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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN WHITES' OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS: A PRO-SOCIAL ORIENTATION OF "FEMALENESS" OR A SHARED SENSE OF "WHITENESS"?

Young M. Kim
Department of Sociology
State University of New York at Oswego

ABSTRACT

Recent research has suggested that women's more positive racial attitudes based on differential gender socialization lead to them to support compensatory government policies. The current research tests this claim by examining gender differences in whites' opposition to government interventions targeted for blacks and the poor. Regression analyses performed using data from the 1990 General Social Survey indicate no significant gender differences in whites' opposition to race-targeted government interventions. Somewhat paradoxically, white females' opposition to non-race-targeted government interventions is mainly driven by their racial attitudes, even after controlling for non-racial ideologies and socio-demographic backgrounds, despite their overall lower level of opposition to such interventions. Taken together, these findings suggest that white females' shared sense of group position is more salient than their pro-social orientation in their opposition to group-based remedial policies. These findings strongly suggest that the effect of gender in the domain of racial attitudes and policy preferences is more complex than typically understood.

INTRODUCTION

Even though old-fashioned racism has weakened substantially over the past several decades, and most whites now endorse the idea of racial equality in principle, these changes have not led to a parallel increase in public support for government policies designed to redress existing racial inequalities (Sears, van Larr, and Kosterman 1997). Building rather inductively from this apparent inconsistency, which has been described as a "paradox" (Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000; Gilens 1995), a "principle-policy puzzle" (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991), and a "principle-implementation gap" (Schumann, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan 1997), the past two decades have witnessed a steady accumulation of alternative explanations. One set of "new" racism approaches has emphasized social psychological processes: "modern" racism (McConahay 1986), "subtle" racism (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995), "laissez faire" racism (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997), racial resentment (Kinder and Sanders 1996), "aversive" racism (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986), and "symbolic" racism (Sears, van Larr, and Kosterman 1997). Another approach has been to discount the continuing significance of racism and emphasize non-racial political ideologies and social structural processes: economic individualism (Sniderman and Kuklinski 1998), conservatism (Sniderman and Piazza 1993), group position theory (Blumer 1958; Bobo and Hutchings 1996), and social dominance theory (Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996). While each theoretical formulation has its own emphasis and substantive focus, taken together, these perspectives have deepened our understanding of the complexity of contemporary racial attitudes and helped illuminate the persistence of whites' opposition to remedial policies designed to redress racial inequalities.

The present research contributes to the literature by exploring a largely ignored issue: gender differences in individuals' opposition to government interventions. Surprisingly little is understood about possible gender differences in the determinants of whites' opposition because few studies have used gender-specific designs (Hughes and Tuch 2003; Stack 1997). Given that racial attitudes have both cognitive and affective dimensions, one would expect that gender differences on such dimensions might result in gender differences in racial attitudes and policy preferences (Hughes and Tuch 2003). For example, previous research has documented gender differences in normative orientations, including white females' stronger emphasis on others' well being and weaker emphasis on materialism and competition (Block 1984; Mills et al. 1995; Beutel and Marini 1995; Cross and Madson 1997; Johnson and Marini 1998). Previous research also has documented that such gender differences exist mainly due to gender-role socialization, which leads white females to be more nurturing, interdependent, and tolerant of others than white males (Milles et al. 1995; Johnson and Marini 1998). Given these previous findings, it is plausible that given females' greater normative orientation toward being concerned about others, white females might be more liberal than white males regarding racial attitudes and policy preferences aimed at achieving equality. However, it is also plausible that white females' pro-social orientation might not make much difference because white females are after all, white. That is, white females and white males share a "sense of group position" (Blumer 1958) that shields and even justifies their higher resources and privileges (Bobo and Fox 2003; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000), and thus women's shared sense of *group* position might be more salient than their pro-social orientation in shaping their opposition to group-based, remedial policies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Symbolic Racism

Whites' views on racial matters have undergone a sweeping change over the past few decades. The old-fashioned racism that once dominated American institutions no longer characterizes whites' racial attitudes. If old-fashioned racism is a thing of the past, then what now dominates whites' present-day racial attitudes in an era of equal rights and political correctness? Much previous research has argued that a new form of racism has risen that is subtler than the old-fashioned or "redneck" racism that supports racial segregation, discrimination, and innate racial inferiority. Among many different formulations of the new racism theses, the symbolic racism perspective has been most popular and influential (Tarman and Sears 2005). Symbolic racism blends early-learned racial resentment with the traditional American values of hard work and self-reliance. The main point of symbolic racism is that whites express their racial resentment toward blacks symbolically and hence indirectly. For example, whites might oppose assistance to blacks largely based on their racial resentment. Such opposition can be successfully disguised, however, by endorsing socially acceptable, non-racial ideologies, such as conservatism, individualism, or traditional American values. Thus, symbolic racism and non-racial ideologies are not synonymous, but do share a common conceptual heritage in their ties to traditional American values. As Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo (1996) argued, the conservative, political racial values of many white Americans are not devoid of racism.

The main argument of symbolic racism is based on the notion that early learned racial fears and prejudices leave whites with long-standing attitudinal predispositions that remain highly stable over time and are resistant to change across the life course (Sears, van Larr, and Kosterman 1997; Kinder and Sears 1981). This perspective is particularly useful in understanding how whites' opposition to government interventions is linked to racial stereotypes that have remained prevalent in contemporary American society (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Stereotypes are conceptualized as the cognitive overgeneralizations often linked to the negative emotions that individuals have toward other groups. Such negative characterizations of blacks commonly include laziness, irresponsibility, immorality, unintelligence, self-destructiveness, and violence. These characterizations violate core American values and can play a significant role in formulations of symbolic racism (Virtanen and Huddy 1998). It is worth emphasizing that many whites who reject old-fashioned racism still accept these negative stereotypes.

Non-Racial Ideologies

Another possible explanation for whites' opposition to government interventions targeted for blacks and the poor is that it is by and large driven by non-racial ideologies, such as conservatism, individualism, and structuralism. That is, whites' opposition may represent genuine differences in political outlooks rather than covert or overt racism (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Thus, proponents of this perspective argue that conservatism must not be confused with racism because the former is the application of conservative principles to racial issues (Carmines and Stimson 1989). For example, people who believe in a limited government tend to oppose compensatory government policies, and such opposition is mostly guided by how people view the government's appropriate role. Similarly, whites' opposition also might be related to

stratification ideologies – "beliefs about how the American stratification should and does work" (Kluegel and Smith 1983, p. 801). For example, we expect to see varying degrees of opposition between those who believe that individuals' characteristics (e.g., laziness, hard-working) are linked to poverty and those who believe that the larger structural constraints (e.g., unequal opportunity, discrimination) are responsible for poverty. Previous empirical studies have found that individualism is the most common ideological orientation upon which whites draw when they oppose social welfare (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Kluegel and Smith, 1986). That is, whites with an individualistic perspective are less likely to believe in the existence of structural constraints to economic advancement for the disadvantaged, and hence, they are more apt to oppose the need for compensatory government policies (Kluegel 1990).

Socio-Demographic Factors

Another possible explanation for whites' opposition to government interventions that redress social inequalities can be traced from non-attitudinal, socio-demographic factors: social class, educational attainment, geographical location, and age. The working class might oppose such interventions because they perceive competition between blacks and whites over limited resources (Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000). Based on the economic self-interest principle, people who are the most likely to lose from race-targeted government interventions are the most likely to oppose them (Bobo and Kluegel 1993). For this reason, both working- and middle-class whites are likely to oppose the race-targeted interventions from which they do not expect to benefit. Education also might play a role. Formal schooling might contribute to establishing racial tolerance and reinforcing racial egalitarianism (Sniderman and Piazza 1993), such that those with more education would be less likely to oppose government interventions than those with less education. Geographically, southern whites historically have shown a high degree of racial prejudice (Glaser and Gilens 1997; Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997). The Jim Crow system that legalized racial discrimination and separation flourished more in the South than in the North (Sears, van Larr, and Kosterman 1997). Some research (e.g., Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan 1997) has indicated that while whites' racial attitudes are converging between the South and the North, a regional gap persists. Finally, studies have shown that younger people typically are less prejudiced than older people (Firebaugh and Davis 1988; Tuch 1987). While younger whites are not immune to racial prejudices, recent research has indicated that younger blacks and whites are becoming increasingly homogeneous in their views on racial matters (Tuch, Sigelman, and MacDonald 1999).

Gender and Racial Attitudes

As stated earlier, theories of racial prejudice in general and the symbolic racism perspective in particular have not explicitly considered gender as a salient factor. Therefore, surprisingly few studies have examined gender differences in racial attitudes and policy preferences (Kane and Kyyrö 2001; Hughes and Tuch 2003). Much research has made the implicit assumption that the determinants of whites' racial attitudes are more or less the same across the sexes. Nevertheless, as Hughes and Tuch (2003) pointed out, given that theories of racial prejudices strongly implicate cognitive and affective dimensions as determinants of such prejudices, one would expect that gender differences on such dimensions might result in gender differences in racial

attitudes and policy preferences. That is, one could argue that women are socialized to be more concerned about others' well-being and to develop personalities that are more nurturing, supportive, and empathetic than men's (Johnson and Marini 1998; Beutel and Marini 1995). To the extent that such characteristics apply to women in today's society, it is quite plausible to expect that women would be more supportive than men of government policies that would increase opportunities for the disadvantaged. In keeping with this assertion, Beutel and Marini (1995) reported the existence of gender differences in value orientations: Females are more likely than males to be concerned for the well-being of the others and less likely to accept materialism and competition. Similarly, Johnson and Marini (1998) found that women are more likely than men to see interracial contact as desirable, even after controlling for political ideology, religiosity, and interracial relationships. They concluded that women's more positive racial attitudes are due to differential gender socialization, through which women are socialized to be more pro-social than men, and further noted "a potential for improving race relations through [the] socialization of males" (Johnson and Marini 1998, p. 256). It must be noted, however, that their sample was limited to high-school seniors and that their measure of racial attitudes was based on social distance only. Assuming that socialization is a lifelong process, it is yet to be determined whether findings based on adolescents can be generalized to other age groups. Furthermore, social distance can help establish how white females' pro-social orientation might be associated with more favorable *interpersonal* interactions, but perhaps not as effective in establishing more favorable *intergroup* relations. Finally, several studies consistently have demonstrated that women are less likely than men to favor inter-racial contact in more intimate areas (e.g., marriage, dating, sharing a room), casting further doubt on using a gender socialization approach (Bogardus 1959; Owen, Eisner, and McFaul 1977; Muit and McGlamery 1984; Muir 1990; Schuman et al. 1997). Built on Johnson and Marini's (1998) limitations, Hughes and Tuch (2003) tested women's liberal racial attitudes and policy preferences by including an array of racial attitudes and using data from two nationally representative surveys. If racial prejudice is a product of gender-specific socialization, then it would be reasonable to find significant differences in racial attitudes between white females and white males. In short, Hughes and Tuch (2003) found that gender differences in racial attitudes and policy preferences are at best small and inconsistent.

As an alternative to a gender socialization approach, one could argue that white females and white males are much alike in regard to their racial attitudes and policy preferences because of their shared sense of group position (Blumer 1958). Proponents of this perspective argue that because white females and white males share the same position in the racial hierarchy, it is in their collective interest to protect and even legitimize their greater resources and privileges (Bobo and Fox 2003; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000). If this is the case, then an important question arises: Why are women, who have been the subjects of long-term inequalities themselves and thus know exactly what it is like to be disadvantaged (Johnson and Marini 1998; Beutel and Marini 1995), not more sympathetic towards the disadvantaged? To the extent that white females are unsympathetic, it might reflect not only their shared sense of group position, but also their collectively weaker status relative to white males. That is, given the extensive privileges of whiteness, white females' immediate economic self-interest might be to maintain, legitimize, and perpetuate race-based inequality (Alcoff 1999). More importantly, given their extensive disadvantages based on gender, white females may perceive external threats posed by blacks even more strongly than white males.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

To explore whether the relation between racial attitudes and opposition to government interventions differs across the sexes, I used data from the1990 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a nationally representative survey of non-institutionalized adults 18 years of age and older residing in the 48 contiguous U.S. states. For a complete discussion of the GSS's sampling methodology, see Davis and Smith (2000). The 1990 GSS is particularly suitable for this study because it includes a number of relevant items that tap the perceived association between race and economic status, beliefs about the causes of economic inequalities, and various racial attitudes (Davis and Smith 2000). Given this study's focus, I restricted the sample to the 1,150 non-Hispanic white respondents only. Finally, I further excluded respondents with missing data on variables needed for the analyses presented here.

Measures of Whites' Opposition to Government Interventions

Two variables – opposition to government intervention for blacks (*helping blacks*) and for the poor (*helping the poor*) - were selected to measure whites' attitudes toward public policies. While the former was asked of all respondents, the latter was asked of a randomly selected two-thirds of the respondents. See Davis and Smith (2000) for details of the GSS's split-ballot structure. Both items used a 5-point Likert scale. For *helping blacks*, "I strongly agree the government is obligated to help blacks" defined one end of the scale (coded 1), "I strongly agree that government shouldn't give special treatment" (coded 5) defined the opposite end, and "I agree with both answers" defined the midpoint (coded 3). For *helping the poor*, "I strongly agree the government should improve living standards" defined one end of the scale (coded 1), "I strongly agree that people should take care of themselves (coded 5) defined the opposite end, and "I agree with both answers" defined the midpoint (coded 3).

Measures of Independent Variables

The independent variables were categorized into three dimensions. First, I measured symbolic racism with a battery of three items: the denial of discrimination as a major cause of blacks' low socioeconomic status (SES) relative to whites (*denial of discrimination*; yes=1), the belief that a lack of will power is a major cause of blacks' low SES (*lack of will power*; yes=1), and a belief that blacks have more influence than they deserve (*too much black influence*; a 3-point scale reverse coded). The second dimension includes three popularly used, non-racial ideologies: *conservatism*, *individualism*, and *structuralism*. *Conservatism* was measured by using respondents' self-identification on a 7-point scale ranging from extremely liberal (coded 1) to extremely conservative (coded 7). *Individualism* was measured by whether respondents believed that poor people are responsible for their poverty (a 3-point scale reverse coded). *Structuralism* was measured by whether respondents believed that poverty is due to industry's failure to

provide enough jobs (a 3-point scale reverse coded). To see whether any relation among symbolic racism, non-racial ideologies, and opposition to policies would hold, net of other determinants, the third dimension included five socio-demographic control variables that have been the most highly correlated with white racial attitudes in other studies: *social class*, *age*, *education*, *region*, and *rural residence*. *Social class* was measured by the respondents' self-identification (lower/working class = 1). *Age* was measured in years. *Education* was measured by the number of years of formal schooling. *Southern residence* was measured by a dummy variable (South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central = 1). Finally, *rural residence* was measured by a dummy variable (living in an area of less than 10,000 population = 1). The exact question wording for all variables is shown in Appendix A. As shown in Appendix B, zero-order correlations among all variables revealed the expected relations between the dependent and independent variables.

Method

OLS regression models were used to test the efficacy of the selected independent variables on two policy items. These two policy items were successively regressed on the selected independent variables, and the analyses were performed separately for males and females (coded 1). Further, using covariance analysis procedures, possible gender differences in the determinants of whites' opposition were examined. This was done by combining the two sexes, and differences in the relationship between each independent variable and dependent variable across the two sexes were tested by examining the coefficients for the interactions between each independent variable and gender. The effects of males and females, and differences in the effects, could be estimated with a single equation. These effects were identical to what is presented here. The decision to provide three separate columns in each table was based simply on the ease of exhibition.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the gender-specific means and standard deviations for all included variables. Several important patterns emerged. First, consistent with prior research (Kluegel 1990; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Bobo and Kluegel 1993), whites were far more likely to oppose government interventions targeted for blacks than those targeted for the poor. Regardless of gender, whites' opinions were decisively more liberal when policies were targeted for the poor. Second, there appear to be a gender difference, with white males reporting higher levels of opposition than white females. In regards to opposing race-targeted interventions, the gender difference (3.53 for white females and 3.68 for white males) was not statistically significant, however. Third, a substantial gender difference in opposition to government interventions targeting the poor was evident and statistically significant (2.68 for white females and 3.03 for white males).

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for All Variables by Gender

Variables	White Female		White Male				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t*-score	Min.	Max.
Dependent Variables							
Helping Blacks	3.53	1.24	3.68	1.18	-1.51	1	5
Helping the Poor	2.68	1.13	3.03	1.07	-3.58***	1	5
Symbolic Racism							
Denial of Discrimination	.61	.49	.67	.47	-2.46*	0	1
Lack of Will Power	.64	.48	.66	.48	-.47	0	1
Too Much Black Influence	1.70	.74	1.74	.75	-1.03	0	3
Non-Racial Ideology							
Conservatism	4.13	1.38	4.27	1.30	-.47	1	7
Individualism	2.43	.62	2.38	.66	.61	1	3
Structuralism	2.16	.72	2.01	.76	3.02**	1	3
Socio-demographic Factors							
Age	46.63	18.44	44.50	16.42	3.02*	18	89
Southern States	.26	.44	.31	.46	-1.51	0	1
Education	13.05	2.61	13.27	3.27	-1.53	0	20
Lower/Working Class	.46	.50	.48	.50	-.98	0	1
Rural	.39	.49	.38	.49	.07	0	1

Note: Number of cases is 905 (484 white females and 421 white males).
*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Overall, white females and white males held similar racial attitudes, as indicated by three symbolic racism measures. While white females tended to have more liberal racial attitudes than white males, only one racial measure, *Denial of Discrimination*, was significantly different across the sexes (p < .05). Overall, these differences were too weak to sustain the view that white females had more favorable racial attitudes than men, suggesting that they experienced their racial position in much the same way (Hughes and Tuch 2003; Kane 2000). Taken together, a substantial portion of whites believed that blacks caused their own social failing. The analyses that follow examine whether these racial attitudes were tied to whites' opposition to government interventions, net of other determinants.

Gender Differences in Opposition to Race-Targeted Government Interventions

I began by estimating the impact of the independent variables where it was likely to be most pronounced: opposition to policies for which blacks are the intended beneficiaries. Table 2 presents the OLS regression results for the effects of the independent variables on whites' opposition to government interventions targeted for blacks, disaggregated by gender.

Table 2. Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients for Effects of Independent Variables on Whites' Opposition to Government Intervention for Blacks by Gender

Independent Variables	White Female	White Male	Gender Difference
Symbolic Racism			
Denial of Discrimination	.54***	.59***	-.05
	(.12)	(.12)	(.17)
Lack of Will Power	.37**	.23	.14
	(.12)	(.12)	(.17)
Too Much Black Influence	.31***	.24***	.07
	(.07)	(.07)	(.11)
Non-Racial Ideology			
Conservatism	.06	.09*	-.03
	(.04)	(.04)	(.05)
Individualism	.11	.23**	-.12
	(.09)	(.08)	(.12)
Structuralism	-.13	-.10	-.03
	(.07)	(.07)	(.10)
Socio-demographic Factors			
Age	.00	-.00	.00
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Southern States	.15	.02	.13
	(.11)	(.12)	(.16)
Education	-.03	-.03	-.00
	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)
Lower/Working Class	.38***	.14	.24
	(.10)	(.12)	(.16)
Rural	.15	.13	.02
	(.10)	(.11)	(.15)
Constant	2.26***	2.82***	2.82***
	(.45)	(.44)	(.44)
Adjusted R-Square	.26	.22	.25

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors; number of cases is 905 (484 white females and 421 white males). The constant in the "gender difference" column is identical to that of the "white males" column because *gender* is dummy coded (females = 1).
*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001* (two-tailed tests)

For white females, the predicted effects of the three symbolic racism measures were evident, even after controlling for non-racial ideologies and socio-demographic factors. However, none of the non-racial ideologies had any discernable impact on white females' opposition, an indication that symbolic racism measures and/or socio-demographic factors might have erased most of the zero-order effects of nonracial ideologies. To test this, I performed a three-stage regression analysis; the nonracial ideologies were entered first, the socio-demographic controls second, and the symbolic racism measures last (Sears et al. 1997). All three non-racial ideologies were significantly and independently related to white females' opposition in stages 1 and 2 (all *ps* at least < .05), but eliminated in stage 3, an indication that nonracial ideologies had

little residual effect when racial measures were considered simultaneously. In short, symbolic racism appeared to be a consistently more powerful predictor of racial policy preferences than nonracial ideologies among white females.

Consistent with the working-class anger thesis (Kluegel and Smith 1983), social class had a sizable effect among white females. Opposition by the lower/working class might reflect perceived competition between blacks and whites over limited resources (Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000) and the feeling of zero-sum competition that blacks' gains necessarily come at whites' expense (Bobo and Hutchings 1996). In contrast, the effect of social class was not significant at all for white males, an indication that lower/working-class white females were more likely than lower/working class white males to perceive that the government was more likely to overlook their problems in favor of taking care of those of blacks. This difference might stem from white females' relatively weaker socioeconomic status as compared with white males; it is also consistent with the theory of racial alienation, which holds that the feeling of zero-sum competition is more prevalent among those who are collectively oppressed and unfairly treated by society (Bobo and Hutchings 1996).

For white males, two measures of symbolic racism and two non-racial measures were significant. That is, unlike white females, both conservatism and individualism were significantly and independently related to white males' opposition, even after controlling for other variables. This comes as no surprise because an individualist, by definition, is more likely than a structuralist to oppose government spending for social programs. What remains to be seen is whether individualists consistently disfavor government spending, regardless of the intended beneficiaries. This uncertainty will be answered shortly when we examine opposition to government interventions for the poor

I tested the statistical significance of gender differences by pooling the female and male samples and including multiplicative interaction terms in the regression equations. The overall results indicated no significant gender differences, suggesting white females and white males were much alike in regard to the determinants of their opposition to helping blacks. What does this mean to the gender-specific socialization thesis? As stated earlier, if racial prejudice is a product of gender-specific socialization, then we should expect to find significant differences in racial attitudes and policy preferences between white females and white males. The results so far suggest that gender-specific socialization plays only a minor role, if any, in determining racial attitudes and policy preferences.

Gender Differences in Opposition to Non-Race-Targeted Government Interventions

Table 3 presents the OLS regression coefficients for the effects of the independent variables on whites' opposition to helping the poor, disaggregated by gender. It has been empirically well established that whites are significantly more opposed to race-targeted public policies than to comparable policies targeted for the poor (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Bobo and Kluegel 1993). Nevertheless, it also has been empirically well established that whites' opposition to helping the poor has become a "race-coded" issue because its intended beneficiaries are cognitively linked to blacks (Gilens 1999). Given these previous findings, the main focuses of this section are

whether the sexes are as homogeneous in their opposition to race-targeted policies, and whether racialized perceptions of intended beneficiaries, if they exist, differ across the sexes.

Table 3. Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients for Effects of Independent Variables on Whites' Opposition to Government Intervention for the Poor by Gender

Independent Variables	White Female	White Male	Gender Difference
Symbolic Racism			
Denial of Discrimination	.31*	-.27	.58**
	(.15)	(.14)	(.20)
Lack of Will Power	.32*	.03	.29
	(.15)	(.14)	(.21)
Too Much Black Influence	.09	.15	-.06
	(.09)	(.09)	(.13)
Non-Racial Ideology			
Conservatism	.00	.14**	-.14*
	(.05)	(.05)	(.07)
Individualism	.07	.20*	-.13
	(.11)	(.09)	(.15)
Structuralism	-.26**	-.13	-.13
	(.09)	(.09)	(.12)
Socio-demographic Factors			
Age	.01*	.01*	.00
	(.00)	(.00)	(.01)
Southern States	-.01	.02	-.03
	(.14)	(.14)	(.20)
Education	.06*	.02	.04
	(.03)	(.02)	(.03)
Lower/Working Class	.01	-.36**	.37*
	(.13)	(.14)	(.18)
Rural	.16	.24	-.08
	(.12)	(.13)	(.18)
Constant	.52	1.89***	1.89***
	(.56)	(.53)	(.53)
Adjusted R-Square	.12	.10	.13

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors; number of cases is 597 (317 white females and 280 white males). The constant in the "gender difference" column is identical to that of the "white males" column because *gender* is dummy coded (females = 1).
*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001* (two-tailed tests)

Judging from the statistically significant parameters, symbolic racism plays a significant role in predicting white females' opposition to helping the poor. Furthermore, a consistent finding across the two government intervention measures was that non-racial ideologies had little discernable impact in structuring white females' opposition, suggesting that racial attitudes continued to trump non-racial ideologies in predicting white females' opposition. *Structuralism* was the only significant non-racial ideology, and its effect was consistent with that found in prior

research: Those who attributed poverty to societal and structural reasons were more supportive of income-targeted policies (Bobo and Kluegel 1993).

The sociodemographic variables *age* and *education* had a significant effect on white females' opposition to policies targeting the poor. Older respondents were significantly more likely to oppose such policies than younger ones, and the well-educated respondents were less supportive than the less-educated respondents. There is a long-held belief that education has a politically liberalizing effect and that the well-educated display a deeper commitment to racial tolerance, democratic norms, and egalitarian values (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Schuman et al. 1997). Ever since Jackman and Muha's (1984) pioneering work, a growing body of research has questioned this view, arguing that education is more likely to reproduce than alter existing race/class inequalities (Sears et al. 1997; Kane and Kyyrö 2001; Federico 2004). The result here provides no evidence that higher levels of education, net of the effects of other variables, breed more egalitarian values, at least among white females.

A markedly different pattern emerged for the determinants of white male opposition to government interventions targeted for the poor. Overall, the results conformed to expectations: Racial measures clearly did not have important effects on white males' opposition, and among the non-racial measures, social class, age, conservatism, and individualism had significant effects on their opposition. Thus, it can be generally concluded that individualism and conservatism consistently played a significant role in disfavoring government spending, regardless of the intended beneficiaries. In particular, consistent with the principled objection theory, conservatives were more likely than liberals to oppose government interventions based on their disapproval of extensive government involvement in redressing class/race inequalities (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). While the effect of conservatism was significant across the two policy areas among white males, it was virtually non-existent among white females.

The effect of social class was not only significant among white males, but it also differed significantly across the sexes. That is, consistent with the economic self-interest principle, lower/working class whites were significantly more supportive of policies targeted toward the poor than middle/upper class whites. This was as expected because middle/upper class whites have little incentive to support policies from which they do not expect to benefit and because there is a growing frustration among middle/upper class whites that their tax monies are used to support the undeserving poor (Skocpol 1991). But why was this not significant among white females? Once again, this difference might stem from white females' relatively weaker socioeconomic status as compared with white males, and their relatively stronger orientation toward structuralism than individualism.

Taken together, there appear to be some significant gender differences. The effect of symbolic racism disappeared entirely for white males, but not for white females. Even though most white males clearly understood that the poor and blacks are not mutually exclusive groups, and even though they were more likely than white females to oppose government policies designated for the disadvantaged, there was no compelling evidence to suggest that white males' opposition was driven by their racial attitudes. Instead, other factors, such as social class, individualism, and conservatism, appear to have discernable effects on white males' opposition. In contrast, white females' opposition was by and large driven by their racial attitudes. This indicates that white

females are more likely than white males to cognitively link helping the poor with racialized perceptions. This is somewhat paradoxical, considering both white females' lower overall level of opposition and their assumed pro-social orientation. What does this mean to the gender-socialization approach? Consistent with the theory, white females in this sample were significantly less likely than white males to oppose race-neutral policies. But inconsistent with the theory, the result indicated a stronger, rather than a weaker relation between racial measures and policy preferences among white females.

A statistically significant association may or may not be substantively meaningful. The significant gender interaction found here might have been related to having a large sample size, where even weak associations are sometimes found to be statistically significant. To explore this possibility, I repeated the analysis using approximately 75% (N = 455) and 50% (N = 279) of the cases that were randomly selected. The interaction between *gender* and *denial of discrimination* continued to be significant regardless of the sample size ($b = .67, p < .01; b = .82, p < .01,$ respectively). These unanticipated findings suggest directions for needed further research. In keeping with feminist scholarship that emphasizes the intersections of gender, race, and class inequalities, research exploring how white females are uniquely located within the system of multiple inequalities may prove valuable.

DISCUSSION

Utilizing the1990 GSS data, I estimated, separately for white females and males, a set of regression equations to explore how far whites' opposition to government interventions is driven by symbolic racism and non-racial ideologies, net of socio-demographic variables. Two central conclusions emerged from this analysis. First, when analyzing whites' opposition to race-targeted policies, there is little evidence to suggest that white females are more likely than white males to support government interventions targeted for blacks. There is also little evidence to suggest that white females' opposition to such interventions shows distinctively different patterns than that of white males. Taken together, these results cast doubt on the gender socialization approach and support Blumer's (1958) theory of prejudice as "a sense of group position." That is, racial attitudes are shaped more by the interactions of an individual's racial group as a whole with other groups than by his or her set of interpersonal experiences. White females' pro-social orientation might be associated with more favorable *interpersonal* interactions, such as "social distance" attitudes (Johnson and Marini 1998). However, when it comes to opposing *group*-based remedial policies, their shared sense of *group* position appears to be more salient than their pro-social orientation. That is, being white means that one is inherently tied to structures of domination and oppression (Alcoff 1999). White females, in particular, while subordinated by gender inequality, also are privileged by racial inequality. Therefore, given the extensive privileges of whiteness, white females' group interests might be to maintain, legitimate, and perpetuate race-based inequality by opposing race-based remedies that might alter the structures of domination (Alcoff 1999). Put simply, white females are probably keenly aware of the fact that white privilege depends upon the rule of "exclusion."

Second, when analyzing whites' opposition to race-neutral policies, the effects of racial measures virtually disappeared for white males, but not for white females. That is, despite the overlapping social categories of the poor and blacks, there is little evidence to suggest that white males'

opposition is driven by their racial attitudes. Other non-racial measures, such as social class, individualism, and conservatism, appear to have significant, independent effects. In contrast, white females' opposition was driven mostly by symbolic racism. This indicates that white females are more likely than white males to cognitively link helping the poor with racialized perceptions. While this is consistent with Gilens's (1999) finding that racial prejudice is a better predictor of opposition to social welfare than any alternative explanation, such as economic self-interest, egalitarianism, and stratification beliefs, it is still puzzling as to why such racialized perceptions are more pronounced among white females than among white males.

The association between gender and racial attitudes should not be understood apart from its historical context. Given this, one could speculate that while white females and males share a sense of group position as whites, white females might have a stronger consciousness of "whiteness," which might stem from their relatively weaker socioeconomic status as compared with white males. Consequently, perceived threats from blacks might be greater among white females because they are more likely than white males to believe that gains made by blacks necessarily come at whites' expense. These speculations offer a context for interpreting white females' racialized perceptions of race-neutral policies within Blumer's theory of group position. It is also consistent with Bobo and Hutchings's (1996, p. 951) theory of racial alienation: "The more that members of a particular racial group feel collectively oppressed and unfairly treated by society, the more likely they are to perceive members of the other groups as potential threats."

The implications of this research are threefold. First, at the most general level, these findings underscore the need to further explore gender differences in the domain of racial attitudes and policy preferences. Taken together, they strongly suggest that the gender effects are more complex than typically understood. Given that previous research on racial attitudes and policy preferences has been largely confined to examining whites' attitudes toward blacks, we need further research to test this assumed gender homogeneity by examining the determinants of opposition to government interventions across different gender/ethnic groups. For example, Kane and Kyyrö (2001) concluded that racial differences are more pronounced than gender differences in racial attitudes. Similarly, Bobo and Hutchings (1996) reported on the complexity of minority group opposition to government interventions targeted for other minority groups (e.g., Asians *vis-à-vis* Hispanics).

Second, we need additional research to support or reject the argument that women's more positive racial attitudes on the basis of differential gender socialization lead to their support for government interventions (Johnson and Marini 1998). It is well documented that early socialization is a major source of racial prejudice. It is also well documented that females are socialized differently from males to be more concerned about others' well-being (Johnson and Marini 1998). The link between these two sets of findings, however, remains unclear and awaits future research. Research is needed to examine the determinants of opposition in a variety of "opportunity-enhancing" and "outcome-oriented" types of government interventions, for example, job training, educational assistance, and preference in hiring and promotion. By doing so, we should be able to explore how and when whites' racial attitudes permeate both racial and non-racial issues and how these processes differ across the sexes.

Finally, we need further research to explore gender differences in racialized perceptions that oppose race-neutral policies because the existing debate on the effect of gender on policy preferences offers no explanation for the patterns we have observed in this study. Federico (2004) reported that opposition to any given public policy is conditioned not only by its intended beneficiaries, but also by *racialized perceptions* of these beneficiaries. Given that attitudes toward welfare recipients are often confounded with attitudes toward blacks, more so than is the case between the poor and blacks, the effects of gender might be more pronounced in opposition to social welfare than in opposition to helping the poor. In this vein, we await further research exploring the cognitive links between a variety of only implicitly racial policies and racialized perceptions in opposition to such policies among different gender/race groups.

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APPENDIX A: Question Wording for All General Social Survey Items Used in Analyses.

Variables	Questions
Opposition to Helping Blacks	"Some people think that (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans) have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans). (1. I strongly agree government is obligated to help blacks, 2., 3.I agree with both answers, 4., 5. 'I strongly agree that government shouldn't give special treatment.) Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you made up your mind on this?"
Opposition to Helping the Poor	"Some people think that the government in Washington should do everything possible to improve the standard of living of all poor Americans; they are at Point 1 on this card. Other people think it is not the government's responsibility, and that each person should take care of himself; they are at Point 5. (1. I strongly agree the government should improve living standards, 2., 3. I agree with both answers, 4., 5. I strongly agree that people should take care of themselves.) Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you have up your mind on this?"
Denial of Discrimination	"On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination? (1. Yes, 2. No.)"
Lack of Will Power	"On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) just don't have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty? (1. Yes, 2. No.)"
Too Much Black Influence	"Some people think that certain groups have too much influence in American life and politics, while other people feel that certain groups don't have as much influence as they deserve. On this card are three statements about how much influence a group might have. (1. Too much influence, 2. Just about the right amount of influence, 3. Too little influence) For each group I read to you, just tell me the number of the statement that best says how you feel."
Conservatism	"We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal-- point 1--to extremely conservative-- point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale? (1. Extremely liberal, 2. Liberal, 3. Slightly liberal, 4. Moderate, middle of the road, 5. Slightly conservative, 6. Conservative, 7. Extremely conservative)"
Individualism	"Now I will a list of reasons some people give to explain why there are poor people in this country. Please tell me whether you feel each of these is very important, somewhat important, or not important in explaining why there are poor people in this country.

	Lack of effort by the poor themselves. (1. Very important, 2. Somewhat important, 3. Not important.)"
Structuralism	"Now I will a list of reasons some people give to explain why there are poor people in this country. Please tell me whether you feel each of these is very important, somewhat important, or not important in explaining why there are poor people in this country. Failure of industry to provide enough jobs. (1. Very important, 2. Somewhat important, 3. Not important.) "
Age	"Respondent's age at the time of interview."
Southern States	"Region of interview: New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, Pacific."
Education	"What is the highest grade in elementary school or high school that you finished and got credit for? Did you ever get a high school diploma or a GED certificate? Did you complete one or more years of college for credit--not including schooling such as business college, technical or vocational school? IF YES: How many years did you complete?"
Lower/Working Class	"If you were asked to use one of four names for your social class, which would you say you belong in: the lower class, the working class, the middle class, or the upper class? (1. Lower class, 2. Working class, 3. Middle class, 4. Upper class)"
Rural	"Size of place in thousands."

APPENDIX B: ZERO-ORDER CORRELATION MATRIX

	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1.	.31	.31	.13	.24	-.09	-.01	.10	-.06	.03	-.03	-.07	.37	.12
2.		.26	.12	.34	-.03	.09	.12	-.17	.06	.05	-.01	.28	.16
3.			.15	.17	-.03	.13	.20	-.18	.02	.08	-.03	.31	.14
4.				.17	-.09	.09	.00	-.11	-.01	.07	-.01	.20	.14
5.					.03	.06	.07	-.15	.07	.04	.02	.23	.13
6.						-.03	.00	-.17	.16	.06	.09	-.08	-.22
7.							-.05	-.18	-.16	.03	.09	.04	.16
8.								-.13	.06	.15	-.05	.12	.03
9.									-.30	-.10	-.05	-.17	.05
10.										.10	-.03	/15	-.11
11.											.00	.09	.03
12.												-.05	-.13
13.													.29

1. Denial of Discrimination
2. Lack of Will Power
3. Too Much Black Influence
4. Conservatism
5. Individualism
6. Structuralism
7. Age

8. Southern States
9. Education
10. Lower/Working Class
11. Rural
12. Gender
13. Opposition to Helping Blacks
14. Opposition to Helping the Poor

AUTHOR'S NOTE

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Young M. Kim is an assistant professor of sociology at the State University of New York–Oswego. His research focuses on social inequality and mobility, race and ethnicity, and public opinion.   E-mail is: ykim1@oswego.edu.