

Examining the Principles in Principled Conservatism: The Role of Responsibility Stereotypes as Cues for Deservingness in Racial Policy Decisions

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Why do educated conservatives oppose affirmative action? Those in the “principled conservatism” camp say opposition is based on principled judgments of fairness about the policies. Others, however, argue that opposition is based on racism. The present article offers an alternative perspective that may reconcile these contradictory points of view. In 2 studies, the authors show 2 major findings: (a) that conservatives oppose affirmative action more for Blacks than for other groups, in this case women, and (b) that the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes is mediated best by group-based stereotypes that offer deservingness information and not by other potential mediators like old-fashioned racism or the perceived threat that affirmative action poses to oneself. The authors conclude that educated conservatives are indeed principled in their opposition to affirmative action, but those principles are group based not policy based.

Keywords: affirmative action, attributions and stereotypes, principled conservatism, racism/prejudice, deservingness

On January 15, 2003, President George W. Bush made the proclamation that although “racial prejudice is a reality in America,” affirmative action programs like those at the University of Michigan are “divisive, unfair and impossible to square with the Constitution” (Office of the Press Secretary, 2003). The debate in the Supreme Court and in lesser institutions across the country over the moral and constitutional validity of affirmative action is mirrored by an equally heated debate among social scientists about the origin and nature of opposition toward these policies. The outcome of the academic debate could have far-reaching implications for the political one because each conflicting perspective makes a different statement about the ethics and fairness of these policies. If opposition to policies like affirmative action is driven by racism, then government intervention in the form of policies that equalize racial opportunity may be needed. However, if opposition to such policies is driven primarily by higher values of equity, fairness, and individualism—which may be undermined by policies that use group membership as a criterion for opportunity—then political decision makers may be motivated to reconsider the utility of such policies for maintaining the moral foundations of our culture. As the quote by President Bush indicates,

political rhetoric regarding such policies often manifests itself as a tug-of-war between these ideological positions.

One of the more popular explanations for opposition to race-oriented policies, often referred to as the “principled conservatism” position, states that although racism was once a factor in political decision making, it has been replaced with race-neutral values of equity and fairness that instead guide attitudes toward political policy (Carmines & Merriman, 1993; Kuklinski et al., 1997; Roth, 1990, 1994; Sniderman & Carmines, 1997; Sniderman, Crosby, & Howell, 2000; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993; Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986). This perspective states that attitudes toward racialized policies are best understood in terms of how they fit into American values of equity and individualism. The crux of this argument is that race and racism no longer drive opposition; rather, opposition stems from a conservative ideology that has little tolerance for policies that distribute opportunity inequitably on the basis of race or other group factors irrelevant to personal merit. They would claim that the ideal American system is one that allows everyone, including racial and gender minorities, to compete equally for desired jobs and other opportunities. Those who try hard in our society and are the most qualified should be rewarded with desirable outcomes. Any policy that undermines this system by giving an extra boost to some groups and not to others is unfair and ultimately un-American. Evidence for the race-neutral nature of principled conservatism is found in studies that show that once conservatism and individualistic values are accounted for, measures of racism (e.g., anti-Black affect) only weakly predict opposition to such policies (e.g., Sniderman, Brody, & Kuklinski, 1984).

On the other side of this debate are theorists who support a racism explanation (Bobo, Kluegel, & Smith, 1997; Federico & Sidanius, 2002a; Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sears, 1988; Sears, van Laar, Carrillo, & Kosterman, 1997; Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, Federico, & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). These theorists

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claim that racial ideologies (such as prejudice) are at the core of opposition to policies designed to assist Blacks. For example, social dominance researchers (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) suggest that the rhetoric of ideology and fairness is used as a tool to maintain White hegemony over Blacks in American society. They claim that “principled” objections allow people to maintain racial hierarchies through the use of more socially acceptable, ostensibly race-neutral justifications for opposition to policies that benefit ethnic minorities. These justifications are more socially palatable to a public that is sensitive to accusations of racism, yet they simply cloak the underlying racism driving policy opposition. Ultimately, the politics of race is a battleground over limited resources and power, with dominant groups using a variety of ideological and political positions (like beliefs in the importance of individualism) to legitimize the unequal distribution of power and resources that maintain the existing hierarchy.

Evidence supporting a racism perspective is manifold. First, it has been well established that conservatism is significantly associated with measures of racism and stereotyping of Blacks (e.g., Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Federico & Sidanius, 2002a; Sears, 1988; Sears & Kinder, 1971; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996; Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, & Kendrick, 1991; Weigel & Howes, 1985). Second, there is evidence against the claim that opposition to policies like affirmative action is driven predominantly by race-neutral ideology (e.g., Sears & Henry, 2003; Sears et al., 1997; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Recent evidence shows that principled objections to affirmative action (such as beliefs that it is unfair and it represents reverse discrimination) were significantly related to classical racism, group threat, and social dominance orientation, even after conservatism and individualism were taken into account (Federico & Sidanius, 2002a, 2002b).

The most compelling evidence against the principled conservative perspective is recent research suggesting that conservative opposition to affirmative action is group based such that people are less likely to support affirmative action programs that benefit Blacks compared with the same programs targeted toward other groups such as women (referred to as a *double standard*; Sidanius, Singh, Hetts, & Federico, 2000). If attention to group-neutral values, such as the overall fairness of the policy, overshadows attention to race (as claimed by principled conservative theorists), then people should be equally opposed to any application of such a policy, regardless of the recipient’s group membership. This group-based opposition pattern¹ suggests that a race-neutral claim is not tenable.

Principled conservative theorists acknowledge that racism does influence political decision making, but only among the less educated (Sniderman, Carmines, Layman, & Carter, 1996; Sniderman et al., 2000; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993). These theorists claim that those who are less intellectually sophisticated do not understand complex ideological concepts or their relationships with political policy and American values. As a result, less educated conservatives will allow racial attitudes to color and guide their political attitudes. In support of these ideas, principled conservative theorists have shown that the relationship between conservatism and racism exists among the less educated and gets weaker as education level increases (Sniderman et al., 1984). These theorists have also shown that group-based disparities in opposition to policies like affirmative action are less prevalent among the highly educated (Sniderman et al., 1991).

Because even principled conservatives acknowledge that the noneducated rely on racially based judgments in determining many political attitudes, racism theorists have more recently directed their attention to the attitudes of the educated. For example, racism theorists have shown that education may instead exacerbate the relationship between racism and policy attitudes (Federico & Sidanius, 2002a, 2002b; Sears et al., 1997; Sidanius et al., 1996, 2000). Although *mean* levels of racism decrease with education, the *correlation* between measures of racism and policy attitudes increases with education, suggesting that education may provide a racially intolerant conservative more sophisticated ways to justify their racial animus.

An Alternative Perspective: Reconciling the Differences

For theoretical, empirical, and, ultimately, political reasons, this tug-of-war between those who claim that political attitudes are driven by fairness motives and those who claim they are driven by a need to maintain a status quo that benefits Whites and marginalizes Blacks needs to be reconciled. The present article offers an alternate perspective that may help bridge these seemingly incompatible theories and findings.

We propose that conservatives, and especially educated conservatives, do care deeply about the fairness of policies. Consistent with a principled conservatism perspective, we suggest that educated conservatives are indeed less concerned with ideologically anemic factors like racism. However, the fairness that occupies the minds of most conservatives is not the fundamental fairness of an entire policy per se, which is the centerpiece of the principled conservative argument. Rather, we propose that the fairness of a policy is determined by the perceived deservingness of its recipients—a criterion that can presumably vary across groups, depending on how hard they are perceived to be working to make meaningful contributions to their own benefit and to society at large (see also Son Hing, Bobocel, & Zanna, 2002).

Principled conservatives typically use the term *principled* to refer to judgments of merit on an individual basis. They claim that principled judgments are, by definition, devoid of group-based information. However, we are proposing that using individual merit criteria is only a specific manifestation of the broader principle of deservingness and that it is deservingness that is the principle at the heart of conservative ideology. Although individual merit is perhaps the best way to determine deservingness, it may not be the only way. In some instances, deservingness may be evaluated on a group level. For example, some people may believe that, as a whole, certain groups in society work harder than other groups and thus deserve special opportunities. When making decisions about the merit of group-based programs like affirmative action, in the absence of individuating information about the millions of potential beneficiaries, voters may rely on their “knowledge” about group deservingness to guide their decisions about who should benefit from these programs and who should not.

Consistent with a racism perspective, information about the deservingness of a group has origins in stereotypes. These stereo-

¹ Throughout the present article, we use the term *group-based opposition pattern* instead of *double standard* because the psychological mechanisms implied by the term *double standard* may not be justified given the data. We elaborate on this point further in the General Discussion section.

types can act as effective and powerful legitimizing beliefs or “legitimizing myths” that create a false sense of the legitimacy of the hierarchies in social systems (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; see also Jost & Banaji, 1994). Such legitimizing myths include believing that the existing social hierarchy in American society is based on morally sound and fair principles. Stereotypes can help justify the subordinate status of certain groups, such as stereotypes that a group is naturally less capable, less moral, or contributes less to society at large, or stereotypes that suggest hegemonic groups possess qualities that make them more fit to hold positions of dominance (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

Legitimacy and Deservingness

We assert that whether people perceive policies like affirmative action as fair or not depends on whether they perceive the recipients as deserving of such policies. If a hardworking, qualified individual is denied a job because of prejudice against her gender, then it is fair for an institution to intervene to ensure that she gets the job (Son Hing et al., 2002). She deserves to be helped, and it is right and just to intervene. However, if a person does not get a job because she chooses not to work hard, then it is fair to deny her assistance.

Deservingness is one of the most important factors in determining fairness in general (Farwell & Weiner, 2000; Henry, Reyna, & Weiner, 2004; Skitka & Tetlock, 1992, 1993; Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982; Weiner, Perry, & Magnusson, 1988; see also Weiner, 1995, for review). Those who put forth effort to succeed should be awarded desired benefits, and those who fail to put forth effort will get only the little they have earned (Barnes, Ickes, & Kidd, 1979; Weiner, 1993, 1995). This belief in the moral power of individualism is a cornerstone of American ideology (de Tocqueville, 1835/1981; Hochschild, 1995; Lipset, 1996; Myrdal, 1944/1998).

Inferences of Deservingness in Group-Based Stereotypes

A powerful source of information about the deservingness of groups can be found in stereotypes, or beliefs about traits and behaviors that are considered common among a social category or group of people (e.g., Ashmore & del Boca, 1981; Stangor, 2000). The idea that stereotypes convey important causal information has been proposed by a number of social psychologists (Hamilton, 1979; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Reyna, 2000; Wittenbrink, Gist, & Hilton, 1997). Reyna (2000) stated that one of the most important functions of stereotypes is to transmit causal information about a group’s behaviors and life outcomes. This information is used to guide decisions regarding how to treat members of groups in particular domains (such as hiring or enrollment decisions) or in society in general. Stereotypes that imply behaviors or lifestyles that are under the volition of the group members (e.g., stereotypes that imply internal and controllable qualities) are particularly relevant here, and we refer to them as *responsibility stereotypes*. If one believes that Blacks are less successful in our society because they categorically are not working hard, then that person will perceive Blacks as violating important American values of independence and hard work. In turn, he or she may feel justified to claim that this group does not deserve government assistance if they refuse to help themselves.

One study testing a similarly stereotyped group demonstrated that people report more support for programs described as “gov-

ernment programs to assist the poor” than for identical programs described as “welfare programs” because of stereotypes that welfare recipients are lazy and are thus responsible for their economic distress. The poor, however, were perceived as working harder to remedy their condition (Henry et al., 2004). These responsibility stereotypes were not only the strongest predictors of attitudes toward the people benefited by the policies but also the strongest predictors of intended voting behavior favoring or opposing such policies.

Conservatism and Judgments of Responsibility

Conservatives are especially sensitive to issues of deservingness. One important belief most advocated by the “compassionate conservative” is in giving aid to those who deserve help but denying aid to those who are responsible for their undesired outcomes (Farwell & Weiner, 2000; Skitka & Tetlock, 1992, 1993). Conservatives especially tend to make larger group-based inferences about responsibility for life outcomes and may be more likely to attribute a group member’s negative life outcomes to internal, controllable causes like lack of effort or self-indulgence (Crandall, 1994; Crandall & Biernat, 1990; Williams, 1984; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Conversely, liberals are more likely to attribute a group member’s negative life outcomes to external, uncontrollable, systemic factors like discrimination, scarce resources, and lack of opportunity (Furnham, 1982; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). These ideological differences in reactions to different groups in society may have a significant impact on the role that stereotypes play in policy decisions. For conservatives, causal information that implies responsibility may be seen as a legitimate source of information with which to guide the treatment of groups. Thus, the stereotype that Blacks are lazy may constitute an important source of information about responsibility and deservingness, especially for conservatives. However, beliefs that Blacks are naturally inferior to Whites (an internal, uncontrollable attribute) would not represent legitimate grounds for denying assistance because these stereotypes imply that the needy are not at fault. We suggest that even if these beliefs were in vogue today, as they were in the precivil rights era, truly principled conservatives would not consider shortcomings in ability a legitimate rationale for deprivation.

One reason the role of race in conservative ideology remains controversial may be because of a confounding of types of racism used in many studies. Scientists who take a racism perspective have found meaningful effects of race on the relationship between conservatism and policy attitudes, even among the educated. However, they often operationalize “racism” by combining a variety of measures of racism with measures of responsibility (e.g., Federico & Sidanius, 2002a, Study 1; Henry & Sears, 2002; Sears et al., 1997). But we suggest that the latter measures primarily drive these effects (see also Sniderman & Piazza, 1993, chap. 4).

To understand how race plays a role in policy decisions, it is important first to separate the different kinds of measures of racism and second to recognize that principled conservatives are more sensitive to information that implies responsibility and deservingness. If principled conservatives are correct in their claims that attitudes toward race-oriented policies are in fact race-neutral, then we should see no mediating effect of any measure of racial bias between conservatism and affirmative action opposition, whether it be anti-Black affect, old-fashioned racism (implying White superiority), or responsibility stereotypes implying that Blacks are

responsible for their economic outcomes. If, however, race does play a role, then we should expect race to be a significant mediator only to the degree that the racial belief fits with what is considered legitimate. Stereotypes implying that Blacks are responsible for their economic outcomes should play a role insofar as implications of responsibility, even if group-based, are perceived as legitimate reasons for denying assistance. The impact of responsibility stereotypes should be especially strong for more educated conservatives who are more facile at using and understanding the relationships between ideology, individualistic values, and policy.

The Present Studies

In the following two studies, we seek to reconcile seemingly contradictory theoretical perspectives between scientists who endorse a principled conservatism perspective and those who endorse a racism perspective by integrating knowledge about stereotyping, judgments of responsibility, and social justice. Specifically, we test the following two ideas: (a) Principled conservative concerns about race-relevant policies like affirmative action are based on group stereotypes that convey information about deservingness (and not on traditional racism); (b) these stereotype-driven evaluations produce a pattern in opposition to group-based policies that disfavor Blacks relative to other groups. We examine these ideas by first replicating the so-called double-standard pattern in racialized policies, which we refer to as a *group-based opposition pattern*, with the expectation that people will oppose affirmative action policies designed to help Blacks more than policies designed to help women. Second, we expect to find a relationship between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes (including any group-based disparity in policy opposition), particularly among the educated. Finally, we pit multiple theoretical explanations for this group-based opposition pattern against each other to see which most strongly mediates the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes. Evidence for our theoretical perspective would show that traditional manifestations of generalized racism and group-neutral values (e.g., Protestant work ethic) do not mediate the relationship between conservatism and policy attitudes as well as responsibility stereotypes, especially among the educated.

Study 1

We first considered whether there was a group-based disparity in opposition to affirmative action policies benefiting Blacks versus women in a nationwide sample of both men and women with some college education as well as those without college experience. We also tested whether responsibility stereotypes best mediate the relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern more than other measures, including group-neutral principles or racial attitudes, for those with college experience.

Research by Sidanius et al. (2000) first suggested that there may be a disparity in opposition to affirmative action policies. Using the 1996 Los Angeles County Social Survey, they assessed support for affirmative action for women, Blacks, or the poor. They found that both college-educated and less-educated conservatives opposed affirmative action for Blacks more than any other group (which they referred to as a “double standard”). In their study, participants evaluated affirmative action programs for either Blacks or women or the poor, depending on their experimental

condition. This between-subjects methodology has an advantage in that it reduces potential response biases from participants who may be eager to appear less prejudiced by expressing similar support for all types of affirmative action programs. However, one drawback of their between-subjects design is that they were unable to test what was driving the *difference* between attitudes toward policies that benefited Blacks versus policies benefiting other groups. In other words, they were unable to fully explore what drives the group-based disparity itself.

In our research, we expected to replicate the group-based disparity in affirmative action opposition in a national sample. Because we used a repeated measures design in this study, we were able to predict what drives the disparity in opposition to affirmative action designed to help different groups. By using a repeated measures design, we run the risk of increasing participant response biases (e.g., participants evaluating all affirmative action programs equally in a desire to appear unprejudiced); however, such response biases would only serve to prevent us from detecting the predicted group-based opposition pattern and therefore would be a more conservative test of any disparity.

We used data from the 1996 General Social Survey (GSS), a biennial survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago in Study 1.² The GSS is a nationwide survey of randomly selected adults that is used to assess, among other things, attitudes toward social policies and issues.

Method

Participant

The 1996 GSS featured the responses of 2,904 participants nationwide who were randomly selected to be interviewed in person, typically at their place of residence. We selected only those Whites who responded to the two questions on affirmative action described below, leaving a sample size of 893 (381 men and 512 women). We analyzed Whites only in this study because the vast majority of research in this debate studies racial attitudes from the perspective of those in power, not those who are affected by negative racial attitudes (see, *inter alia*, Federico & Sidanius, 2002a; Kuklinski et al., 1997; Sears et al., 1997). The mean age of the respondents was 45 years old, ranging from 18 to 89 years of age.

The Affirmative Action Experiment

The following within-subjects experiment allowed us to test whether there is a disparity in support for affirmative action programs depending on whether Blacks versus women benefit from the policies. The key items we tested were two otherwise identically worded measures of opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus for women (brackets indicate the changes between the two items):

Some people say that because of past discrimination, Blacks [women] should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of Blacks [women] is wrong because it discriminates against Whites [men]. What about your opinion—are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of Blacks [women]?

² More information about the General Social Survey (as well as the data used in this article) is available from the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu:8080/GSS/homepage.htm>

Participants were asked both questions, and for both gave one of four possible responses: 1 = *strongly favor*, 2 = *favor (not strongly)*, 3 = *oppose (not strongly)*, and 4 = *strongly oppose*.

Education

Education was measured with a variable that assessed the highest year of school completed on a 20-point scale representing each year in high school completed (0–12) and each year in college completed (13–19). We split our sample between those who indicated they had at least 1 year of college experience ($n = 500$) versus those who indicated they had no college experience ($n = 392$).

There are a number of important reasons we chose to treat education as a categorical variable (i.e., split between college educated and noncollege educated). First, our study is a continuation of a literature that has treated the education variable as a dichotomous variable, with a particular focus on participants with at least some college education (e.g., Federico & Sidanius, 2002a; Sidanius et al., 2000; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993). Second, treating the education variable as a dichotomous variable allows one to more easily consider differences in the ability of our key theoretical variables to mediate the relationship between conservatism and policy attitudes (a kind of “moderated mediation”). But third, and perhaps the most theoretically driven reason, is that education as a construct is complex and nonlinear. For example, the Study 1 education variable is scaled on a 20-point scale delineating years of education; however, we believe that there is a substantial qualitative leap ideologically, attitudinally, and demographically between those who end their education at Year 12 in a K–12 system and those who move on to Year 1 of education in college. Differences between, say, Year 11 and Year 12 in high school or between Year 2–Year 3 in college are not nearly as dramatic as the move from high school to college.

Conservatism

Our conservatism measure comprised two items. For the first item, participants were shown a 7-point scale with the labels *extremely liberal*, *liberal*, *slightly liberal*, *moderate*, *middle of the road*, *slightly conservative*, *conservative*, and *extremely conservative* and were asked to indicate the label with which they most identified. For the second item, participants were asked whether they thought of themselves as a Democrat, Republican, or Independent. Those Democrats and Republicans were then asked whether they thought of themselves that way strongly or not so strongly, and Independents were asked whether they felt closer to Democrats or to Republicans. A 7-point scale comprised these items with the labels *strong Democrat*, *not so strong Democrat*, *Independent close to Democrat*, *Independent*, *Independent close to Republican*, *not so strong Republican*, and *strong Republican*. The liberal–conservative item and the Republican–Democrat item were combined to create our conservatism composite, with higher numbers indicating greater conservatism (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .62$).

Mediating Variables

Participants were asked a variety of nonpolicy-oriented questions regarding Blacks as well as questions regarding race-neutral principles. Our key item was the *responsibility stereotype*, implying that Black’s failures are because of lack of effort: “Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without special favors” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). This responsibility item has been used in measures of modern and symbolic racism (e.g., Henry & Sears, 2002) and represents a good example of how responsibility stereotypes are often collapsed or confounded with other measures of racism.

Two items were used as measures of *old-fashioned racism* toward Blacks that did not directly implicate responsibility. Participants indicated agreement with the statements “Blacks shouldn’t push themselves where they are not wanted” and “White people have a right to keep Blacks out of

their neighborhoods if they want to, and Blacks should respect that right,” both on 4-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*).³ The items were combined to form a scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .67$).

Two measures were included that represented the Protestant *work ethic*. Participants were asked in the first item, which we call *value importance*, the following: “Some people say that people get ahead by their own hard work; others say that lucky breaks or help from other people are more important. Which do you think is most important?” The participants then chose hard work as more important, hard work and luck as equally important, or luck as more important, with higher numbers indicating greater importance given to hard work. A second item, which we call *value priority*, was created in which participants were asked to rank order five different values in terms of their importance for teaching children to be prepared in life. Those values were “to work hard,” “to obey,” “to be well liked or popular,” “to think for oneself,” and “to help others.” The value “to work hard” (our focal value) was given a ranking of 1–5, with 1 representing it as having top value priority, and 5 least value priority. (This item was recoded such that a high number, 5, indicated highest priority.) The two measures of the value of Protestant work ethic were almost completely uncorrelated, $r(377) = -.012$, and so were kept separate in all further analyses.⁴

Finally, we included a proxy for *gender self-interest* by including the measure for sex (0 = male, 1 = female). Although an exogenous variable like sex cannot technically be a mediator (because conservatism cannot “cause” sex in our sample), we nevertheless included sex in our mediation analyses as a proxy for the kind of psychological self-interest that could come from being a potential female beneficiary of affirmative action programs.

Results

Group-Based Disparity in Affirmative Action Attitudes

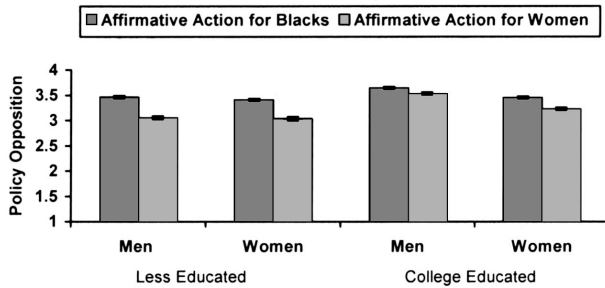
We first tested the idea that there is a group-based disparity in opposition toward affirmative action, depending on whether the programs are described as helping Blacks versus helping women, using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). This test is important because any group-based disparity provides powerful evidence undermining the principled-conservative position that anti-affirmative action attitudes are driven mostly by race-neutral, ideological concerns. Additionally, we included two key demographic groups that could influence this pattern. First, we included gender in the analysis because this group-based opposition pattern could be driven by the women in our sample who could directly benefit from affirmative action policies directed at women (a self-interest explanation). Second, we included education because of the claim in the literature that this group-based opposition pattern in policy attitudes is more

³ The item “Blacks shouldn’t push themselves where they are not wanted” was in the original Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986), but the data used to develop this scale was collected in the late 1970s and early 1980s. More recent research (e.g., Sears et al., 1997, p. 47) suggests that this item has shifted in meaning and is more associated with old-fashioned racism beliefs (as measured in factor analyses).

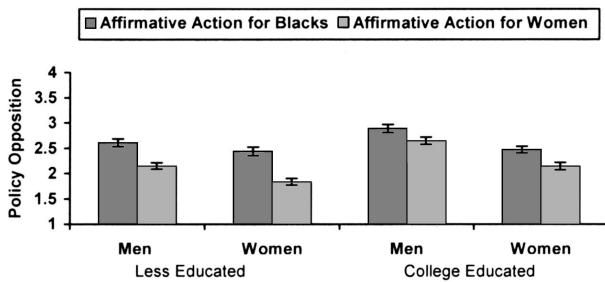
⁴ This lack of correlation between the different measures of the work ethic items is consistent with the literature that suggests that rank-ordering values results in different effects compared with expressing the value’s importance for success in life (Schwartz, 1992), or that different expressions of the same value can often result in unrelated measures (Henry & Reyna, 2005). The correlation matrix in the Appendix shows that both measures, though uncorrelated with each other, have statistically significant relationships with other constructs.

likely to occur among the less educated (Sniderman et al., 1991). To test for this disparity, we ran a 2 (target of affirmative action: Blacks vs. women) \times 2 (gender of participant) \times 2 (education of participant: no college vs. some college) ANOVA, with the target of affirmative action measured within subjects. Figure 1 (top panel) shows that, consistent with our

Study 1: Affirmative Action



Study 2: Affirmative Action



Study 2: Stereotypes

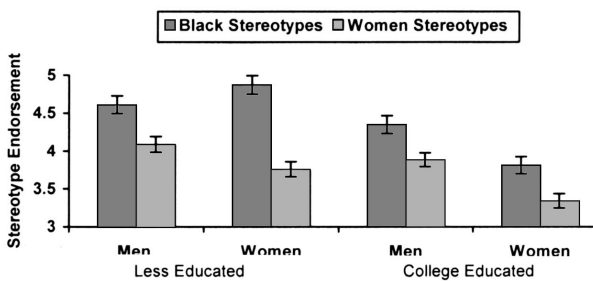


Figure 1. Differences showing greater opposition to women compared with Blacks Studies 1 and 2. The full range of response options is shown for the policy items (1–4 along the y-axis). The range shown for the stereotype items is the midpoint (4) plus one unit above (5) and below (3). Error bars represent the standard error for each policy or stereotype scale across all participants. All effects that are not reported are not statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. For affirmative action in Study 1 (top panel), main effect of policy target, $F = 70.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .088$; main effect of gender, $F = 5.60$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .008$; main effect of education, $F = 13.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .018$; Target \times Education, $F = 10.63$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .014$. $N = 733$. For affirmative action in Study 2 (middle panel), main effect of policy target, $F = 27.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .144$; main effect of gender, $F = 5.62$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .033$. $N = 167$. For stereotypes in Study 2 (bottom panel), main effect of stereotype target, $F = 35.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .176$; main effect of education, $F = 5.58$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .033$. $N = 170$.

predictions, a main effect for the groups emerged with participants overall largely opposing affirmative action more for Blacks ($M = 3.49$, $SE = .03$) than for women ($M = 3.21$, $SE = .04$), $F(1, 729) = 70.11$, $p < .001$. Approximately 8.8% of the variance in opposition to affirmative action could be explained by the simple word change from *Blacks* to *women* in the items.

There was no interaction between participant gender and target of affirmative action, showing that both men and women were more likely to support affirmative action for women versus Blacks, and ruling out an alternative explanation that this greater support is driven predominantly by women's preference for policies that help themselves. There was an interaction between education and the target of affirmative action, $F(1, 729) = 10.63$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .014$. Post hoc analyses suggested that the more educated sample showed less of a difference in support for affirmative action for Blacks versus women (mean difference = 0.18) compared with the less educated sample (mean difference = 0.39).⁵ However, the mean differences were statistically significant for both education subsamples, $t(418) = 4.90$, $p < .001$, for the more educated, $t(313) = 6.51$, $p < .001$, for the less educated, showing that greater opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women exists across both education groups. There were no other interactions with the target of affirmative action.

Additionally, there were two other main effects: Men were more opposed to affirmative action policies in general ($M = 3.42$, $SE = .04$) than were women ($M = 3.28$, $SE = .04$), $F(1, 729) = 5.60$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .008$. Of most interest, those who were college educated were more opposed to affirmative action policies in general ($M = 3.46$, $SE = .04$) than were those with no college experience ($M = 3.24$, $SE = .05$), $F(1, 729) = 13.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .018$.⁶

Mediating Conservatism and Opposition to Affirmative Action

We next examined the role conservatism plays in opposition to affirmative action and considered these analyses by splitting our sample into educated (some college experience) and less educated (no college experience) groups. We expected to see a pattern of mediation between conservatism and opposition to affirmative action among the educated. Particularly, measures that blame Blacks for their condition (the responsibility stereotype) should present the strongest mediation between conservatism and policy attitudes. Because we argue that these responsibility judgments are group-based and act independently of group-neutral principles, we expected that valuing a strong work ethic in the abstract (i.e., without implicating a group) would not mediate the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action opposition. Our the-

⁵ The correlation between the continuous education variable and the residual variable that represents a type of difference score between the affirmative action variable for Blacks versus women (described later) was $r(731) = -.08$, $p < .05$. This correlation replicates the repeated measures ANOVA results by showing that with less education, people respond more negatively toward affirmative action for Blacks relative to women.

⁶ However, the correlation between the continuous education variable and opposition to affirmative action for Blacks was not statistically significant, $r(752) = -.01$. The correlation between the continuous education variable and opposition to affirmative action for women was significant, $r(760) = .16$, $p < .001$.

oretical perspective also states that educated conservatives would be concerned only with issues of deservingness and not blatant racism. Therefore, measures of negative attitudes toward Blacks that do not involve deservingness should not share this mediating role. Finally, because ideological principles and their relationship to policy are considered more diffuse among the less educated, we did not expect to find much of a pattern of mediation between conservatism and opposition to affirmative action for this subsample (a kind of moderated-mediation pattern; see Baron & Kenny, 1986).

The first step in establishing the mediation relationship of responsibility stereotypes between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes was establishing a correlation between conservatism and the responsibility stereotype. This relationship was shown to be especially strong for the more educated ($B = 0.475$, $SE = .059$, $p < .001$) but weaker for the less educated ($B = 0.179$, $SE = .067$, $p < .01$). An analysis of the interaction term between the dichotomous education variable and the continuous conservatism item (using the procedure for testing interactions in multiple regression analyses from Aiken & West, 1991) indicated that this difference was statistically significant (interaction $B = 0.161$, $SE = .047$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that conservatism is linked with stereotypic perceptions of Blacks, particularly among the educated. This interaction is maintained when education is treated as a continuous variable as well (interaction $B = .017$, $SE = .007$, $p < .05$).

The next step was establishing that responsibility stereotypes mediate the relationship between conservatism and opposition to affirmative action for Blacks among the educated. We tested this mediation through a series of multiple regression analyses predicting opposition to affirmative action for Blacks, and the results are shown in Table 1. Each column represents the unique mediating effects of each construct separately.⁷ To test the significance of the mediation, we conducted Sobel tests using the mediation statistical program provided by Preacher and Leonardelli (2001) and the equation that subtracts the product of the standard errors of the unstandardized regression coefficients (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Goodman, 1960).

Mediating Conservatism and Opposition to Affirmative Action for Blacks

Focusing on the educated subsample (the top half of the table), the first column shows a strong relationship between conservatism and opposition to affirmative action for Blacks, with 11.2% of opposition to affirmative action explained by conservatism among the educated. The remaining columns show five different models for explaining the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action opposition. In Model 1, we used the gender variable as a proxy for gender-related self-interest as a mediator between conservatism and policy support. This proxy for gender self-interest did not mediate the relationship between conservatism and policy opposition. Models 2 and 3 show that the two versions of the Protestant work ethic also cannot explain the effect of conservatism on affirmative action opposition. Model 4 shows that old-fashioned racism predicts opposition to affirmative action for Blacks independently ($\beta = .157$, $p < .05$) and that it even has some mediating power between the relationship between conservatism and opposition to affirmative action (when old-fashioned

racism is added, $\Delta\beta = .023$, Goodman mediation statistic = 1.96, $p = .050$). However, the final column, Model 5, shows that the single responsibility stereotype item provides the most powerful mediation between conservatism and affirmative action opposition, significantly cutting the initial beta for the conservatism measure by over half (drop in $\beta = .178$, Goodman mediation statistic = 6.65, $p < .0001$). Although the beta for conservatism is still statistically significant, its predictive power is reduced enough to suggest that the responsibility stereotype is playing an important mediating role, and certainly more important than the other mediating options.

The bottom half of Table 1 shows the results for the less educated subsample. Conservatism plays a marginal role in determining attitudes toward affirmative action for Blacks for the less educated ($B = .193$, $SE = .059$) when compared with the more educated sample ($B = .304$, $SE = .041$; interaction term $B = .060$, $SE = .035$, $p = .085$).⁸ One variable, the responsibility stereotype, significantly mediated the relationship between conservatism and policy opposition. These results suggest that the mediation variables we selected appear to play less of a role in driving the relationship between conservatism and policy opposition among the less educated sample compared with the more educated sample.

Mediating Conservatism and Opposition to Affirmative Action for Blacks Above and Beyond Opposition to Affirmative Action for Women

Given that we found greater opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women, we continued to examine whether conservatism predicts this difference through its relationship to responsibility stereotypes. We created a new variable that is akin to an affirmative action difference score by regressing the attitudes toward affirmative action for Blacks onto the otherwise identically worded item measuring attitudes toward affirmative action for women and saving the unstandardized residual variance from this equation as a separate variable (for a similar methodology, see Henry et al., 2004; Vecchio & Sussmann, 1989). By creating a variable that removes the overlap of variance of attitudes toward affirmative action for women from the same item targeted toward Blacks, we effectively create a type of difference score that improves on some of the problems associated with algebraic difference scores (Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Dubois, 1957). This residual variance, then, became the key dependent variable in a multiple regression, shown in Table 2.

⁷ We do not include a full multiple regression analysis with all of the variables simultaneously because our aim is not to predict affirmative action attitudes per se but to evaluate the ability of each construct to mediate the relationship between conservatism and policy attitudes. The correlation matrices in the Appendix offer justification for the appropriateness of testing a mediation model for the responsibility stereotypes, for both Study 1 and Study 2 (see Baron & Kenny, 1986). Although this justification is not present for several of the other possible mediating variables (e.g., the Study 2 conservatism variable does not have a statistically significant relationship with the personal interest variable), we include the mediation statistics for these variables for purposes of comparison, as they are important theoretical constructs that are prominent in the literature on ideology and policy.

⁸ This marginally significant pattern is maintained with education as a continuous variable (interaction $B = .011$, $SE = .006$, $p = .074$).

Table 1
Multiple Regressions Testing the Mediation Between Conservatism and Opposition to Affirmative Action for Blacks in Study 1

Test	No mediator	Model 1: Gender self interest	Model 2: Work ethic #1 (value importance)	Model 3: Work ethic #2 (value ranking)	Model 4: Old-fashioned racism	Model 5: Responsibility stereotypes
More educated respondents						
Conservatism						
β	.338***	.332***	.332***	.334***	.301***	.160***
Mediator						
β		-.043	.043	.051	.203**	.493***
Mediation						
Conservatism beta drop		.006	.006	.004	.004	.178
Goodman's statistic		0.93	0.67	0.84	2.46	6.65
p		.350	.502	.399	.014	< .0001
Adjusted R ²	11.2%	11.2%	10.7%	10.9%	14.6%	32.3%
Less educated respondents						
Conservatism						
β	.180**	.179**	.185*	.186*	.183*	.147*
Mediator						
β		-.031	.080	.173*	.039	.234***
Mediation						
Conservatism beta drop		.001	No drop	No drop	No drop	.033
Goodman's statistic		0.77				2.31
p		.444				.021
Adjusted R ²	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%	5.1%	2.1%	8.0%

Note. The conservatism beta drop is the drop in conservatism after the mediator is included in the regression. No drop indicates that the conservatism beta did not drop with the mediator in the equation.

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Table 2
Multiple Regressions Testing the Mediation Between Conservatism and the Difference Score Between Affirmative Action for Blacks Versus Women in Study 1

Test	No mediator	Model 1: Gender self-interest	Model 2: Work ethic #1 (value importance)	Model 3: Work ethic #2 (value ranking)	Model 4: Old-fashioned racism	Model 5: Responsibility stereotypes
More educated respondents						
Conservatism						
β	.189***	.186***	.182***	.187***	.144*	.018
Mediator						
β		-.023	.054	.027	.249**	.474***
Mediation						
Conservatism beta drop		.003	.007	.002	.045	.171
Goodman's statistic		0.49	0.79	0.47	2.68	6.38
p		.626	.431	.637	.007	< .0001
Adjusted R ²	3.4%	3.2%	2.9%	2.8%	8.7%	22.8%
Less educated respondents						
Conservatism						
β	.079	.077	.084	.083	.074	.053
Mediator						
β		-.030	.087	.143	.067	.182**
Mediation						
Conservatism beta drop		.002	No drop	No drop	.005	.026
Goodman's statistic		0.73			0.91	2.11
p		.467			.361	.035
Adjusted R ²	0.3%	0.1%	0%	1.5%	0%	3.2%

Note. The conservatism beta drop is the drop in conservatism after the mediator is included in the regression. No drop indicates that the conservatism beta did not drop with the mediator in the equation.

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

The top half of Table 2 shows the results for the more educated subsample, which shows in the leftmost column that conservatism significantly predicts the difference in attitudes toward affirmative action for Blacks versus women. The remaining columns show the same five models, as in Table 1, that are designed to test different mediators of the relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern. Again, Models 1, 2, and 3 show that the self-interest proxy of the gender variable and the two versions of the Protestant work ethic, respectively, cannot explain the effect of conservatism on the greater opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women. Model 4, again, shows that the effect is partially mediated by the Old-Fashioned Racism scale. Although the correlation between conservatism and the opposition disparity does not drop to nonsignificance levels, the drop in the beta for conservatism is statistically meaningful (for conservatism in Model 4, $\Delta\beta = .030$, Goodman mediation statistic = 2.20, $p = .028$). The most dramatic influence on the relationship between conservatism and the disparity in opposition, however, is shown in Model 5 with the responsibility stereotype. The conservatism beta drops to a value not significantly different from zero, and the mediation statistics reflect this change (for conservatism in Model 5, $\Delta\beta = .171$, Goodman mediation statistic = 6.65, $p < .0001$).

The bottom half of Table 2 shows the results for the less educated subsample. The relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern is not statistically significant, although the difference between the slope for the more educated sample ($B = .132$, $SE = .033$) is not significantly different from the slope for the less educated sample ($B = .076$, $SE = .055$). Again, the responsibility stereotype item seems to be providing some mediation between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern; however, these results should be interpreted with caution given that the relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern for the less educated is not statistically significant.

Discussion

These results demonstrate the following: (a) Whites, including both men and women and both the more and less educated, oppose affirmative action more for Blacks than for women; (b) conservatism seems to have an important relationship to affirmative action attitudes, both with affirmative action for Blacks and with the difference score representing the greater opposition to affirmative action for Blacks over affirmative action for women; (c) this notable effect of conservatism among the educated is mediated most significantly by responsibility stereotypes; (d) other measures of self-interest (i.e., gender), group-neutral principles (i.e., Protestant work ethic), or attitudes toward Blacks as a group (i.e., old-fashioned racism attitudes) do not play a similarly strong mediating role.

What is clear from these results is that opposition to affirmative action, particularly among educated conservatives, is not driven by negative attitudes toward the abstract idea of affirmative action but by stereotypes about the people who benefit from the policy. If principled opposition was not about the people but about the policy per se, then we would not see a disparity in opposition for affirmative action for Blacks versus women, and we would not see conservatism predicting this effect. Furthermore, it is not simply any negative attitude about the groups in question (like generalized racism) that drives opposition; rather, it is specifically information

from stereotypes that implicates the responsibility of those in question. If just any negative attitude toward Blacks was driving opposition to affirmative action among educated conservatives, then we would see a much stronger mediating relationship with the Old-Fashioned Racism scale among the educated. But we do not, despite the fact that old-fashioned racism independently predicts affirmative action attitudes and the group-based opposition pattern. Although old-fashioned racism played a smaller mediating role, it failed to completely mediate the relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern. This evidence suggests that educated conservatives indeed may be principled, but their principles may be based on the perceived deservingness of the group of recipients who benefit from the policies—perceptions that are driven by responsibility stereotypes—and not necessarily on conservatism as an abstract principle or overarching ideology. Further evidence to this end is provided by the relative weakness of the work ethic measures: Abstract principles without a group attached to them played no mediating role between conservatism and the affirmative action measures.

Although the results from this study are fairly clear, there are still some important shortcomings. First, the number of items representing each construct was minimal, with only one item representing all constructs except the Old-Fashioned Racism scale, which had two. Second, we were not able to test other prominent competing models such as anti-Black affect and opposition to equality (a dominance perspective). Third, we did not measure beliefs about the responsibility of women compared with Blacks. If stereotypes are playing a role, then it is important to establish that the group-based opposition pattern is driven by stereotypes that Blacks are more responsible than women for their disadvantage. Clearer evidence that Blacks are being singled out would come from the difference score for Black's laziness versus women's laziness as a predictor rather than from simply the item measuring responsibility stereotypes of Blacks alone.

Study 2

A sample from the Greater Chicago area who completed a survey assessing political attitudes with a focus on affirmative action was used in Study 2. The survey contained an embedded within-subjects experiment to test the effects of target group on attitudes toward affirmative action. This study allowed us to further explore our theoretical perspective with the inclusion of items about responsibility stereotypes for Blacks and women (identically worded), affirmative action for Blacks and women (identically worded), and an item assessing general attitudes toward affirmative action (not group specific). In Study 2, we were also able to include several items and scales that allowed us to provide more thorough tests of competing theories that have tried to account for affirmative action attitudes and the group-based opposition pattern. Specifically, we were better able to test self-interest by including an item measuring whether the participants or their relatives could benefit from affirmative action programs. We were also able to test the effects of perceptions of personal threat resulting from affirmative action policies, opposition to equality, and anti-Black affect. In addition to these new measures, we were able to improve on our ability to assess old-fashioned racism, Protestant work ethic, and our responsibility stereotypes for Blacks versus women by including multi-item measures for each of these constructs.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 184 participants (83 women and 101 men) from the greater Chicago area, including residents of northwest Indiana and southern Wisconsin. All participants in the study were Whites. The mean age of participants in the sample was 34 years old, ranging from 18 to 80 years of age. Participants were sampled from a variety of locations in the Chicago area, including shopping malls, airports, train and bus stations, laundromats, coffee shops, beaches, and businesses throughout Chicago and other community locations. Participants were paid \$5 for filling out the survey.

Affirmative Action

General affirmative action questions. Participants were first asked, "In general, do you support or oppose affirmative action?" They could select from four options: 1 = *strongly support*, 2 = *somewhat support*, 3 = *somewhat oppose*, and 4 = *strongly oppose*. This question was always presented before the manipulation of recipient groups in order to avoid any biasing effects of priming group membership and thus was used to assess general attitudes toward affirmative action (not explicitly directed toward any groups).

Within-participant experiment. The experiment allowed us to test whether there is a group-based disparity in opposition to affirmative action programs (the group-based opposition pattern), depending on whether Blacks versus women benefit from the policies. Three questions were asked to assess opposition to affirmative action policies for Blacks. Participants were asked to indicate whether they strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the following policies: "Affirmative action for African Americans/Blacks in job hiring and promotion"; "Affirmative action for African Americans/Blacks in university admissions"; "Affirmative action in awarding government contracts to African Americans/Blacks." These questions were combined into an Affirmative Action for Blacks scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$). An identical set of questions was used to assess attitudes toward affirmative action programs that benefit women, with the words *African Americans/Blacks* replaced with *women*. These items were also combined to form an Affirmative Action for Women scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). The presentation of these affirmative action items was counterbalanced so that half the participants received a survey with questions measuring affirmative action for Blacks first, and the other half received questions measuring affirmative action for women first.

Education

Education was measured with the following options: less than a high school degree; high school or GED; associates degree or some college; bachelor of arts/bachelor of science; Master's or professional degree; or doctorate degree. As with Study 1, we were interested in comparing those with some college experience with those who did not have any college experience, and so we combined the first two choices into a no college education category ($n = 50$) and the last 4 choices into a college education category ($n = 134$).

Conservatism

Two questions were asked regarding conservatism: "When it comes to politics, do you usually consider yourself as a liberal, a conservative, or a moderate?" and "Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or an Independent?" These items were both measured on a 7-point scale with 1 indicating a liberal or Democratic ideology, 4 indicating moderate or independent ideology, and 7 indicating a conservative or Republican ideology. These items were combined to form a Conservatism scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .60$).

Mediating Variables

Responsibility stereotypes. Our key mediating variable was a scale assessing Black responsibility, comprising four items. These items were similar to a subset of items from the Symbolic Racism Scale (see Henry & Sears, 2002) assessing Black responsibility: "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if African Americans/Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites," "Many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. African Americans/Blacks should do the same without any special favors," "If African Americans/Blacks try hard they almost always get what they want," and "On average, African Americans/Blacks have worse jobs, income, and housing than Whites because most African Americans/Blacks just don't have the motivation or willpower to pull themselves up out of poverty." These items were assessed on 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) and had good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$). A similar scale was created to assess women's responsibility. The scale asked questions identical to the Black Responsibility scale but worded to apply to women such as, "Many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Women should do the same without any special favors." These items were measured on the same scale as that for Black responsibility (Cronbach's $\alpha = .69$).

Old-fashioned racism. The scale assessing old-fashioned racism comprised the following four items: "On average, African Americans/Blacks have worse jobs, income, and housing than Whites because most African Americans/Blacks are not as capable as Whites," "We would have fewer social problems if people of the same ethnic background lived and worked with people like themselves," and "The Black community would be better off if it formed its own social and political institutions such as schools, banks, and police force," and "African Americans/Blacks need affirmative action because they are not as capable as other groups." Responses were assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This scale had good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$).

Anti-Black/antiwomen affect. Affect was assessed using a standard "feeling thermometer" measure. Participants rated their feelings about several groups ranging from 0 (*very unfavorable*) to 100 (*very favorable*), including African Americans/Blacks and women. These items were recoded (by subtracting each score from 100) so that higher numbers indicated greater negative affect toward the groups in question.

Gender self-interest. As in Study 1, we included a proxy for gender self-interest by including the measure for sex (1 = male, 2 = female), under the assumption that women will have a psychological personal interest in affirmative action programs designed to aid them.

Personal interest. Given that some of our respondents are women and therefore could benefit from affirmative action programs, and given that even male respondents could have family members who could also benefit (e.g., wives, sisters, daughters), we included an item that assessed personal interest: "Are you or any member of your family eligible for affirmative action benefits?" Participants answered either yes (1) or no (0) to this item.

Personal threat. Because personal threat has been proposed to influence affirmative action attitudes, we wanted to assess the possibility that affirmative action attitudes are driven by beliefs of potential personal loss as a result of the program. Thus, we asked, "How likely is it that, sometime in the future, you may face barriers to advancement because of affirmative action programs?" ranging from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 7 (*very likely*).

Protestant work ethic. A scale assessing Protestant work ethic (with items taken from Feldman, 1988) included the following four items: "If people work hard, they almost always get what they want," "Even if people try hard, they often cannot reach their goals" (reverse scored), "Most people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they really have only themselves to blame," "Hard work offers little guarantee for success" (reverse scored). These items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$).

Opposition to equality. We included two items that were related to the general Opposition to Equality (OEQ) subscale (see Jost & Thompson, 2000) of the Social Dominance Orientation scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stall-

worth, & Malle, 1994): "If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems," and "Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed." Although these items measure beliefs about equality with respect to individuals rather than groups, they are close approximations to the subscale of social dominance that is most closely associated with conservatism and beliefs about affirmative action (Jost & Thompson, 2000). These items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) (Cronbach's $\alpha = .56$). The items were recoded so that higher numbers represented greater opposition to equality.

Results

Group-Based Disparity in Affirmative Action Attitudes

We first wanted to replicate the group-based opposition pattern in attitudes toward affirmative action found in the national survey used in Study 1. To test this pattern, we ran a 2 (target of affirmative action: Blacks vs. women) \times 2 (gender of participant) \times 2 (education of participant: no college vs. some college) ANOVA, with target of affirmative action measured within subjects. Figure 1 (middle panel) reveals a significant main effect of the target of affirmative action such that respondents were once again more opposed to affirmative action for Blacks ($M = 2.59$, $SE = .09$) than for women ($M = 2.18$, $SE = .08$), $F(1, 168) = 27.34$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, a full 14.4% of the variance in opposition to affirmative action was driven by the group membership of the recipient.

This group-based opposition pattern was not qualified by an interaction with gender, education, or the combination of gender or education, suggesting that this disparity in opposition exists roughly equally for both men and women and both more and less educated participants. There was an overall main effect of gender: Although both men and women supported affirmative action more for women than for Blacks, women were more supportive of affirmative action overall ($M = 2.21$, $SD = .12$) than were men ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .09$), $F(1, 163) = 5.62$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

Responsibility Stereotypes

We were particularly interested in the degree to which people are sensitive to commonly held stereotypes that imply that Blacks do not try hard in American society and are therefore responsible for their plight. To test this, we ran a 2 (responsibility stereotype: Blacks vs. women) \times 2 (gender of participant) \times 2 (education of participant: no college vs. some college) ANOVA, with target of stereotypes measured within subjects. The data supported the prediction that overall, our sample was more likely to see Blacks as not putting forth effort to pull themselves out of poverty ($M = 4.40$, $SE = .13$) compared with women ($M = 3.76$, $SE = .11$), $F(1, 169) = 35.51$, $p < .001$ (see bottom panel of Figure 1). Furthermore, a full 17.6% of the variance in perceptions of laziness was driven by the target group label. This stereotype pattern also was not qualified by an interaction with gender, education, or the combination of gender or education, suggesting that the greater stereotyping of Blacks over women as responsible for their outcomes happens equally for both men and women and both the more and less educated. There was an overall main effect of education: Although both college educated and less educated participants stereotyped Blacks more than women, the less educated

were more extreme in their responsibility judgments for both target groups ($M = 4.33$, $SE = .182$ for the less educated; $M = 3.83$, $SE = .100$ for the more educated), $F(1, 166) = 5.58$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .03$.⁹

Mediating Conservatism and the Group-Based Disparity in Policy Opposition

Our key assertion is that the disparity in opposition to affirmative action policies is driven most importantly by beliefs that Blacks do not try hard in society. If Blacks are seen as responsible for their lower economic status, then they could be perceived as not deserving the opportunities proffered by affirmative action. Therefore, we tested whether the stereotypes that Blacks do not try hard relative to women predict the group-based opposition pattern above and beyond the other possible sources of this disparity that were measured in this study, such as traditional racism or opposition to equality. Because our respondents were White, and some were women, we were also interested in testing whether this disparity is driven by self-interest (given that women could benefit from the policy) or by a belief that affirmative action threatens personal opportunities—a threat that is stronger for this sample when affirmative action is awarded to Blacks but less so when awarded to women.

As in Study 1, we created a difference variable by regressing attitudes toward affirmative action for Blacks on attitudes toward affirmative action for women and saving the residual. We used a similar procedure to create a variable representing Black laziness with the variance of women's laziness removed to test whether the group-based opposition pattern was driven by perceptions that Blacks do not try hard in society relative to women.

The first step in establishing the mediation relationship of responsibility stereotypes between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes involved establishing a correlation between conservatism and the responsibility stereotype. Conservatism was significantly related to responsibility stereotypes for both the more educated ($B = .337$, $SE = .084$, $p < .001$) and the less educated ($B = .255$, $SE = .124$, $p < .05$). An interaction test showed that these slopes were not significantly different from each other.

The next step was establishing that responsibility stereotypes mediate the relationship between conservatism and the group-based disparity in opposition to affirmative action. As with Study 1, we ran tests separately for the more- versus less educated subsamples, with each column representing the mediating effects of each construct separately, holding nothing else constant. The top half of Table 3 shows the results for the more educated subsample. Eight separate models were tested to explain the relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern: the self-interest proxy of the gender variable, general affirmative action self-interest, personal threat, the Protestant work ethic, antiegalitarian attitudes, anti-Black affect, old-fashioned racism, and responsibility stereotypes, suggesting that Blacks do not work hard compared with women. The first analysis revealed that conservatism significantly predicts the difference between affirmative action for Blacks versus women (the group-based opposi-

⁹ The correlation between the continuous education variable and the responsibility judgments for Blacks was $r(174) = -.27$, $p < .001$; for women it was $r(173) = -.18$, $p < .05$.

Table 3

Multiple Regressions Testing the Mediation Between Conservatism and the Difference Score Between Affirmative Action Opposition for Blacks Versus for Women in Study 2

Test	No mediator	Model 1: Gender self-interest	Model 2: Personal interest	Model 3: Affirmative action threat	Model 4: Protestant work ethic	Model 5: Opposition to equality	Model 6: Old-fashioned racism	Model 7: Anti-Black affect	Model 8: Responsibility stereotypes
More educated respondents									
Conservatism									
β	.243**	.235**	.238**	.238**	.217*	.208*	.216*	.198*	.126
Mediator									
β		-.074	-.038	.291**	.137	.200*	.207*	.356**	.324**
Mediation									
Conservatism beta drop		.008	.005	.005	.026	.035	.027	.045	.117
Goodman's statistic		0.93	0.57	0.17	1.35	1.59	1.59	1.50	1.90
p		.350	.566	.863	.178	.112	.112	.134	.057
Adjusted R^2	5.1%	4.9%	4.5%	12.9%	6.2%	8.3%	8.6%	15.3%	13.7%
Less educated respondents									
Conservatism									
β	.171	.173	.185	.184	.170	.130	.289*	.097	.228
Mediator									
β		-.014	-.120	.095	.008	.136	.509**	.436*	.426*
Mediation									
Conservatism beta drop		No drop	No drop	No drop	.001	.041	No drop	.074	No drop
Goodman's statistic					0.00	0.85		0.99	
p					.999	.397		.324	
Adjusted R^2	0.4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23.6%	11.0%	11.8%

Note. The Conservatism beta drop is the drop in conservatism after the mediator is included in the regression. No drop indicating that the conservatism beta did not drop with the mediator in the equation. Models 7 and 8 control for anti-women affect and women responsibility respectively.

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

tion pattern). Model 1 (gender) and Model 2 (personal interest) show that this effect is not significantly mediated by self-interest variables. Specifically, given that the women in our sample could benefit directly from affirmative action, and given that the male participants' female relatives could benefit, one might expect Whites to support affirmative action more for women over Blacks. However, these variables did not explain this disparity. Another possible explanation for this disparity, related to personal interest, is that opportunities for Whites in their education and career may be more threatened by affirmative action for Blacks than for women (Model 3); however, the threat item also failed to mediate the relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern.

As expected, Protestant work ethic (Model 4) did not mediate the group-based opposition pattern and did not predict this disparity independently. Opposition to equality (Model 5) also did not meaningfully mediate the group-based opposition pattern, although it did predict the pattern independently. Consistent with our position, ideologies that are not rooted in justice principles, whether it be racism or beliefs in inequality, are not mediating between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern for the more educated subsample.

As predicted, the group-based opposition pattern was also not significantly mediated by the inclusion of the Old-Fashioned Racism scale (Model 6) or the anti-Black affect item (Model 7)—both markers of generalized racism. It is interesting to note that both old-fashioned racism and anti-Black affect uniquely predict the disparity in opposition, suggesting that the fact that they do not

significantly mediate the effect of conservatism for the more educated subsample is not because of weak measures.

Finally, Model 8 shows that the effect of conservatism is mediated by beliefs that Blacks do not work hard compared with women. Only when responsibility stereotypes are controlled for does the relationship between conservatism and the group-based opposition pattern become nonsignificant. The results of the Sobel test also suggest that this drop is meaningful and is the most powerful drop in the beta coefficient for conservatism produced by any of the models tested (for conservatism in Model 8, $\Delta\beta = .117$, Goodman mediation statistic = 1.90, $p = .057$).

The bottom half of Table 3 shows the results for the less educated subsample. Although conservatism did not significantly predict opposition to policy for Blacks versus women, the slope for the less educated ($B = .100$, $SE = .093$) was not significantly different from the slope for the more educated ($B = .119$, $SE = .043$). Additionally, none of the mediators seem to be driving the relationship between conservatism and policy opposition in a significant way for the less educated. Of most interest, old-fashioned racism may be functioning as a suppressor variable for conservatism: Including this item in the mediation equation made the conservatism beta jump from .171 to .289, becoming a significant predictor of the group-based opposition pattern. Finally, despite the lack of significant mediated effects, old-fashioned racism, anti-Black affect, and responsibility stereotypes all uniquely predicted the group-based opposition pattern independently of conservatism.

Mediating Between Conservatism and General (Non-Group Specific) Affirmative Action Attitudes

One possible interpretation of the previous findings may be that stereotypes play a role only when respondents are asked to think about affirmative action in racial terms (specifically, affirmative action toward Blacks). It is possible that attitudes toward affirmative action in general (not group specified) may be driven by more abstract, ideological positions as claimed by principled conservatives. However, if people have race in mind when thinking about affirmative action in general, then we should see responsibility stereotypes playing a significant role in predicting general attitudes toward these policies. Conversely, if conservative attitudes toward affirmative action in general are driven by other factors like race-neutral values, then the Protestant work ethic should emerge as the best mediator of affirmative action attitudes especially among the educated. Therefore, beliefs that predict affirmative action in general (not directed toward a particular group) are considered in the following analyses.

We originally predicted that, because educated conservatives are sensitive to fairness information, they should not rely on old-fashioned racism, anti-Black affect, or opposition to equality to guide policy decisions. However, they should be strongly influenced by stereotypes that Blacks are lazy and therefore do not deserve special policies like affirmative action. We conducted a series of regression analyses to test the prediction that stereotypes mediate the relationship between principled conservative beliefs and attitudes toward general affirmative action.

The top half of Table 4 shows the results for the educated

subsample. We once again tested eight theoretical models. The first column revealed that conservatism significantly predicts attitudes toward general affirmative action. Models 1 and 2 once again show that this relationship was not mediated by personal interest—as measured by gender or by having the self or a member of the family eligible for affirmative action, although gender did independently predict affirmative action attitudes in general. Personal threat also did not mediate the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes; however, it did uniquely predict affirmative action attitudes.

Contrary to a principled conservatism perspective, the Protestant work ethic did not mediate the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes for the more educated, although it did independently predict general attitudes toward affirmative action. Opposition to equality produced a marginal drop in the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes and independently predicted affirmative action attitudes in general.

Models 6 and 7 show that the relationship between conservatism and attitudes toward affirmative action was not mediated by the inclusion of the Old-Fashioned Racism scale or the anti-Black affect item—both markers of generalized racism. Anti-Black affect did significantly predict affirmative action attitudes independently, supporting the claim by many political psychologists that antiaffirmative action attitudes are rooted in racism to a meaningful degree.

Finally, Model 8 shows that the effect of conservatism on general affirmative action becomes completely mediated by ste-

Table 4
Multiple Regressions Testing the Mediation Between Conservatism and Opposition to General Affirmative Action in Study 2

Test	No mediator	Model 1: Gender self-interest	Model 2: Personal interest	Model 3: Affirmative action threat	Model 4: Protestant work ethic	Model 5: Opposition to equality	Model 6: Old-fashioned racism	Model 7: Anti-Black affect	Model 8: Responsibility stereotypes
More educated respondents									
Conservatism									
β	.230**	.205*	.223*	.227**	.193*	.184*	.216*	.190*	.128
Mediator									
β		-.235**	-.061	.239**	.199*	.265**	.115	.321***	.300**
Mediation									
Conservatism beta drop		.025	.007	.003	.037	.046	.014	.040	.102
Goodman's statistic		1.19	0.82	0.18	1.64	1.74	1.12	1.52	2.64
p		.235	.411	.860	.100	.082	.261	.134	.008
Adjusted R ²	4.6%	9.3%	4.2%	9.6%	7.6%	10.7%	5.1%	14.1%	11.9%
Less educated respondents									
Conservatism									
β	.218	-.224	.255	.218	.220	.182	.253	.217	.218
Mediator									
β		.042	-.305*	.210	.019	.118	.150	.093	.118
Mediation									
Conservatism beta drop		No drop	No drop	No drop	No drop	.036	No drop	.001	No drop
Goodman's statistic						0.82		1.02	
p						.415		.304	
Adjusted R ²	2.7%	0.8%	10.0%	4.9%	0.5%	1.8%	2.5%	1.5%	1.5%

Note. The conservatism beta drop is the drop in conservatism after the mediator is included in the regression. No drop indicates that the conservatism beta did not drop with the mediator in the equation.

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

reotypes that Blacks do not try in society (for conservatism, $\Delta\beta = .102$, Goodman mediation statistic = 2.64, $p = .008$).

The bottom half of Table 4 shows the results for the less educated subsample. Again, although the slope for conservatism on opposition to general affirmative action for the less educated is not statistically significant ($B = .179$, $SE = .177$), it is not significantly different from the slope for the more educated sample ($B = .151$, $SE = .057$; note, the difference in the standard errors is likely contributing to the differences in significance levels). In addition, none of our mediator variables significantly altered the relationship between conservatism and policy opposition for the less educated. Finally, only the personal interest item independently predicted attitudes toward general affirmative action for the less educated.

Discussion

Replicating the findings from the GSS in Study 1, participants in this study were, once again, more opposed to affirmative action programs that benefited Blacks than identical programs directed at women (the group-based opposition pattern). In addition, we found a similar discrepancy in perceptions that Blacks are not putting forth effort to be successful (consistent with a “laziness” stereotype) compared with women, who were perceived as more hard-working. Contrary to the principled conservative argument, the educated were just as likely to hold the group-based opposition pattern as were the less educated and were equally likely to stereotype Blacks as responsible for their poverty.

We also predicted that more educated conservatives would be more likely to use responsibility stereotypes, and less likely to use traditional forms of racism, to guide decisions about deservingness and therefore policy support. As predicted, the relationship between conservative ideologies and general attitudes toward affirmative action among the educated were not affected strongly by traditional forms of racism, although opposition to equality did seem to play a marginal mediating role for the group-based opposition pattern. However, the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action attitudes was completely mediated by responsibility stereotypes. These results provide further support for our theoretical position that conservative opposition to affirmative action is rooted in perceptions of group deservingness, which can be guided by cultural stereotypes, and not in the fundamental fairness of the policy.

As with any study, there are some issues that remain unanswered in Study 2. First, we claim that conservatives care deeply about fairness and equity in the distribution of resources and opportunities. To assess this claim, we used what are arguably some of the most popular scales for assessing group-neutral, conservative values: the Protestant Work Ethic scale and Equality. However, these scales may not map perfectly onto conservative principles of equity, as defined in our theoretical perspective. For example, the Protestant Work Ethic scale assesses the belief that equity is the rule that is currently applied to the distribution of opportunity and resources and is more *descriptive* of the status quo (that those who work hard in fact get ahead). However, conservatives may be concerned more with beliefs that equity *should* be the rule for distribution; that is, they may be more concerned about the *prescription* of equity as good for society (that those who work hard should get ahead). There may be a meaningful distinction between descriptive versus prescriptive measures of the Protestant

work ethic, and future studies would do well to reach beyond these traditional measures of conservative ideology to include refined assessments of values and rules guiding decisions about distribution (cf. Henry & Reyna, 2005).

Second, we propose that one reason past research has had difficulty resolving the debate between the principled conservative perspective and the racism perspective has been the confounding of racism items that assess negative attitudes toward Blacks and responsibility stereotypes. Indeed, one of the items in our Responsibility Stereotype scale has been used in assessments of modern and symbolic racism (“Many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up, African Americans/Blacks should do the same without any special favors,” cf. Henry & Sears, 2002). By disentangling this item from other items in the modern and symbolic racism scales that do not address responsibility directly, we were able to investigate the unique role that responsibility stereotypes play in deservingness judgments. However, disentangling responsibility stereotypes from a larger context of prejudice raises the question about whether endorsing responsibility stereotypes still constitute prejudice. This question is difficult to answer empirically because it rests, to some degree, on how prejudice is defined (see Arkes & Tetlock, 2005; see also the General Discussion section for more on this issue).

Finally, we tested in the present study a stereotype that conveys what is arguably the most powerful attribution—responsibility. There is a long and rich literature on the power of responsibility judgments on decisions to offer or deny assistance (see Weiner, 1995, for review). There are other possible stereotypes that could convey attributional information that may also guide decisions about affirmative action and other group-based policies (see Reyna, 2000, for a more complete model of attributional stereotypes). For example, although we focused on laziness (a common stereotype of Blacks), one could explore the impact of beliefs that a group values family over career (a common stereotype for women) or beliefs about qualifications (e.g., stereotypes that suggest that women are bad at math) on policy attitudes.

General Discussion

In this article, we set out to reconcile a long-standing tug-of-war between scholars who argue that attitudes toward preferential policies are driven by issues of fairness and equity and those who argue that these attitudes continue to be the byproduct of racism. Principled conservative theorists state that attitudes toward racialized policies are best understood in terms of how they fit into American values of equity and individualism. They claim that opposition to these policies is not an expression of group-based judgments (like racism) but rather an expression of conservative ideology that considers policies that distribute opportunity on the basis of any group factors as fundamentally unfair. Those who endorse a racism perspective state that the principled conservative argument is simply palatable rhetoric used to legitimize the racial and economic status quo. Racism theorists claim that conservative opposition to affirmative action is driven by an American legacy of deep-seated racism and that, over time, conservatives and others have become more adept at reframing their opposition in the socially acceptable language of fairness. Both camps have produced bodies of research to support their claims, yet the debate between fairness and racism remains unresolved.

The present article offers a theoretical framework in which these contradictory perspectives and literatures may find common ground. We propose that those who endorse conservative values do care deeply about issues of fairness, merit, and equity. But whether preferential policies like affirmative action are seen as legitimate depends not on the fairness of the policy per se but on the perceived fairness of applying the policy to certain groups of recipients. The deservingness of its recipients seems to determine the fairness of a policy, and that perceptions of deservingness can vary across groups, depending on how hard they are perceived to be working to make meaningful contributions to their own benefit and to society at large. Information about whether a group deserves such policies may be conveyed through cultural stereotypes about the group and whether they are violating values of hard work.

One important reason that common theoretical ground has not been achieved between the principled conservatism perspective and the racism perspective is the type of analysis used in considering educated conservative opposition to affirmative action. Some types of analyses have used simple multiple regression techniques to show that race is more powerful than other predictors, including conservatism, suggesting theoretically that conservatism is more peripheral in race politics (e.g., Sears et al., 1997). Others have shown that conservatism is itself a mediator of ostensibly more basic processes, like desires for group-based dominance, suggesting theoretically that conservatism serves as a justification for promoting White dominance through opposition to race-based policies like affirmative action (e.g., Federico & Sidanius, 2002a).

Alternatively, by considering instead the mediators of conservatism as a predictor of affirmative action—and especially as a predictor of the difference score between support for affirmative action for Blacks versus for women—we forward the theoretical idea that conservatism is basic in predicting race-based policies and that educated conservatives in particular use principles. However, these principles are based on perceptions of group deservingness. In this sense, we agree with the principled conservative theoretical position that states that, given a Black individual who is portrayed as not trying, White conservatives will not favor assistance, but given a Black individual who is portrayed as trying hard, White conservatives will favor assistance (e.g., Peffley, Hurwitz, & Sniderman, 1997; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993; Sniderman et al., 1991). However, we further this theoretical position by suggesting that, in general, conservatives do not see Blacks as individuals when considering assistance, but instead see Blacks as a group, and in particular a group that is not trying and is therefore less deserving of assistance as a whole. This perception helps drive the greater opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women.

Although we argue that educated conservative principles are based on group assessments of Blacks' deservingness (i.e., responsibility stereotypes), we also make the claim that other measures of racism play less of a role in driving educated conservatives' affirmative action policy opposition. More specifically, we argue that measures of old-fashioned racism, negative Black affect, and opposition to equality do not mediate the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action opposition as strongly as assessments of Black deservingness among the educated. One alternative explanation for the ability of the responsibility stereotypes to serve as a more effective mediator compared with these other measures is that these other measures are subject to social desirability response biases (e.g., McConahay, 1986), rendering them weak or meaningless indicators of attitudes toward Blacks.

However, as shown in Tables 1–4, in all but one instance, these race-based measures were statistically significant independent predictors of affirmative action attitudes for the educated. Despite their statistical significance in the multiple regressions as independent predictors (given by the beta weights), none was as effective as the responsibility stereotypes in mediating the relationship between conservatism and affirmative action opposition (given by the Goodman statistics). This finding helps rule out potential measurement effects and reinforces the idea that conservative opposition to affirmative action for Blacks may lie most strongly in assessments of group-based deservingness.

Group-Based Disparities in Opposition to Preferential Policies

The finding that people are more opposed to affirmative action programs for Blacks versus women is one of the most compelling indicators that race remains a factor driving opposition to affirmative action. If attention to fairness overshadows attention to race, as the principled conservative perspective asserts, then people should be equally opposed to any application of such a policy regardless of the recipient's group membership. But in fact the present set of studies demonstrates that people do care about the group membership of the recipient when determining support or opposition. Specifically, Whites were more willing to support these programs when they were directed toward women compared with Blacks. This was especially the case for educated conservatives, who appear to pay special attention to issues of deservingness where distributive policies are concerned.

These findings have important implications for prevailing theories in the field. When one defines principles by the strict criteria of individual merit, support for programs like affirmative action can appear to reflect a double standard wherein these programs are supported for some groups (like women) and not for other groups (like Blacks). This interpretation has been used by racism theorists to assert that conservatives use principles to mask an underlying desire to oppress racial minorities. However, when we consider the larger, underlying principle of deservingness, attitudes that appear to reflect a double standard could in fact represent a single standard of deservingness that is evaluated on a group-by-group basis. This perspective suggests that conservatives indeed may be motivated by higher principles like deservingness, but their information about deservingness may be influenced by prevailing cultural beliefs about the groups in question—namely, by stereotypes.

Responsibility Stereotypes and Legitimacy

The bigger issue, of which this group-based opposition pattern is merely a symptom, is whether group-based factors like stereotypes influence how we evaluate legitimacy and distributive justice. Stereotypes represent a collection of causal "data" that are used when weighing decisions about deservingness. In the absence of information about an individual's efforts or life circumstances, certain people, particularly conservatives, may rely on more global theories of responsibility to guide these judgments. Conservatives, by and large, are more sensitive to issues of responsibility when determining whether it is fair to help the needy, but they are also more likely to perceive the needy as responsible for their problems. The present study offers evidence that conservatives may be more likely to see Blacks as responsible as well. The stereotype that

Blacks are lazy is one of the most prevalent and accessible stereotypes about Blacks (e.g., Devine, 1989, Study 1; Devine & Elliot, 1995). More important, however, is that this stereotype has direct relevance to perceptions of whether Blacks deserve special programs like affirmative action. If conservatives are sensitized to information relevant to responsibility, then prevalent stereotypes such as this one may be particularly accessible when evaluating policy in the context of stereotyped groups.

The implications of these findings are potentially far-reaching. Many if not most stereotypes convey traits, attributes, and behaviors that have causal implications that can influence our attitudes about stereotyped groups and can be used to legitimize our treatment of those group members. For example, responsibility stereotypes are at the heart of why the public is paradoxically less tolerant toward policies described as welfare policies compared with the same policies described as aid to the poor (Henry et al., 2004). Ideally, people's judgments about whether to support social programs (such as aid to the needy) would be driven by the merit and utility of the program itself, but this kind of consideration is not common. Intentions to support such programs are influenced more by our stereotypes of the recipients than by the details of the programs. It is not difficult to see the mark of stereotypes in the way other policies are implemented. For example, most immigration laws are not implemented equivalently across all groups. Recently, there has been outrage over the Department of Homeland Security's mandate that only men from Islamic or Arab nations go through special registration procedures. Also, although we continue to tighten the Mexican American border, the Canadian American border remains the longest unprotected border in the world.

Group-based disparities in the application and enforcement of policies attract labels such as *racial profiling* and *prejudice*. Although we make an effort to distinguish between responsibility stereotypes and traditional forms of racism, one may wonder whether we are merely presenting a particularly potent version of prejudice with our responsibility stereotype construct or explaining a phenomenon that exists outside of prejudice. This conclusion depends in part on how one defines prejudice (see Arkes & Tetlock, 2005, for a similar discussion), either as an attitude, a motivation, or an outcome (e.g., not supporting a policy like affirmative action or not hiring a person because of their race). Those with racist motives can and do invoke the power of responsibility stereotypes to justify subordinating other groups. However, well-meaning, egalitarian-minded people can also unwittingly rely on responsibility stereotypes as sources of knowledge about a group when no other information is available. For example, imagine visiting a foreign culture, having no prior exposure to any of the groups in that culture, and holding no ill will toward anyone there. Simply being exposed to common stereotypes suggesting that Group X may be less deserving by the standards of that society could be enough to sway you in a "rational" way to deny Group X opportunities. Even in the absence of an underlying antipathy or negative motivation against a group (prejudice), cultural stereotypes can still taint judgment. Is this use of information a type of prejudice, too? If one defines prejudice by outcomes (e.g., denying Group X opportunities), then perhaps we have to say yes. However, if one defines prejudice as an underlying antipathy or hostile motivation against a group, then responsibility stereotypes can theoretically exist beyond these frames of reference. The same issues could be applied to conservatives' approach to affirmative

action. Although there may be important theoretical value in questioning the underlying and perhaps unconscious motives behind conservatism (see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), we appeal to Occam's razor in our more immediately parsimonious conclusions of questioning not the logic of conservatism but the content of the information being gathered and used (stereotypes).

Given these issues, those in our field who study prejudice would benefit from some degree of consensus about what constitutes prejudice. Both innovations in measurement (such as implicit and neurological measures) as well as cultural changes in intergroup relations and social mores regarding diversity have made detecting and defining prejudice an even more complicated endeavor than ever before. It appears that researchers nowadays are debating over almost indiscernible shades of gray when it comes to measuring prejudice. Regardless of how researchers define prejudice, it would be valuable to investigate when a person will rely on attributional stereotypes and when they will not. We suspect that those with a negative regard toward a group will rely heavily on unflattering stereotypes to guide attributions even when there is sufficient, nonstereotypical information available about a group member's outcome. However, we suspect that those who are motivated to be egalitarian would only fall back on stereotypes as "data" to guide the judgment of a group member's outcome when there is insufficient or ambiguous information about the outcome. We also suspect that attributional stereotyping will be more prevalent across the board when judgments are made on a group level. Similar patterns have been demonstrated to varying degrees in research on racial discrimination (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), but it would be valuable to pursue this line of research in the study of stereotypes as vehicles for attributional judgments. In the end, whether one endorses responsibility stereotypes as a byproduct of their own racism or as a way to justify dominating other groups—or whether one unintentionally relies on stereotypes as a crude form of data with which to guide deservingness judgments—the negative outcomes associated with responsibility stereotypes remain the same.

Implications for Affirmative Action Policy

One goal of any scientific investigation of such a far-reaching policy as affirmative action is to contribute knowledge that can disentangle the complex and contradictory perspectives about the utility or moral legitimacy of such a policy. One of the stated goals of affirmative action is to protect visible minorities from discrimination on the basis of their group membership. Affirmative action is designed to increase the probability that those who have been the target of discrimination will have opportunities despite ongoing prejudice against their groups. This goal is rooted in the implicit assumption that most members of society who are considering minority applicants for a position are not able to make judgments that are immune to stereotypes and prejudices against these groups. Either we are unable to because we are unaware of our own prejudices or we are not motivated to because we prefer members of the dominant group.

When asking whether affirmative action is still needed, the answer becomes clearer in light of the present data. If stereotypes are used to guide deservingness decisions with regard to policy, then the same psychological process is likely at work when making deservingness decisions regarding individuals who are applying

for a job or admission into a university. If a person believes that African Americans do not work as hard as other groups, then this belief can be used to legitimize decisions to pass over potentially qualified Black candidates. Employers or admissions committee members are taking a greater risk giving an important position or limited slot to a Black candidate who may not (in their minds) put forth as much effort to succeed as a White candidate. After all, deciding who to hire, fire, promote, or demote is legitimately guided by (among other things) perceptions of hard work and dedication. Just as educated conservatives let group membership inform who deserves assistance, employers are susceptible to allowing group membership to inform hiring decisions. Therein lies the dilemma for the affirmative action debate: Given that people make hiring decisions on the basis of group-based information, and given the potential inaccuracy of that group-based information, or the potential insensitivity to the causes of group-based differences in society, those very assessments that lead to principled opposition to affirmative action may be the very assessments that make affirmative action policies necessary for true equality in American society.

Those who oppose affirmative action on the grounds that it is unfair may argue that using group membership instead of qualifications to make hiring or admissions decisions that favor minorities (e.g., “reverse racism”) does not represent the spirit of meritocracy. However, even those who oppose affirmative action consider some affirmative action-type policies as fair, depending on how they factor in merit (Reyna, Tucker, Korfmacher, & Henry, 2005). Additionally, an affirmative action program can be seen as fair depending on the circumstances of its use. For example, Song Hing and colleagues (2002) demonstrated that affirmative action can be seen as fair if it counteracts existing discrimination. Discrimination is a violation of fairness and merit, and policies like affirmative action can be seen as fair to the degree that they ameliorate this violation. But given that there is a relationship between conservatism and denial of broad-based discrimination (Henry & Sears, 2002; Sears & Henry, in press), it is likely that even for these types of programs, group-based deservingness information about its recipients would continue to influence conservative opposition.

Because conservative opposition to affirmative action is group based rather than policy based, as our data strongly suggest, then principled conservative opposition to affirmative action is unjustified to the extent that information about the recipient groups’ lack of deservingness is based on stereotypes. The debate in the literature and in the world of politics, then, should no longer focus on whether conservatives are principled, because most educated conservatives probably are. Instead, the debate should focus more closely on the information gathered and used to guide the principles that produce opposition to affirmative action policies, and other group-based policies. This approach, we argue, may be the most effective for finding common ground among divisions that have made affirmative action one of the most heated and misunderstood issues in modern American politics.

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Appendix

Correlation Matrices for Studies 1 and 2

Study 1: More educated respondents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Opposition to affirmative action for Blacks	—							
2. Opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women	.867***	—						
3. Conservatism	.338***	.189***	—					
4. Gender self-interest	-.088	-.048	-.136***	—				
5. Work ethic #1: Value importance	.090	.080	.140**	-.003	—			
6. Work ethic #2: Value ranking	.078	.043	.083	-.153**	-.046	—		
7. Old-fashioned racism	.258***	.276***	.182***	-.044	.018	.123	—	
8. Responsibility stereotypes	.551***	.481***	.361***	-.096*	.193**	.088	.340***	—
Study 1: Less educated respondents								
1. Opposition to affirmative action for Blacks	—							
2. Opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women	.830**	—						
3. Conservatism	.180**	.079	—					
4. Gender self-interest	-.041	-.034	-.054	—				
5. Work ethic #1: Value importance	.068	.082	-.064	.036	—			
6. Work ethic #2: Value ranking	.167*	.140	-.031	.079	.038	—		
7. Old-fashioned racism	-.027	.072	.069	.004	-.080	-.104	—	
8. Responsibility stereotypes	.255***	.190**	.144**	-.003	-.006	.099	.140	—

(Appendix continues)

Appendix (continued)

Study 2: More educated respondents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Opposition to affirmative action	—												
2. Opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women	.306**	—											
3. Conservatism	.230**	.243**	—										
4. Gender self-interest	-.257**	-.099	-.108	—									
5. Personal interest	-.088	-.067	-.120	.592***	—								
6. Affirmative action threat	.243**	.294**	.015	-.214*	-.065	—							
7. Protestant work ethic	.236**	.178*	.189*	-.073	-.103	-.008	—						
8. Opposition to equality	.298**	.236**	.175*	-.151	-.113	.009	.195*	—					
9. Old-fashioned racism	.142	.234**	.127	-.140	-.200*	.158	-.053	.151	—				
10. Anti-Black affect	.345***	.366***	.126	-.107	-.019	.180*	.017	.137	.286**	—			
11. Anti-women affect	.116	.188*	.023	-.112	-.021	.122	-.047	-.072	.070	.589***	—		
12. Responsibility stereotypes: Blacks	.344***	.379***	.341***	-.185*	-.100	.157	.470***	.281**	.219*	.295**	.047	—	
13. Responsibility stereotypes: Women	.347***	.259**	.302**	-.229*	-.232**	.131	.486***	.199*	.216*	.132	.057	.623***	—
Study 2: Less educated respondents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Opposition to affirmative action	—												
2. Opposition to affirmative action for Blacks versus women	.261	—											
3. Conservatism	.218	.171	—										
4. Gender self-interest	-.008	.012	.151	—									
5. Personal interest	-.274	-.098	.121	.436**	—								
6. Affirmative action threat	.236	-.070	.136	-.057	.012	—							
7. Protestant work ethic	.008	.029	.123	.109	.083	-.388**	—						
8. Opposition to equality	.173	.175	.302*	.012	-.117	-.075	-.031	—					
9. Old-fashioned racism	-.092	-.442**	.232	.005	.112	.048	-.190	-.023	—				
10. Anti-Black affect	.096	.067	.015	-.173	-.228	.033	.038	.181	-.320*	—			
11. Anti-women affect	-.020	-.244	-.126	-.097	-.141	-.151	.065	.065	-.150	.693***	—		
12. Responsibility stereotypes: Blacks	.172	.289	.300*	.074	.048	.274	.065	.042	-.100	-.024	-.372*	—	
13. Responsibility stereotypes: Women	.173	-.056	.475**	-.173	.162	.320*	.093	.137	.350*	-.103	-.279	.528***	—

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

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