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The City Is Black, Black Is The City: Exploring The Intersections Of Race And Stratification Beliefs On Policy Preferences

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**THE CITY IS BLACK, BLACK IS THE CITY: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS
OF RACE AND STRATIFICATION BELIEFS ON POLICY PREFERENCES**

by

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THESIS

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DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my family, who have sacrificed time, energy, financial security and so much more in order for me to get to this point in my academic journey. I would also like to dedicate this paper to those influential figures in my life who did not have the opportunity to travel this far in life with me before forever departing and ending the struggle that seems eternal.

To my grandmother Selena Wyatt, cousin/brother Clifford Mason, and my best friend Jerry Kimbrough who first showed me how to take care of my affairs as a man should, whatever that may mean, I carry the lessons that you all taught me to my dying days as they are as invaluable as anything I ever learned in a classroom. It's all about my last name, not my first.

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INTRODUCTION

The decline of American cities in the postindustrial era is well documented (Sugrue 1996; Wilson 1996; Eisinger 2014). Iconic metropolises such as Detroit and Cleveland that were once ripe with investment and prosperity are now centers of crime, joblessness, and high incarceration (Wilson 1996). This deterioration of cities can be linked to several different realities, including the outmigration of industry from central cities, a large reduction in federal funding, and staunch residential segregation policies coupled with massive capital flight from the aforementioned cities (Sugrue 1996; Wilson 1996). During this capital flight, most Whites, and an infinitesimally fewer amount of Blacks who could afford it, left the inner city for the suburbs to follow high paying jobs, leaving cities with a concentration of poor minorities, mostly African Americans (Massey and Denton 1993).

Fast forward to today's "post-racial era" and cities are worst off with no immediate signs of relief from the federal government (Eisinger 2014). Given the current racial makeup of these metropolises, this means that the mass of African Americans are suffering the same effects with no hope in sight. So the question is, why have American cities, and indirectly African Americans, failed in gaining public support for federal investment? The answer may be that federal funding or a public interest in improving the plight of cities or the African American condition rather, are complicated by years of rhetoric that has distorted the public perception of the origin of these social problems.

The explanations we give for why racial inequality persists have profound implications. Specifically, when thinking about African Americans, a significant amount of Whites tend to report that individual factors—such as lack of motivation, rather than structural issues such as

institutional discrimination—explain the Black-White racial gap in many quality of life indicators (Kluegel and Smith 1982; Hunt 1996). Likewise, for Whites, these beliefs have been associated with opposition to race-targeted policies like Affirmative Action to reduce Black-White inequality (Kluegel and Smith 1982; Bobo 1991; Bobo and Kluegel 1993). But how are these beliefs related to policies that do not explicitly target Blacks but nonetheless impact them at greater proportions? Are the patterns similar? This research will investigate the association between stratification beliefs and support for policies to improve living conditions in large U.S. cities. Guetzkow (2010) argues that how individuals explain social failings not only impacts how they perceive the target group's deservingness but also what "long-term" solutions need to be taken to ameliorate their conditions. Consequently, the way racial/ethnic groups perceive Black underachievement could have implications for what policies these groups believe are appropriate to resolve significant social problems, influencing national and local public policy.

Coded language theory forms the core argument for this study. Lopez (2014) argues that coded language, or "dog whistles", in politics operate as metaphors that avoid overt racial pandering but nevertheless evoke strong reactions among different racial groups. These terms, such as "welfare queens" or "illegals" (referring to Mexicans), have been used by politicians to incite racial solidarity among White voters by getting them to vote against any policy that may be perceived to disproportionately benefit undeserving minority groups. In their incensed passion, the White voters do not realize that this manipulation fostered by corporate-backed politicians leads to the Whites voting against their own interests as poor and middle class citizens and to a greater concentration of wealth for the wealthiest individuals (Lopez 2014). In the context of this study, the theory suggests that the term large city operates as a code word for undeserving inner-city

Blacks. Thus, the beliefs that White's ascribe to Black's underachievement will likely influence their support or opposition to policies that impact Blacks directly and indirectly, such as the city question under study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have examined how stratification ideology applies to perceptions about opportunities for Black Americans (Rytina, Form, and Pease 1970; Kluegel and Smith 1982; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Hunt 1996). These studies tend to place stratification ideology into two groups, individualist or structuralist (Merolla, Hunt, and Serpe 2011). Kluegel and Smith (1982) examined White males as more individualist than structuralist and observed that Whites' predominantly subscribe to the dominate ideology, the belief that America is the land of opportunity (Rytina, Form, and Pease 1970). Schuman and Krysan (1999) argue that Whites may tend to take this position due to legislative efforts such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act which aimed to decrease inequality among Blacks. They arrived at this conclusion after finding that the blame which Whites attributed to Blacks themselves for their continued failure to achieve socioeconomic status comparable to Whites consistently increased in the mid-60s to mid-90s.

Before the mid-60s, Whites blamed their own racial group for Black's lack of success. The passing of this landmark legislation, possibly coupled with race riots in many American cities may have led Whites to see a certain illegitimacy in Black's claims of racial discrimination (Schuman and Krysan 1999). Consequently, Whites have been found to be more likely to oppose race-based policies like Affirmative Action to increase Black's opportunity, deeming them as reverse discriminatory and unnecessary.

On the contrary, Blacks tend to be more structural in their explanations of racial stratification which mediates their support for race-targeted policies that reduce inequality (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Hunt 1996). This pattern for Blacks extends to policies that do not exclusively target race as well, as Blacks are more likely than Whites to be supportive of income-targeted policies that reduce inequality for the poor (Bobo and Kluegel 1993) and overall redistributive

policies that hold the federal government responsible for producing widespread equality (Bobo 1991). Hispanics' explanations of inequality have been demonstrated to resemble that of Blacks more closely than they do Whites (Hunt 1996). This possibly suggests that minority status makes one more predisposed to feelings of marginalization perceived to be derived from a structure not meant to benefit them.

Although many earlier studies place stratification ideology within a dichotomy of individual or structural explanations, more recent findings have shown minorities to actually subscribe to dual explanations, both structural and individualist (Hunt 2007; Merolla, Hunt, and Serpe 2011). This pattern for minorities increases in areas with high concentrated poverty (Merolla, Hunt, and Serpe 2011), while Whites become more contemptuous of Blacks as local populations of African Americans increase (Taylor 1998). These realities have far-reaching implications for postindustrial cities since many of them are aggressively segregated by race with levels of concentrated poverty higher than that seen in suburban or rural areas (Massey and Denton 1993). As the rise of purely motivational, or individual, explanations for Black underachievement continues (Kluegel 1990; Hunt 2007), individuals are likely more reticent of policies perceived to reduce inequality for African Americans.

Early studies of Blacks' support for redistributive policy demonstrated general support independent of social class differences (Hope and Independence 1989). However, later studies revealed that income plays a significant role in support for redistributive policies (Shelton and Wilson 2009). While previous studies demonstrate that Blacks are more likely than Whites to support race-targeted policies as well as overall redistributive policies, Shelton and Wilson (2009) found that this support differs among different income brackets. Privileged Blacks are significantly less likely than poorer Blacks to support such policies, possibly due to the negative perception that

successful Blacks have achieved their status because of unfair affirmative action programs. This finding aligns with Wilson's (1987) class polarization theory. He asserted that as more middle class Blacks moved to suburban areas leaving poor Blacks isolated in ghettos, solidarity among the group diminished along with their views on social policy.

As outlined above, prior studies address how racial stratification explanations vary between groups and within groups, how explanations have changed over time, and how they mediate support for race-targeted policy. What remains to be explored is the extent to which these explanations transcend policies that explicitly target race. The fact that beliefs about Blacks predict support for policies targeted towards those same Blacks may seem commonsensical. Thus the present study looks at how these beliefs may predict support for policies that do not exclusively target Blacks. The current racial composition of most large postindustrial cities in the U.S. and the persistent racial inequality present in those metropolises seems to indicate a link between race, inner city life, and marginalization. That said, the current study seeks to provide a new way of understanding how problems of race and perception carryover to other aspects of life in the so called post racial era.

How White Cities Became Black Cities

During the Great Depression scores of African Americans left the South in search of lucrative manufacturing jobs available in northern industrial cities like Cleveland, Chicago, and Detroit (Sugrue 1996; Wilson 2010). During this time, African Americans were able to enjoy upward mobility due to the higher than average wages that large scale manufacturers like Ford and General Motors afforded. However, after World War II, manufacturing jobs provided by American automakers declined and began to move out of central cities and into suburban areas (Sugrue

1996). The move had a negative impact on most middle class African Americans who could not afford to follow industrial jobs into the suburbs like their White counterparts (Sugrue 1996; Wilson 1996). Racial restrictions to move into the suburbs were placed on Blacks through the institution of federally subsidized policies that fueled residential segregation and were reinforced by private banks and real estate agents (Wilson 1996; 2010). As more Whites, and a significantly fewer amount of African Americans who could afford to move, left cities, the more cities became highly concentrated with poor Blacks, leading to a series of metropolitan social problems. Wilson (1996) observed that in 1959 less than one-third of the nation's poor lived in central cities compared to almost half by 1991. At the same time that massive capital flight was occurring in metropolitan areas, the federal government's lack of "support for basic urban programs profoundly aggravated the problems of inner-city neighborhoods" (Wilson 2010: 35).

Douglass Massey traces the concentration of Blacks in the largest Northeast and Midwest cities to being the reason behind Blacks persistent underclass status. He insists that "in the nation's largest urban areas, these groups [Blacks and Puerto Ricans] are the only ones that have experienced high levels of residential segregation and sharp increase in poverty" and "the urban underclass is confined primarily to the Northeast and Midwest, and to mostly a small number of large metropolitan areas, such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Baltimore (Massey 1990: 352)." Census data backs these claims as the greatest concentration of African Americans tends to be in these large postindustrial cities. Consequently, the poverty rate in these principal cities is higher than that found anywhere else in the United States (US Census 2014).

Individualism, Group Interests, Racial Coding and Policy Preferences

No study on race beliefs and policy preferences could be comprehensive without a review of the literature detailing why Blacks' and Whites' policy preferences diverge. As aforementioned

Whites tend to be more individualist in their beliefs about inequality compared to Black. Studies demonstrating a link between individualism and opposition to redistributive policies (Bobo 1991) may explain why Whites typically oppose government initiatives to reduce racial inequality.

Kluegel and Smith (1986) found individualism to have an important and significant influence on American's policy preferences. Moreover, those Whites who generally scored higher on measurements of individualism likewise tended to espouse more negative attitudes concerning Blacks (Gilens 1995). People who are more individualist in their beliefs also tend to be more politically conservative and thus less supportive of large government efforts to make life more fruitful for a perceived undeserving population (Feagin 1972). Race attitudes concerning Blacks seemingly amplify Whites' opposition to redistributive policies as Gilens (1995) found them to be the single most important factor for opposition to welfare, even more so than individualism.

Scholars have insisted that group interests play a pivotal role in how racial groups construct their policy preferences (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Blumer 1958). This theory suggests that individuals view themselves as members of a racial group and consequently view their group in relation to other groups. These racial groups characterize themselves in opposition to one another. Race prejudice increases in the White group as they feel superior and fundamentally different from the other group with a claim to privilege and a suspicion that the subordinate group places a threat to the benefits of said group (Blumer 1958). In light of these beliefs, members of the dominant group tend to be opposed to any policy that is not in the interest of the group (Kinder and Sanders 1996). It is assumed that for this reason Whites of all classes demonstrate more opposition than Blacks to policies such as affirmative action and welfare, which are perceived to disproportionately advantage Blacks while disadvantaging Whites. Blumer argues that this mode of thinking "reflects, justifies, and promotes the social exclusion of the subordinate group" (1958: 5).

Along these lines, Lopez (2014) argues that Whites are in fact misled to vote against their own self-interest by conservative politicians who frame specific issues as Black problems. In this theory, “color coding” is the modus operandi with an obvious link between race and individualist thinking. Blacks are cast as undeserving recipients of government aid and the fact that Whites benefit from these policies as well is largely lost by the White population. Race prejudice seems to be a strong motivator for policy preferences. Gilens (1996) observed Whites to espouse negative views of both White and Black single mother welfare cheats, but only the negative view of Black mothers was associated with opposition to welfare. Further research is necessary to analyze the influence of race attitudes on race implicit policies to determine the extent of color coding and what may need to be done to gain political backing for policies to ameliorate racial inequality.

DATA AND METHODS

To achieve the goals of this study I use a quantitative approach. Specifically, I use secondary data analysis of the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS), a national sample of noninstitutionalized residents aged 18 or over. The GSS is a nationally representative survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) every year since 1972. While several researchers interested in racial stratification beliefs have used the GSS before to analyze data, this study investigates data specifically from the most recent file. The election of the United States' first Black president, for many, marked the beginning of the so-called post racial period. Thus the belief in plentiful opportunity for all Americans, especially Blacks, may be higher than years past.

Dependent Variables

The two dependent variables for the study are government assistance to Blacks and government assistance for large cities. They are used to represent the concepts of racially explicit policies versus racially implicit policies. Respondents were prompted "We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money or about the right amount." The variables are coded in ascending order with too little money as 1, about the right amount as 2, and too much money as 3. For the purposes of this study, those who believe that the government spends too little money will be coded as supportive of the policy. Those who believe that the government spends too much money will be coded as being opposed to the policy. Therefore, the increase of scores for the dependent variable represents opposition to the policies, since if an individual believes that federal spending for these areas are about right or too much, they are unlikely to support increased efforts.

Independent Variables

The independent variables are race and an individual and structural racial stratification belief. Race is represented as White or Black. The individual stratification belief is “On the average African Americans have worse jobs, income and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are because most African Americans just don't have the motivation or willpower to pull themselves up out of poverty?” The structural stratification belief is “On the average African Americans have worse jobs, income and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination?” Both variables are dichotomous as respondents can answer yes (1) or no (0). In addition, I include two interaction variables for race and stratification beliefs to assess if the impact of the stratification beliefs vary by racial group. This interaction is achieved by multiplying both race variables by the variable that represents the belief that Blacks lack the willpower to get out of poverty and by multiplying the race variable by the belief that discrimination is the reason for the Black – White achievement gap. Three analyses will be included, one for Whites exclusively, one for Blacks exclusively, and one for the entire sample.

Control Variables

The study also includes several pure control variables to reduce spuriousness of findings. These variables include sex, income, region, political views, and education and many were dummy coded in order to provide salient comparisons of different demographics. Sex was dummy coded to compare females to males. In addition, political views were dummy coded to compare liberals and moderates to conservatives, while South became a dummy variable for region. Income was recoded from a continuous variable to a categorical variable to compare different brackets or social class groups. Lastly, education included four categories ranging from high school graduate or less to college graduate with an advanced degree. High school graduate or less acts as the reference group in the analyses. The literature played a significant role in the selection of each control

variable. Simple bivariate cross tabulations and descriptive statistics are reported for preliminary analyses. Multivariate ordinal logistic regression is used to analyze the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variables.

Hypotheses

H1: For Whites, the belief that Blacks lack the willpower to pull themselves out of poverty is associated with opposition to government spending to help Blacks and to improve big cities. There will be no such relationship found for Blacks.

H2: For Whites, the belief that Black – White differences are because of discrimination is associated with support for government spending to help Blacks and to improve big cities. There will be no such relationship among Blacks.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Analysis

Table 1 demonstrates that there are significant differences between Blacks and Whites for every variable except the belief that Blacks lack the willpower to pull themselves out of poverty. Blacks are nearly twice as likely to believe that discrimination is the reason for the Black – White achievement gap. Blacks are three times more likely to believe that increased government efforts are required for assisting Blacks, and almost twice as likely to believe that increased government spending is needed for improving cities.

Cross tabulations (not shown) demonstrated that almost 47 percent of Whites who believe that Blacks lack the willpower to pull themselves out of poverty oppose additional spending to improve large cities compared to almost 41 percent of blacks who believe the same thing. About 24 percent of Whites who believe that discrimination explains black underachievement support additional spending for large cities. This number on the surface appears underwhelming, however this proportion more than doubles the percentage of Whites who do not believe that discrimination explains Black underachievement but support the policy. Given this observation, it would appear that this belief holds significance among Whites as they construct their political outlook. In fact, both the individualist explanation and the structural explanation appear to be significant predictors of policy support/ opposition for Whites as compared to Blacks.

Regression Analyses

Table 2 demonstrates that both structural and individual stratification beliefs are substantively and statistically significant predictors of Whites' support for increased government spending for Blacks. The belief that Blacks lack will is associated with Whites' opposition to the policy while the belief that Blacks are discriminated against is associated with support for

increased spending for Blacks, as predicted in the hypotheses. While observing Blacks, table 2 demonstrates that individual explanations have no effect on Blacks support or opposition to race targeted additional spending. However, the belief that racial stratification persists due to discrimination against blacks, or structural explanations, is associated with Blacks' support for increased race-targeted spending. This finding suggests that hypothesis 2 should be rejected.

Although the findings demonstrate that structural explanations work in a similar fashion when predicting support for additional race-targeted spending for both Whites and Blacks, the differing coefficients seemingly suggest that these beliefs mean more for Whites than do for Blacks. To test if this statement is true, an analysis of the total sample along with interaction variables for race and stratification beliefs is included in the third and fourth columns of table 3. Here significant p values for the interaction variable representing Whites who believe Blacks lack will demonstrates statistically that individual stratification beliefs are statistically more important to Whites when predicting support for additional race-targeted spending. The interaction variable representing Whites who believe that discrimination holds Blacks back was found to be significant at the 95 percent confidence level. This finding means that the belief in structural explanations for Black – White inequality hold greater importance for Whites as compared to Blacks. More simply, the belief that Blacks are systematically oppressed may be a necessity for gaining White support for policies that seek to help African Americans. The table demonstrates that although structural explanations similarly predict support for additional race-targeted spending for both groups, the effect is stronger for Whites. At any rate, the direction of the effects of both interaction variables combined with the main effects of the two racial stratification beliefs shows that Whites attitudes toward federal assistance for Blacks is more dependent on their racial attitudes than Black attitudes toward federal assistance for Blacks.

Table 3 presents data on the effects of racial stratification beliefs on support for additional spending on large cities. When observing the effect of beliefs on support for increased federal spending by racial group, it is discovered that contrary to the hypothesis, the belief that Blacks lack will has no effect on Whites support for increased federal spending for cities, but does has an effect on Black support. Contrary to this finding however, the belief that Black – White achievement disparities are the result of discrimination have an effect on White support for additional spending for cities but none for Blacks. Given these results it would appear that Whites, who are generally more opposed to additional federal spending for cities than Blacks are, only view additional spending as favorable if they view the potential target population as being significantly hampered by structural inequality. To the more supportive Blacks this belief is irrelevant but the way their opposition is very much linked to their belief in the deservingness of the potential target population. Interaction variables in the third and fourth columns of table 3 demonstrate substantive and significant differences between the effects of the two groups' racial attitudes on support for additional federal spending for cities. The effect of structural explanations on support for federal spending for cities are significantly stronger for Whites while the effects of individual explanations are significantly stronger for Blacks. The interaction of individualist beliefs about Blacks and belonging to the White race is insignificant at 95 percent confidence interval but significant at the 90 percent interval. A larger sample size of Blacks may have pushed this coefficient past the 95 percent threshold which would have suggested that individualist beliefs as it pertains to policy preferences regarding race implicit ambitions, like urban development, are more important to Blacks than for Whites. However, as it stands now, that assertion cannot be accepted statistically.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and T Tests

	White	Black
Variables		
Govt. Spend Black (not enough)	20.8	63.7*
Govt. Spend Cities (not enough)	16.6	30.2*
Blacks lack will (yes)	44.3	42.7
Institutional Discr. (yes)	29.1	54.2*
Female	53.8	65.3*
Conservative	21.1	9.9*
Moderate	60.8	67.7*
Liberal	15.4	18.8*
Income	17.9	14.63*
Bachelors	20.9	12.5*
Advanced Degree	12.5	7.1*
South	19	33.3*
Total	2910	585

*=sig.>.05

Table 2: Government Spending on Blacks Regressed by Racial Beliefs

	Whites	Blacks	Total Sample	Total Sample
White			.635***	.424***
Blacks lack will	.295***	.081	.261***	.051
Inst. Discrimination	-.437**	-.207*	-.226*	-.397***
Age	.002	-.005	.001	.001
Some college educ.	.063	.209	.097	.095
Bachelor's degree	-.060	.233	-.031	-.020
Advanced degree	-.095	-.001	-.091	-.083
Sec. lowest income cat	.035	-.024	.018	.023
Middle income cat	.052	.062	.054	.061
Sec. highest income cat	.064	.011	.052	.056
Highest income cat	.157	.074	.143^	.143^
South	-.005	.121*	.012	.014
Female	.001	-.233*	-.034	-.036
Liberal	-.325**	-.181**	-.306***	-.323***
Moderate	-.114**	-.125**	-.130*	-.129*
Black lack will * White				.258*
Inst. Discrim * White			-.223*	
Total	819	179		999

*=sig.>.05 **=sig.>.01 ***=sig.>.001 ^=sig.>0.1

Table 3: Government Spending on Cities Regressed by Racial Beliefs

	Whites	Blacks	Total Sample	Total Sample
White			.256***	.350***
Blacks lack will	.013	-.266*	.207^	.041
Inst. Discrimination	.243***	.219^	-.168***	.107
Age	.001	-.005	0	0
Some college educ	.080	.311	.149	-.147
Bachelor's degree	-.074	.127	-.075	-.078
Advanced degree	-.168*	-.262	-.183*	-.177*
Sec. lowest income cat	.003	-.255	-.039	-.045
Middle income cat	.008	.048	.028	.028
Sec. highest income cat	.009	.127	.009	.002
Highest income cat	.010	.279	-.019	-.010
South	.124*	.398**	.181**	.181**
Female	.079	-.006	-.068	.071
Liberal	-.342**	-.269	-.297***	-.261***
Moderate	-.245**	-.011	-.233***	-.227***
Black lack will * White			-.201^	
Inst. Discrim * White				-.351**
Total	822	179		995

*=sig>.05 **=sig.>.01 ***=sig.>.001 ^=sig.>0.1

DISCUSSION

So what does all this mean? Regarding racial stratification beliefs, it has been demonstrated that they predict support for racially implicit policies in the same manner in which they predict support for racially explicit policies, adding some credibility to the theory that color coding plays a role in how Americans construct their political preferences. For instance, individual explanations for Black poverty predict both opposition to increased federal spending for race explicit policies as well as race implicit policies, while structural explanations predict the opposite for both types of policy. But when race is isolated much more is revealed. It is observed that when thinking about race explicit versus race implicit federal spending, only certain stratification beliefs matter to each group. For Whites, when Blacks are exclusively targeted for federal assistance, both individual and structural beliefs are important factors for predicting their support or opposition for these policies. However, this pattern does not seem to hold up for Blacks. On the contrary, when looking at policies that may be implicitly linked to Blacks, structural explanations are stronger predictors for White support than they are for Black support, while individual explanations are stronger predictors for Black opposition than they are for White opposition, contrary to the hypothesis. Given the data laid out, it would seem that the theory of “dog whistling” or racial code words holds true. The similar nature of the correlations found in the model created to represent racially targeted to the model constructed to represent a racially implicit policy, suggests that certain terms signify race and the way individuals think about race has profound influence on the acceptance of those policies.

Simple descriptive statistics demonstrate that Whites are significantly less supportive of both increased federal spending that explicitly targets Blacks and those that implicitly impact

Blacks. Whites also tend to be significantly less likely to subscribe to structuralist explanations for Black underachievement than Blacks. Given this information, the findings seem to suggest to Whites are likely to be supportive of policies that disproportionately or completely impact Blacks only if they perceive African Americans as being inhibited by structural constraints. Since so few Whites agree with this assertion, the prospects for White support for these policies are dismal. In order to gain much needed backing for marginalized Black populations, advocates for inner city redevelopment should turn their attention to illuminating the structural inequities that perpetuate Black – White inequality to alter public opinion.

Katznelson (2005), when discussing how Blacks can acquire greater support for affirmative action, suggests that advocates work to demonstrate specific forms of past discrimination towards Blacks and offer policy prescriptions that can feasibly remedy that discrimination for the particular individuals affected by it. For example, as it pertains to housing discrimination, he suggested that civil rights groups demonstrate how certain individuals were barred from owning a home due to specific discriminatory practices. The children of these individuals thus lacked the opportunity to inherit wealth that was available to their White counterparts. In light of this, he proposed short term funding for the families affected to purchase homes as a means to remedy past discrimination. The same can be done for inner city redevelopment. Advocates can highlight how specific structural realities negatively impacted Blacks in certain post-industrial cities and work on particular policy prescriptions to give these individuals greater access to upward mobility opportunities. This proposal is no small feat as it will take an exorbitant amount of financial investment, social scientific research, and access to media outlets to carry out this plan. Even if these challenges are confronted, there still remains the task of convincing powerful interests that do not directly or indirectly benefit from Black

marginalization that altering society in a more egalitarian way is more profitable. As it stands now, a multitude of interests are served by the mere presence of high levels of racial inequality. For these groups, racial inequality is functional. Nevertheless, if the structural inequality is made more visible to all racial groups, there stands a chance to close the racial divide in policy preferences.

This study is limited by the nature of the data used in the analyses. More information may have been revealed if it would have been possible to ask respondents about specific policies that are understood to improve large cities. It is true that some policies that may be viewed by the public to improve large cities do not affect Blacks much at all and may even benefit Whites more than any other group. For example, policies to build new sports arenas usually gain widespread support from Whites but do not really affect Black populations because they do not have the means to attend sports events in large number like Whites. Policies such as this type may technically be a policy that may improve cities for some but they do not qualify as a social policy that would improve the life chances of residents, which is what the study seeks to measure. This reality may skew the data for the general question that was used in this particular study. More specific policies may generate even wider gaps between Black support and White support than was observed here. At any rate, the findings of this study are consistent with past research and provide valuable insight and direction for future studies. At the very least, the study demonstrates that how individuals think about race very much affects what they think needs to be done to improve certain aspects of society that do not always impact one particular group.

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ABSTRACT**THE CITY IS BLACK, BLACK IS THE CITY: EXPLORING THE
INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND STRATIFICATION BELIEFS ON
POLICY PREFERENCES**

by

RANDALL WYATT**May 2016****Advisor:** Khari Brown**Major:** Sociology**Degree:** Master of Arts

This paper examines the association between race blame attitudes with support for policies aimed at improving the nation's large cities among White and Black Americans. Although legislative safeguards protect the constitutional rights of all Americans, Blacks trail Whites on nearly all quality of life indicators. By extension, the quality of life within cities with disproportionate and segregated Black populations is decidedly worse than in other cities. That said, the current study largely finds that black and white Americans maintain different motivations for supporting increased or decreased funding for large urban American cities, which often serves as a code word for Black cities. According to the General Social Survey (2014), among whites, individuals that believe that racial inequality result from a lack of Black effort are more likely than others to believe that that the government does not need to offer any additional help to large American cities. This relationship, however, does not hold up for Blacks, suggesting perhaps that the word "city" operates as a code word for Whites that spurs racial resentment.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Growing up on the west side of Detroit, Michigan, Randall Wyatt experienced his early life much like any other young so called “Black” kid enveloped in the precariousness of everyday living in America’s ghettos. It was here that he learned that true intelligence is not always what one learns in graduate classrooms or difficult to decipher scholarly books, but having the aptitude to employ ones available resources to survive. Consequently, seeing that many of the individuals around him possessed the resources to survive but not necessary the ones needed to live (two very distinct things), he was inclined to engage the graduate classrooms and scholarly books aforementioned to possibly uncover the solutions to the problems his people faced. It was not long before he realized that he would have to find his own answers which brought him to the field of sociology.

He arrived at the conclusion that in order to help groups of people, he would undoubtedly have to become an expert on groups of people. Randall Wyatt earned his Bachelor’s degree in Sociology from Wayne State University with a minor in Africana Studies in 2014. He plans to graduate with his Master’s degree in 2016 and is already pursuing his doctorate in the field of sociology.

Although being an academic and intellectual is incredibly fulfilling to Randall, the one thing, actually two things, which for him trumps this role is being a husband to his endearing wife and father to his sons. He acknowledges that each role he fills is invaluable to his own sociology and understanding of the world we live in.