

COLOR-CODING POVERTY: SELECTIVITY IN COMMITMENTS
TO INDIVIDUALISM AND STRUCTURALISM ACROSS
VARIOUS RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS.

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Sarah Faye Hanson; my wonderful daughter and sweet cheeky monkey.

I'd also like to thank my husband, Warren; I'm so looking forward to the rest of our journey together.

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Abstract

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It is by now widely understood that a “generic conception of the poor” (Feagin 1975; Robinson 2009; Sigelman and Welch 1994, Wilson 1996) drives the dominant American ideology of individualism. However, research also suggests that beliefs about poverty remained racially contextualized. This study combines multinomial logistic regressions with a content analysis of written comments volunteered by participants within an embedded experiment questionnaire. This research directly contributes to the existing literature by asking what blacks, Latinos, and Asians believe to be the causes of poverty among whites. It also contributes to current knowledge by deepening the discipline’s understanding of stratification beliefs among Asians and Latinos. Finally, this study distinguishes between social class and race as perceived causal attributions in explanations of poverty among whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians. When those in poverty are “color-coded” (Wilson 1996) - the selectivity with which participants apply individualistic and structural explanations are revealed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The intersections between racial group membership and beliefs about the causes of poverty have remained an important topic of scholarly interest for nearly a century, from Max Weber's ([1920] 1946) theory of status groups and W.E.B. Du Bois' ([1903] 1940) argument of racial and social division as instruments of American political institutions. Since, scholars across various fields of study have since developed a rich and substantive literature on Americans' beliefs about the individualistic and structural sources of inequality (Feagin 1975; Huber and Form 1973; Hunt 1996, 2004; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lee, Jones and Lewis 1990; Shelton and Wilson 2006; Steinberg 2001; Wilson 1996). In recent years, this line of research has taken a critical turn toward engaging the rapidly changing racial and ethnic composition of the nation (Bobo and Fox 2003; Hopkins 2009; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 2004, 2007; Shelton and Greene 2013; Steinberg 2001). More specifically, Americans' beliefs about why members of certain racial and ethnic groups are poor has become increasingly relevant as inter-group poverty rates intensify (Current Population Survey 2008, Current Population Survey 2010).

While the rate of poverty for *all* Americans is quietly but steadily increasing (American Community Survey 2008, American Community Survey 2010), it is widely known that poverty levels differ across racial and ethnic groups. Approximately 10% of all whites and 8% of all Asians live below the poverty line, while nearly 28% of all blacks and 25% Latinos do so (American Community Survey 2010; Current Population

Survey 2010). Despite these objective conditions, sociologists still know very little about the *subjective* explanations for the enduring economic disparities that exist between the “haves” and the “have-nots”. For example, do Americans’ espouse contrasting explanations for why some racial and ethnic groups are poor as compared to others?

In a rapidly fluctuating demographic landscape, the need to understand the role that race and ethnicity play in shaping beliefs about inequality is considerable. The answers to above mentioned questions require us to engage the intersections between race, ethnicity, social class, and beliefs about inequality be examined in a more comprehensive and nuanced fashion than has been previously attained. In particular, they require a unique research methodology that accounts for potentially contrasting causal attributions for poverty across a range of racial and ethnic groups – and engages the nation’s growing diversity.

This paper provides new insights on the role that diversity plays in shaping Americans’ beliefs about the causes of poverty. It contributes to the existing scholarship in three important ways. First, the research design of this study utilizes an *embedded experiment* procedure pioneered by Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza (1993). This methodology ensures that multiple survey items on the same topic differ in only one distinct way (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). As employed here, embedded experiments reveal whether, all else being equal, causal attributions about the perceived causes of poverty differ depending on the racial or ethnic group that survey participants are presented with. This approach allows us to pinpoint the extent to which respondents’ beliefs about individualistic and structural causes of poverty vary when applied to whites,

blacks, Latinos and Asians. In other words, this research methodology utilizes the experiment to determine whether Americans believe that Latinos are poor because they are held back by racism, or that Asians are poor because they don't work hard enough.

Second, the data analyzed in this study was collected in one of the most racially and ethnic diverse regions of the United States: the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. "DFW", as it is affectionately known, is an ideal setting not only because it is the fifth largest metropolitan area in the country, but also because it is a "gateway" for new immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) and is home to a thriving African American middle class (Brown 2007). What's more, DFW is an understudied region of the U.S. Consequently, what is presented here is a more comprehensive analysis of Asian and Latino beliefs about poverty than has been previously offered.

Third, this research provides fresh insights on the extent to which Americans distinguish between two types of structural attributions for inequality – explanations based on racial and ethnic group membership versus explanations based on class position. This contribution allows us to determine whether study participants believe that whites primarily face class-based structural barriers while blacks primarily face race-based structural barriers. In short, this study reveals the ideological limits of structuralism - as different groups seemingly face different barriers.

In sum, this research "reaches beyond race" (Sniderman and Carmines 1997) and the minority/majority divide to pinpoint exactly who believes what, about whom, and why (Huber and Form 1973). It examines the ideological similarities and differences in commitments to individualism and structuralism across four racial and ethnic groups –

Asians, Latinos, blacks and whites. Specifically, this paper answers the call for greater attention to a wider range of racial and ethnic groups (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Bobo and Fox 2003; Hunt 2004, 2007), as it examines how causal attributions vary with respect to racial and ethnic diversity among the poor (Bobo 1991; Kluegel and Bobo 2001; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Wilson 1996).

Chapter 2

Stratification Beliefs and Trends

The *dominant American ideology* is the most popular framework for explaining socioeconomic attainment in the United States. This view postulates that America is a fair and open society, and that opportunities for achievement are plentiful and accessible to everyone (Feagin 1975; Huber and Form 1973; Hunt 1996, 2004; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Shelton and Wilson 2006). Regardless of one's gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or family background, the dominant ideology embraces the idea that everyone has a chance to make it. From previous research, scholars understand that this ideology is deeply ingrained in American society, even among the most disadvantaged of groups and strata (Huber and Form 1973; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Steinberg 2001; Wilson 1978). The popularity of this ideology among even those at the bottom, speaks directly to its wide spread pervasiveness in American culture.

Individualism and Structuralism

Belief in the dominant American ideology necessitates a justifying explanation for inequalities that exist within society. This lays the foundation for *individualism* - the belief that each person is responsible for their own socioeconomic fate and success on the basis of their individual efforts and choices in life. Individualism rationalizes that since fairness and equality are hallmarks of American society, those who live in poverty are personally responsible for their predicament in life, having somehow made bad decisions or not worked hard enough to be among those ranks. For example, the results of most national and local studies show that a majority of Americans - up to 60% - espouse

individualistic explanations for poverty (Shelton and Greene 2013). The most popular individualistic explanations for poverty are those such as “personal irresponsibility”, “lack of a strong work ethic”, “a lack of talent or ability” and “lack of proper money management skills” (Feagin 1975; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 2007; Kluegel and Smith 1986, Robinson and Bell 1978; Shelton and Greene 2013). All of these explanations have in common that there is nothing else to hold accountable but the individual; that whatever the social, political and economic structures that are in place are surmountable by those who choose to do so.

Conversely, *structuralism* is the belief that the relationship between the success of an individual and her society is directly affected by the organization of its social structures and institutions. For instance, structuralism theorizes that individuals with higher status have greater access to opportunity, education, and resulting life chances than do those lower on the status ladder (Bobo 1991; Feagin 1975; Hochschild 1995; Huber and Form 1973; Hunt 1996, 2004, 2007; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Shelton and Wilson 2006). It also posits that external and institutionalized forces in society such as classism, racism, sexism – can also strongly influence one’s socioeconomic course – and that these forces are also beyond a person’s control. Consequently, structuralists argue that individualism is the equivalent of “blaming the victim” – they contend that the aforementioned forces (as well as others) become institutionalized within the political and economic institutions, carried out in policies and laws, and permeate across all levels and domains of American social life. Previous research as well as the most recent national and local studies show that up to 45% of Americans believe in structural

attributions such as “low wages”, “failure of society to provide quality schools”, “gender discrimination”, “racism and racial discrimination”, and a “lack of jobs” as explanations for poverty (Feagin 1975; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 2007; Kluegel and Smith 1986, Robinson and Bell 1978; Shelton and Greene 2013).

However, while individualistic and structural beliefs seem to occupy opposite ends of an ideological spectrum, studies have shown that in the minds of most Americans, they frequently coexist (Feagin 1975; Hunt 1996, 2004, 2007; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Robinson 2009; Shelton and Greene 2013; Smith 1985). Structuralism is generally “layered onto” commitments to individualism and personal merit (Hunt 1996; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Robinson 2009; Smith and Stone 1989). In other words, structural beliefs do not usurp the power of the dominant ideology and individualism, but rather, are applied as a secondary aspect to explain inequality in the U.S.

The Effects of Region and Context on Beliefs about Inequality

Research also provides us with evidence that Americans' subscription to individualism and structuralism are influenced by, and vary according to region and context (Bullock 1999; Hopkins 2009; Hunt 1996, 2004; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lee, Jones and Lewis 1990, Shelton and Greene 2013; Shelton and Wilson 2006; Wilson 1996). For example, in his analysis of survey data among southern Californians, Hunt (1996) found support for Kluegel and Smith's (1986) assertion that commitments to individualistic beliefs tend to wane during difficult economic, social or political times. Hunt offered that Californians may, on the whole, be more politically liberal, and as a

result more structural than residents of other regions of the country (Hunt 1996). This study takes a look at the beliefs of residents in DFW – a traditionally conservative area currently undergoing a demographic and political transformation (Meyerson 2011).

The context in which poverty is examined affects Americans' beliefs about its causes as well. George Wilson's (1996) examination of survey data in Baltimore, Maryland argued that residents' beliefs about poverty are “color coded” - directly affected by racial prejudice toward those experiencing poverty and that individual explanations were favored in that context. In this vein, Hopkin's (2009) analysis of a national phone survey found that contextually - proximity to poor whites resulted in more structural explanations of poverty (2009). In such a uniquely diverse area as DFW, contextualizing the racial and ethnic diversity of those in poverty uncovers surprising results.

Race and Beliefs about Inequality

Much of sociology's knowledge about stratification beliefs have largely concentrated on whites' beliefs about inequality. From this body of work social scientists know that whites are largely more individualistic in their explanations of poverty (Feagin 1975; Huber and Form 1973; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 1996, 2004; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lee, Jones and Lewis 1990), though poor whites and white women tend to be more structural in their beliefs about inequality (Bullock 1999; Feagin 1975; Huber and Form 1973; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Quadagno 1995).

As for minority groups, findings from existing studies indicate that blacks are more structural in their stratification beliefs than whites (Feagin 1975; Huber and Form

1973; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 1996, 2004; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lee, Jones and Lewis 1990, Robinson 2009; Sniderman and Hagen 1985; Wilson 1996). Moreover, more recent studies provide strong evidence that stratification beliefs among privileged blacks are in a "state of transition" (Hunt 2007; Shelton and Greene 2013). It seems that African Americans with higher levels of socioeconomic attainment are becoming less likely to support traditional race-based structural explanations of poverty and more likely to support individualism (Hunt 2007; Hwang Fitzpatrick and Helms 1998; Shelton and Wilson 2006; Shelton and Greene 2013). As a gateway city to new immigrant populations and home to a growing black middle class, DFW serves as promising area to examine whether what social scientists know about blacks' stratification beliefs will translate to other racial and ethnic minority groups'.

However, far less research has been published on the stratification beliefs of Latinos and Asians. Regarding Latinos, results from Hunt's (1996, 2004, 2007) analyses suggest that Latinos do not differ significantly from blacks in commitment to individualistic attributions. Moreover, Latinos' subscriptions to structural explanations for poverty such as "racial discrimination" appear to be robust, while Asians' are likely to make individualistic attributions in their explanations of poverty (Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 2007; Kluegel and Bobo 2000; Lopez and Pantoja 2004; Yancey 2003).

What is novel about Hughes and Tuch's (2000) analysis is that, to the researcher's knowledge, it is the only study that dissects causal attributions about poverty - according to racial or ethnic group membership of the group experiencing poverty. In other words, Hughes and Tuch *contextualized* or "color coded" (Wilson 1996) stratification beliefs, to

determine whether they differed according to which racial and ethnic group the participant was presented with - blacks, Latinos and Asians.

Race and Ethnicity versus Social Class as Theoretical Determinants of Poverty

From a theoretical perspective, the argument over whether one's racial group membership or social class standing is more influential as a determinant of one's life chances has been a matter of hot debate since the "culture of poverty" theory first purported by Oscar Lewis (1959). Lewis suggested that those in poverty do not simply lack the resources with which to acquire better opportunities and life chances, but that those in poverty develop traits that perpetuate poverty to future generations. Lewis argued that those in poverty are affected by the systemic nature of poverty and acquire skills and behaviors with which to adapt to the constant conditions of an underclass existence, and these habits and world views are passed from one generation to the next, making the escape from poverty quite unlikely, if not impossible (Lewis 1959).

The political and social debate over the causes of poverty turned a different corner when William Julius Wilson (1978) suggested that social class has replaced race as the primary determinant of life chances for people in the U.S. (Wilson 1978). Wilson argued that macro level political and financial institutions were becoming common place and with the globalization of a world economy, the financial means with which to secure one's opportunities would become a more salient factor for improving one's life chances and success than one's race (Wilson 1978).

More recently, Stephen Steinberg (2001) offered a dismantling of the argument regarding ethnic myths; the long offered theory that racial and ethnic groups in and of

themselves, have cultural values or group traits that explain why some racial and ethnic groups are successful in America, while other groups remain disproportionately disadvantaged (Steinberg 2001). Steinberg offered that instead, factors such as geographical location, selective migration, class conflict, and economic factors initially produce inequalities between groups, and then perpetuate those same inequalities. Steinberg offered that the dominant ideology, the persistence of the American dream, is a cultural trait of Americans precisely because of its ability to infiltrate even the most disadvantaged of groups (Steinberg 2001).

These theories are directly important to this study as it examines how “color-coding” poverty may result in different explanations as to why some racial and ethnic groups are poor as compared to others. This study essentially asks “Were are we now?” with regard to the debate over individualism, social class, or race as perceived determinants of poverty among Asians, Latinos, blacks and whites.

In sum, the present study contributes to the existing literature by examining the causal attributions of poverty further contextualized - beyond minority racial group membership to include poverty among whites. It also contributes the stratification beliefs of DFW residents - an under researched and extremely racially and ethnically diverse metropolitan area - to explore the role that diversity plays in shaping beliefs about inequality. Finally, this study contributes both the limitations of individualism and the selectivity of structural explanations for poverty *among* racial four racial and ethnic groups; whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians.

Chapter 3

Data

This study analyzes a local area sample of students enrolled at a large public university in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex (N=1569). IRB approval and in-class professor consent was obtained prior to data collection. During the spring 2010 semester, the survey instrument was pre-tested with 60 upper-division sociology majors for measurement and concept clarification. These pre-tests were not included in the final sample. The first wave of data collection was conducted during the first week of courses during the summer sessions of 2010 – and the initial data (N = 399) analyzed as a part of a McNair Scholars project. The second wave of collection was conducted during the first two weeks of courses during the subsequent fall 2010 semester, which culminated in 1672 total surveys being distributed. From May through August of 2010 surveys were distributed in the following courses; “Introduction to American Political Science”, “Introduction to Texas Political Science”, “Introduction to American History”, “American History II”, “Introduction to Spanish”, “Introduction to Earth Science”, “Introduction to Sociology”, “Introduction to Composition English”, “Introduction to Argument Theory English”, “Elementary Statistics”, and “College Algebra”. Future analysis for submission will consider any wave effect in the time differential of data collection as well as any effect found between the courses in which respondents were enrolled.

Because 93 (5.51%) surveys were either incomplete with regard to answering the questions, or answered unusably, the response rate was approximately 93.8%. Ten (0.59%) respondents identified as either American Indian or “other” without any usable clarification and were not included in the analysis.

In terms of initial indicators of representativeness, this study offers comparable percentages in its racial and ethnic composition to the larger DFW Metroplex. In 2010, Dallas was comprised of 28.8% whites, 25.0% blacks, 42.4% Latinos and 2.9% Asians (U.S. Census 2010). In 2010, Fort Worth was comprised of 41.7% whites, 18.9% blacks, 34.1% Latinos and 3.7% Asians (U.S. Census 2010). While this sample has a higher percentage composition of Asians (which is attributed to the higher socioeconomic attainment rates among Asian-Americans), this difference is nonetheless, very useful in learning more about the stratification beliefs of this under researched racial and ethnic group.

Independent Variables

Response choices for the race and ethnicity of respondents were designed taking into consideration the Houston Area Survey’s four main category options of race and ethnicity, Anglo, Black, Hispanic or Asian (Klineberg 2010). However, this study utilized Asian/Pacific Islander rather than “Asian”, “African American/Black” instead of Black, Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin” in place of Hispanic, and “white” rather than Anglo. This survey also offered American Indian as a race/ethnic category which respondents could select, though these were not used in the analysis.

The racial and ethnic composition of the sample under analysis is as follows: white (40.1%), blacks (17.9%), Latinos (20.5%) and Asians (21.5%). The age of the participants in this study range from 18 to 62, with the following percentage breakdowns; 18 – 20 at 67.5%, 21-30 at 26.8%, 31-40 at 3.9%. Only 1.8% of the sample is older than 41 years of age. Males constituted 41.9% of the sample and females made up 58.1%. Parental levels of education ranged from “some high school” at 10.9%, “high school degree/GED” at 15.1%, “some college” at 27.3%, “college degree” at 31.5% to 15.2% of parents’ holding advanced degrees. With regard to political orientation, 26.6% identified as “conservative”, 38.3% as “liberal” and 26.9% as “moderate”.

The other independent variables were household income and two global statements about individualistic and structural stratification beliefs. These global statements were; “If you work hard in America, eventually you will succeed” as an indicator of belief in individualism and “Society grants some groups more opportunities than others” as an indicator of structural beliefs. Both statements offered the response categories; “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”. These questions are slight variations of questions asked in the General Social Survey (1972 – 2006) and the Houston Area Survey (2008), respectively. The GSS asks “To begin, we have some questions about opportunities for getting ahead. Please show for each of these how important you think is it for getting ahead in life. Hard work – how important is that for getting ahead in life?” The answer options provided to respondents were “essential”, “very important”, “fairly important”, “not very important” and “not important at all” (GSS 1972-2006). The Houston Area Survey (2008) presented respondents with “Blacks

and other minorities have the same opportunities as whites in the U.S. today” with the answer options of “agree” or “disagree” provided (Houston Area Survey 2008).

Carmines, Sniderman, and Easter (2011) have recently argued that measurement indexes of attitudes toward race-specific policies may be conflated with the measurement of racial resentment. In other words, that there exists a spurious relationship between measures designed to examine support for race-targeted public policies and using them as indicators of racial resentment and racism. Howard Schuman (2000) argues that racial resentment measures primarily reflect racial policy attitudes (Schuman 2000) and Carmines and colleagues agree (Carmines et. al. 2011). While race-specific public policies are not considered in this study, it does examine whether general stratification ideologies are factors in causal attributions for specific racial and ethnic groups in poverty – or whether the saliency of the race and ethnicity of the target group in poverty directly affects the explanations for the group’s poverty. Also discussed is how respondents’ racial and ethnic group membership may affect their beliefs’ about poverty as well as racial resentment in the analysis and findings – and why including these two global measures of stratification beliefs as control variables are both appropriate and meaningful to the research question: does it matter *who* is poor when respondents are asked to explain *why*?

Chapter 4

The Embedded Experiment

The survey instrument examined in this study was designed utilizing an embedded experiment technique pioneered by Sniderman and Piazza (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Embedded experiments can potentially reveal nuanced and insightful results because they ensure that each respondent is asked the same question and presented with the same response categories, save one important distinction: the subject of the question. The embedded experiment technique asks the same question, and offers the same response categories from which to choose, but with one important exception – the subject of the question (Sniderman and Carmines 1997).

In this study, an embedded experiment was employed to address attributions for poverty across various racial and ethnic groups. Respondents were asked “Why do you think there are poor _____?” The subject of this question was rotated among four groups: whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians. Each individual respondent was only asked about one of these four groups, as every first survey focused on Asians, every second survey focused on Latinos, every third survey focused on blacks and every fourth survey focused on whites. Questionnaires were collated in this manner *prior to distribution* to randomize the experiment as effectively as possible. Procedures were also taken to ensure that a student enrolled in more than one of the participating courses only submitted one completed survey.

Respondents were presented with three answer possibilities;

“A. They do not work hard enough to succeed.”

“B. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their poverty.”

“C. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their race.”

Three stratification beliefs were measured with the fixed choice response categories offered in the experimental question; individualism, class-based stratification beliefs and race-based stratification beliefs. A respondent’s belief in individualism as the explanation for poverty for the racial group embedded into his/her question was measured by option A. From prior research, it is well understood that this aspect of individualism is by far the most popular, and that lack of “hard work” the preeminent dimensions of personal responsibility for one’s success (Feagin 1975; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 2007; Kluegel and Smith 1986, Robinson and Bell 1978; Shelton and Greene 2013).

Previous research supports the most popular marker of social class as having the economic means with which to secure one’s opportunities and life chances (Feagin 1975; Hochschild 1995; Huber and Form 1973; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Wilson 1978). A respondent’s belief in the causal attribution of social class as a determinant of poverty was measured by the selection of response option B. Respondents’ beliefs in race-based causal attributions as explanations for poverty among the racial and ethnic groups in the experiment were measured by the response option C. Wording the answer response in this way allows for respondents to subjectively assess whether or not they believe the race of the group embedded within the question to be an important determinant of their poverty.

Respondents were not offered an “I don’t know” or “none of these” option from which to choose, in line with Sniderman and Piazza’s (1993) reasoning. In forcing participants to choose the *one* response with which they most agree as an explanation for poverty about *the* specific racial/ethnic group in question, they are ultimately drawing upon their most salient stratification beliefs, and the embedded experiment is used to determine whether respondents’ causal attributions will vary according to the specific racial and ethnic group in poverty within the survey instrument.

This unique and particularistic methodology of the embedded experiment results in four dependent variables in this study; causal attributions about poor whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians. Each dependent variable has three answer options from which to choose; individualistic explanations, class-based explanations and race-based explanations about the causes of poverty among Asian, blacks, Latinos and whites, respectively. However, during the data entry process it was discovered that 151 written remarks were volunteered with completed survey instruments. These voluntary supplemental results were organized, coded and analyzed. Table 5 presents these results and they are discussed as additional findings.

Analysis

Numerous models were analyzed in order to be confident in the saliency of the findings, particularly in light of the near mirror-image percentage distribution results of the global individualistic and structural stratification belief statements. Multivariate binary logistic regression models were analyzed with and without nesting of the

individualistic and structural stratification beliefs statements. With regard to concern over the theoretical overlap between global and specific stratification beliefs, bivariate correlations were analyzed, and results indicated no overlapping between the independent variables. To be thorough, tests for multi-collinearity were also conducted using the variance inflation factor analysis, and none of the independent variables were found to have any multi-collinearity. This is very important to the saliency of the findings - particularly because the results discussed here were largely consistent across each of the various models.

The final models discussed are multinomial logistic regressions, with the global stratification belief statements nested in. The other variables that are controlled for in the regression analysis are; gender, household income, education level of parents, and political affiliation of the respondent. With all else being equal, this study examines the saliency of racial group membership in stratification beliefs and whether and how the causal attributions for poverty might differ according to the racial/ethnic group in poverty.

Chapter 5

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics offer a global interpretation of the richness of the data collected from the sample population. Table 2 displays the percentage distributions for all dependent variables according to the racial/ethnic group embedded in the questionnaire.

Attributions for Poverty among Whites

Table 2 displays the cross-tabulation results of causal attributions for poverty across the four different racial and ethnic groups examined in the study. The right marginal indicates that 57.7% of participants believed the determinant of poverty among whites was individualistic in nature – not working hard enough to succeed. 35.8% of participants indicated that they believed the determinant of poverty among whites to be structural and based on social class. When examined according to the race/ethnicity of the participants these global measures remain very closely consistent between groups - suggesting that whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians do not differ widely in their attributions regarding poverty among whites.

Attributions for Poverty among blacks

There is little consistency between racial/ethnic groups with regard to beliefs about the determinants of the causes of poverty among blacks. The right marginal shows that the sample populations' beliefs' about the poverty among blacks is fairly evenly

distributed between individualistic work ethic, social class and race at 29.8%, 33.6% and 36.6% respectively.

Attributions for Poverty among Latinos

The right marginal indicates that 49.6% of participants attributed poverty among Latinos to social class, 36.1% of the sample population believed race to be the determinant of poverty for the group. Only 11.1% of the sample population indicated individualistic explanations as an explanation for poverty among Latinos. When examined according to the race/ethnicity of the participants, these global measures remain only somewhat consistent between groups, suggesting that while whites, Latinos and Asians do not differ widely in their attributions regarding poverty among Latinos; blacks' beliefs do vary in some respects.

Attributions for Poverty among Asians

The right marginal indicates that 55.7% of participants believed social class to be a determinant of poverty among Asians while 34.3% of participants indicated that they believed race to be the explanation of poverty among Asians. Only 10.0% of the sample population indicated beliefs in an individualistic explanation as an explanation for poverty among Asians. When examined according to the race/ethnicity of the participants, these global measures remain closely consistent between groups, suggesting that whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians do not differ widely in their attributions regarding poverty among Asians.

Regression Results

Tables 3 and 4 display the results of respondents' levels of commitment to social class or to racial group membership compared to individualism as causal attributions for poverty across different racial and ethnic groups. These causal attributions are regressed on the race/ethnicity of the respondent, global stratification belief measures, gender, income, education and political orientation.

Beliefs about Poor Whites

Within the sample population, there is nothing to suggest that blacks differ significantly from whites in their structural or individualistic stratification beliefs about poor whites. However, the findings do suggest that Latinos and Asians have a significant and stronger commitment to individualism than to social class when explaining poverty among whites than do whites and blacks. Latino respondents were 48% more likely to disagree with social class as an explanation for poverty among whites. Similarly, Asian respondents were approximately 45% more likely to disagree that social class could explain poor whites when compared to individualism.

Consistent with previous literature, females were likely to be more structural in their causal attribution beliefs than males. When comparing social class to individualism, females were approximately one and a half times more likely to agree that social class could explain poverty among whites. Females were also nearly four times as more likely to agree with racial group membership as an explanation for poverty among whites than were males. Consistent with previous research, those who identified as politically

moderate and liberal were nearly twice as likely to agree with social class as an explanation for poverty among poor whites as compared to individual work ethic.

Given the nearly mirrored percent distribution between the global individualistic and structural stratification beliefs questions, this study finds strong support for the concept of dual-consciousness (Hunt 1996, 2004, 2007) - the simultaneous holding of both individualistic and structural stratification beliefs. That both the individual and structural global indicators are significant with regard to social class versus individualism for poverty among whites suggests that racial and ethnic minority respondents in this study also subscribe to the idea that the determinants of poverty among whites may be individualistic as well as structural in nature.

At this point, the saliency of race in previous models is worthy of discussion. Where racial group membership was significant in a model without the global stratification beliefs, it remained so when controlled for in the models discussed here, in every instance. In only one model (Table 4, *Poor Latinos, Because of Race*) does nesting the global stratification belief questions result in any change to a statistically significant racial or ethnic group (in that model, adding the global questions resulted in Latinos being significant as well as blacks). The selectivity with which respondents apply structural and individualistic explanations to specific racial and ethnic groups is of particular interest with regard to poor whites. The global structural stratification belief measure is significant for poor whites when race as an explanation is compared to individualism, though none of the racial groups are significant. This finding suggests that

compared to whites, racial and ethnic minorities that are largely structural in their stratification beliefs, do believe racial group membership to be a factor for poor whites.

Beliefs about Poor Blacks

Table 3 also presents the results for the multinomial regression results for respondents' levels of commitment to social class or to racial group membership compared to individualism as causal attributions for poverty among blacks. When social class is compared to individualism as an explanation poverty among blacks, no racial nor ethnic group is statistically significant. This bears out when considering the near evenly divided overall percent distribution in the descriptive statistics in Table 2.

However, when race is compared to individualism as an explanation for poverty among blacks, the results suggest that black respondents do significantly differ from whites, Latinos, and Asians in their belief that race remains an important determinant of poverty among poor blacks. Blacks were more than twice as likely to agree with race as an explanation for poverty among blacks than the individualistic explanation. That finding is also very much in line with previous research, as is those that identified as politically liberal or moderate were also more than twice as likely to agree with social class and race as explanations for poverty among poor blacks when compared to individualism.

In this study, those with higher education were more than two times more likely to agree with social class as an explanation for poverty among blacks, though the education variable was not significant with regard to race. These findings are also is

consistent with previous research, in that as blacks who are higher in status may begin to separate from strictly structural beliefs to more individualistic beliefs. Those respondents that were more structural in their answer to the structural global stratification question were also twice as more likely to agree with racial group membership as a determinant for poverty among poor blacks than compared to individual work ethic. In sum, the results of this study find that only blacks believe race to be salient as an explanation for poverty among poor blacks.

Beliefs about Poor Asians

There is nothing in Table 4 to suggest that whites, blacks, Latinos or Asians differ from one another in their commitments to social class or race when compared to individualism as explanations for poverty among poor Asians. However, females and those respondents who identified as politically moderate were more than twice as likely as their counterparts to agree that poverty among poor Asians may be explained by social class versus individualism. With regard to race versus individualism as an explanation for poverty among poor Asians, females, those who identified as politically liberal, as well as moderate were nearly three times more likely to agree with race as an explanation for poverty among poor Asians.

The lack of statistical significance with regard to the global stratification belief questions, in combination with the lack of statistical significance among any racial or ethnic group when explaining poverty among poor Asians is interpreted in the additional findings. These additional findings suggest that Asians as a racial and ethnic group are

largely considered to be a “model minority” (Steinberg 2001) – and that a disbelief that the group experiences poverty may be affecting both the global stratification belief questions as well as the racial and ethnic group variables.

Consistent with other previous literature and the work of Hughes and Tuch (2000), this study finds that women and those who identify as politically moderate are more than twice as likely to agree with social class when compared to individualism as an explanation for poverty among poor Asians. Those who identified as politically liberal were almost three times more likely to agree that race was a factor in explaining poverty among poor Asians, as politically moderate and women.

Beliefs about Poor Latinos

Table 4 also illustrates the levels of commitment to social class and racial group membership when compared to individualism as explanations for poverty among poor Latinos. Latinos differ significantly from whites, blacks and Asians when considering social class versus individualism as an explanation for poverty among fellow Latinos. Latinos in this study were nearly four times as likely as whites, blacks, and Asians to agree with social class as a determinant of poverty for poor Latinos as compared to individualism or work ethic. Those who were more individualistic in their responses to the global stratification belief question were 53% more likely to disagree with social class compared to individualism as an explanation for poverty among poor Latinos. Those that identified as politically moderate were more than twice as likely to agree with social class rather than individualism when explaining poverty among poor Latinos.

When race is compared to individualism as an explanation for poverty among poor Latinos, blacks were nearly six times more likely than whites or Asians to agree that race was a determinant of poverty for poor Latinos when compared to individualism. Latinos were more than four times more likely to agree with race as an explanation for poverty for poor Latinos when compared to individualism. That these odds ratios are the highest of any racial or ethnic group within any target group experiencing poverty may suggest that belief in the ethnic myth of Latinos as a hard working group is alive and well (Steinberg 2001). This is certainly supported in the additional findings of volunteered remarks as well. Those who identified as more individualistic in the relevant global stratification question were 68% more likely to disagree with race as an explanation for poverty among poor Latinos than with the explanation of individual work ethic.

It is in this model that nesting the global stratification belief questions results in any change to a statistically significant racial or ethnic group. Prior to nesting the global stratification belief questions into the model, Latinos were not significant. This finding may suggest that Latinos themselves may strongly subscribe to general stratification beliefs. However, it should be noted that this change occurs only when Latinos are explaining poverty among *fellow Latinos*. In other words, with regard to poverty among Latinos, assimilation to the dominant ideology is perhaps not as prevalent as previous literature might offer (Hughes and Tuch 2000). Rather, these findings suggest that Latinos in this study may accept the importance of race as a determinant of poverty within American society.

Overall, these findings suggest that global stratification beliefs are not mediated by racial group membership, rather the reverse – that the racial group membership of the target group in poverty is independent of stratification beliefs. The results here suggest that stratification ideologies do not extend to race-specific groups in poverty. Rather, the influence of generalized stratification beliefs are limited and selective when contextualized by the race or ethnic group in poverty. The initial lack of significance among any racial or ethnic group regarding poor Asians necessitates the interpretation of the additional findings in order to reveal what respondents may believe with regard to poor Asians. This study finds that Latinos and Asians are significantly selective in their explanations about poor whites, and more individualistic in their beliefs when whites are experiencing poverty. Blacks are selective when explaining poverty for poor blacks and poor Latinos, and their beliefs are selectively race-based. Latinos are also selective in their commitment to race based explanations for poverty among poor Latinos, but not so for poor blacks. In other words, this study suggests that beliefs about poverty are indeed “color-coded” - and it *does* matter *who* is poor, when respondents are asked to explain *why*.

Chapter 6

Additional Findings and Internal Validity

During data entry, 151 (9.52% of the total number of participants) written comments were found on the surveys. While unsolicited, these remarks provide us with a more nuanced understanding of the determinants of the causal attributions examined in the study. The comments reveal beliefs in specific stereo-typed cultural traits, the perception of the culture of poverty existing within specific socioeconomic and racial and ethnic groups, double- or dual-consciousness, racial resentment and racism and even disbelief regarding the target group experiencing poverty.

In terms of analysis, the written remarks were organized, coded by thematic reference and cross-tabulated by the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent and the target group embedded in the survey question. The findings resulting from the analysis of participants' written comments provide further evidence of the internal validity of the study, given that the observed changes in the dependent variable (stratification beliefs) can be directly attributed to the manipulation of the independent variable (the change in target group embedded in the experiment).

Coding and Categorization

Participants' written comments that indicated a belief in individualism were coded as "IN" and categorized consistently with previous survey research indicators (Feagin 1975; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Hunt 2007; Kluegel and Smith 1986, Robinson and Bell

1978; Shelton and Greene 2013). Comments coded as individualistic included participants' written remarks such as; "equal rights", "equal opportunity", "chooses (i.e. to be poor, not to succeed)", "fault/failure to see/seize (i.e. opportunities)", "ambition", "(does not work/isn't) smart enough", "lazy", "mental or social problems", "dependency on welfare", "self-worth (lacks/lack of)", and "race is not a factor".

Participants' written statements indicating agreement with social class as a determinant of poverty were coded as "SC" and categorized consistently with previous survey research indicators (Bobo 1991; Feagin 1975; Hochschild 1995; Huber and Form 1973; Hunt 1996, 2004, 2007; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Shelton and Wilson 2006).

Written comments that were coded as a participant's belief in social class as determinant of poverty for a target group were those such as; "relative/cyclical poverty", "no money", "no money for/lack of education", "have to have money to make money", "failure of government/society (with no reference to race/ethnicity)" and "race is not a factor" – when the participant selected social class as their response choice.

Participants' written statements indicating agreement that the race or ethnicity of the target group is a determinant of its poverty were coded as "SR" and categorized consistently with previous survey research indicators (Bullock 1999; Hopkins 2009; Hunt 1996, 2004; Hunt and Wilson 2009; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lee, Jones and Lewis 1990, Shelton and Greene 2013; Wilson 1996). Written remarks such as; "affirmative action", "immigration", "discrimination", "failure on the part of government/society to make races equal/race reparations", "government assists some (racial and ethnic) groups

more than others”, and “stigma that comes with color” were categorized as race based stratification beliefs.

Beliefs in the stereotypes of cultural traits or the culture of poverty were coded as “CT” and categorized consistently with previous survey research indicators (Feagin 1975; Huber and Form 1973; Lewis 1978; Sampson and Wilson 1987; Steinberg 2007).

Comments that were found to be consistent with known stereotypes of the target group embedded in the experiment were categorized and coded accordingly. These indicators consisted of written remarks such as; “mindset”, “they (the target group in the survey) bust it (as in work hard)”, “reside/work here illegally”, “modern slavery of illegal immigration”, “have too many kids”, “depend on welfare”, “some races have/racial stereotypes/people act like this/fall into these”, “cultural/culture discourages saving”, “they idolize rappers/ dumb sports stars”, “they grow up in areas that do not reward hard work and make them feel alienated if they do”, “origin – they are put down because they try to work hard at whatever they do”, “they put themselves and each other down/they feel like they aren’t worth”, “language barrier” and “it’s cultural, not racial”.

While a primary goal of this study was to identify the one stratification belief a participant within the sample population would use to explain poverty within a target group, evidence of double or dual-consciousness (W.E.B. DuBois 1903; Hocschild 1995; Hunt 1996, 2004, 2007) was also found in addition to the near mirror image percent distributions of the global stratification belief statements. When a participant had selected more than one response, such as the individualistic response in combination with a

structural response, or offered a written comment that was in direct contrast to their selection choice, the survey was analyzed with the other non-standard responses here and coded as “DC”. Those surveys with more than one selection made were not included in the study’s data set of 1586 used for regression analysis.

Disbelief regarding the existence of poverty within a target group in the questionnaire was categorized as “UN” and coded accordingly, such as; “since when are there poor Asians/whites?”, “where?” “ridiculous question, there aren’t any”, “this doesn’t apply to Asians/whites”, “N/A”, “I don’t” and “I don’t think there are any poor Asians/whites”. While disbelief could be combined with cultural traits and ethnic myths, it seemed intuitive to separate the concept in order to specify which of the target groups were subject to this disbelief regarding the existence of poverty within it.

Evidence of racial resentment and racism were coded as “RR” and categorized consistent to previous research indicators (Bullock 1999; Hopkins 2009; Hunt 1996, 2004; Hunt and Wilson 2009; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lee, Jones and Lewis 1990, Quadagno 1994; Shelton and Greene 2013; Wilson 1996) with remarks such as; “I think...(blacks) don’t apply themselves”, “(they’re) dumb”, “government offers more resources to (immigrants/minorities) than those born here”, “because they’re made in (China)”, “government won’t make them citizens”, “modern slavery (illegal immigration)”, “they take our jobs”, “affirmative action (as a response to poverty among whites)”, and “that Hobama”.

Table 5 contains the coded and categorized written comments cross-tabulated by the target group embedded in the survey and the race/ethnicity of the respondent. Of the 151 written remarks, 17 were made by participants identifying as Asian, 20 were written by black respondents, 24 were written by Latino participants and 90 were made by white respondents.

Individualistic and Structural Indicators

The findings in Table 5 show that subscriptions to individualism exist within all four racial ethnic groups in the sample population. A general pattern emerges here in the subscription of individualistic beliefs as determinant about the causes of poverty with regard to racial and ethnic groups other than the participant's, which is consistent with previous research. The findings in Table 5 also reveal that subscriptions to individualism exist within all four racial and ethnic groups in the sample population, and a general pattern is found in that these structural beliefs as determinants of poverty were more likely to be made about the *participant's own racial and ethnic group*. Findings consistent with prior research in regard to gender differences can be seen as well, with females more likely than males to make structural explanations regarding the determinants of inequality among blacks, Latinos and whites.

Dual-Consciousness, Cultural Traits and the Culture of Poverty

Findings in Table 5 suggest more support for a dual-consciousness, in which indicators were found among written comments from Latino and white participants, but not among black or Asian participants. Findings in Table 5 suggest that Asians, blacks,

Latinos and whites within the sample population ascribe to beliefs in cultural traits among other racial and ethnic groups as well as their own. Specific references included “Poor Asians? In Asia”, “they depend on welfare” (with regard to poor blacks), “hell no, they bust it” (with regard to poverty among Latinos), and “since when are there poor whites?”

A Lack of Comments

A curious “omission” emerged when analyzing the written remarks – no black participants within the sample population made any comments about poverty among whites. In stark contrast to this, there were far more white participants who commented on their beliefs about poverty across all groups included in the study. Perhaps this lack of comments by black respondents might be attributed to the cultural history of discrimination - when objections by blacks are voiced, they are met with prejudice and racism.

Caution should be taken in the analysis here, particularly given that the number of surveys commented on by white respondents outnumber all those by all other racial groups. Still, the fact remains that whites within the sample population had more to say than their racial or ethnic minority counterparts certainly speaks to the long standing inherent privilege of being white rather than a member of a minority group.

Racism and Racial Resentment

An undercurrent of racial resentment and racism becomes evident in the findings in Table 5 when analyzing white participants' remarks regarding blacks, Latinos and within their own group. Comments such as "because there are not as many special grants and scholarships for whites compared to ethnic guys" and "they have too many kids" (in reference to poor Latinos) "a lot of blacks don't apply themselves", and "affirmative action" (in reference to poor whites). While caution must also be taken when considering these results, the indicators of racial resentment and minority group threat from a privileged group are difficult to ignore.

Chapter 7

Limitations and Further Study

Though great care was taken to administer pretests regarding the social class indicator as an answer option “they do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their poverty”, future research should consider using an even more salient answer option as an indicator of social class. From the written remarks found on the questionnaires, perhaps “generational poverty” or “cyclical poverty” might serve as better measures.

It is understood that college populations are different than the general population, and this sample does share some of those characteristics; both women and Asian respondents are overrepresented, and make up more of the sample than would likely be found in the general population. This sample is also much younger than would be found in the larger population. To that end, an area study that is conducted similarly to the Houston Area Survey would be recommended for the Dallas Fort Worth area. While a limitation of this study is the generalizability with regard to age, future longitudinal studies of the effects of diversity on stratification beliefs over time would also be interesting and is recommended.

Given the descriptive statistics strong “second” finish of social class as an explanation for poverty within all four groups, and the relatively little research that has focused on the stratification beliefs of Asians and Latinos, future study in this specific context is also recommended.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This study examines beliefs about poverty using a sample of Asian, Latino, black and white residents within the fifth largest metropolitan area in the U.S. – the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex, considered a “gateway” for new immigrants and home to a thriving African American middle class. This study makes several contributions to sociology’s understandings of stratification beliefs, and the results suggest that beliefs are complicated, contextualized and specific.

First, this study provides the first examination of beliefs about poverty among residents of the Dallas Fort Worth area, a very racially and ethnically diverse area not previously examined with regard to stratification beliefs. Second, this study is able to distinguish between commitments to contrasting structural beliefs about inequality, and sheds light on the debate over race versus class as separately perceived mechanisms of inequality. Finally, this study’s findings contribute precisely who believes what about whom and why in its findings, and does so for both minority and majority racial and ethnic groups. The findings are rich and complex, and do not tell a simple story.

On a descriptive level, the finding that social class is clearly popular as an explanation for poverty within all four racial and ethnic groups; Asians, Latinos, blacks and whites, suggests that diversity may play an important role in deterring the effect of “color-coding” beliefs about groups in poverty (Wilson 1996). Social class was found to be the most popular explanation as a determinant of poverty for poor Asians and Latinos

among DFW residents, and race as a determinant of poverty was the second most popular explanation among these two groups. With regard to impoverished blacks, DFW residents remain nearly evenly divided in their commitments to race, social class and individualistic determinants, with race only a slightly more popular explanation. Finally, individualism is by far the most popular explanation of poverty for poor whites across all four racial and ethnic groups in DFW, though social class as a determinant makes for a significant second most popular explanation.

These findings fit Kluegel and Smith's (1986) argument that structural beliefs are more likely to be popular among the most disadvantaged of groups, but that these beliefs stop short of denying the individualistic ideology of socioeconomic equality. The descriptive statistics also support the previous work of Hunt (1997, 2004, 2007) and Hughes and Tuch (2000) and suggest that Latinos and Asians are more committed to individualism when explaining poverty among other racial and ethnic groups, while being more likely to attribute poverty within their respective groups to structural beliefs.

The results of the embedded experiment utilized in this study reveals findings consistent with Wilson's 1996 work on "color coding" and Hopkins' 2009 study. The findings of this study do suggest that determinants of beliefs about poverty are directly affected by the racial prejudice toward those experiencing poverty (Feagin 1975; Quadagno 1994; Wilson 1996). Simultaneously, the findings here also support Hopkins' recent study that proximity to poor whites results in more structural beliefs about poverty (Hopkins 2009), at least with respect to whites' and blacks' beliefs.

Multinomial regression analyses reveals that Latinos and Asians have a significant and stronger commitment to individualistic explanations for poverty among whites when compared to social class than do blacks or whites. With regard to beliefs about poverty among Asians, there is no significant difference in levels of agreement regarding social class or race when compared to individualism as an explanation for poverty among poor Asians between Asians, Latinos, blacks or whites.

This study finds no statistical difference between whites, blacks, Latinos, or Asians when considering social class versus individualism in explaining poverty among blacks. Blacks do significantly differ from whites, Latinos and Asians in subscribing to race versus individualism as an explanation for poverty among blacks. Within a very diverse region, this study shows that blacks remain strongly committed to race based structuralism. The findings of this study suggest that Latinos have a stronger commitment to social class as a determinant of poverty among Latinos than do Asians, blacks or whites. Both blacks and Latinos are more committed to race versus individualism as an explanation for poverty among Latinos as compared to whites and Asians.

In spite of any direct measures, belief in cultural traits about specific racial and ethnic groups and racial resentment emerge here as in other studies (Bobo and Fox 2003; Kinder and Kam 2009; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Hopkins 2009; Hughes and Tuch 2000; Wilson 1996). While racial and ethnic diversity may offer some effect on minimizing individualistic attributions for impoverished racial and ethnic minorities among whites, this study suggests that racial and ethnic diversity may act as a mechanism for perceived

minority group threat among whites, which is consistent with previous studies (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Taylor 1998; Schuman 2000; Sears and Henry 2005; Quillan 1996). Carmines and colleagues (2011) argue that the only evidence that racism dominates the thinking of white Americans is based on a single measure that they have shown to be not valid (lack of support for racially targeted policies) and that racism and racial resentment are spurious findings confounded by racial policy attitudes.

While this author certainly does not dispute their methodology, nor wholly disagree with their optimism, this study does find that racial resentment and racism are alive and well, without even having examined support for race specific policies. That it is found in such a racially and ethnically diverse area as DFW strongly suggests that the intersections between beliefs about poverty, race, social class and individualism are indeed “color-coded”. Beliefs about poverty within the context of racial and ethnic diversity are indeed complicated and do not tell a simple story. Given that the National Research Council projects that the U.S. will likely have no single racial or ethnic group by the year 2050 (Smelser, Wilson and Mitchell 2001), further research in this specific area is highly recommended.

Appendix A

Tables 1 - 5

Table 1. Codes and Percent Distributions for all Independent Variables.

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Race/Ethnicity	
Whites ^a	40.1
Blacks	17.9
Latinos	20.5
Asians	21.5
Causal Attributions	
<u><i>Individualism</i></u> ^b	
Question: "If you work hard in America, eventually you will succeed."	
Strongly Agree (3)	27.5
Agree (2)	60.7
Disagree (1)	9.1
Strongly Disagree (0)	2.7
<u><i>Structuralism</i></u> ^b	
Question: "Society grants some groups more opportunities than others."	
Strongly Agree (3)	27.6
Agree (2)	62.1
Disagree (1)	9.1
Strongly Disagree (0)	1.2
Sociodemographics	
<u><i>Gender</i></u>	
Males ^c	41.9
Females	58.1
<u><i>Income</i></u> ^b	
Less than \$22,499 (0)	19.8
\$22,500 to \$34,999 (1)	16.7
\$35,000 to \$44,999 (2)	10.9
\$45,000 to \$59,999 (3)	12.2
\$60,000 to \$74,999 (4)	11.7
\$75,000 to \$99,999 (5)	11.2
\$100,000 to \$124,999 (6)	8.7
\$125,000 + (7)	8.8
<u><i>Education</i></u> ^b	
Some High School (0)	10.9
High School Degree/GED (1)	15.1
Some College (2)	27.3
College Degree (3)	31.5
Advanced Degree (4)	15.2
<u><i>Political Views</i></u>	
Conservative ^d	29.0
Liberal	41.7
Moderate	29.3

NOTE: ^a reference category for race/ethnicity; ^b ordinal variables in analyses; ^c reference category for gender; ^d reference category for political views.

Table 2. Survey Questions, Answer Possibilities, and Percent Distributions by Race of Respondent
for Causal Attributions for Poverty Across Various Racial and Ethnic Groups.

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	Whites	Blacks	Latinos	Asians	Totals
<i>(a) Attributions for Poverty among Whites</i>					
Why do you think there are poor whites?					
a. They do not work hard enough to succeed.	53.0	55.9	63.4	61.0	57.7
b. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their poverty.	39.4	40.7	29.3	32.9	35.8
c. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their race.	7.6	3.4	7.3	6.1	6.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>(b) Attributions for Poverty among Blacks</i>					
Why do you think there are poor blacks?					
a. They do not work hard enough to succeed.	33.3	19.7	28.1	34.6	29.8
b. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their poverty.	37.7	22.5	30.5	39.5	33.6
c. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their race.	29.0	57.8	41.4	25.9	36.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>(c) Attributions for Poverty among Latinos</i>					
Why do you think there are poor Latinos?					
a. They do not work hard enough to succeed.	14.1	4.8	4.8	15.2	11.1
b. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their poverty.	49.4	40.3	53.3	54.4	49.6
c. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their race.	36.5	54.9	41.9	30.4	39.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>(d) Attributions for Poverty among Asians</i>					
Why do you think there are poor Asians?					
a. They do not work hard enough to succeed.	14.5	4.6	8.5	7.5	10.0
b. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their poverty.	51.0	64.6	63.3	50.0	55.7
c. They do not have the same opportunities to succeed because of their race.	34.5	30.8	28.2	42.5	34.3
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3. Multinomial Logistic Regressions for Levels of Commitment to Social Class and Racial Group Membership Versus Individualism as an Explanation for Poverty among Various Racial and Ethnic Groups.

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>R Believes Poor Whites Do Not Have the Same Opportunities</i>						<i>R Believes Poor Blacks Do Not Have the Same Opportunities</i>					
	<i>Because of Poverty</i>			<i>Because of Race</i>			<i>Because of Poverty</i>			<i>Because of Race</i>		
	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>												
Blacks	-0.39	0.37	0.67	-1.14	0.84	0.32	-0.27	0.46	0.76	0.86*	0.42	2.36
Latinos	-0.66 [†]	0.37	0.52	-0.14	0.61	0.87	-0.12	0.40	0.89	0.20	0.41	1.23
Asians	-0.60 [†]	0.34	0.55	-0.67	0.65	0.51	0.05	0.36	1.05	-0.23	0.40	0.80
<i>Attributions</i>												
Individualism	-0.89***	0.21	0.41	-0.38	0.39	0.68	-0.05	0.22	0.95	-0.33	0.22	0.72
Structuralism	0.54**	0.21	1.71	0.87*	0.41	2.38	0.12	0.23	1.13	0.69**	0.25	2.00
<i>Sociodemographics</i>												
Female	0.53*	0.26	1.69	1.38*	0.55	3.96	0.28	0.28	1.32	0.43	0.29	1.54
Income	0.06	0.06	1.06	-0.05	0.11	0.95	-0.09	0.07	0.91	-0.07	0.07	0.94
Education	-0.01	0.12	1.00	0.09	0.21	1.09	0.27*	0.14	1.31	-0.07	0.14	0.94
Liberal	0.68*	0.34	1.98	-0.52	0.61	0.60	0.79*	0.38	2.21	1.23***	0.38	3.42
Moderate	0.61*	0.30	1.84	-0.72	0.58	0.49	0.80*	0.31	2.22	0.83*	0.33	2.30
Pseudo R ²	0.19			0.19			0.18			0.18		
X ²	58.68***			58.68***			61.53***			61.53***		
N	338			338			353			353		

NOTE: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, [†]p<.10; (2-tailed tests)

Table 4. Multinomial Logistic Regressions for Levels of Commitment to Social Class and Racial Group Membership Versus Individualism as an Explanation for Poverty among Various Racial and Ethnic Groups.

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>R Believes Poor Asians Do Not Have the Same Opportunities</i>						<i>R Believes Poor Latinos Do Not Have the Same Opportunities</i>					
	<i>Because of Poverty</i>			<i>Because of Race</i>			<i>Because of Poverty</i>			<i>Because of Race</i>		
	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR	B	SE	OR
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>												
Blacks	1.00	0.69	2.72	0.35	0.72	1.42	0.91	0.68	2.49	1.75**	0.68	5.75
Latinos	0.21	0.57	1.24	-0.22	0.61	0.80	1.38*	0.70	3.96	1.42*	0.72	4.13
Asians	0.58	0.56	1.79	0.85	0.57	2.35	0.14	0.45	1.15	-0.05	0.48	0.95
<i>Attributions</i>												
Individualism	-0.37	0.34	0.69	-0.55	0.35	0.58	-0.75*	0.31	0.47	-1.15***	0.32	0.32
Structuralism	-0.19	0.31	0.83	-0.03	0.33	0.97	0.23	0.29	1.26	0.48	0.30	1.62
<i>Sociodemographics</i>												
Female	0.80*	0.41	2.23	1.07*	0.43	2.92	0.60	0.38	1.83	0.53	0.39	1.71
Income	-0.01	0.09	0.99	-0.09	0.10	0.92	-0.07	0.09	0.93	-0.04	0.09	0.96
Education	-0.13	0.20	0.88	-0.05	0.21	0.95	0.28	0.17	1.32	0.16	0.18	1.17
Liberal	0.77	0.52	2.16	1.04 [†]	0.55	2.83	0.76	0.50	2.15	0.41	0.51	1.51
Moderate	0.82 [†]	0.47	2.28	1.07*	0.50	2.92	0.78 [†]	0.43	2.18	0.34	0.45	1.41
Pseudo R ²	0.11			0.11			0.14			0.14		
X ²	31.79*			31.79*			44.08***			44.08***		
N	338			338			345			345		

NOTE: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, [†]p<.10; (2-tailed tests)

Table 5. Coded Written Remarks Cross-Tabulated by Race/Ethnicity and Gender of Participants and Target Group Embedded in Questionnaire.

	Poor Asians	Poor Blacks	Poor Latinos	Poor Whites	Totals
Asian Females	RC, SD+IN, UN, CI	UN, IN, CI		UN	
Asian Males	DC, CI	UN	CI, CI, CI, IN, IN, SC		
Totals	6	4	6	1	17
Black Females	UN, SR, SR, RR, DC, UN	SA+R, SD+IN, RC, SA+R, SD+R, IN, IN			
Black Males	UN, UN, CI	IN, SD+R, IN	UN		
Totals	9	10	1	0	20
Latina Females		SR, CI, IN, DC, IN, SC	DC, SD+R, IN, SR, SR, SC, SC, DC, CI		
Latino Males	DC, SC	DC	UN, IN, SA+IN, SC	UN, DC	
Totals	2	7	13	2	24
White Females	DC, SD+SR, RC, UN	DC, IN, CI, UN, DC, IN, IN, RR, SR, SR, SR, SD+SR, SD+SR, RR	SD+IN, CI, RC, SR, SR, RC, SC, DC, SD+SR, SA+SR	UN, RR, SR, SR, RR, UN, DC, CI, CI, DC, IN, SD+SR, RR, UN	
White Males	RR, CI, DC, SD+R	UN, IN, SD+R, UN, IN, SD+SR, SD+SR, CI, CI, CI, RR, IN, SD+SR, CI, CI	SA+R, SC, RR, SC, CI, RR, IN, CI, SD+SR, IN, SD+SR, UN, DC, SD+SR	SR, RR, SR, IN, SD+SR, IN, IN, DC, DC, DC, DC, SR, DC, DC	
Totals	8	30	24	28	90
	25	51	44	31	151

n = 151

IN = Individualistic; SC = Social Class; SR = Race; RC = Race and Class; CI = Cultural Traits or Issues; DC = Dual Consciousness; UN = Disbelief; RR = Racial Resentment/Racism; SD + another code = Strong Disagreement with that explanation; SA + another code = Strong Agreement with that explanation

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Biographical Statement

M. Faye Hanson-Evans earned her Honors Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the Honors College at UT Arlington in Arlington, Texas in May of 2011. M. Faye minored in Political Science, was twice honored by Who's Who among Students in American Colleges and Universities, inducted to Alpha Kappa Delta (National Sociological Honor Society), a University Scholar, and a McNair Scholar as well. Her early research with McNair was selected to be presented at the McNair Scholars Program National Research Conference in Lake Delavan, Wisconsin in 2010, as well as the Southwestern Social Sciences Association Annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada in 2011.

M. Faye Hanson-Evans earned her Master of Arts in Sociology, magna cum laude, from UT Arlington in May of 2013. M. Faye was again honored by Who's Who among Graduate Students in American Colleges and Universities during her early graduate career. M. Faye was also awarded an Enhanced Graduate Teaching Fellowship in order to continue her research at UT Arlington. M. Faye's research interests involve the intersections of race and inequality, and different stages of her continued work were selected for presentation at the Southwestern Sociological Association in 2013, and the Southern Sociological Association Annual Meetings in both 2012 and 2013.

M. Faye Hanson-Evans has been accepted to the doctoral program for Sociology at the University of North Texas, where she will continue to pursue her research interests and studies.