

Racial Politics Complicated: The Work of Gendered Race Cues in American Politics¹

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“Of the greatest importance, the Negro male, particularly in the South, became an object of intense hostility, an attitude unquestionably based in some measure of fear....Keeping the Negro ‘in his place’ can be translated as keeping the Negro male in his place: the female was not a threat to anyone.”—Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Moynihan Report*, 1965.

No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have black women... When black people are talked about the focus tends to be on black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women.

— bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 1981.

“...when the practices expound identity as woman or person of color as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling.” —Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins,” 1991.²

We quote the report on African Americans authored by Kennedy and Johnson advisor Daniel Patrick Moynihan in the build-up to Johnson’s Great Society programs and Kimberle Crenshaw’s groundbreaking work on intersectional identity politics to point to a repeated but still misunderstood and understudied piece of American politics. Despite the push of scholars for the idea of intersectionality (e.g., Crenshaw 1991; Patricia Hill Collins 2000; Hancock 2004, 2007)—the idea that politically meaningful identities are found at the intersections of simple social grouping

¹ McConnaughy and White are Associate Professors of Political Science at The George Washington University. For helpful comments on this project we thank Angie Bos, Nancy Burns, Claudine Gay, Leonie Huddy, Vincent Hutchings, Donald Kinder, Rose McDermott, Tali Mendelberg, Gladys Mitchell, Kira Sanbonmatsu, Monica Schneider, Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, Candis Watts Smith, Katherine Tate, Nicholas Valentino, and all of the participants of the Center for Political Studies Workshop at the University of Michigan, the Conference on Methodology in Political Psychology at The Ohio State University, and the New Research on Gender in Political Psychology Conference at Rutgers University. For research assistance we thank Nyron Crawford, Chryl Laird, Emily Lynch, and Yalidy Matos.

²Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. 1965. “The Negro Family: The Case For National Action.” Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor Action; Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.” *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241-1299.

categories³—political science research endeavoring to understand the work of the politically salient categories of race and gender has generally conceived of and operationalized them as uni-dimensional, referencing just a single group membership. Our concern is with how this practice narrows our understanding of how Americans actually use race and gender in political evaluations and decisions, missing important ways in which social categories defined by both race and gender are brought to bear. Our first point is found in the words of Moynihan: that our employment of race in American politics is one that has been consistently differentiated by gender. Our second point comes from both Moynihan and Crenshaw: that the specific race-gender differentiation placed at the center of our discourse of race in American politics is so often that of the black male. We are motivated to understand the consequences of these realities in the specific realm of political communication—the medium through which political elites can cue to the American public the relevance of racial considerations for their political attitudes and actions.

We focus in this paper on the workings of race-gender categories in political decision-making among whites, where we add to and complicate a well-established literature on racial cue-taking in political communication from elites (media, political campaigns, etc.).⁴ Our central argument is that gendered racial subgroups, in particular, provide an important outlet for the work

³ We are, admittedly, only taking up a piece of what comes from the large and growing literature on “intersectionality” and related concepts of multiple and “interlocking” political identities. For an excellent overview of the landscape we do not address, see Dhamoon, Rita Kaur. 2011.

“Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality.” *Political Research Quarterly* 64(1): 230-243.

⁴ For other racial groups, we expect that the process is more politically complicated, and thus we leave that work for a future project. For example, for black Americans, we expect that the construction of notions of “blacks” is importantly tied to linked fate politics in the venue of black-white political relations. The most relevant discourse here is one of unity and positive in-group sentiment. That is, we take the overwhelming message of black political discourse on the achievement of racial equality and representation of blacks’ interests in mainstream American politics to forward a uniquely politicized construction of the group “blacks” among African Americans; one constructed as a by-product of inter-group politics. In contrast, we expect that categories defined by race *and* gender derive their meaning through a more complicated set of processes of in-group differentiation.

of racial cues in political communication from elites on ordinary white citizens' political decision-making. The gender modifier, we argue, is not simply a technical correction, but rather a pattern to be expected given previous work both on the American political experience of "race" and on gender as normalized differentiation. That is, we take as important the ways in which the politics of race have happened at intersections of race and gender identities and the observation that constructions of gender categories—at least somewhat differently than race categories—seem stubbornly impervious to conversations about the impropriety of categorical thinking and violations of egalitarian norms. For white Americans, we expect that stereotypical notions of blacks, whether gender differentiated or not, are constructed in the realm of racial outgroup politics. That is, we expect that notions of racial differences and notions of race-gender differences are created and maintained in largely the same political process (though not with the same content)—through political discourse that distinguishes whites from blacks, but also black men from white men, white women from black women, and perhaps most saliently, black men from white women.

What centrally motivates all of the American political discourse of race is a politics of "othering." What we expect to be unique about race-gender differentiation among whites is its particular political ease and resonance. Thus, though some have argued that modern American social norms of egalitarianism and racial tolerance may push against explicit "racial" talk and differentiation, which may limit the discourse of distinction by "black" and "white" (e.g., Mendelberg 2001), we argue that gender subgrouping normalizes racial discourse. Moreover, as Moynihan's and Crenshaw's observations underscore, these gender-differentiated racial categories have been leveraged in American politics in ways that have generally underscored the threat of black men, the preciousness of white women, and an invisibility of black women. We take this to imply that not only will white Americans readily describe race-gender differences, but that they will be

most easily cued to use the most practiced race-gender outgroup differentiation—that of the threatening black male—in their political evaluations and decisions.

To test our arguments about race-gender differentiation, we turn to the stereotypes of groups defined by both race and gender and their ability to explain support for public policies. We concentrate on stereotypes both because of their demonstrated function as central constructs in the psychological associative networks about groups that individuals bring to bear in their political decision-making (e.g., Lodge and Stroh 1993; Lau 1986), and because work within the psychological literature on subgrouping that suggests gender specific sub-categories are, in fact, particularly meaningful to Americans' constructions of their categorical racial beliefs (Brewer et al. 1981, Stangor et al 1992). Our argument leads us to two types of tests. The first are tests of the content of race versus race-gender categories, where we expect not only that these two types of stereotypes are empirically distinguishable, but also that the pattern of politics will lead to particular distinction of the categories “black men” and “white women,” and particular difficulty among whites in distinguishing the category “black women.” We find strong evidence across both explicit stereotype measures and an experimental manipulation of the implicit measurement strategy of the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP) that black men are seen by white Americans in uniquely pejorative terms. We also find evidence of a unique moral veneration of white women in the stereotype measures. And we find white Americans fail to have well-distinguished ideas about black women—that the category “black” is in some dimensions highly correlated with views of black men, but also that black women on other dimensions fall outside the construct of “women.” The second type of test is then of the consequences of these categories for racializing politics. We offer race-gender cues in political communication about a policy area where others have argued that race has been important—crime—and test whether these cues differentially shape the policy attitudes white Americans express. We find that attitudes about black men, specifically, significantly increase

support for punitive crime policy, and do so only in the presence of the explicit cue of a black male suspect.

Gender and Race—Normalized and Practiced Differentiation

We turn to gender as essential in understanding contemporary American racial politics for two reasons. First, we note that several literatures point strongly in the direction of gender as a particularly “normalized” form of categorical social differentiation. Gender is a set of ideas or ideologies that explains and expounds differences between individuals of differently sexed bodies—male and female in its simplest constructions. As a system of categorical social differentiation gender is marked by the unique degree to which it is bound to everyday and intimate social interaction. Men and women, in other words, necessarily live in close and intimate arrangements, meaning not only that “gender” is practiced in daily routines, but that such differentiation is, at least in some incarnations, tied to positive emotions (like love). In this way, gender is an especially strong and normalized tool of categorical social differentiation, an argument that has been made in some form or another by sociologists (e.g., Jackman 1994), psychologists (e.g., Fiske & Stevens 1993) and political scientists (e.g., Winter 2008). We take this insight to be particularly important for understanding the possibilities for continued practices of racial distinction in the presence of more broadly accepted norms against racial discrimination. If differentiating first between “boys” and “girls” and then “men” and “women” is deemed by many individuals as, at least to some extent, natural, as studies of the development of gender identity might suggest, (see Powlishta et al. 2001 for a relevant review), then the modifiers of “men” and “women” or “male” and “female” stand as ready tools for making racialized distinctions without making “racist” distinctions. To say, for example, that black men are generally violent can be read as making a distinction defensible on the

more comfortable grounds of gender differentiation—that the ascription hinges in an important way on the “maleness,” and is thus not an assertion of racial group differences.

Second, and just as important, gender is deeply embedded in the social information used to construct race. Gender importantly permeates the contemporary “real information” that Americans collect about racial groups. From Moynihan’s report to contemporary coverage of social welfare, Americans encounter messages about the tendency for black women to head (poor) households and black men to desert them. Even positively valenced messages often carry such gender distinction. When, for example, President Johnson famously addressed the 1965 graduating class at Howard University, his commentary singled out success in how the “median income of Negro college women tonight exceeds that of white college women,” and yet how “the income of Negro men relative to white men declined in every section of this country.” In contemporary discourse, oft-repeated crime statistics point to the peculiar representation of black males in the criminal justice system (Gilliam and Iyengar 200). Indeed, the media have recently made note of a tide of “black women rising”—trends of increasing educational and career attainment among black women, which are readily juxtaposed against accounts of the “endangered black male”—the latter group characterized by its high incarceration and mortality rates, as well as its comparatively lower educational and employment prospects.⁵

Taking together the power of gender differentiation and its common use in the public discourse of race, we argue, implies not only that gendered racial stereotypes should be available to the average American for possible use in their political judgments, but also that by attaching a gender qualifier to a racial cue, perceptions of a contradiction between egalitarian norms and the use

⁵ President Lyndon B. Johnson's Commencement Address at Howard University: “To Fulfill These Rights,” June 4, 1965. (Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965. Volume II, entry 301, pp. 635-640. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1966). “From Schools to Jobs, Black Women Are Rising Much Faster Than Black Men; What It Means for Work, Family and Race Relations.” *Newsweek*, February 23, 2003.

of racialized thinking should be alleviated. That is, given the normalization of categorical thinking about men and women, categorical thinking about black men, black women, white men and white women can be justified. For whites, attitudes about gendered racial groups are thus a normatively acceptable alternative to “racial” thinking. Gender, we argue, solves the ambivalence problem, enabling explicit (gendered) racial cues to influence whites’ thinking by invoking their stereotypic notions of the gendered racial subgroups.

Racial Cue-taking

The current dominant theoretical perspective about racial cue-taking in contemporary American politics is centered on understanding white Americans’ use of race in their evaluations of policies and political figures. Central is work by Mendelberg (2001) that argues racial cue-taking is an automatic or outside of consciousness process, one that works only when the racial cues provided are implicit. This argument focuses on the contradiction between the presently widely held American norm of equality and negative affect or pejorative thinking about racial minority groups—particularly African Americans. Mendelberg argues that when white Americans are aware of the racial content of political messages, this contradiction results in ambivalence and thus suppression of the suggested racialization. Hence, effective cues to race need to be subtle (implicit cues), providing just enough racial content to provide racial meaning, but not so much (explicit cues) that people actively think about—and hence repress—that racial meaning. While there has been some challenge to Mendelberg’s explicit/implicit model (Huber and Lapinski 2008), a significant and growing body of research is supportive of the model (Valentino, Hutchings & White 2002; Hurwitz & Peffley 2005; White 2007; Mendelberg 2008). These are mostly experimental studies that provide implicit or explicit racial cues within some piece of political communication, such as an advertisement or news story, and look for increased effects of negative racial attitudes on the target policy or candidate.

That is, they are looking for racial priming effects—and find them in response to implicit racial cues, but not in response to explicit ones.

Despite the research supportive of Mendelberg's explicit/implicit model, the reality of a significant amount of explicit racial content in American political discourse challenges the notion that explicit messages are with no effect on ordinary citizens' understandings and political choices. This includes the reality that racial minority candidates for elective office are still consistently explicitly labeled by their race in public discourse—no doubt in part because they are still novel enough that their race tends to attract attention. In other work, one of us has argued (White 2007) that racial politics among non-Whites indeed depends on explicit racial cues. Most obviously, racial minorities do not face an inherent conflict between their central racial attitudes—in-group identification—and egalitarian norms. This negates the ambivalence problem articulated by Mendelberg. More important, implicit racial cues tend to be ineffective among racial minorities to the extent that they tend to prime particular subgroup-specific or negative representations of the in-group.

Our contention is that that the ambivalence problem among whites articulated by Mendelberg can be solved in ways other than implicit cues. One such solution is suggested by work on ethnic priming by Mendelberg and Berinsky (2005) and McConnaughey et al. (2010). Beginning with the same notion of likely suppression of normatively inappropriate group-based attitudes in response to explicit ethnic group cues, this research focuses on the effectiveness of such cues through a process of spreading activation. The ethnic cue is argued to access related group-centric notions that are not as normatively taboo, which are in turn used to make a political judgment. Since people's stereotypes of a group should be interconnected in their memories, explicit cues that invoke unacceptable stereotypes can result in the use of the socially acceptable ones instead.

What this work suggests is that the ambivalence problem can be solved not only by avoiding conscious processing of racial messages, but also by somehow normalizing or de-stigmatizing the racial content used. The spreading activation accounts offered in the realm of ethnic priming, we argue, are just one type of such a normalizing process. The question remains about whether there are politically relevant normalizing alternatives. To answer that question we turn to gender differentiation.

The Subgroup Model

In making the argument that gendered racial subgroups, in particular, provide an important outlet for the work of explicit racial cues, we are making a two-fold argument. First, we argue that sub-grouping is an essential and integral part of explaining the building and maintenance of racial stereotypes in an era where they are socially stigmatized. Second, we argue that subgrouping facilitates the activation of racial attitudes in the face of explicit racial cues—working to attach people’s gendered racial attitudes to their evaluations of policies and political figures. We take each of these points in turn.

Sub-grouping refers to individuals’ cognitively meaningful differentiation of social groups or their decomposition of those groups into defined sub-categories (see Richards and Hewstone 2001 for a review). Our contention that gender subgrouping is a cognitively important piece of white Americans’ racial attitudes is consistent with both previous research that has demonstrated whites’ abilities to use attitudes about differentiated sub-categorizations of blacks in their assessments of specific figures (e.g., Maddox and Gray 2002; Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991) and the work of some social psychologists that suggests that gender subgrouping is an integral part of the formation of racial stereotypes (Brewer et al. 1981). Indeed, Charles Stangor and his collaborators (1992) have marshaled experimental evidence that suggests not only that race and gender are particularly salient

individual features that are useful in shaping underlying dispositions about a person, but also that an individual's single race/gender subcategory provides particularly useful information that goes beyond the broader social categories of only race or gender.

Our argument on the second point—that this subgrouping phenomenon is an important part of understanding the perpetuation of racial stereotypes—is rather straightforward. While public discourse that forwards pejorative stereotypes of blacks as a group is sharply censored by egalitarian norms, gendered racial talk is less so. Again, think how easily we accept the labeling of a criminal suspect as a “black male” or of a welfare recipient as a “black woman.” That gender is the important normalizing force here is consistent with evidence across a number of literatures dealing with gender that shows that despite gains for women in their access to opportunity and some increasing norms against sexism in recent decades, gender stereotyping is still commonplace and, apparently, largely socially acceptable. We think it especially informative that some of this research has documented patterns of a greater willingness by individuals to ascribe to stereotypical assessments of gender groups than to racial groups. Moreover, we note that gender stereotypes have been shown to have consequence in a wide variety of evaluations, from those of political candidates, to the propriety of some social policies. These realities suggest that some forms of sex-based differentiation are not perceived as in conflict with egalitarian norms. Thus we argue that gendered racial public discourse therefore should not only be more available for the updating and preservation of stereotypic notions, it should be more easily integrated. This means that not only do we expect that explicit gendered racial cues result in a type of racial activation effect, but that we also have an expectation that they work directly on racial attitudes, increasing the degree to which the cued stereotypic traits are attributed to the category. This is divergent from most of the literature that invokes the implicit/explicit model, where scholars posit—and find—only priming effects of implicit racial cues.

Thus, we argue, not only should gendered racial stereotypes be available to the average American for possible use in their political judgments, but by attaching a gender qualifier to a racial cue, perceptions of a contradiction between egalitarian norms and the use of racialized thinking should be alleviated. That is, given the normalization of categorical thinking about men and women, categorical thinking about black men, black women, white men and white women can be justified.

Analysis

In order to evaluate our argument about the work of race-gender subgrouping, we highlight the results of three analytic tasks. First, we verify that (White) Americans indeed have significant distinct cognitive content about the race-gender subgroups, and provide a sense of the trait types where gender differentiation is concentrated. This is accomplished both through a stereotype question-wording experiment and through the use of an implicit measure of race-gender differentiation. Second, we test the hypothesis that explicit sub-group specific cues are capable of updating stereotypes and test whether that updating is limited to the cued sub-group through an experiment that manipulated a race cue within an article on crime. Third, we use the crime article experiment to test whether the explicit cues succeeded in racializing the issue to which they were attached.

The Subgrouping Experiments

We ran two types of studies to assess our argument that gendered subgrouping is an important element of the stored information that white Americans have in their minds about racial groups. In the first, the subgrouping experiments, respondents were randomly assigned to receive either a battery of stereotype questions about “blacks,” “whites,” “men,” and “women,” or a battery of the same stereotype items about the groups “black men,” “white men,” “black women,” and

“white women.” Each question asked whether a particular trait described “almost none, a few, some, many, or almost all” of the members of the group. We included items to capture the sort of pejorative social stereotypes present in the race literature (violent and promiscuous), items that reflect the qualifications stereotypes with which the gender literature is typically concerned (intelligent, ambitious), and one item meant to capture the sort of social stereotype that might have either positive or pejorative meaning implied by the gender literature (nurturing).

Our design enables us to sort out in which ways the race/gender subcategories are different from the larger meta-categories of race and gender, and to do so without concern that respondents are artificially anchoring their related group notions to each other as a result of being asked about both the meta-categories and the relevant race-gender subgroups. In other words, the design provides no cue for sub-group anchoring for the meta-categories of race and gender (or *vice-versa*). This enables us to evaluate what representations of the meta-category are being conjured when people respond to these questions—in particular, to see whether people tend to think of a particular sub-group when they answer the meta-category item. That is, to the extent that responses to the stereotype items on a particular trait are the same or different, we are able to discern whether when people say, for example, that blacks are violent, they are thinking about blacks in general (or randomly about black men or black women), or if they are thinking about a particular subset of blacks, such as black men.

The subgrouping experiment was conducted on a diverse sample of American adults as part of the Cooperative Congressional Election Studies (CCES) in 2008.⁶ This was an online study,

⁶ We also re-ran the experiment in the 2009 CCES. The results were extremely consistent with the 2008 results, and thus are not shown here but are available upon request. The CCES was a collaborative national survey, involving about 30 different universities. The studies were conducted in October and November of 2008 (and 2009), and the data we use were part of the Ohio State University modules, which included 1,000 respondents. For more on the sampling methodology of the CCES see: <http://web.mit.edu/polisci/portl/cces/sampledesign.html>.

where participants read and responded to the stereotype items via computer. The sample is not random, but is nationally representative on a range of demographic dimensions. Despite its non-random nature, for this type of experimental research, involving simple question wording and manipulation of political stimuli, the CCES is ideal. It provides a large, diverse subject pool—much more diverse than we would normally get either in our political communication laboratories or geographically concentrated field experiments—and it does this at a reasonable cost to the researcher. For our purposes, we gain some sense of the possible extent of race-gender subgrouping among white Americans, coupled with strong leverage on the question of the interconnection between the subgroups and meta-categories in people’s minds.

The key results of the stereotype wording experiments are displayed in Figures 1 through 5. Each point in the figures indicates the percentage of white subjects who were willing to say that many or almost all members of the indicated group are described by that trait, and the band around that point is the corresponding 95 percent confidence interval. The left side of each figure displays the results for subjects in the meta-category or “traditional wording” condition; the right side displays the results for subjects in the subgroup wording condition.

[INSERT FIGURES 1 & 2 HERE]

We turn first to the results of the social stereotype items, displayed in Figures 1 and 2. The results within the traditional wording condition, on the left side of the figures, suggest that these traits do differentiate whites from blacks and men from women. Respondents clearly saw blacks and men as more prone to violence than whites and women. Just over twenty percent of respondents described men as particularly violent, while only three percent made the same evaluation of women. And while just over forty percent of respondents deemed blacks as typically violent, only about twenty percent thought the same of whites. A similar pattern of differentiation

emerges for the promiscuity trait seen in Figure 2. About forty percent of white respondents saw blacks as a group as particularly promiscuous, while only about twenty-seven percent saw whites and women as particularly promiscuous.

Our expectation that (white) Americans can and do make these sort of stereotypical assessments of groups defined by both race and gender, however, are borne out in the results within the subgroup wording condition. As highlighted in Figure 1, white respondents clearly saw black men as uniquely violent. Over one third of respondents indicated that they believed many or almost all black men to be violent. In contrast, only a little more than fifteen percent of respondents indicated that they thought of white men as particularly violent, about nine percent of respondents said the same of black women, and only three percent deemed white women particularly violent. Figure 2 reveals similar, albeit less dramatic, evidence of sub-grouping. While forty-five percent of respondents deemed black men particularly promiscuous, fewer than thirty-seven percent of respondents viewed any of the other groups as particularly promiscuous. To underscore the gendered content of categorical notions of race, we note that on both the violence and promiscuity dimensions race does not differentiate between the female subgroups. Respondents seem to view black women much more similarly to white women than to black men.

Indeed, comparing the results of the traditional wording items with the subgroup wording items allows us some insight into what representations of the meta-categories of race and gender are being conjured by respondents when they answer the traditional wording questions. And the data here suggest that the category “black” essentially captures stereotypical attributions of black men. The percentages of whites subjects willing to say that blacks as a group are particularly violent or promiscuous (42% and 42% respectively) are much more similar to the percentages willing to say the same of black men (35% and 46%) than they are to the percentages willing to say the same of black women (9% and 23%). Given the additional information that black and white women seem

equally likely to be deemed violent or promiscuous, the implication is that the stereotypical notion that “blacks” as a group are particularly violent or promiscuous is actually driven by white subjects’ views of black men. In fact, not only do black males stand out as particularly promiscuous and violent in comparison to any of the other race/gender sub-categories, but also as significantly more likely to be deemed promiscuous and violent than any of the race and gender meta-categories.

[INSERT FIGURES 3 & 4 HERE]

Turning to the qualification stereotype results, displayed in Figures 3 and 4, we find that the patterns observed in the social stereotypes do not replicate themselves. Although the gender literature has argued that women candidates are penalized by stereotypes that render them unqualified for political office in the eyes of voters, the qualification traits of intelligent and ambitious do not seem differentially ascribed to the groups men and women. If any difference is seen in terms of the gender meta-categories, it is that respondents were slightly *more* likely to deem many or almost all women intelligent than they were men and slightly less likely to deem many or almost all women ambitious than men.

The real differentiation in these particular qualification traits within the traditional wording condition is one of race—a distinction between blacks and all the other groups. While over fifty percent of respondents saw whites, women, and men as particularly ambitious, only about thirty percent said the same of blacks. And while well under forty percent of respondents deemed blacks as generally intelligent, over fifty percent thought of men women and whites as generally intelligent.

Also in contrast to the social stereotype results, the subgroup wording condition results on qualification stereotypes suggest that these traits are differentiated predominantly by race, rather than by race and gender. Although there were slight differences in respondents’ willingness to ascribe the qualification traits to white men and white women, and to black men and black women, those differences are statistically indistinguishable. Rather, both black men and black women are

clearly less likely to be seen as intelligent or ambitious than both white men and white women. Note that this pattern in comparison to the pattern in the traditional wording condition suggests white ownership of the gender meta-categories; that respondents appeared to be conjuring views of white men and white women as they answered the meta-category “women” and “men” items.

The last trait we examine is nurturing—a slightly different social stereotype from those typically used to gauge individuals’ differentiation of social groups in the political realm. This is in part because it has no clear (or at least consistent) positive or pejorative meaning. Yet, it is exactly the sort of personality trait that some have suggested most strongly differentiates individuals’ perceptions of men and women.

Indeed, the left side of Figure 5 demonstrates that respondents saw extremely clear gender differences in nurturing. Over eighty percent of subjects credited women with being particularly nurturing, while men were only deemed generally nurturing by about twenty percent of the respondents. Yet, while the gender difference is most striking in the traditional wording condition, a racial difference is also unearthed, with respondents being significantly less likely to attribute the nurturing trait to blacks than to whites.

That both race and gender matter in the definition of nurturing stereotypes is also evident in the results of the subgroup category condition. In this condition, while there are no significant racial differences between women—black and white women are deemed essentially the same in their nurturing capacity—respondents clearly failed to see black men as particularly nurturing. Only eighteen percent of whites saw black men as particularly nurturing compared to thirty-five percent of white men and over seventy percent of black and white women. As on the social stereotype items, it once again seems that distinctions about the meta category “black” are really references to a differentiation about black men.

We draw three important conclusions from the subgrouping experiment. First, white Americans indeed have unique content in their cognitive representations of groups defined by both race and gender, though race-gender differentiation is not equally distributed across traits. Pejorative social stereotypes of promiscuity and violence are most clearly characterized by the interaction of race and gender, while qualification traits, such as intelligence and ambition, appear to be characterized by fairly unambiguous racial differences. Even a trait strongly tied to gender differentiation—nurturing—shows evidence that racial distinctions are being made within those notions of gender. Second, we find that it is black men that are most likely to be distinguished from the other race-gender groups, and to be particularly negatively evaluated when they are. Finally, those negative evaluations of black men seem particularly influential on assessments of blacks as a group—suggesting that whites may be more likely to conjure their notions of black men when thinking about blacks as a group.

Race and Gender in Automatic Processing

While the stereotype wording experiments gave us leverage on expressed race-gender attitudes, questions remain about whether the evidence is entirely about the stored information in people's heads that is being accessed. Indeed, given that evidence has been provided in the literature in favor of the implicit/explicit model of racial cue-taking, the notion that white Americans' expressions of their attitudes involving race are consciously filtered begs the question of whether race-gender sub-grouping can be observed in automatic processing. That is, stronger evidence that Americans have readily available stored notions of race-gender subgroups would come from a measure less vulnerable to conscious construction and filtering than the stereotype items we asked in the first set of experiments. Thus we turn to an implicit measure of race-gender differentiation, a modified version of the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP).

The AMP (Payne et al. 2005) was designed as a gauge of individuals' attitudes that limited the interference of their monitoring and control. That is, it is an implicit measurement strategy, meant to gauge unfiltered attitudes. It works by offering respondents a very brief "prime" image, a brief "target" image, and then soliciting their immediate affective response to the target image. The prime image is the image that actually contains the affect stimulus, while the target image is ambiguous—hence the notion of affect *mis*attribution. The affect being captured is driven by the prime, but without self-monitoring from the respondents who believe they are evaluating the target. Although the procedure only captures one element of attitudes—affect—it is useful nonetheless in gauging our argument that attitudes about racial groups are inherently gendered. If race-gender sub-grouping is present in affect, it is present in stored attitudes. Further research, however, would be useful to probe how much further the sub-grouping extends.

We follow Payne et al.'s approach to measuring racial attitudes with the AMP with one important deviation. Like Payne and his coauthors, we instructed respondents to rate Chinese characters that appeared on the computer screen as pleasant or unpleasant. That is, the Chinese characters are the target images. Each character appeared on the computer screen for 100 milliseconds. Before each character we provided a prime image, which was of a person's face. Each face appeared on the screen for 125 milliseconds. Following the Chinese symbol a mask-box appeared on the screen until the subject responded. Subjects were instructed that the faces were simply images that indicated the target image was about to appear, and to ignore them in their evaluations of the Chinese characters. Our deviation from previous use of the AMP for measurement of racial attitudes was that we offered four categories of primes: black female faces, black male faces, white female faces, and white male faces. We used twelve images for each group. Previously only black and white male faces have been used. Our addition allows us not only to test for the presence of race-gender subgrouping within an implicit measure of racial attitudes, but is also

enables us to judge whether previous studies that have claimed to find evidence of racial bias with the AMP have done so, or whether their stories need to be complicated by gender as well. In other words, by adding the female faces, we are able to assess whether what has been deemed a measure of “racial” bias is just that, or is rather a measure of race-gender bias.

Because precise exposure and response times are important to the administration and analysis of the AMP, we chose to conduct this study in the lab. We recruited 71 adult college students to a computer lab at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio from October 5 through 9, 2010. Participants were recruited to participate in the study via the Ohio State University Political Science Department subject pool. Although the narrow base of our sample limits our ability to make general statements about the prevalence of race-gender sub-grouping, the degree of control in the lab ensured clear insight into the presence of subgrouping among these participants.

[INSERT FIGURE 6 HERE]

Figure 6 displays the results of the automatic processing study. The points in the figure indicate the mean percentage of symbols that respondents indicated were “unpleasant” when the characters followed black male faces, black female faces, white male faces, and white female faces. The bands around each point provide 95 percent confidence intervals. In the left panel of the figure, the results for all respondents are displayed; in the right panel are the results just among the fastest responders—those least likely to have been engaging in any self-monitoring. The results in both panels are consistent with our expectation that attitudes about race are infused with gendered content. Black men stand out as uniquely unpleasant, among all respondents, and especially so among the fastest responders. Among all respondents, on average, nearly half of the responses to the black male primes were “unpleasant,” while less than 45 percent of responses to each of the other race-gender group primes were “unpleasant.” Looking to the fastest responders, black males again stand out as uniquely unpleasant, with, on average, over half of the black primes soliciting an

“unpleasant” response. What’s unique among the fast responders is a further differentiation between black women and both white women and white men. While nearly half the black female primes solicited an “unpleasant” response among the fast responders, less than forty percent of the white male and white female primes did the same. Again, because fast responders are the least likely to have engaged in any self-monitoring, this differentiation is particularly suggestive of a race-gender differentiation in out-group affect in stored memory. Our results also challenge the use of only male faces in the AMP as a measure of “racial bias.” It is clear that the use of female faces holds the potential to lessen the degree of “racial bias” measured. And yet it is also relevant information about the nature of racial bias to know the distinct negative affective response to black men. As was the case in the realm of explicit stereotype measures, these results speak to the added information about the contours of race offered by complicating the story with gender.

The Crime Experiment

With evidence that white Americans indeed have meaningful representations of groups defined by race and gender, we turn next to questions about their use in politics. Specifically, we next want to provide a test of the causal leverage of the subgroup model; to test how the use of subgrouping within political discourse interacts with stereotypes and leads to changes in policy attitudes. To do this, we designed an experiment that manipulated the racial content of a story about crime, enabling us to test the consequences of explicit gendered race cues for stereotype attribution and racialization of crime attitudes. In choosing to focus the experiment on crime, we are following the lead of Gilliam and Iyengar (2001) who make the case that crime scripts on local news perpetuate an image of criminals as (violent) non-white males. In other words, we know that sub-group cues are prevalent in the realm of crime, and so our theory-testing exercise can also speak to this real-world phenomenon.

The crime experiment was administered as part of the 2008 CCES. Again, this means that it was conducted on a large and fairly representative sample of white American adults, and that it was administered online. The experiment included five treatment conditions and a control group. All the treatment groups received a news story about an armed robbery, and the race/gender identity of the suspect described in the story varied across the conditions. The experiment included four explicit cue conditions, where a specific race/gender identity was referenced—black male, white male, black female, white female—and a slightly morphed “composite sketch” of the suspect was provided. We also included an implicit racial cue condition—where subjects read the same article but with no race/gender identity information provided for the suspect (See Appendix A for actual manipulations). The racial priming literature would deem this an implicit racial cue because through the work of crime scripts, (violent) crime itself should already be associated with blacks in people’s minds. We note, however, that Iyengar and Gilliam actually show crime to be associated with the gendered subgroup “black men” in particular, and we come back to what that might imply when we get to the results. All of the subjects were asked, post treatment, about their attitudes about a range of crime policies and crime-related issues, including a battery that measured subjects’ support for punitive crime policies. A randomly selected half were asked stereotype items for racial groups (black and white) and the other half were asked the same items for the gendered racial sub-groups.

The sub-group model and the explicit/implicit model would give us two sets of expectations for how the experiments’ cues should affect crime policy attitudes. As mentioned earlier, the explicit/implicit model has generally only been used to generate racial priming hypotheses. In our experiment, these hypotheses would be that only the implicit condition should connect attitudes about crime to attitudes about race—making those with more pejorative stereotypes of blacks more likely to support punitive policies. We note that this is a moderating hypothesis. The sub-group model that we have been discussing specifies that explicit gendered race cues should racialize an

issue through a mediating effect. Because we argue that this subgroup-based differentiation in political communication is important to the building and maintenance of stereotypical notions of race-gender categories, we expect that such racialized messages can increase attributions of traits associated with the provided cue to the subgroup and then connect those attributions to the issue or figure to which the cue is attached. In this case, we expect the trait “violent” first to be attributed to the black male sub-group, but not to the meta-group “black.” Again, we are accepting the Mendelberg argument of egalitarian norms working against the expression of pejorative views about a racial group, so we expect movement in race only attributions is unlikely. Indeed, Gilliam and Iyengar failed to find any significant effect of crime scripts—with or without additional cues to race—on meta-group social stereotypes of African Americans. We argue, however, that gender sub-grouping normalizes the attribution, leaving people freer to express a cued attribution. They are then also free to connect that attribution to the issue or figure at hand. Hence, we expect the real work of race/gendered crime scripts is in altering perceptions about the specific race/gender subgroup cued. What’s important in the sub-group model is that people have to have the gender information to let the race cue do this work.

Explicit/Implicit Model Test

We first assess the experiment within the implicit/explicit model framework, looking for increased support for punitive crime policies among only those in the implicit cue condition. As is standard in the literature, we do so by modeling support for punitive policies as a function of stereotypes of blacks and dummy variables for exposure to the implicit and explicit conditions, with interactions between stereotypes and conditions to test the moderating hypothesis. We model this effect using both the social stereotypes of violence and promiscuity—they are the traits most associated with crime scripts. We do this for the subjects who provided black meta-category

attributions, then for the subjects who provided the subgroup attributions, alternating examining the stereotypes of black males and of black females.

[INSERT TABLES 1 & 2 HERE]

Overall the results presented in Tables 1 and 2 show little support for the implicit racial priming hypotheses. Table 1 shows that the estimated coefficients on the interactions between each of the violence measures (blacks, black men, black women) and the dummy variable indicating the subjects were in the no race/gender suspect (C5) condition are all small and statistically insignificant. This result is replicated in Table 2, which tests the activation of the promiscuity stereotype. Here we see similarly statistically insignificant coefficients on each of the promiscuity and no race/gender suspect condition interactions. Despite the racial content of crime coverage in the media (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000), stories about crime that made no reference to race (or gender) failed to activate the use of black racial stereotypes in formulating attitudes about punitive treatment of criminals.

Finding little support for the implicit racial priming hypotheses, we turn our attention to the ability of explicit racial cues to activate the black meta and sub-group stereotypes. In Tables 1 and 2 we test the effect of explicit racial cues by including interactions of each of the explicit cue conditions with the violence and promiscuity stereotypes. The results of this test reveal mixed support for the explicit racial priming argument. Table 1 does show some evidence of racial priming resulting from exposure to one of the explicit racial messages. When subjects are exposed to a message featuring a black female suspect their beliefs that blacks are violent become more important to their judgments about crime policy, leading those who see blacks as particularly violent to express more punitive attitudes about crime. The results presented in Table 2 show that the same condition also activates attitudes about black male promiscuity. In this case, however, the resulting relationship between black male promiscuity stereotypes and crime policy is in the opposite direction predicted by the theory. Instead of increasing support for punitive crime policy among those who hold

pejorative stereotypes of black males, exposure to the to the black female suspect message leads whites who think black males are particularly promiscuous to be significantly *less* likely support for punitive crime policy.

In sum, even when accounting for both meta and sub-group stereotypes we find little support for the implicit/explicit model of racial priming. Implicit messages failed to activate any black racial stereotypes and explicit messages lead to a somewhat inconsistent pattern of attitude activation.

Sub-group Model Test

Given the somewhat inconsistent findings of the implicit/explicit racial priming model, we then turn our attention to assessing the experiment within the sub-group model framework. Recall that the sub-group model implies that explicit gendered race cues should racialize an issue through a mediating effect: first increasing attributions of traits associated with the cue to the subgroup and then connecting those attributions to the issue or figure to which the cue is attached. Our first test is to examine the effect of exposure to the racialized conditions on stereotype attributions of violence and promiscuity.

[INSERT TABLES 3 & 4 HERE]

Tables 3 and 4 present mean differences relative to the control in violence and promiscuity attribution for each of the experimental conditions. Consistent with the sub-grouping hypotheses the results suggest that across both of the stereotype traits there is very little evidence of whites' willingness to update stereotypes about any of the meta-groups. In fact, the only statistically significant changes were a decrease in willingness to say that blacks were violent when exposed to the counter-stereotypic white female condition and a decrease in willingness to say that whites are violent in the no race/gender suspect (implicit) condition.

Whites' sub-group attributions in response to the experimental conditions produced a very different pattern. With the exception of the truly counter-stereotypic condition (white female suspect), exposure to any of the experimental conditions increased whites' willingness to think that black men are particularly violent. We take this result as suggestive evidence of our main argument that white Americans have stored information about gendered racial subgroups that can be accessed through racial cues: the mere discussion of crime reminds whites of the notion of black male violence, and allows them to update their expressed stereotypes accordingly. We also see the possibility of the subgroup model working through implicit gendered race cues as well. The implicit condition generates a similar pattern in changes in stereotype attribution, suggesting that crime is in fact an implicitly *gendered*-racial issue—not simply a racial one. The results presented in Table 4 are also consistent with the subgroup hypotheses. While we see no changes in stereotype attribution for any of the meta-group promiscuity attributions, we see that when whites are exposed to a message featuring a black female suspect they display significant increases in their willingness to say that both black men and women are promiscuous.

We also assessed whether the cues affected notions about race-gender subgroups by looking for differences across conditions in the results of our AMP measure. In Table 5, we present the mean proportion of unpleasant responses for each of the race-gender subgroup primes across the conditions of central interest—the explicit black male suspect condition, the explicit black suspect condition, the implicit condition, and the control condition. We find that the explicit gendered racial cue indeed does unique work, even on the implicit measure of bias. The black male condition moves affect toward black men as a group in an even more negative direction, evidenced by the statistically significant 10 percentage-point increase in frequency of “unpleasant” responses to black male primes in the AMP. In contrast, the explicit racial cue without the normalizing gender modifier actually depresses the attribution of unpleasant responses to black male primes, while the implicit

race cue causes no significant changes. These results suggest that the gender modifier does unique work in accessing negative notions of black men. It is also worth noting that the racial cues, particularly the two explicit racial cues, appear to cause a change in the accessed notions about the race-gender out-group of white women, increasing the frequency of “unpleasant” responses to white female primes. Exactly why this occurs is unclear, though it suggests an important intertwining of notions about the race-gender groups.

[INSERT TABLE 5 HERE]

The relationships we observe here between sub-group stereotypes and exposure to racialized cues (both implicit and explicit) are a necessary but not sufficient condition for our mediation hypothesis. Next we need to test if the effect of the treatment conditions on attitudes about crime is working through increased sub-group stereotypes. To do this we run a simple structural equation model that examines the direct and indirect paths of the implicit and explicit cue effects, enabling us to estimate the size of the indirect effect that the sub-group racial stereotypes have on the relationship between the treatment and crime attitudes. Theoretically we don’t expect a mediating effect through the meta-category “black” stereotype, and from the results in the previous table we know that indeed the experimental conditions failed increase perceptions of blacks as violent. So we will only test those relationships that produced significant increases in either of the pejorative social stereotypes.

[INSERT FIGURE 7 HERE]

We expected that the racializing effect of the explicit black male cue on crime attitudes would be mediated by black male stereotypes. And the results presented in Figure 7 are consistent with that expectation. Not only does exposure to this condition significantly increase willingness to stereotype black men as violent, but these views about black men are then significantly related to a greater willingness to express punitive crime attitudes. The Sobel test estimates that 45% of the

effect of the message is mediated by stereotypes of black males as violent. The implicit cue condition, however, failed to produce statistically significant mediation effects. In the implicit cue condition, exposure to the message leads to a greater willingness to stereotype black men as violent, but there is no significant relationship between willingness to stereotype black men as violent and crime attitudes. Indeed, none of the other conditions that increased violence stereotypes of black males produced statistically significant mediation effects. As we predicted, only the explicit gendered race cue does the work of increasing stereotype attributions *and* attaching those attributions to attitudes about the subject at hand.

[INSERT FIGURE 8 HERE]

Of course, we also looked into whether the cues worked through related group-based notions, notably the other pejorative social stereotype of promiscuity. In Table 4 we saw that exposure to the black female suspect condition did increase willingness to ascribe the promiscuity stereotype to both black men and black women. The results presented in Figure 8 are of the test if the promiscuity stereotype mediates the effect of this condition. We do not find evidence that the cues attached these notions to attitudes about crime: no mediation effects are observed for the promiscuity trait.

Conclusion

We developed the subgroup model to explain how one prevalent form of explicit racial discourse affects individuals' use of race in their political thinking. Adding a gender modifier, we argued, is a common phenomenon in political discourse that makes explicit racial categorization more normalized, enabling gendered race cues to both increase stereotype attribution and to link those stereotypes to the topic at hand. Across both explicit measures of stereotypes and implicit measures of group-based affect we found strong evidence that not only do individuals have distinct

notions of groups defined by both race and gender, but that these notions are uniquely updated and made relevant to political evaluations when explicit cues to the race-gender subgroups are offered in political communication.

While the evidence we have in hand is supportive of our central claims, it also leaves open some additional important questions. First, we remain uncertain about the role of implicit gendered racial cues. The implicit/explicit model would imply that these sorts of implicit cues should activate gendered racial predispositions on opinions about the associated policy or figure. We don't find evidence for that prediction. While we do find evidence that an implicit gendered racial cue can change stereotype attributions for the cued subgroup, we didn't see any connection to the target policy. We think this underscores the openness of the question of what makes an implicit cue to any racial category—whether meta- or subgroup specific—a sufficient one for racializing politics.

Another open question underscored by our results is about the extent to which attitudes about black men in particular are driving “racial politics,” or at least our understanding thereof. When race-gender differentiation arose in our studies, it came in the form of particularly negative differentiation of black men. Further, we found evidence that, on the traits we studied, these particularly negative views of black men are largely responsible for the negativity of whites about the group “black.” We question what, exactly, this implies about attitudes about black women and their place in American racial politics. Does it imply that black women are, as some have suggested, the invisible category in American politics? Or perhaps that white Americans hold such mixed views of black women that no dominant pattern of differentiation stands likely to arise? Or would we, if we knew the right place to look, find a realm of differentiation markedly about black women? On the other hand, if black women indeed are much more positively evaluated than black men, what might it mean for American racial politics if black women had more access to political discourse and political power?

Finally, our study of race-gender subgrouping among white Americans was fixated on explaining important out-group politics, notably the role of race-gender subgrouping in perpetuating anti-black racial politics. We believe this work sets the stage for important questions about the work race-gender subgrouping does among in-groups. Among whites, for example, what are the implications of their unique and often uniquely positive stereotypic notions of white women? Among blacks, what patterns of differentiation will we find, and what about group-based politics might it help to explain? Could it be that the normalizing differentiation work of gender helps explain moments at which linked fate politics among blacks fall apart (White 2007; Cohen 1999)? We intend to return to these questions in future research, and hope that other researchers will join us.

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Figure 1. Violence Attribution Among White Americans

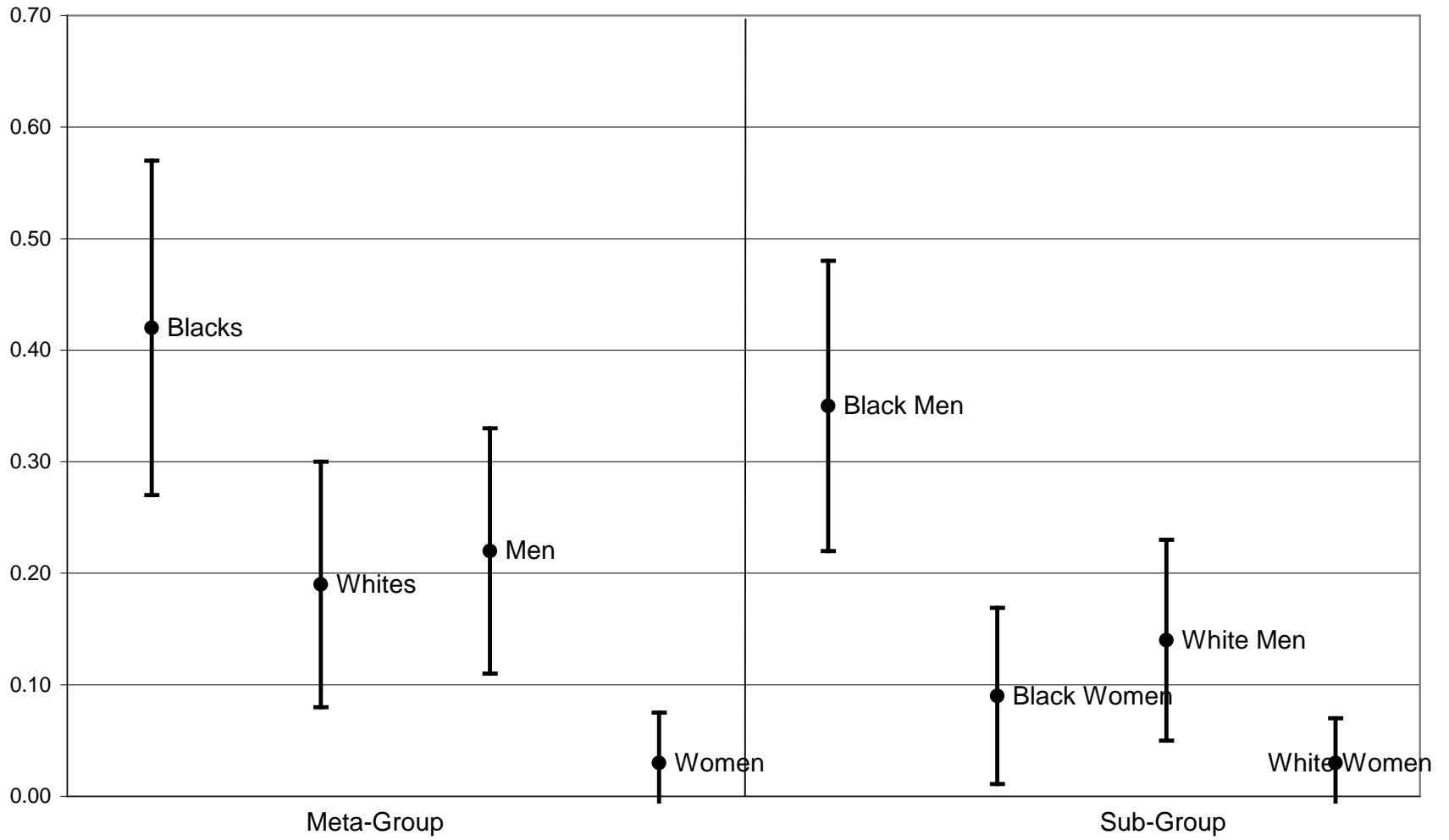


Figure 2. Promiscuity Attribution Among White Americans

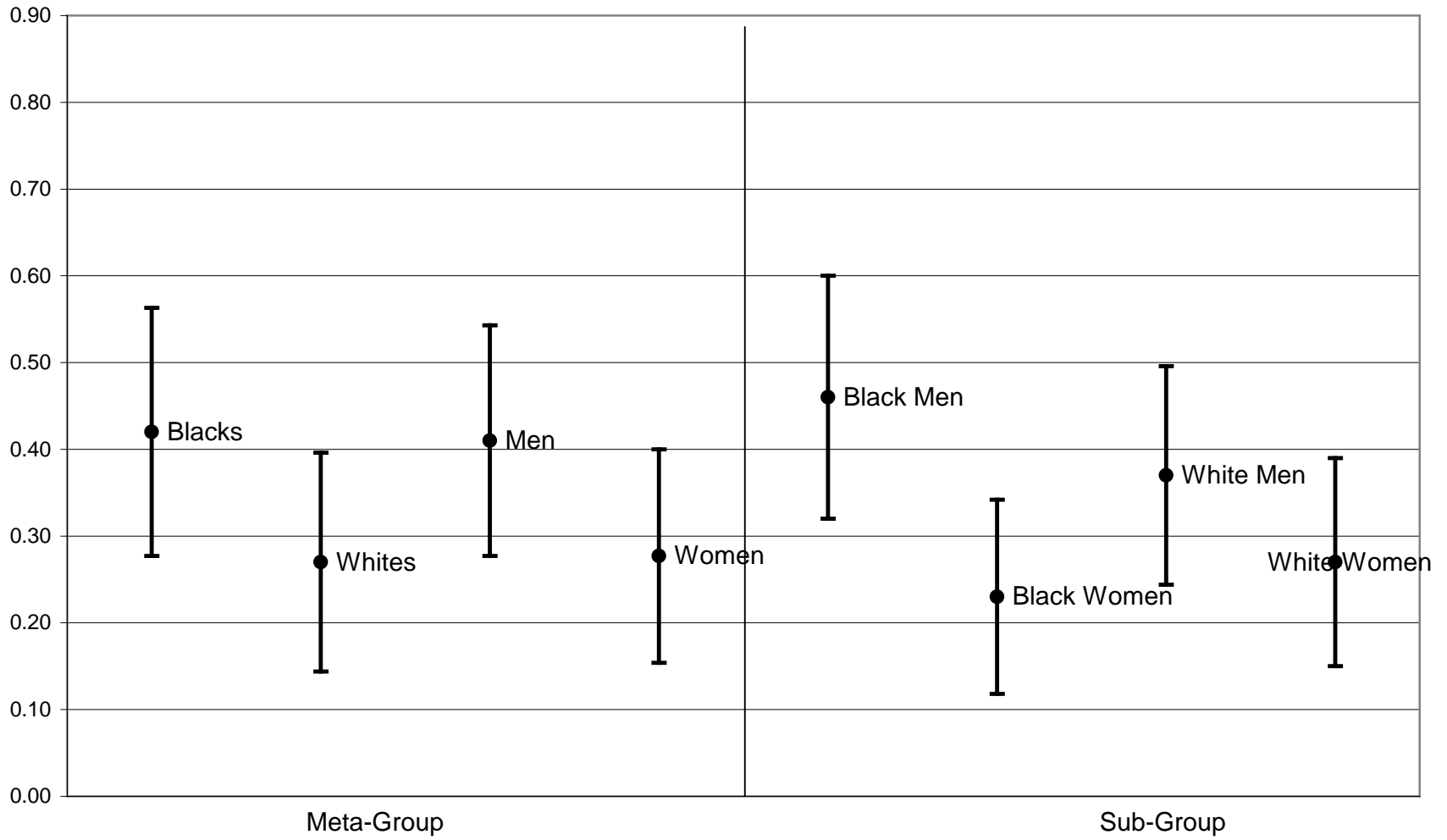


Figure 3. Intelligence Attribution Among White Americans

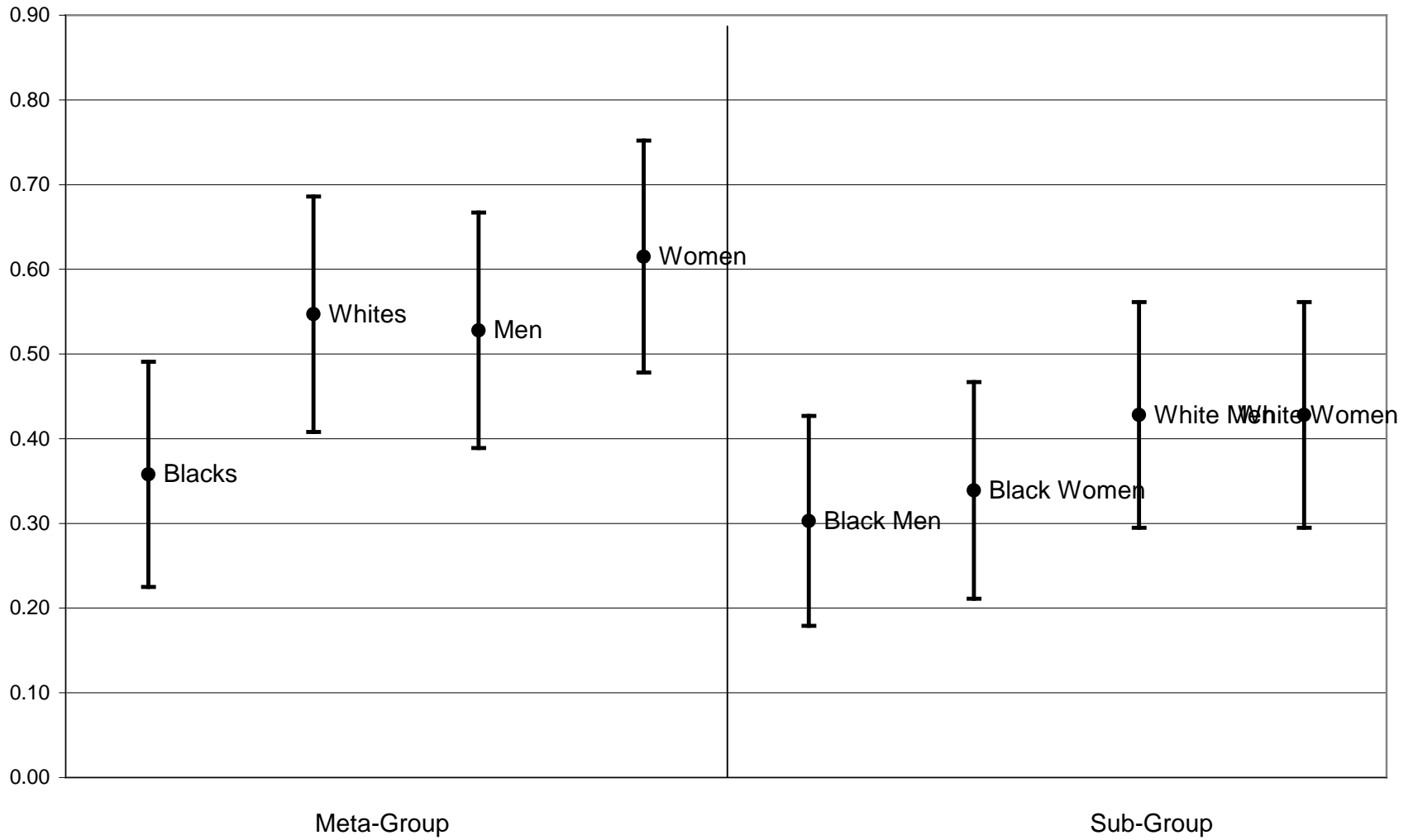


Figure 4. Ambition Attribution Among White Americans

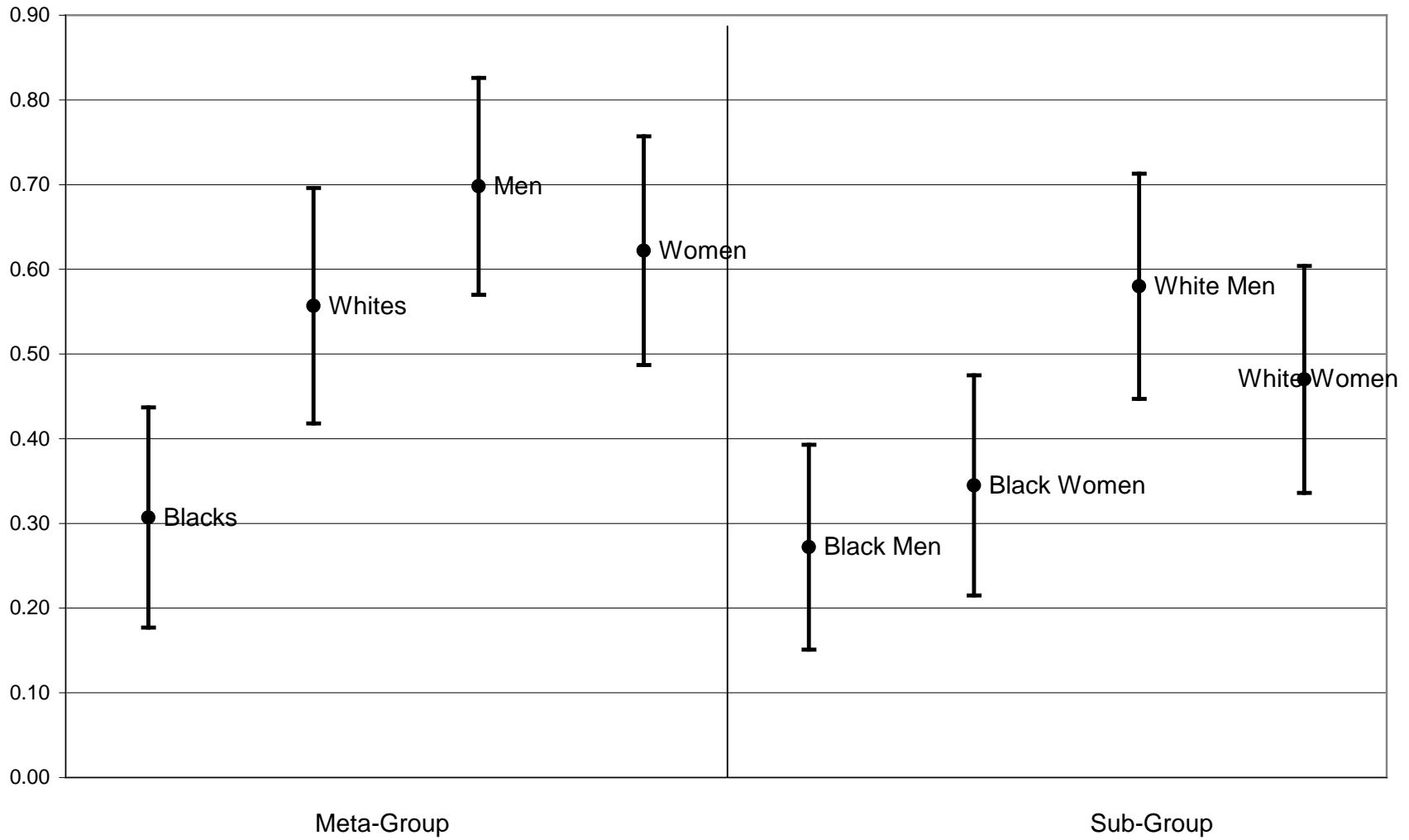


Figure 5. Nurturing Attribution Among White Americans

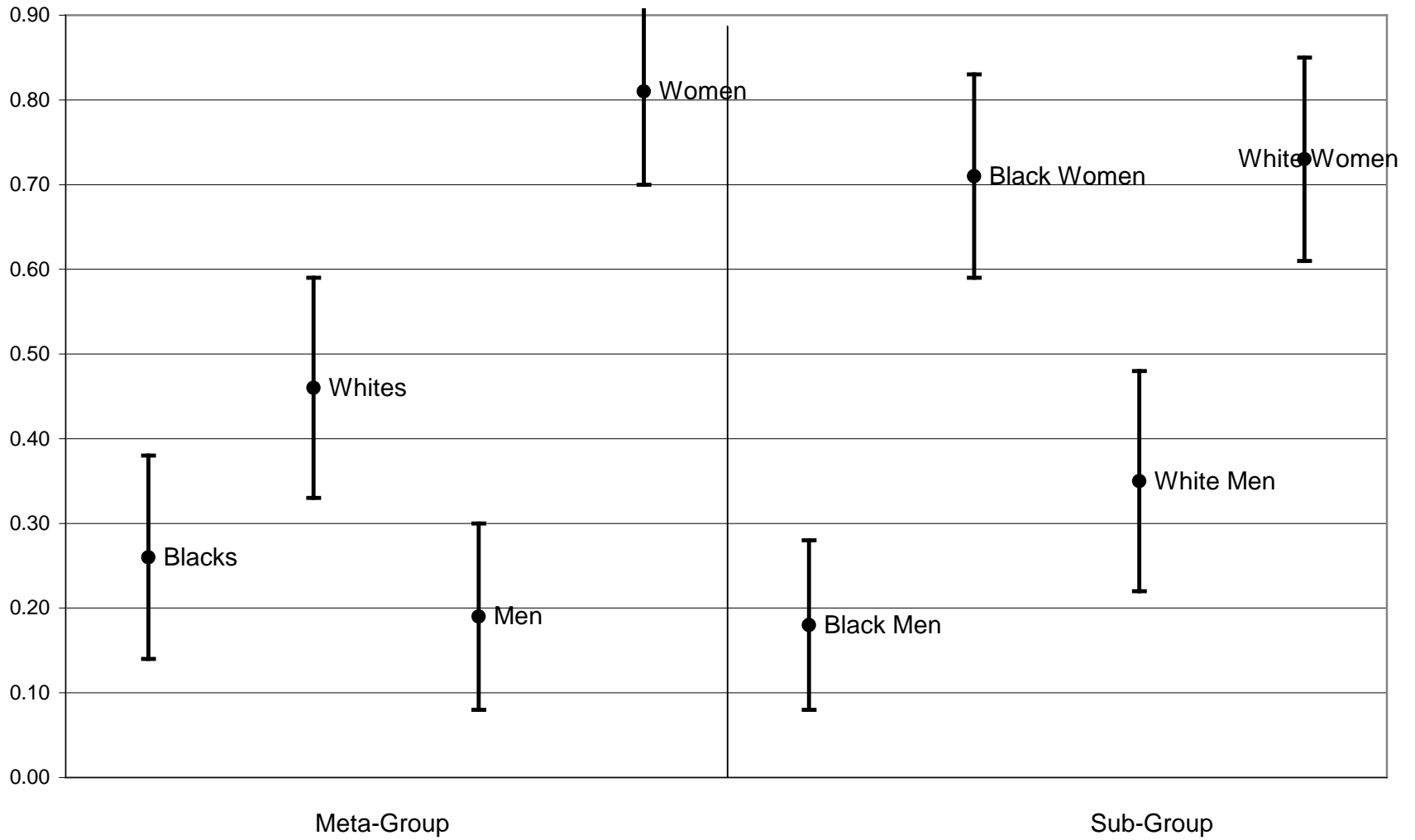


Figure 6. Proportion of "Unpleasant" Responses by Prime

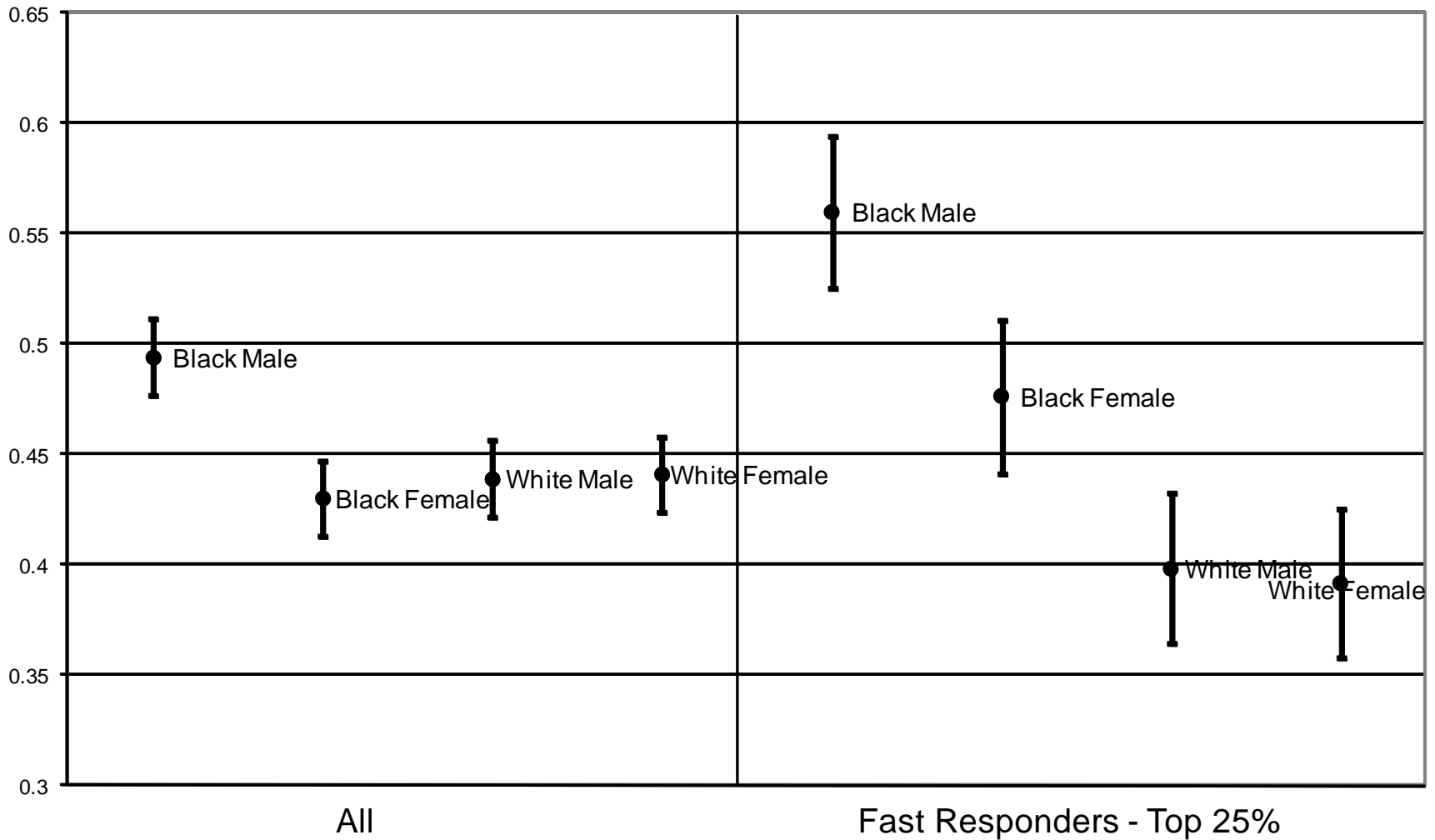


Table 1. Effect of Violence Stereotype on Punitive Crime Support by Condition

	Violent Blacks	Violent Black Male	Violent Black Women
Black Male Suspect (C1)	0.00 0.07	-0.08 0.09	0.01 0.06
White Male Suspect (C2)	-0.06 0.08	0.10 0.08	0.04 0.06
White Female Suspect (C3)	-0.03 0.07	-0.02 0.08	0.00 0.06
Black Female Suspect (C4)	-0.15 * 0.08	0.06 0.09	0.09 0.06
No Race/Gender Suspect (C5)	0.00 0.07	0.06 0.09	0.04 0.06
Violence	0.02 0.09	0.13 0.10	0.12 0.09
ViolenceXC1	0.01 0.12	0.18 0.14	0.06 0.13
ViolenceXC2	0.15 0.13	-0.16 0.13	-0.08 0.13
ViolenceXC3	0.09 0.13	0.03 0.14	-0.02 0.13
ViolenceXC4	0.26 * 0.13	-0.04 0.14	-0.12 0.13
ViolenceXC5	0.02 0.12	-0.05 0.14	-0.03 0.14
Constant	0.22 * 0.05	0.14 * 0.06	0.16 * 0.04
N	370	368	369

Table 2. Effect of Promiscuity Stereotype on Punitive Crime Support by Condition

	Promiscuous Blacks	Promiscuous Black Men	Promiscuous Black Women
Black Male Suspect (C1)	-0.03 0.08	-0.04 0.08	-0.01 0.08
White Male Suspect (C2)	-0.07 0.09	0.11 0.09	0.08 0.08
White Female Suspect (C3)	0.02 0.08	0.03 0.08	-0.07 0.08
Black Female Suspect (C4)	-0.06 0.08	0.25 0.09	0.18 * 0.08
No Race/Gender Suspect (C5)	0.07 0.07	-0.04 0.09	-0.08 0.08
Promiscuous	0.01 0.09	0.11 0.09	0.10 0.10
PromiscuousXC1	0.06 0.12	0.12 0.12	0.08 0.14
PromiscuousXC2	0.17 0.14	-0.15 0.14	-0.12 0.14
PromiscuousXC3	-0.01 0.13	-0.06 0.12	0.10 0.15
PromiscuousXC4	0.11 0.13	-0.32 * 0.13	-0.24 0.14
PromiscuousXC5	-0.11 0.12	0.11 0.13	0.22 0.14
Constant	0.23 * 0.06	0.14 * 0.06	0.16 * 0.05
N	369	367	367

Table 3. Whites' Violence Attribution Across Conditions

	Black Male Suspect	White Male Suspect	White Female Suspect	Black Female Suspect	No Race/Gender Suspect
<i>Meta-Group Stereotypes</i>					
Violent Blacks	-0.05	0.02	-0.07*	0.01	-0.05
Violent Whites	0.01	0.01	-0.05	0.02	-0.06*
Violent Men	0.00	0.04	-0.01	0.02	-0.03
Violent Women	0.05	0.00	-0.03	0.02	-0.02
<i>Sub-Group Stereotypes</i>					
Violent Black Men	0.08*	0.09*	0.02	0.06*	0.07*
Violent White Men	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.01	0.03
Violent White Women	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.04
Violent Black Women	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.06

Note: Two-tailed test of significance, * = $p < .05$.

Table 4. White's Promiscuity Attribution Across Conditions

	Black Male Suspect	White Male Suspect	White Female Suspect	Black Female Suspect	No Race/Gender Suspect
<i>Meta-Group Stereotypes</i>					
Promiscuous Blacks	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.03	-0.01
Promiscuous Whites	0.02	-0.01	0.00	0.03	0.01
Promiscuous Men	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.01
Promiscuous Women	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.02
<i>Sub-Group Stereotypes</i>					
Promiscuous Black Men	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.08*	0.04
Promiscuous White Men	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.03
Promiscuous White Women	0.02	-0.01	0.03	0.03	0.01
Promiscuous Black Women	0.06	0.03	0.05	0.10*	0.02

Note: Two-tailed test of significance, * = $p < .05$.

Table 5. Proportion of "Unpleasant" Responses by Prime and Racial Cue Condition

	Control	Black Male Suspect	Black Only Suspect	No Suspect Race/Gender
Black Male	0.48	0.58*	0.40*	0.50
Black Female	0.40	0.47	0.43	0.36
White Male	0.43	0.48	0.41	0.44
White Female	0.40	0.50*	0.51*	0.47

Two-tailed difference of means test (relative to control), *=p<.05.

Figure 6. Violence Stereotype Mediation Model

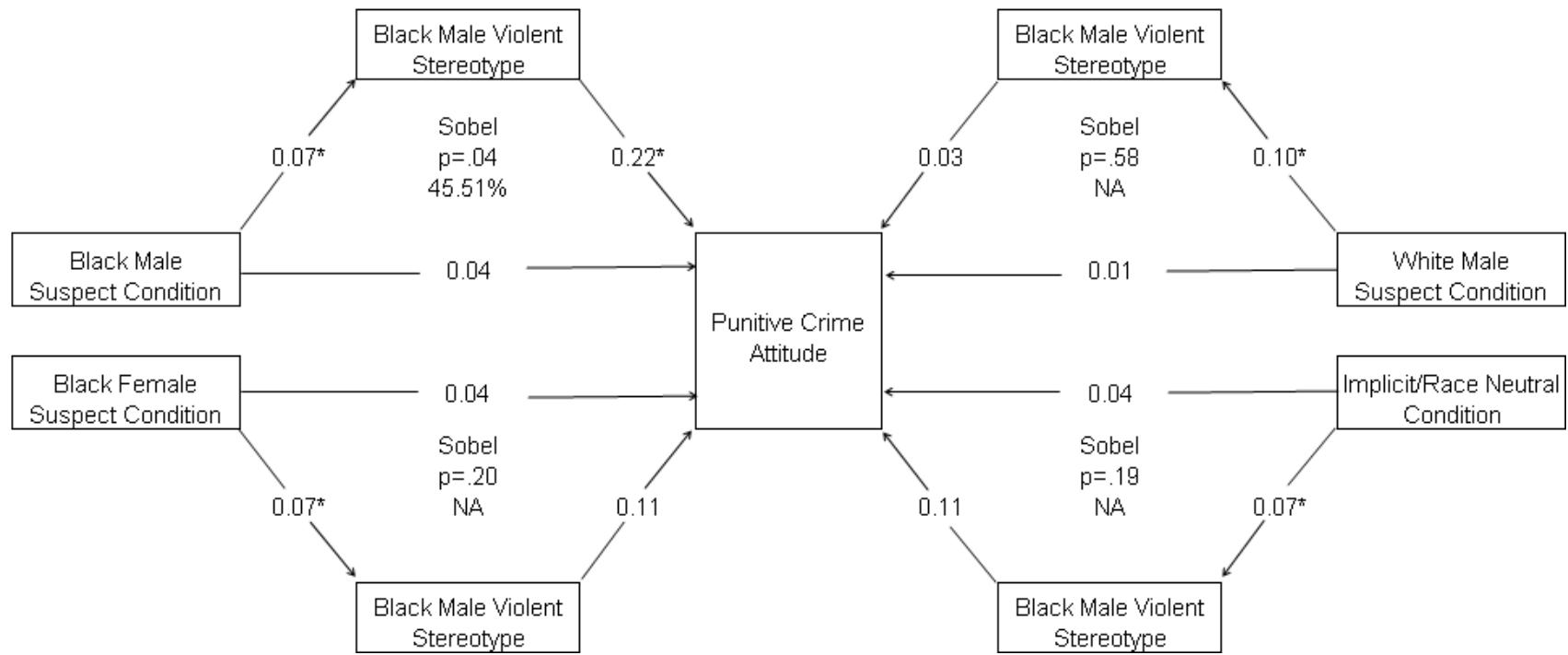


Figure 7. Promiscuity Stereotype Mediation

