from 562 out of 685 students registered in the introductory sociology courses for the 2009 spring semester. Of the 562 respondents, 45 percent were male and 55 percent were female. According to the University System of Georgia during the fall semester of 2008, 67 percent of the students were white and 22

percent of the students were black at Georgia Southern University. The respondents were 72.8 percent white, 19.4 percent black, 1.8 percent Hispanic, 1.8 percent Asian, and 3.9 percent of the respondents were either bi-racial or classified themselves as “other.” The majority of respondents in the sample were 18 years of age (38.3 percent) or 19 years of age (29.4 percent) with the remaining sample reporting ages older than 19. When asked about political ideology in a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (very liberal) to 5 (very conservative), 4.1 percent of the respondents were very liberal, 16.7 percent were liberal, 46.1 percent were moderate, 27.6 percent conservative, and 3.7 percent were very conservative.

SES was measured using parental education and family income. Respondents reported that 45.2 percent of their mothers received a bachelor degree or higher and 47.0 percent of their fathers received a bachelor degree or higher. Family income was measured with a seven point scale ranging from 1 (\$20,000 or Less) to 7 (\$100,000 or More) and a description of the median household income for the state of Georgia being \$64,000. There were 4.6 percent reporting family incomes of \$20,000 or less, 11.6 percent reporting \$64,000, 27.2 percent reporting \$100,000 or more, with the remaining scores being evenly distributed throughout the scale. These three variables were reduced into a single measure via a factor analysis. The new variable had a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. A higher score indicates a higher socioeconomic status.

Eighty-three percent of respondents declared that their families had never received any type of family aid, 9.4 percent reported that their families have received some type of aid either from Aid to Families with Dependent Children or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (AFDC/TANF), general assistance, supplemental security

income, or food stamps, and 7.7 percent reported “Do Not Know.” For those who had no history or were unsure of whether their family received aid, the variable was recoded to zero while for those who had a history of family aid the variable was recoded to one.

### *Dependent Variables*

The dependent variable in the analysis is support for social programs. The survey contained 16 questions that measured student’s support for social programs. Twelve of the 16 questions measured the students’ beliefs and attitudes about welfare and governmental assistance programs using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Four questions measured how likely they felt about the possibility that programs targeting the disadvantaged would interfere with job promotions or college admissions of more qualified candidates using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very unlikely) to 4 (very likely). Factor analysis and reliability measures were utilized to create five distinct variables: positive attitudes toward welfare ( $\alpha=.720$ ), negative attitudes toward welfare ( $\alpha=.606$ ), attitudes toward extreme governmental intervention programs ( $\alpha=.647$ ), attitudes toward assistive type governmental programs ( $\alpha=.552$ ), and fear of losing positions to minorities ( $\alpha=.826$ ).

Table 1 shows index statistics with factor loadings, means, and standard deviations for items used to measure the dependent variables. These data suggest that students hold both positive and negative beliefs about welfare. A relatively high mean suggests that students felt that welfare recipients should be “required to work” ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $S.D. = 0.99$ ) and welfare also “encourages people to work less” ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $S.D. = 1.01$ ). In contrast students also believed that welfare helps prevent “hunger and starvation” ( $M =$

3.79, S.D. = 0.85) and “helps people get on their feet when facing difficult situations such as unemployment, a divorce, or a death in the family” (M = 3.72, S.D. = 0.92).

I found that extreme interventions such as “government limiting the amount of money an individual earns in a year” (M = 1.70, S.D. = 0.85) and ending unemployment by “hiring everybody without a job” (M = 2.30; S.D. = 0.93) were not favored by the majority. In contrast, the data suggest that students were in favor of assistive type programs such as “providing scholarships for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who maintain good grades” (M = 4.17, S.D. = 0.89) and government spending for “schools in poor neighborhoods” (M = 3.79, S.D. = 0.94).

The data from the four questions measuring fear of losing positions to minorities suggests that students felt like minority preferences in college admission were plausible scenarios. The question, “What do you think the chances are these days that a person won't get admitted to a college or university program while an equally or less qualified disadvantaged person gets admitted instead?” showed general agreement. (M = 2.77, S.D. = 0.82). When asked about the “chances are these days that a person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified disadvantaged person gets one instead” students also felt that this was possible (M = 2.64, S.D. = 0.81).

Table 1: Index Statistics of Dependent Variables ( $N = 562$ )

	Factor Loading	Mean	(SD)
1. Negative Attitudes Toward Welfare ( $\alpha = .720$ )			
a. People should be required to work in order to receive welfare.	0.64	3.99	0.99
b. Welfare makes people work less than they would if there wasn't a welfare system.	0.76	3.85	1.01
c. Welfare encourages young women to have babies before marriage.	0.81	2.85	1.15
d. Welfare discourages young women who get pregnant from marrying the father of the child.	0.70	2.65	0.93
2. Positive Attitudes Toward Welfare ( $\alpha = .606$ )			
a. Welfare helps keep people's marriage together in times of financial problems.	0.74	2.86	0.90
b. Welfare helps to prevent hunger and starvation.	0.79	3.79	0.85
c. Welfare helps people get on their feet when facing difficult situations such as unemployment, a divorce or a death in the family.	0.69	3.72	0.92
3. Extreme Government Intervention ( $\alpha = .647$ )			
a. The government should end unemployment by hiring everybody without a job.	0.76	2.30	0.93
b. The government should see that every family has enough money to have a decent standard of living.	0.78	2.76	1.06
c. The government should limit the amount of money an individual earns in a year.	0.71	1.70	0.85
4. Assistive Type Intervention ( $\alpha = .552$ )			
a. Special college scholarships should be provided for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who maintain good grades.	0.81	4.17	0.89
b. The government should spend more money on the schools in poor neighborhoods especially for pre-school and early education programs.	0.75	3.79	0.94
5. Fear of Losing Position to Minority ( $\alpha = .826$ )			
a. What do you think the chances are these days that a person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified disadvantaged person gets one instead?	0.78	2.64	0.81
b. What do you think the chances are these days that a person won't get admitted to a college or university program while an equally or less qualified disadvantaged person gets admitted instead?	0.84	2.77	0.82
c. What do you think the chances are these days that you or anyone in your family won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified disadvantaged employee receives one instead?	0.78	2.50	0.82
d. What do you think the chances are these days that a person won't get admitted to a college or university program while a less qualified disadvantaged person gets admitted instead?	0.83	2.63	0.84

### *Independent Variables*

Nine questions using a 4-point Likert scale measured individualist and structuralist explanations of poverty ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 4 (very important). Table 2 shows the index statistics with factor loadings, means, and standard deviations associated with the items that measured the independent variables.

Structuralist beliefs ( $\alpha=.720$ ) and individualist beliefs ( $\alpha=.664$ ) were found to be well represented after factor analytic procedures and reliability measures. The data suggest that students' sentiments about poverty are combinations of both structuralist and individualistic beliefs (Hunt 2004). Students felt that poverty could be attributed to "failure of society to provide good schools" ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $S.D. = 0.81$ ) and "low wages in some businesses and industries" ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $S.D = 0.77$ ). In contrast, students also attributed to poverty to "lack of saving and proper money management skills" ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $S.D. = 0.62$ ) and "personal irresponsibility" ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $S.D. = 0.78$ ).

The Modern Racism Scale developed by John B. McConahay was presented in the final section of the survey to determine the presence of racial discrimination (Dovidio and Gaertner 1986). Six questions were answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Due to the fact that those being surveyed were not selected by race, the questions were altered to reflect views held toward minorities and not a specific racial group. I created a Modern Racism Scale ( $\alpha=.625$ ) using factor analysis procedures and reliability measures and found that there were sentiments of minorities "getting more economically than they deserve" ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $S.D. = 1.10$ ) and being "too demanding for equal rights" ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $S.D. = 1.15$ ). In contrast,

the data also suggest sentiments for “understanding the anger of minority groups in America” ( $M = 3.04$ ,  $S.D. = 1.12$ ).

Table 2: Index Statistics for Independent Variables ( $N = 562$ )

	Factor Loading	Mean	(SD)
1. Structuralist Beliefs ( $\alpha = .720$ )			
a. Failure of society to provide good schools for many people.	0.90	3.18	0.81
b. Low wages in some businesses and industries.	0.82	3.19	0.77
c. Failure of society to provide good schools for many Americans	0.90	3.05	0.87
d. Prejudice and discrimination.	0.60	2.73	1.04
e. Failure of private industry to provide enough jobs.	0.76	2.86	0.85
2. Individualist Beliefs ( $\alpha = .664$ )			
a. Loose morals and drunkenness.	0.58	2.85	0.82
b. Lack of saving and proper money management skills.	0.55	3.58	0.62
c. Lack of effort by the poor themselves.	0.83	3.14	0.82
d. Personal irresponsibility, lack of discipline among the poor.	0.83	3.20	0.78
3. Modern Racism Scale ( $\alpha = .625$ )			
a. Over the past few years, minorities have gotten more economically than they deserve.	0.82	2.89	1.10
b. Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect for minorities than they deserve.	0.79	2.65	1.06
c. It is easy to understand the anger of minority groups in America.	0.59	3.04	1.12
d. Discrimination against minorities is no longer a problem in the United States.	0.64	2.09	0.98
e. Minorities are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.	0.84	2.72	1.15
f. Minorities should not push themselves where they are not wanted.	0.76	2.45	1.14



## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

In order to answer my first research question, is support for social programs affected by racial priming, I divided my respondents into two categories by race, white and black. As I previously noted, past research has focused predominantly on white support for social programs such as welfare, homelessness or affirmative action policy (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Gilens 1996; Kluegel and Smith 1983; Smith 1998). I hypothesized that racial priming would influence the level of support for social programs (Hypothesis 4b). I used a one-way ANOVA for each of the two racial groups to analyze the influence of the three priming passages.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics organized into three groups by the priming passage for whites (N = 365). In total, 135 white students received the black reference to poverty, 121 received the white reference, and 139 received no racial reference on their survey. The first 5 rows in the table show the mean response of the students on support for social programs. The final column in the table indicates whether there are significant differences between students who had a particular racial primer. This column shows that there are no significant differences between the student responses on the dependent variables and the racial primers. Hypothesis (4b) was not supported. Table 3 also shows the independent variables with means displayed by the racial primer. This was done in order to check for any possible bias. Because the surveys were handed out randomly and the racial primer was included on the survey following the independent variables there should not be significant differences. Column D shows a significant difference on structuralist beliefs about poverty, with the strongest difference found between whites

who received the black reference and the white reference, as well as whites who received the white reference and no racial reference.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for White Respondents (N = 395)

	A		B		C		D
	Black Reference Mean	(SD)	White Reference Mean	(SD)	No Racial Reference Mean	(SD)	Sig. Diff.
Negative Attitudes Toward Welfare	3.46	0.72	3.42	0.68	3.45	0.78	
Positive Attitudes Toward Welfare	3.38	0.71	3.48	0.62	3.38	0.66	
Extreme Government Intervention	2.23	0.69	2.09	0.69	2.08	0.68	
Assistive Type Intervention	3.94	0.72	3.80	0.73	3.85	0.83	
Fear of Losing Position to Minority	2.69	0.60	2.54	0.65	2.72	0.65	
Modern Racism Scale	2.80	0.64	2.78	0.52	2.78	0.59	
Structuralist Beliefs	2.98	0.56	2.70	0.53	2.89	0.57	A,B ***;B,C*
Individualist Beliefs	3.14	0.54	3.10	0.57	3.24	0.56	
Political Ideology	3.26	0.81	3.25	0.92	3.32	0.85	
Gender	0.41	0.49	0.54	0.50	0.45	0.50	
Family Aid	1.94	0.48	2.03	0.36	2.01	0.30	
SES	0.07	0.94	0.14	0.96	0.06	0.97	
	(N = 135)		(N = 121)		(N = 139)		

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

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics organized into three groups by the priming passage for blacks (N = 108). In total, 36 black students received the black reference to poverty, 36 received the white reference, and 36 received no racial reference on their survey. The first 5 rows in the table show the mean response of the students on support for social programs. Column D in the table indicates whether there are significant differences between students who had a particular racial primer. This column shows that there are no significant differences between the student responses on the dependent variables. Therefore I conclude that racial priming had no influence on the level of support for social programs (Hypothesis 4b). Table 4 also shows the independent variables with means displayed by the racial primer. Column D reveals a significant difference between blacks who received the black reference and no racial reference for

both structuralist beliefs and individualist beliefs about poverty. Again I note here that the independent variables preceded the priming reference in the survey.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Black Respondents (N = 108)

	A		B		C		D
	Black Reference Mean	(SD)	White Reference Mean	(SD)	No Racial Reference Mean	(SD)	Sig. Diff.
Negative Attitudes Toward Welfare	3.01	0.71	2.97	0.68	3.07	0.83	
Positive Attitudes Toward Welfare	3.80	0.62	3.63	0.58	3.52	0.70	
Extreme Government Intervention	2.56	0.67	2.57	0.80	2.68	0.60	
Assistive Type Intervention	4.33	0.65	4.36	0.65	4.46	0.61	
Fear of Losing Position to Minority	2.52	0.77	2.50	0.72	2.51	0.73	
Modern Racism Scale	2.33	0.61	2.03	0.56	2.21	0.56	
Structuralist Beliefs	3.58	0.42	3.49	0.41	3.32	0.47	A,C *
Individualist Beliefs	3.44	0.44	3.24	0.53	3.16	0.47	A,C *
Political Ideology	2.69	0.62	2.47	0.81	2.72	0.70	
Gender	0.33	0.48	0.42	0.50	0.46	0.51	
Family Aid	1.88	0.41	2.06	0.50	2.00	0.51	
SES	-0.13	1.09	-0.33	1.03	-0.23	0.98	
	(N = 36)		(N = 36)		(N = 36)		

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

We used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression in order to answer my second research question, “Do the effects of SES, political ideology, and poverty beliefs on people’s support for social programs change due to racial priming?” I regressed the dependent variables on the predictors. I hypothesized that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables would be influenced by the priming passages (Hypothesis 4c).

Tables 5-9 show the regressions of the dependent variables for the white respondents. Table 5 shows the non-standardized regression coefficients and standard errors of the independent variables organized into three groups by the priming passage for the variable, negative views of welfare. The final three rows show the adjusted r-squared value, the F-value, and the sample size. Table 5 shows that the strongest

predictors for negative attitudes toward welfare are the Modern Racism Scale and individualist beliefs about poverty. The strongest correlations are found between negative attitudes about welfare and the Modern Racism Scale with beta and standard error scores of .375 (.102) for the black reference group, .410 (.134) for the white reference group, and .502 (.110) for the group who received no racial priming passage. Whites with stronger racial attitudes are more negative in their views of welfare. Individualist beliefs about poverty also were significantly correlated with negative attitudes toward welfare with beta and standard errors scores of .290 (.115) for the black reference group, .348 (.108) for the white reference group, and .350 (.105) for the group who received no racial priming passage. The more individualist whites are the more negative are their views of welfare. In regards to my second research question and (Hypothesis 5c), the significant effects of the independent variables were consistent across all three priming passages. Therefore, the priming passages did not moderate the independent variables' influence on the students' negative views of welfare.

Table 5: Regression of Negative View of Welfare on Independent Variables for Whites

Negative View of Welfare (Whites)									
Regressed on Independent Variables (Whites)									
<i>Variables</i>	Black Reference			White Reference			No Racial Reference		
	$\beta$		<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$		<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>Std. Error</i>	
Modern Racism Scale	.375	***	(.102)	.410	**	(.134)	.502	***	(.110)
Structuralist Beliefs	-.029		(.110)	-.120		(.126)	-.021		(.110)
Individualist Beliefs	.290	*	(.115)	.348	**	(.108)	.350	**	(.105)
Political Ideology	.141		(.075)	.007		(.065)	.058		(.072)
Males	-.017		(.118)	-.050		(.117)	-.054		(.119)
Family Aid	.065		(.178)	.051		(.265)	-.387		(.331)
SES	.091		(.066)	-.044		(.064)	-.061		(.064)
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.256			.228			.243		
<i>F Value</i>	7.209 ***			5.715 ***			7.106 ***		
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	126			112			133		

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

Table 6 shows the non-standardized regression coefficients and standard errors of the independent variables organized into three groups by the priming passage for the variable, positive views of welfare. The final three rows show the adjusted r-squared value, the F-value, and the sample size. Table 6 shows that the strongest predictors for positive attitudes toward welfare are the Modern Racism Scale and individualist beliefs about poverty. The strongest correlations are found between positive attitudes about welfare and the Modern Racism Scale. The beta and standard error scores were -.165 (.106) for the black reference group, -.388 (.134) for the white reference group, and -.234 (.105) for the group who received no racial priming passage. Whites with stronger racial beliefs are less positive about their views of welfare. Individualist beliefs about poverty also were significantly correlated with positive attitudes toward welfare, but for only whites who received the primer that references black poverty. The more individualist whites are the less positive their views of welfare. In regards to my second research question and (Hypothesis 4c), the significant effects of the individualist scale were not consistent across all three priming passages. Therefore, the priming passages moderated the influence individualist beliefs had on white students' positive views of welfare.

Table 6: Regression of Positive View of Welfare on Independent Variables for Whites

Positive View of Welfare (Whites) Regressed on Independent Variables (Whites)						
<i>Variables</i>	Black Reference		White Reference		No Racial Reference	
	$\beta$	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>Std. Error</i>
Modern Racism Scale	-.165 *	(.106)	-.388 **	(.134)	-.234 *	(.105)
Structuralist Beliefs	.240	(.113)	-.075	(.126)	.022	(.105)
Individualist Beliefs	-.179 *	(.119)	-.036	(.108)	-.057	(.100)
Political Ideology	-.134	(.077)	-.068	(.065)	-.100	(.069)
Males	.002	(.122)	.054	(.117)	.125	(.113)
Family Aid	.357	(.183)	.448	(.264)	-.464	(.316)
SES	.113	(.068)	-.031	(.063)	.060	(.061)
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.151		.105		.058	
<i>F Value</i>	4.201 ***		2.879 **		2.170 *	
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	126		112		133	

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

Table 7 shows the non-standardized regression coefficients and standard errors of the independent variables organized into three groups by the priming passage for the variable, extreme intervention methods to alleviate poverty. The final three rows show the adjusted r-squared value, the F-value, and the sample size. Table 7 shows that significant predictors for extreme intervention methods for the poor are the Modern Racism Scale and structuralist beliefs about poverty. Whites who scored higher on the Modern Racism Scale and received the black priming passage are more supportive of extreme poverty interventions than those that received the white priming passage or no racial reference. Structuralist beliefs about poverty were also significantly correlated with extreme intervention methods. Whites who hold more structuralist beliefs about poverty are more in favor of extreme interventions to alleviate poverty regardless of the priming passage. In regards to my second research question and (Hypothesis 4c), the significant effects of the Modern Racism Scale were moderated by the priming passages.

Table 7: Regression of Extreme Intervention on Independent Variables

Extreme Intervention (Whites) Regressed on Independent Variables (Whites)						
<i>Variables</i>	Black Reference		White Reference		No Racial Reference	
	$\beta$	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>Std. Error</i>
Modern Racism Scale	.228 *	(.108)	.102	(.133)	.010	(.099)
Structuralist Beliefs	.348 **	(.115)	.449 **	(.125)	.392 ***	(.099)
Individualist Beliefs	.028	(.121)	-.001	(.107)	.025	(.094)
Political Ideology	-.062	(.079)	-.074	(.064)	-.082	(.065)
Males	-.192	(.124)	-.187	(.116)	-.086	(.107)
Family Aid	.038	(.187)	.515	(.262)	.803	(.299)
SES	-.044	(.079)	-.097	(.063)	-.038	(.058)
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.080		.133		.180	
<i>F Value</i>	2.575 *		3.461 **		5.180 ***	
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	126		112		133	

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

Table 8 shows the non-standardized regression coefficients and standard errors of the independent variables organized into three groups by the priming passage for the variable, assistive intervention methods to alleviate poverty. The final three rows show the adjusted r-squared value, the F-value, and the sample size. Table 8 shows that the significant predictors for assistive intervention methods are the Modern Racism Scale, structuralist beliefs, individualist beliefs, and socioeconomic status. There is a significant relationship between the Modern Racism Scale and support for assistive intervention methods among whites who received the white primer, while those that received the black priming passage or no racial reference did not. Whites who hold stronger racial attitudes were more supportive of assistive interventions when they received the primer for their own race. Whites who received the priming passage with no racial reference show significant influence of structuralist beliefs on support for assistive intervention methods, while those that received the black priming passage or white priming passage did not. Whites who hold stronger individualist beliefs are more supportive of assistive interventions when they received the primer with their own race. Whites with higher

SES who received the black priming reference showed less support for assistive intervention when receiving the black primer. In regards to our second research question and (Hypothesis 4c), this inconsistency across all three priming passages suggest that the priming passages moderated the influence of racial attitudes, structuralist beliefs, individualist beliefs, and SES on assistive interventions for poverty.

Table 8: Regression of Assistive Intervention on Independent Variables for Whites

Assistive Intervention (Whites)							
Regressed on Independent Variables (Whites)							
Variables	Black Reference		White Reference		No Racial Reference		Std. Error
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$		
Modern Racism Scale	-.182	(.109)	.410 **	(.134)	-.153		(.125)
Structuralist Beliefs	.220	(.116)	-.120	(.126)	.368 **		(.125)
Individualist Beliefs	-.033	(.122)	.348 **	(.108)	-.191		(.119)
Political Ideology	.016	(.079)	.007	(.065)	-.048		(.082)
Males	.113	(.125)	-.050	(.117)	-.069		(.136)
Family Aid	-.190	(.188)	.051	(.265)	-.390		(.377)
SES	-.184 *	(.070)	-.044	(.064)	-.125		(.073)
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.085		.136		.114		
<i>F Value</i>	2.681 *		3.516 **		3.453 **		
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	126		112		133		

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

Table 9 shows the non-standardized regression coefficients and standard errors of the independent variables organized into three groups by the priming passage for the variable, fear of losing position to minorities. The final three rows show the adjusted r-squared value, the F-value, and the sample size. Table 9 shows that the strongest predictors for fear of losing position to minorities are the Modern Racism Scale and structuralist beliefs about poverty. Whites who received the black priming passage showed significant effect between the Modern Racism Scale and support for fear of losing position to minorities, while those that received the white priming passage or no racial reference did not. Whites who hold stronger racial attitudes showed more fear of



losing position to minorities when they received the black primer. Structuralist beliefs show a significant difference for whites who received the priming passage with no racial reference on fear of losing position to minorities, while those that received the black or white priming passage did not. Whites who hold stronger structuralist beliefs show stronger fear of losing position to minorities when they received the priming passage with no racial reference. In regards to my second research question and (Hypothesis 4c), this inconsistency across all three priming passages suggest that the priming passages moderated the influence of racial attitudes and structuralist beliefs on fear of losing positions to minorities.

Table 9: Regression of Fear of Losing Position on Independent Variables for Whites

Variables	Fear of Losing Position to Minorities (Whites) Regressed on Independent Variables (Whites)					
	Black Reference		White Reference		No Racial Reference	
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	Std. Error
Modern Racism Scale	.195 *	(.095)	.042	(.145)	.140	(.104)
Structuralist Beliefs	-.034	(.102)	.144	(.137)	.215 *	(.104)
Individualist Beliefs	-.061	(.107)	-.025	(.117)	.019	(.099)
Political Ideology	.091	(.069)	.065	(.071)	-.011	(.068)
Males	-.016	(.110)	.172	(.127)	.198	(.113)
Family Aid	-.067	(.165)	.369	(.286)	.267	(.313)
SES	.046	(.062)	.047	(.069)	-.054	(.061)
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.033		-.011		.013	
<i>F Value</i>	1.617		.831		1.251	
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	125		111		133	

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

We used a bivariate correlation (*Pearson's r*) to examine the relationship between the independent variables and support for social service programs for black respondents. Due to the small sample size, the regression method was not possible and the significance level of  $p < .15$  was used. The likelihood of making a Type I error has been increased, but was deemed necessary for this study due to the small number of black respondents.

Tables 10-14 show the correlation coefficients between the independent variables and dependent variables organized by the three priming passages. The sample sizes were 36 for the black priming passage, 36 for the white priming passage, and 37 for the priming passage with no racial reference.

Table 10 shows significant relationships between three of the independent variables and negative views of welfare. Blacks with stronger racial attitudes showed stronger negative attitudes of welfare when they received the white priming passage ( $r = .256$ ). Blacks with stronger individualist beliefs showed stronger negative attitudes of welfare when they received the white priming passage ( $r = .320$ ). An inverse relationship is seen in regards to family aid and the priming passages. Blacks that were recipients of family aid had less negative attitudes of welfare when they received the black priming passage ( $r = -.261$ ) but more negative views when they received the priming passage with no racial reference ( $r = .375$ ). In regards to my second research question and (Hypothesis 4c), this inconsistency across all three priming passages suggest that the priming passage moderated the influence of racial attitudes, individualist beliefs, and a history of family aid on negative views of welfare.

Table 10: Bivariate Correlation for Negative View of Welfare and Independent Variables for Blacks

Negative View of Welfare (Blacks)			
Bivariate Correlation on Independent Variables (Blacks)			
	Black Reference	White Reference	No Racial Reference
<i>Variables</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>
Modern Racism Scale	-.048	.256 *	.058
Structuralist Beliefs	.135	.058	-.051
Individualist Beliefs	.225	.320 *	-.030
Political Ideology	.098	-.023	-.003
Males	.133	.145	-.144
Family Aid	-.261 *	-.213	.375 *
SES	-.022	.163	-.085
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	36	36	37

\*  $p < .15$

Table 11 shows the relationships between the independent variables and positive views of welfare. Blacks with stronger racial attitudes showed less positive attitudes of welfare across all three priming passages. Blacks with stronger individualist beliefs showed stronger positive attitudes towards welfare when they received the priming passage with no racial reference ( $r = .261$ ). Black males showed less positive attitudes of welfare when they received the black priming passage ( $r = -.343$ ). With the exception of the Modern Racism Scale, the inconsistency across all three priming passages suggests that the priming passage moderated the influence of individualist beliefs and gender on positive views of welfare.

Table 11: Bivariate Correlation for Positive View of Welfare and Independent Variables for Blacks

Positive View of Welfare (Blacks)			
Bivariate Correlation on Independent Variables (Blacks)			
<i>Variables</i>	Black Reference	White Reference	No Racial Reference
	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>
Modern Racism Scale	-.287 *	-.299 *	-.258 *
Structuralist Beliefs	.237	-.089	.129
Individualist Beliefs	.216	.029	.261 *
Political Ideology	-.116	-.144	-.164
Males	-.343 *	-.044	-.030
Family Aid	-.085	.075	-.101
SES	.019	.220	-.116
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	36	36	37

\*  $p < .15$

Table 12 shows significant relationships between two independent variables and extreme intervention methods. Blacks who hold stronger racial attitudes showed less support for extreme intervention methods when they received the black priming passage ( $r = -.284$ ). Blacks who reported higher SES showed less support for extreme intervention methods when they received the priming passage with no racial reference ( $r$

= -.496). In regards to my second research question and (Hypothesis 4c), this inconsistency across all three priming passages suggest that the priming passage moderated the influence of SES and racial attitudes on negative views of welfare.

Table 12: Bivariate Correlation for Extreme Intervention and Independent Variables for Blacks

Extreme Intervention (Blacks)			
Bivariate Correlation on Independent Variables (Blacks)			
<i>Variables</i>	Black Reference <i>r</i>	White Reference <i>r</i>	No Racial Reference <i>r</i>
Modern Racism Scale	-.284 *	.231	-.033
Structuralist Beliefs	.130	.050	-.012
Individualist Beliefs	-.031	.152	-.030
Political Ideology	-.190	-.004	.074
Males	-.130	-.067	-.032
Family Aid	-.141	-.182	.154
SES	.042	.016	-.496 *
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	36	36	37

\*  $p < .15$

Table 13 shows the relationships between the independent variables and assistive intervention methods. Blacks with stronger racial attitudes showed less support for assistive intervention methods when they received the priming passage with no racial reference ( $r = -.285$ ). Blacks with stronger structuralist beliefs showed stronger support for assistive intervention methods when they received the priming passage with no racial reference ( $r = .308$ ). An inverse relationship is seen in regards to political ideology and the priming passages. Conservative blacks showed less support of assistive intervention methods when they received the white priming passage ( $r = -.251$ ). Black males also showed less support for assistive intervention methods when they received the priming passage with no racial reference ( $r = -.278$ ). Finally, blacks with higher socioeconomic backgrounds showed stronger support for assistive intervention methods when they received the black priming passage ( $r = .277$ ). In regards to my second research question

and (Hypothesis 4c), this inconsistency across all three priming passages suggest that the priming passage moderated the influence of structuralist beliefs, political ideology, gender, and socioeconomic background on support for assistive intervention methods.

Table 13: Bivariate Correlation for Assistive Intervention and Independent Variables for Blacks

Assistive Intervention (Blacks)			
Bivariate Correlation on Independent Variables (Blacks)			
<i>Variables</i>	Black Reference <i>r</i>	White Reference <i>r</i>	No Racial Reference <i>r</i>
Modern Racism Scale	-.220	.004	-.285 *
Structuralist Beliefs	-.167	.157	.308 *
Individualist Beliefs	-.031	-.119	.093
Political Ideology	-.163	-.251 *	.039
Males	-.046	.095	-.278 *
Family Aid	-.083	.008	.176
SES	.277 *	.034	-.197
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	36	36	37

\*  $p < .15$

Finally, Table 14 shows significant relationships between the dependent variable fear of losing position to minorities and the independent variables. Blacks with stronger racial attitudes showed stronger fear when they received the white priming passage ( $r = .348$ ) and the priming passage with no racial reference ( $r = .387$ ). Blacks with stronger structuralist beliefs showed stronger fear of losing position to minorities when they received the black priming passage ( $r = .256$ ). Conservative blacks showed less fear of losing position to minorities when they received the white priming passage ( $r = -.400$ ). In regards to my second research question and (Hypothesis 4c), this inconsistency across all three priming passages suggest that the priming passage moderated the influence of structuralist beliefs and political ideology on fear of losing position to minorities.

Table 14: Bivariate Correlation for Fear of Losing Position and Independent Variables for Blacks

Fear of Losing Position (Blacks)  
Bivariate Correlation on Independent Variables (Blacks)

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<i>Variables</i>	Black Reference <i>r</i>	White Reference <i>r</i>	No Racial Reference <i>r</i>
Modern Racism Scale	-.134	.348 *	.387 *
Structuralist Beliefs	.256 *	-.002	.194
Individualist Beliefs	.069	.026	-.066
Political Ideology	-.136	-.400 *	-.107
Males	.080	-.087	.088
Family Aid	-.063	-.029	-.010
SES	-.226	-.144	-.240
<i>Sample Size (n)</i>	36	36	37

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\*  $p < .15$

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### *Discussion*

The data suggest that the independent variables are related to support for social programs but are not consistent. Individualist beliefs influenced support for social programs (Hypothesis 1a). In general, white students that hold individualist beliefs are less supportive of social programs based on the significance of the variables on three of the five dependent variables. For black students the individualist measure was significant on two of the five dependent variables. The moderating hypothesis (4c) was supported with the individualist scale. For white students the racial primer affected how individualist beliefs affected positive views of welfare and assistive intervention. For blacks, the relationship between individualist beliefs and views of welfare, both negative and positive, were affected by the primer. The findings indicate that when students are primed with the opposite race in terms of black and white, the effects of individualist beliefs changes the level of support for welfare programs.

Structuralist beliefs also influenced support for social programs (Hypothesis 1b). White students that hold strong structuralist beliefs show stronger support for social programs based on the significance of the variables on three of the dependent variables. This may indicate that whites may hold stronger structuralist beliefs than previous research suggests and are willing to support programs that provide extreme measures of poverty intervention regardless of racial beliefs. Both white and black students show support for assistive intervention when the primer was race neutral. This may reflect the importance of a race neutral language when seeking support for social programs.

Consistent with prior research, blacks who have a history of family aid showed stronger support for social programs based on the significance of one of the five variables (Hypothesis 3b). Whites with higher SES backgrounds showed less support for assistive intervention programs while blacks with higher SES showed more support for assistive intervention programs, but only when they received the primer with the opposite race. There is some evidence to suggest that those with lower SES are more supportive of social programs (Hypothesis 3a). Additionally, blacks with higher SES backgrounds are more supportive of assistive interventions while blacks with lower SES backgrounds are more in favor of extreme intervention methods.

I hypothesized that political ideology would also influence support for social programs (Hypothesis 4). The only significance found in regards to political ideology is that conservative blacks were less supportive of assistive interventions and showed more fear of losing position to minorities when they received the primer with the opposite race. This weak finding may be due to the fact that the students are in a transitional phase and may have not really developed sound political ideologies.

The most activity seen in Tables (5-14) can be found in regards to the Modern Racism Scale. I found significant interactions across all five of the dependent variables for both races indicating that strong racial beliefs affect support for social programs. This finding contradicts my expectation that racial attitudes would not be related to support for social programs (Hypothesis 4a). White students who scored high on the Modern Racism Scale showed less support for social programs regardless of the primer they received for both positive and negative views of welfare. Whites who scored high on the Modern Racism Scale also showed more support for social programs when they received the



primer for the opposite race for extreme intervention methods. In contrast, white students that scored high on the Modern Racism Scale were willing to support assistive programs only when they received the primer for their own race. Black students who scored high on the Modern Racism Scale also showed less support social programs for all five of the dependent variables. Blacks also showed stronger negative views of welfare when they received the primer for the opposite race. When they received the primer for their own race, black students who scored high on the Modern Racism Scale showed less support for extreme intervention methods. Blacks who scored higher on the Modern Racism Scale also showed stronger fear of losing position to minorities when they received either the opposite race or the race neutral primer.

### *Conclusion*

In regards to my first research question, is support for social programs affected by racial priming, the primer did not influence the dependent variables when examined with one-way ANOVA tests. Regarding my second research question, do the effects of SES, political ideology, and poverty beliefs on people's support for social programs change due to racial priming, the regression and correlation analysis showed that the primer did affect the independent variables' influence on the dependent variables. In order to assure more focus on the primer, it should be displayed more predominantly. Finally, in regards to my third research question, do the effects of SES, political ideology, and poverty beliefs on people's support for social programs differ by race, there is evidence to suggest that support for social programs for both races are affected by racial beliefs. Both black and white students that showed stronger racial beliefs showed less support for social programs for all five of the dependent variables. Overall whites' support for social

programs was influenced by structuralist and individualist variables. Blacks' support for social programs was also influenced by structuralist and individualist variables to a lesser degree and more influenced by political ideology, family aid, and SES. Due to the small sample size for the black respondents and inconsistency with significance levels, the third research question cannot be confidently answered in this study. This could be corrected with a larger sample size and an increased number of black respondents.

The findings suggest that support for social programs is influenced by strong racial attitudes, and support is generally more favorable when it is seen as assistive intervention. This may call for a framing of policy as "opportunity enhancing" even for race targeted programs designed to alleviate long term social inequalities (Bobo and Kluegel 1993:460). It may also be important that terminology reflects supplementation based on individual performance, such as financial assistance for people who are making individual effort to secure employment in order to gain support for particular social policies, such as welfare to work laws. This does not suggest that racial attitudes should be overlooked and ignored in agenda laden rhetoric. There is insurmountable evidence that social programs that target minorities are still needed to balance the social inequalities in the United States. Some aspects of policy, such as subsidized housing, should focus on racial disparities and may require race targeted programs without framing tactics that are designed to skirt the race issue.

The debate over the existence of racism has changed throughout the years, but still remains an important issue even after the decline of the civil rights movements. Claims that racism has become a more hidden, embedded trait are certainly valid, but this study provides evidence that strong racial prejudices are still present. Gilens (1995)

found that racial attitudes of whites are the most important predictor of opposition to welfare. Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens (1997) found that racial prejudices are still strong, especially among white southern men. But racial animosity is not limited to the south. The 1996 California's Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209) was designed to end affirmative action and passed with the support of 63 percent of whites in favor and 75 percent of blacks and Latinos in opposition (Lopez and Pantoja 2004). The findings in the current study and previous research suggest that a measure of racial attitudes should be included when examining support for social programs. The current findings also suggest that additional work should continue to examine people's attitudes and beliefs affecting support for social service programs. As economic stability declines more people may need assistance and how the public feels about giving help could have profound effects.

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## APPENDIX

Appendix A: Priming Passages Included in the Survey

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(Priming Passage No. 1)

In 2006, more than one-quarter of all African-Americans (26.1%) lived in poverty. The proportion of families with an unemployed parent jumped by nearly a percentage point to 6.6% from 2005 to 2006.

(Priming Passage No. 2)

In 2006, more than one-quarter of all whites (26.1%) lived in poverty. The proportion of families with an unemployed parent jumped by nearly a percentage point to 6.6% from 2005 to 2006.

(Priming Passage No. 3)

In 2006, more than one-quarter of all Americans (26.1%) lived in poverty. The proportion of families with an unemployed parent jumped by nearly a percentage point to 6.6% from 2005 to 2006.