The Motives Underlying Stereotype-Based Discrimination Against Members of Stigmatized Groups

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Abstract We argue that the motivations that underlie stereotype-based discrimination against racial minorities and other stigmatized groups often fail to meet standard criteria for rational judgments. Stereotyping of such groups is often driven by threats to one's self-esteem and a desire to rationalize inequality, and declines when the perceiver is motivated to be accurate. Also, *Bayesian racism*—the belief that it is rational to discriminate against individuals based on stereotypes about their racial group—correlates highly with negative feelings toward minorities and the desire to keep low-status groups in their place, and correlates *negatively* with indices of rational thinking. The motives that drive social judgments call into question whether people engage in stereotype-based discrimination for rational reasons.

Keywords Stereotyping · Rationality · Threatened egotism · System justification · Social dominance orientation · Bayesian racism · Bayesian prejudice

Are people who use stereotypes of racial minorities and other stigmatized groups to guide their judgments acting rationally? Arguments for the rationality of stereotyping are frequent not only among political pundits (D'Souza, 1995; Malkin,

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2004), but also laypeople (Khan & Lambert, 2001), anthropologists (Fox, 1992), economists (Phelps, 1972), political scientists (Wilson, 2002), philosophers (Levin, 1997), legal scholars (Schauer, 2003; Sherry, 1992), and psychologists (Arkes & Tetlock, 2004; Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, & Hepburn, 1980; McCauley, Jussim, & Lee, 1995; McCauley, Stitt, & Segal, 1980). From this perspective, individuals who use stereotypes are rational actors who utilize base rates to optimize their predictions. Just as a loan officer at a bank uses an applicant's race to predict whether she will default on a loan, a police officer uses a pedestrian's race to predict whether he has committed a crime.

The present article focuses on the *motives* that lead people to engage in stereotype-based discrimination against individual members of stigmatized groups. Here we argue that motives for stereotyping often fail the *epistemic standard* of rational judgment. This standard centers on the idea that if one's motive is to make an accurate judgment, then he or she is being rational from an epistemic perspective. Thus, one engages in a psychological process for an epistemically rational reason when one's motive is to make accurate judgments (Alston, 1985; Foley, 1991a, 1991b; Nozick, 1993).

Here we present evidence that the motives underlying stereotyping of racial minorities and other stigmatized groups often violate the epistemic standard of rationality. In particular, wounded self-esteem and a desire to rationalize inequality frequently drive stereotyping of members of stigmatized groups. At the same time, the empirical evidence that people stereotype members of stigmatized groups out of a desire to make accurate judgments is weak—in fact, accuracy motivation generally decreases, rather than increases, stereotyping. Finally, the lay belief that it is rational to discriminate against individuals based on stereotypes about their racial group—what we term *Bayesian racism*—correlates positively with racial prejudice and a desire to keep low status groups "in their place," and correlates negatively with indices of rational thinking.

Importantly, we focus on the motives that drive stereotyping of racial minorities and other stigmatized and/or disadvantaged groups (e.g., gay men, professional women, and the mentally ill). Many of the key motives we argue drive stereotyping of members of stigmatized groups, such as threats to one's ego and a desire to rationalize inequality, seem less likely to lead to stereotype-based discrimination against members of dominant groups (Fein & Spencer, 1997). For instance, a White man's desire to see himself positively may not always be well served by discriminating against another White male for a position on a basketball team. At the same time, we focus on the use of stereotypes to *discriminate* against members of stigmatized groups, as the public debate focuses on the rationality of stereotyping as a justification for discrimination in hiring and racial profiling by law enforcement.

Numerous definitions of rationality other than epistemic rationality are well known. For example, a psychological process may be defined as "evolutionarily rational" if it increased a person's chances of reproduction in ancestral environments (e.g., having a preference for calorically dense foods). However, the public debate about the rationality of the motives underlying stereotyping has centered on epistemic rationality. The political pundits who advocate stereotyping argue that people use stereotypes out of a desire to make accurate judgments (D'Souza, 1995;

Malkin, 2004). For example, while acknowledging the oppression African-Americans have suffered in the past, D'Souza (p. 268) writes that:

> Taxidrivers, storekeepers, and women who clutch their purse or cross the street will attach little significance to such personal and historical sensitivities. They are not historians but amateur statisticians acting on impressionistic but not unreasonable generalizations of the sort we all make in other contexts every day. Such people are unlikely to be intimidated by accusations of prejudice. For them, the charges are meaningless, because the prejudice is warranted. In this context, a bigot is simply a sociologist without credentials.

However, such public figures would not argue that stereotyping is "rational" because it raises the self-esteem of White men and helps rationalize the low status of Black Americans. Therefore, in the context of the contemporary public debate, stereotyping is rational if people use stereotypes out of a desire to make accurate judgments (i.e., meets standards of epistemic rationality).

The present article aims to fill what we see as a gap in the literature. Prior scientific exchanges on the rationality of stereotyping have dealt with issues such as the accuracy of popular stereotypes relative to some criterion (Lee, Jussim, & McCauley, 1995), the related issue of whether relying on stereotypes increases the accuracy of social judgments (Banaji & Bhaskar, 2000; Glaser, 2001, 2006; McCauley et al., 1995; Stangor, 1995), and whether it is normatively rational and/or morally appropriate to use stereotypes (Arkes & Tetlock, 2004; Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2004). However, to our knowledge no prior review has exclusively focused on the rationality of the *motives* underlying the discriminatory use of stereotypes.

Notably, nothing in our argument requires that social stereotype be grossly inaccurate or their use lead to grossly inaccurate judgments, although objective benchmarks for assessing accuracy are in some cases elusive. For example, people can, for the most part, accurately estimate the percentage of Black Americans who are on welfare (McCauley et al., 1980) and the proportions of men and women in certain high-status occupations (McCauley & Thangavelu, 1991; McCauley, Thangavelu, & Rozin, 1988; for reviews of research on stereotype accuracy and judgmental accuracy, see Jussim, Eccles, & Madon, 1996; Lee et al., 1995). However, it is difficult to see how one could objectively verify the commonly held stereotypes that Black Americans are lazy and women are fundamentally poor leaders. Given that many damaging beliefs about stigmatized groups are inherently subjective, it is important to examine the motives underlying the use of these stereotypes to discriminate.

One must also distinguish between a (debatably) accurate belief or judgment and an epistemically rational motive. An observer may argue that a police officer increases judgmental accuracy by using a driver's race to decide whether or not to pull him over (D'Souza, 1995; Malkin, 2004; for opposing views, see Armour, 1997; Banaji et al., 2004, Banaji & Bhaskar, 2000; Glaser, 2001, 2006; Stangor, 1995). However, this does not necessarily mean that the police officer used a racial stereotype out of a motivation to make accurate judgments. He could also have been influenced by a conscious or unconscious desire to maintain the social hierarchy, or

even could be pulling over minority drivers because of recent threats to his self-esteem. Thus, the outward appearance and internal psychology of stereotypic judgments can be very different.

Overview

In the first part of this article, we review three streams of research that support the idea that the use of stereotypes is often not epistemically rational. Specifically, we review literature that shows that stereotyping of members of stigmatized groups is often driven by threats to one's self-esteem and a desire to rationalize inequality, and declines when the perceiver is motivated to be accurate. In the second part of the article, we present data indicating Bayesian racism—the belief that it is rational to discriminate against individuals based on stereotypes about their racial group—correlates highly with negative feelings toward minorities and the desire to keep low-status groups in their place, and correlates *negatively* with indices of rational thinking. As we will argue, both experimental and correlational research on the motives that underlie judgments reveal the epistemically irrational side of stereotyping.

Threatened Egotism

Derogating and discriminating against Black Americans, Jewish Americans, gay men, and other stigmatized groups may allow individuals to repair a wounded ego (Allport, 1954). Indeed, a large number of studies attest to the influence of threatened egotism on stereotyping and discrimination (e.g., Fein, Hoshino-Browne, Davies, & Spencer, 2003; Schimel et al., 1999; Sinclair, & Kunda, 1999, 2000; Spencer, Fein, Wolfe, Fong, & Dunn, 1998; see Kunda & Spencer, 2003, for a review). For instance, Fein and Spencer (1997) provided some participants with negative feedback on an ostensive intelligence test. Participants told that they had done poorly were subsequently more likely to attribute stereotypic traits to a gay man. Moreover, giving ego-threatened participants the opportunity to judge a target person stereotypically restored their self-esteem. In another experiment, being criticized by a Black man increased the accessibility of negative stereotypes of Black Americans, whereas negative feedback from a White man did not (Sinclair & Kunda, 1999). Providing evidence that stereotype use is motivated by a desire to denigrate outgroup members, Fein et al. (2003) found that threatened egotism led to an increased use of negative, but not positive, stereotypes of Asians. Further suggesting that threatened egotism mainly influences judgments of members of socially stigmatized groups, Fein and Spencer (1997) found that failing an intellectual test led to more negative judgments of a Jewish American but not an Italian American.[1]

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[1] Notably, there is no consistent correlational relationship between self-esteem and stereotyping (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). However, it is unclear what directional prediction to even expect in this case. If individuals successfully boost their self-esteem by stereotyping, high self-esteem might be expected to predict greater reliance on stereotypes. On the other hand, if individuals low in self-esteem use

A potential alternative explanation for these findings is that rather than motivating stereotyping, threatened egotism simply reduces individuals' ability to make a positive impression on others. People are somewhat inhibited about using their stereotypes, and a bruised ego may increase stereotyping by temporarily lowering such inhibitions. However, several empirical findings cast doubt on such an explanation. Threatened egotism increases stereotyping even when the person's capacity for conscious control is severely limited (e.g., by asking him to count backward from 1000 by 7) and on implicit word activation tasks in which participants are oblivious to the fact that their stereotypes are even being measured (Sinclair & Kunda, 1999; Spencer et al., 1998). Since participants in these studies were not able to control their responses enough to lie effectively, the effects of threatened self-esteem on stereotyping cannot be attributed to a reduction in lying.

It is obvious that wounded self-esteem does not constitute an epistemically rational reason for using stereotypes in reasoning and decision-making. Indeed, if the participants in Fein and Spencer's (1997) study became aware of the link between their test feedback and their stereotyping, they would likely admit that wounded self-esteem provides no justification for stereotyping (Kruglanski, 1989; Pizarro & Uhlmann, 2005).

Of course, the fact that stereotyping members of stigmatized groups can be caused by threatened egotism does not mean that it usually is. Knowing that someone has sustained a bruised ego tends to be a good predictor of his use of stereotypes. But if someone made use of a stereotype, it does not follow that he experienced a bruised ego because stereotyping can occur for other reasons. While experimental studies show that threatened egotism can cause stereotyping, they are somewhat ill equipped to demonstrate what usually causes stereotyping. Doing so would require generating a representative sample of social judgments and determining the causes of each of them. Still, the fact that people commonly experience personal failures and receive negative feedback does suggest that stereotyping due to threatened egotism is a common occurrence. More importantly, however, making judgments out of a desire to maintain self-esteem, rather than a desire for accuracy, is not epistemically rational.

System Justifying Motivations

Many contemporary theories of intergroup relations propose that social stereotypes are driven by the desire to see one's own group positively (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Empirical support for this idea comes from studies of experimentally created and real-world groups. For instance, engineering and business students tend to endorse positive ingroup stereotypes and negative outgroup stereotypes (Judd & Park, 1993).

Footnote 1 continued

stereotypes in an effort to repair or boost their negative self-views, then low self-esteem would perhaps be expected to predict greater stereotyping. Regardless of the lack of clarity in the theoretical predictions or empirical data with regard to individual differences in self-esteem, the experimental data demonstrates a clear causal relationship between threatened egotism and stereotype use.

Still, the empirical evidence that *race and gender* stereotypes are the product of a desire to see one's own group positively is surprisingly limited. Glick and Fiske (1996) found that female students were less likely to endorse negative stereotypes of women as demanding and manipulative than were male students. However, both genders tended to endorse positive stereotypes of women as communal and nurturing. Ryan (1996) found that African-American students were more likely to endorse negative outgroup than ingroup stereotypes; however, parallel results were not found for European-American students.

Much more striking than such group-based effects is the extent to which racial stereotypes are endorsed by both European Americans and African Americans, and gender stereotypes by both men and women (for reviews see Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This suggests that group-based motivations play a more limited role in race and gender stereotyping than is commonly believed and that some other mechanism, which leads both targets and perceivers to endorse stereotypes, must be at work.

One explanation is that people rely on stereotypes because doing so supports their conviction that the existing social system is just, fair, and good (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Czopp & Monteith, 2006; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2004; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Notably, stereotypes differ between historical periods and cultures in a manner consistent with system justification. Black Americans were often stereotyped as childlike, affectionate, and happy during slavery, but as savages during reconstruction. Also, stereotypes of Black people in Brazil, where they are often employed as house servants, emphasize their faithful and humble nature (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Saunders, 1972). The idea of a servant class is rendered more acceptable when low-status groups are characterized as suited to service. Indeed, social stereotypes of low-status groups tend to emerge in the wake of oppression rather than before it (Jost & Hamilton, 2005). According to George Fredrickson, a noted historian of racism, stereotypes of Jews evolved to help justify the hatred toward Jews that developed in Spain in the 15th century, while stereotypes of Africans became widely endorsed as slavery was institutionalized (Fredrickson, 2003; see Dikötter, 1992, for similar historical evidence regarding the emergence of color consciousness among the Chinese in the 12th century).

Additional evidence is provided by experimental studies (see Jost, 2001, for a review). For instance, Hoffman and Hurst (1990) gave participants trait descriptions of 30 members of two alien species from another planet, the Orinthians and the Ackmians. One group consisted mostly of 'city workers' and the other mostly of 'child raisers.' Despite the fact that the trait descriptions for the two groups did not differ along the critical dimensions, participants rated whichever group filled the child raiser role as patient and kind, and the group that filled the city worker role as confident and forceful. Interestingly, this effect was even stronger when participants were asked to explain why the groups held different roles. This suggests that people use stereotypes to justify existing social arrangements—and perhaps feel an especially strong need to do so when called to explain why groups occupy different social positions.

Activating stereotypes has also been shown to influence beliefs about social hierarchy. When people are primed with stereotypes of poor people as honest and hard working, they report more system justifying attitudes (e.g., greater belief in a just world, less egalitarianism; Kay & Jost, 2003). Jost and Kay (2005) similarly found that priming stereotypes of women as nurturing and kind increased the extent to which women accept the social status quo. Stereotypes can engender greater acceptance of the social hierarchy by promoting the idea that lower status groups, if deprived of opportunities, are at least content and morally pure.

Just as perceived threats to the self activate egocentric motivations, perceived threats to the social order can activate system-justifying motivations. Such pro-system motives in turn increase social stereotyping. Consistent with this idea, reading that American society was falling apart led participants to evaluate powerful people as intelligent, and obese people as lazy but sociable (Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005). Israeli participants who read that Israel was doing poorly were more likely to endorse the common Israeli stereotypes of Ashkenazi Jews as achievement-oriented (i.e., responsible, intelligent, ambitious, hard working, and focused on education) and Sephardic Jews as communal (i.e., emotional, traditional, open, friendly, happy, calm, and family-oriented). Importantly, both (relatively high status) Ashkenazi Jews and (relatively lower status) Sephardic Jews increased their endorsement of these social stereotypes in response to system threat (Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermandi, & Mosso, 2005). This suggests that the system threat manipulation activated a pro-system rather than a pro-ingroup bias.

It is not epistemically rational to use stereotypes out of a desire to maintain the current social order because, in this case, people's goal is not to make accurate judgments. If people were aware that they were stereotyping others out of a desire to maintain the current social order, they would likely not view this behavior as justified (Kruglanski, 1989; Pizarro & Uhlmann, 2005).

Again, such studies are only able to show that system-justifying motivations can lead to stereotyping, not that they are the typical causes of stereotypical judgments. Still there are reasons to expect that system-justifying motives exert a pervasive influence on stereotyping. The aforementioned widespread acceptance of stereotypes, even by members of stereotyped groups, suggests an underlying system-justifying motive (Jost et al., 2004; Jost & Banaji, 1994). The fact that consensus is found not just on demographic and behavioral stereotypes, but also on beliefs about traits, supports system justification theory. For instance, Sniderman and Piazza (1993) found that Black Americans were more likely than White Americans to endorse stereotypes of Black Americans as lazy and irresponsible. That Black Americans make such derogatory, essentialist attributions about their own group is strongly suggestive of system justifying motives influencing stereotype endorsement. The maintenance of personal self-esteem and bias in favor of one's ingroup (two other major social goals) cannot explain why so many Black Americans perceive members of their group as lazy. If Black Americans merely believed their group is overrepresented among welfare recipients, one might conclude their beliefs are the product of a desire to make accurate judgments. After all, Black Americans are overrepresented among welfare recipients (Oliver & Shapiro, 1997). However, it is difficult to defend the position that Black Americans are objectively lazy, and

Black Americans are merely being accurate when they attribute the trait "lazy" to their group.

Evidence that system justification motives strongly impact social judgment more generally (Jost et al., 2004) lends further support for the claim that they exert a pervasive influence on stereotyping of members of stigmatized groups. For instance, many people believe the world is a just place, which leads them to blame the victims of tragedies for their misfortune (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Members of low status groups (e.g., poor people, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans) are often *more* likely than members of high status groups to endorse political ideologies that run contrary to their material interests (Jost et al., 2004; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Poor individuals are more likely than wealthy individuals to believe that differences in pay are needed to provide an incentive for people to work hard. Also, on implicit measures of automatic associations, high status groups such as White Americans and heterosexuals show a strong ingroup bias, while relatively low status groups such as Black Americans and homosexuals show no overall preference (and in some cases, are implicitly biased in favor of the higher status outgroup; Jost et al., 2004). While it is certainly not the only motive that drives social judgments, system justification is clearly an important one.

Accuracy Motives

Leading proponents of the rationality of stereotyping often argue that people stereotype out of a desire to make accurate judgments (e.g., D'Souza, 1995; Malkin, 2004). Consider a corporate executive who must decide whether or not to interview a female applicant for a managerial position. If he takes into consideration that women are, on average, less assertive than men, he may decide to reject her application and hire a male manager instead.

In contrast to the various motives for stereotyping we have considered so far, a desire to make accurate judgments is the paradigm of an epistemic reason. As Foley (1991a, p. 376) puts it, "[p]urely epistemic goals are those that are concerned solely with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of our current belief systems." Thus, if people engage in stereotyping because they want to make accurate judgments, stereotyping would be epistemically rational. However, the available evidence suggests that people are less likely to use stereotypes when they are motivated to be accurate.

Fiske, Neuberg and their colleagues have systematically investigated the effects of accuracy motivation on the use of prior expectations, including stereotypes (for reviews see Fiske, 2001; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). This line of research has repeatedly demonstrated that people who are induced with a motivation to be accurate are more likely to rely on individuating information about others, and *less* likely to depend on their stereotypical expectations (Bogart, Ryan, & Stefanov, 1999; Moreno & Bodenhausen, 1999; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987; Rudman, 1998). For example, Neuberg and Fiske (1987) found that individuals instructed to be as accurate as possible were less likely to rely on their stereotypes of schizophrenics

when forming impressions of a person formerly hospitalized for schizophrenia. This is consistent with dual process models of social evaluations, which propose that stereotypes automatically and mindlessly color judgments unless the social perceiver is motivated to think carefully and systematically consider all the available information about the target (Devine, 1989; Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997; Fazio, 1990; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000).

One might argue that direct instructions to be accurate create an experimental demand to avoid using stereotypes. However, even when the motivation to form accurate impressions is elicited indirectly, for example by telling perceivers that their pay on an upcoming collaborative task will depend on the target's performance, accuracy motives lead to reduced stereotyping (Neuberg & Fiske, 1987; Rudman, 1998). For instance, Rudman (1998) found that outcome-dependent male participants were less likely to stereotype a female confederate when deciding whether or not to select her as their partner in a Jeopardy!-like quiz game. Some of these studies have further employed unobtrusive outcome measures, such as the amount of time spent reading stereotype consistent vs. inconsistent information, which further undercuts an interpretation based on experimental demand.

Notably, one investigation found that when the target person's characteristics closely conformed to the stereotype of his group (i.e., gay men) accuracy motivation increased stereotyping (Madon, Guyll, Hilbert, Kyriakatos, & Vogel, 2006). However, in the Madon et al. (2006) study the target's self-description stated that "the most important thing to know about me is that I am gay." Since the target himself had explicitly indicated the stereotype was highly applicable, it is perhaps unsurprising that accuracy-motivated participants were more likely to rely on the stereotype. That said, we agree that under some circumstances a motivation to be accurate may increase stereotyping—for example, when the target identifies the stereotype as self-relevant, when the target is consistent with the stereotype (e.g., a weak female leader, or a violent Black male), or when only the only information available about the social target is his or her group membership. However, the currently available evidence suggests that accuracy motivation generally reduces (rather than increases) reliance on stereotypes.

Are People Who Endorse "Rational Racism" Consistently Rational, or Consistently Racist?

Empirical research illuminates the roles of wounded self-esteem and a desire to rationalize inequality in stereotyping of members of stigmatized groups. Moreover, a desire to make accurate judgments tends to decrease, rather than increase, the use of stereotypes in social judgments. However, this prior work leaves an open question as to whether individuals who believe it appropriate to engage in stereotype-based discrimination are actually any more epistemically rational than other people. Therefore, of further interest is whether individual differences in such beliefs are related to other variables relevant to the rational stereotyping debate, such as racial prejudice and the tendency to think rationally. Since prejudice is

driven by negative feelings toward a particular group rather than a desire to make an accurate judgment, prejudice fails to provide an epistemically rational reason for one's social judgments.

We have recently developed questionnaire items assessing individual differences in what we term Bayesian racism—the belief that it is rational to discriminate against individuals based on stereotypes about their racial group (McDell, Uhlmann, Omoregie, & Banaji, 2006; Uhlmann & Banaji, 2001; Uhlmann & Brescoll, 2008). Representative items include "When the only thing you know about someone is their race, it makes sense to use your knowledge of their racial group to form an impression of them" and "If you want to make accurate predictions, you should use information about a person's ethnic group when deciding if they will perform well." See the Appendix for these items, which form a reliable measure ($\alpha = .74$).

We administered an anonymous survey to American adults examining the correlations between our Bayesian racism measure and indices of prejudice and rational thinking (see Table 1). Scores on the Bayesian racism measure correlated positively with Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), which measures the degree to which people believe that social group hierarchy is desirable ($r = .55$). Representative items from the SDO scale are "Inferior groups should stay in their place" and "Some groups of people are simply not the equals of others." Individuals who believed that stereotyping is rational were also more likely to believe that race differences in violent crime are due to biological factors ($r = .53$) (suggesting that group differences in violent behavior are deep-seated and

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bayesian racism	3.18	.96									
Social dominance orientation	3.12	1.53	.55**								
Crime differences genetic	2.13	1.35	.53**	.55**							
Racist joke funny	3.46	2.15	.41**	.22*	.29**						
Attitude toward Whites	87.10	16.85	−.02	.01	.06	.02					
Attitude toward Blacks	69.12	22.76	−.45**	−.33**	−.38**	−.30**	.34**				
Attitude toward Hispanics	64.82	24.80	−.46**	−.26**	−.35**	−.35**	.26**	.66**			
Attitudes toward Arabs	57.52	27.46	−.49**	−.28**	−.23*	−.27**	.18†	.54**	.62**		
Attitudes toward statistics	4.31	.82	−.19*	−.07	−.10	.11	−.11	.01	.03	.10	
REI rationality subscale	4.98	1.01	−.26**	−.22*	−.32**	−.13	−.09	.19†	.12†	.14	.15

Note: $N = 109$

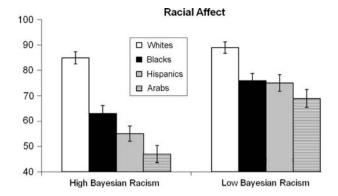† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Fig. 1 Attitudes toward Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Arabs among participants high and low in Bayesian racism. Higher numbers indicate more positive feelings toward members of each racial group

immutable), and find a joke suggesting Black people are intellectually inferior to animals amusing ($r = .41$).

Also administered were standard "feeling thermometer" measures assessing attitudes toward various racial groups on a scale ranging from 1 (extremely negative) to 100 (extremely positive). Bayesian racism was unrelated to attitudes toward White Americans ($r = -.02$), but significantly associated with negative attitudes toward Black Americans ($r = -.45$), Hispanic Americans ($r = -.46$), and Arab Americans ($r = -.49$). As seen in the Fig. 1, individuals who scored above the median in Bayesian racism reported significantly more negative feelings toward Black Americans than toward White Americans ($M_{difference} = 23$), toward Hispanic Americans than toward White Americans ($M_{difference} = 30$), and toward Arab Americans than toward White Americans ($M_{difference} = 38$). Notably, individuals who scored below the median in Bayesian racism also reported significantly more negative feelings toward Black, Hispanic, and Arab Americans relative to White Americans ($M_{difference} = 13$, 15, and 21, respectively) but clearly not to the same extent as participants high in Bayesian racism. Thus, the correlation between Bayesian racism and racial affect was not driven by bias against Whites among individuals low in Bayesian racism.

Remarkably, Bayesian racism was *negatively* related to indices of rational thinking. Individuals who endorsed Bayesian racism were significantly *less* likely to support the use of statistical information in decision-making, as assessed by the Attitudes Toward Statistics Scale (Wise, 1985), ($r = -.19$). Example items include "By relying on statistical probabilities, we can make our judgments much more accurate" and "I feel that statistical information is often very useful in making a decision." Bayesian racism also correlated negatively with the rationality subscale of the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI; Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj, & Heier, 1996), ($r = -.26$). Representative rationality items are "I enjoy thinking in abstract terms" and "Knowing the answer without having to understand the reasoning behind it is good enough for me (reverse coded)."

In a second survey, participants who endorsed Bayesian racism did not apply the same principle to all groups. Ivy League students who believed it rational and

appropriate to discriminate against Black and Hispanic individuals based on stereotypes about their racial group rejected the use of base rates to discriminate against Ivy League students. Specifically, 86% rejected the policy that employers and graduate schools should be allowed to take into account grade inflation at elite schools when evaluating the applications of Ivy League students. Notably, there was no significant correlation between Bayesian racism and endorsing discrimination against Ivy League students, ($r = .05$). Taken together, these findings suggest prejudice is more likely than actual rational considerations to underlie the belief that stereotyping minorities is rational. People who endorse the concept of "rational racism" appear to be much more consistently racist than they are rational.

Conclusion

The motives underlying stereotyping would be epistemically rational if people's goals when they use stereotypes were—as D'Souza (1995), Malkin (2004), and others have argued—to make accurate judgments (Foley, 1991a, 1991b; Nozick, 1993). However, when examined at the level of the underlying motives, stereotyping members of stigmatized groups often fails standards of rational decision-making. Specifically, research shows that stereotyping members of stigmatized groups can be driven by threatened egotism and system justifying motives. Also, Bayesian racism—the belief that it is appropriate to discriminate against individuals based on stereotypes about their racial group—is strongly related to prejudiced attitudes and a desire to keep low status groups "in their place," and negatively correlated with indices of rational thinking. In addition, there is little evidence that people stereotype out of a desire to make accurate judgments. In fact, a motivation to make accurate judgments generally *reduces* the influence of stereotypes on impressions of individuals. The fact that people use stereotypes to derogate stigmatized group members in response to their own failings, out of a desire to maintain the social hierarchy, because they are prejudiced, and when they are least motivated to be accurate bodes poorly for someone defending the rationality of racial and gender stereotyping. For example, it would be difficult to argue that stereotyping is rational because it raises the self-esteem of White men and helps rationalize the low status of Black Americans.

   The point of the present review is not to argue that stereotyping members of stigmatized groups is *never* the product of rational motives. Stereotyping is a complex and over-determined phenomenon, and it seems possible that in some instances rational factors, such as a desire for accuracy, do underlie stereotypical judgments. (This seems most likely in cases where only information about group membership is available about the social target.) Our point is that even when a social perceiver honestly believes that his stereotypic judgment was driven by rational motives, and third-party observers believe his use of the stereotype appears to have been driven by rational motives, that may not be the case. People are often unaware of the influences on their judgments (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) and, in the cases of stereotyping, those influences are often unsavory.

The public debate regarding the rationality of stereotyping is emotional, contentious, and cuts across many areas of scholarship. That stereotyping is an area of intense research activity within the social sciences naturally raises the issue of what psychology can contribute. The present review finds psychological research makes a critical contribution by illuminating the irrational motives that can underlie the use of social stereotypes.

Appendix

Bayesian Racism Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

1. If you want to make accurate predictions, you should use information about a person's ethnic group when deciding if they will perform well.
2. If your personal safety is at stake, it's sensible to avoid members of ethnic groups known to behave more aggressively.
3. When the only thing you know about someone is their race, it makes sense to use your knowledge of their racial group to form an impression of them.
4. Law enforcement officers should pay particular attention to those social groups more heavily involved in crime, even if this means focusing on members of particular ethnic groups.
5. Law enforcement officers should act as if members of all racial groups are equally likely to commit crimes (reverse scored).
6. It is always wrong to avoid someone because members of their racial group are more likely to commit violent crimes (reverse scored).

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