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BACKGROUND

- Negative bias toward people in poverty is highly prevalent; it relates to discrimination, stigmatization, and reduced willingness to contribute to social programs assisting the poor, often resulting in negative outcomes.
- Poverty bias research has been conducted using solely explicit self-report questionnaires, which are prone to social desirability influences.

AIMS

- To evaluate poverty bias within a contextual behavioral framework
- To evaluate explicitly- and implicitly-assessed poverty bias and relations with related constructs
- To assess the incremental predictive validity of implicitly assessing poverty bias, in predicting both voting behavior related to welfare programs and political candidates.

METHODS

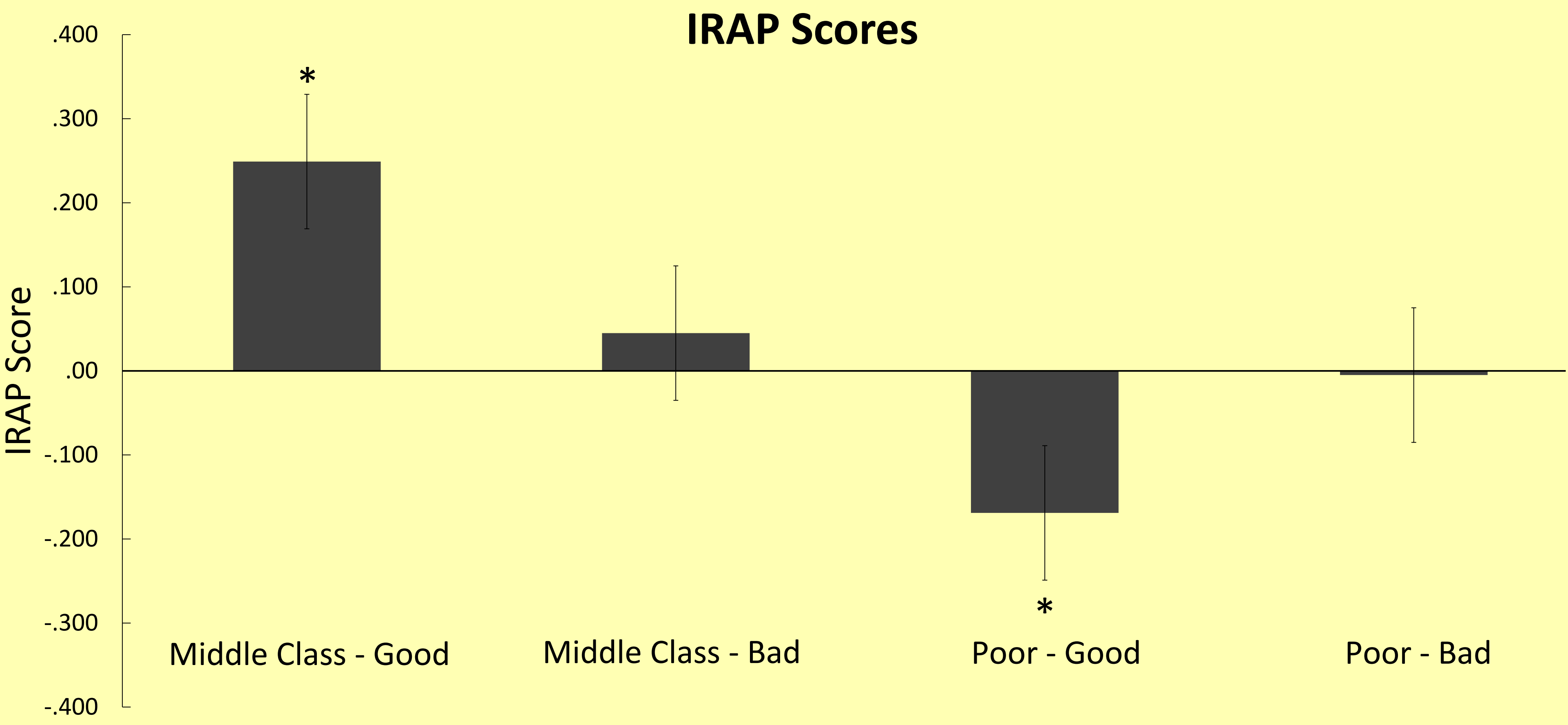
- Participants**
 - 14 undergraduates (21.4% R/Conservative, 42.9% D/Liberal, 7.1% Independent, 28.6% undecided)
- Measures**
 - Acceptance and Action Questionnaire II (Bond et al., 2011)
 - Attitude Toward Poverty Scale (Yun & Weaver, 2010)
 - General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, Montada, & Schmitt, 1987)
 - Attributions for Poverty Questionnaire (Bullock, 2004)
 - Protestant Work Ethic Scale (Mirels & Garrett, 1971)
 - Right Wing Authoritarianism Scale (Altemeyer, 1998).
- IRAP Procedure**
 - Implicit measure based on RFT
 - Assesses strength of relational responses (i.e., the degree to which functionally similar responding has occurred in the past).
 - Presents stimulus relations (e.g., "poor person" + "lazy") to which participants respond by selecting one of two options (e.g., "similar" or "opposite").
 - On half of the trials, participants are required to respond in a manner consistent with a negative bias toward poor people. On the other half of trials, participants are required to respond in a manner consistent with a positive bias toward poor people.
 - IRAP scores are standardized differences in response latency between consistent and inconsistent trials and represent the strength of a given relational response.

RESULTS

Correlations Among Study Measures

	AAQ II Total	RWA Total	ATPS Total	APQ Total	BWQ Total	Middle-Class-Good	Middle-Class-Bad	Poor-Good
AAQ II	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
RWA Total	.23	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
ATPS Total	-.35	-.34	--	--	--	--	--	--
APQ Total	.29	-.54	.14	--	--	--	--	--
BWQ Total	-.14	.56	-.46	-.19	--	--	--	--
Middle-Class-Good	.16	.56*	.30	-.53	.26	--	--	--
Middle-Class-Bad	.06	.51	-.01	-.53	.13	.51	--	--
Poor-Good	.39	.25	.01	-.21	.05	.55*	.366	--
Poor-Bad	-.10	.21	-.22	-.53	-.23	.13	.09	-.08

Note. * = $p < .05$ significant correlation



- IRAP Results**
 - Middle-Class-Good* trials: Participants faster to respond when similar was required than when opposite was required, suggesting a positive relational bias towards middle-class people, $t(13) = 2.96, p = .011$.
 - Middle Class Bad* trials: Participants equally as quick to respond when similar was required as when opposite was required, suggesting no relational bias.
 - Poor-Good* trials: Participants faster to respond when similar was required than when opposite was required, suggesting a positive relational bias towards people in poverty, $t(13) = -2.37, p = .034$.
 - Poor-Bad* trials: Participants were equally as quick to respond when similar was required as when opposite was required, suggesting no relational bias.
- Correlational Results**
 - Middle-Class-Good* IRAP scores positively correlated with RWA scores.
 - Although study was underpowered to detect significant correlations, the following variables might be moderately correlated and should be explored further: psychological flexibility and attitudes towards people in poverty; right wing authoritarianism and beliefs about welfare; *Poor-Bad* IRAP trials and attitudes towards poverty.

Presidential Candidate Voting

Presidential Candidate	Percentage
Hillary Clinton	7.1
Bernie Sanders	50.0
Donald Trump	0.0
Ted Cruz	0.0
John Kasich	7.1

CONCLUSIONS

- IRAP results suggest participants have a history of responding to both middle-class and poor people in a positive manner.
- IRAP results might have been influenced by contextual features - namely, the responding rules presented before each block of trials. Data collection for this study is ongoing, with systematic manipulations of the responding rules to experimentally evaluate the impact of this contextual feature on strength and predictive validity of IRAP scores.
- Positive correlation between *Middle-Class-Good* IRAP scores and Right Wing Authoritarianism scores suggests a more extensive history of responding positively to middle-class people might be associated with greater endorsement of authoritarian beliefs (e.g., preferences for social uniformity).
- Moderate negative correlations between the AAQII and ATPS may suggest a negative relation between psychological inflexibility and structural beliefs about causes of poverty.

LIMITATIONS

- Data is largely cross-sectional and sample size is small, thus limiting conclusions and ability to address all aims.
- Results might not be generalizable to other populations outside of college undergraduates, who tended to report more liberal political affiliation and might differ from the general US population in a variety of ways.