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# Negative attitudes towards welfare claimants: The importance of unconscious bias

**Robert de Vries**

As discussed elsewhere in this volume, research in a wide variety of countries shows that unemployed people are generally considered less deserving of welfare support than other social groups, such as older people or people with disabilities (e.g. Van Oorschot, 2006; Hills, 2002; Albrekt Larsen, 2002; Coughlin, 1980). However, not everyone feels the same way about the unemployed. Opinions about how much help this group deserves vary widely: between countries, between individuals and over time. There are many potential reasons for these differences of opinion. For example, different welfare systems might encourage people to view welfare recipients differently (Albrekt Larsen, 2006). However, in this chapter I focus on the role of negative stereotypes. Specifically, I argue that *unconscious* (implicit) stereotypes of unemployed people are likely to have an important effect on people's feelings about how deserving they are of welfare support. This is supported by the results of an initial empirical study investigating the nature and effects of implicit attitudes towards this group.

## 1. The role of stereotypes in perceptions of deservingness

As Van Oorschot (2006) and others have described, people living in countries with very different histories, cultures and policy environments exhibit remarkable consistency in how they rank the deservingness of different social groups. Although there is some variation (see Laenen and Meuleman in this volume), the dominant rank order places older people and the disabled at the top, and immigrants and unemployed people at the bottom. The consistency of this order suggests that people in different countries use the same mental criteria to evaluate which groups are more deserving or less deserving of welfare (Van Oorschot, 2006; Petersen, 2012). These criteria are likely to include whether members of the group are perceived to be at fault for their circumstances, whether they are thought to have paid into the system and whether they are generally felt to be likeable and to be 'people like us' (Van Oorschot, 2000; see also the introduction to this volume). It is mostly these criteria that determine the perception of unemployed people as less deserving than other groups. For example, unemployed people are often considered to be responsible for their own situation due to laziness or incompetence (Albrekt Larsen, 2002), and are less likely than other groups to be seen as having contributed sufficiently to the welfare system through tax payments.

If people do indeed use the same set of criteria to determine who is deserving of welfare, then this presents a puzzle. Why do judgments about the deservingness of unemployed people differ so strongly: between individuals, countries (Albrekt Larsen, 2006) and time periods (Park et al., 2012)? I should note that I am not referring here to people's perceptions of how deserving unemployed people are *relative to other social groups*, but am instead referring to absolute judgments. How generously do unemployed people deserve to be supported? How strict should the preconditions be for accessing this support?

Petersen and others (Petersen, 2012; Aaroe and Petersen, 2014) argue that this variation is principally explained by differences in stereotypes. Properly applying the deservingness criteria described above requires specific information, for example on the circumstances which led to someone becoming unemployed. In the absence of this information, people will fall back on stereotypes of unemployed people (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Crawford et al., 2011), which will differ between individuals, countries and time periods. For example, Aaroe and Petersen (2014) find that when provided with specific information about a hypothetical unemployed person's circumstances, people in both Denmark and the USA (countries with very different cultures and welfare regimes) give very similar deservingness judgments. However, when no specific information is given, Danish respondents are considerably more generous than Americans; indicating, the authors argue, that the latter rely on a more negative stereotype of unemployed people than the former.

## 2. Implicit stereotypes and attitudes

Research in both Europe and the US shows that unemployed people are often stereotyped in negative terms, with a particular focus on their suspected laziness and dishonesty (Baumberg et al., 2012; Bamfield and Horton, 2009; Bullock, 1999; Secombe et al., 1998; Furnham, 1983). Attitudes towards unemployed welfare claimants seem to be particularly extreme, with a number of studies suggesting that they are more strongly disliked and disrespected than many other stigmatized groups, such as disabled people and those belonging to minority ethnicities (Fiske et al., 1999, 2002).

Previous research in this area focuses exclusively on *explicit* attitudes: conscious attitudes and beliefs that respondents are willing and able to report in a survey or interview. However, research into other stereotyped groups shows that, over and above explicit attitudes, *implicit* attitudes are also important (Greenwald et al., 2009). Implicit attitudes are unconscious, automatically activated feelings and associations held in relation to particular groups (Greenwald, McGhee, and Shwartz, 1998). For example, consciously we may genuinely believe that women are no less competent in the workplace than men. However, unconsciously the characteristics we associate with men and women

have developed under the influence of persistent exposure to sexist stereotypes, potentially leading us to develop implicit negative attitudes regarding women's competence (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

Implicit and explicit attitudes are likely to be positively correlated. Someone who holds implicit negative attitudes towards women is also more likely to hold consciously sexist views (Greenwald et al., 2009). However, a large body of research shows that implicit and explicit attitudes can be empirically separated and have important independent effects. For example, work in the US consistently finds that white Americans harbour implicit negative stereotypes of black Americans: more easily associating black faces with negative concepts such as 'disgusting', 'annoying' and 'bad' (Fazio et al., 1995), or with negative stereotypes such as 'lazy' or 'criminal' (Lepore and Brown, 1997). Such research shows that these implicit associations are present even among those who do not report explicit negative views. It also shows that, over and above explicit attitudes, implicit negative associations are important predictors of how people behave towards members of stereotyped groups (for a review, see Greenwald, et al., 2009). What this research shows is that if we consider only explicit reports, we are left with an incomplete picture of people's stereotyped attitudes towards stigmatized groups.

To my knowledge, no previous research has investigated implicit attitudes towards unemployed people. We may therefore be missing an important part of our understanding of stereotyped attitudes towards this group. In terms of people's perceptions of the deservingness of the unemployed, implicit attitudes may explain some of the variation that is not explained by explicit stereotypes. This possibility is supported by parallel research, which finds implicit attitudes towards other social groups to be an important predictor of relevant policy preferences, independent of explicit attitudes. For example, investigating the effects of implicit attitudes towards illegal immigrants, Perez (2010) finds that people with stronger negative implicit attitudes towards this group tend to support stricter immigration policies. This effect remains even after controlling for a variety of explicit attitudes, including left/right political ideology, economic concerns and explicit intolerance towards immigrants (see Craemer, 2008, for a similar study on attitudes towards African Americans).

### 3. An empirical investigation into implicit attitudes towards benefit claimants in the UK

The theory behind implicit attitudes suggests that they develop in response to repeated exposure to negative stereotypes, for example through the media (Greenwald and Krieger, 2006). In the UK,

media discussions of welfare are dominated by negative and stereotyped characterizations of 'benefit claimants'. This broad term can technically apply to a number of social groups, including recipients of old-age pensions and working people receiving income support. However, colloquially it is almost exclusively used to refer to people claiming out-of-work benefits: principally those claiming unemployment benefit. Despite the majority of unemployment benefit claims being for short durations between periods of work (ONS, 2015), and the fact that large fractions of the population have claimed these benefits at one time or another (DWP, 2013), 'benefit claimants' are often discussed as if they are a separate, homogenous social group (Dorling, 2010). In UK political and media discussions, people in this group are routinely characterized as lazy, feckless and aggressive (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013; Wring and Ward, 2015).

UK residents are therefore routinely exposed to negative stereotypes of welfare benefit claimants. It seems likely that this exposure would lead to the development of negative unconscious attitudes towards this group, in the same way that (for example) pervasive gender stereotypes lead to negative implicit attitudes towards women. In addition to explicit attitudes and stereotypes, these implicit attitudes could play an important role in explaining perceptions of benefit claimants' deservingness.

In the study described below, I address three questions: Do implicit attitude measures suggest the existence of implicit negative attitudes towards benefit claimants in the UK? Are implicit attitudes towards claimants related to people's opinions about the support this group should receive through the welfare system? Further, if so, do implicit attitudes explain variation in these opinions that cannot be explained by explicit attitudes?

### 3.1 Methodology

The study, which was conducted in the UK in 2012–13, comprises three main components: 1) a measure of implicit attitudes towards benefit claimants, 2) survey measurements of explicit attitudes towards this group and 3) survey measurements of opinions on the welfare support unemployed people should receive. Participants completed both the survey and the implicit attitude measure online using the Inquisit software platform.<sup>i</sup>

There is an apparent mismatch here between the implicit and explicit attitude measurements, which focus on 'benefit claimants', and the welfare opinion measurements, which focus on unemployed people. This is due to the way in which unemployed people are referenced in UK media and political discussions. The aim of the study was to investigate the role of negative stereotyped attitudes and beliefs in perceptions of the deservingness of unemployed people. However, negative discussions

about this group do not often refer to them using the specific term 'unemployed people'. Instead, they are routinely referred to as 'benefit claimants' or 'people on benefits'. It is therefore likely that stereotypes of unemployed people are more strongly associated with the latter terms than with the former term 'unemployed people'.

### 3.1.1 Participants

112 people (58 women and 54 men) participated in the study. They were recruited from the Nuffield College Centre for Experimental Social Science (CESS) participant pool at the University of Oxford. Ages range from 16 to 70 years, with a median age of 29. Some 40 per cent of participants were in full-time education at the time of the study, 41 per cent were employed, 8 per cent were unemployed, 6 per cent were retired and 5 per cent reported being outside the labour force looking after the home or family. The majority of participants (85%) are of white British ethnicity. Because the study is primarily concerned with negative implicit attitudes developed through exposure to the UK political and media environment, only people born and continuously resident in the UK were recruited.

### 3.1.2 Measuring implicit attitudes towards welfare claimants

#### **The Go/No-Go Association Test**

In this study, implicit attitudes are measured using the Go/No-Go Association Test (GNAT; Nosek and Banaji, 2001). In the GNAT procedure, participants are asked to sort a set of presented stimuli into target categories. The stimuli are of four types:

1. Stimuli relating to the target social group. For example, in a study of implicit attitudes towards black people, these may be pictures of black faces.
2. Positive words.
3. Negative words.
4. Irrelevant distracter words.

These stimuli are presented in quick-fire fashion in the centre of a computer screen. The top of the screen displays a target category. As each stimulus appears, respondents must quickly classify it as either belonging to the target category or not. Participants press the space bar ('Go') to indicate that the stimulus belongs to the target category, or refrain from pressing ('No-Go') to indicate that it does not. For example, if the target category is 'benefit claimants and positive words' and the words 'wonderful' or 'jobseeker' appear on the screen, the correct response would be to press the space bar. If the word 'bad' or 'terrible' appears on the screen, the correct response would be to do

nothing and wait for the next stimulus to appear.<sup>ii</sup> The theoretical basis of the GNAT is that participants will find the task easier when the target category pairs concepts that are closely unconsciously associated (for example benefit claimants and negative words) than when non-associated concepts are paired (for example benefit claimants and positive words). A large body of research has found that implicit attitudes measured by this and related tasks are associated with concrete outcomes related to the target group, including policy preferences and behaviour towards the target group (Greenwald et al., 2009).

### **Procedure**

The stimuli used were all words: ten positive words (for example 'friendly', 'clean', 'wonderful'), ten negative words (for example 'bad', 'useless', 'dirty'), five words or phrases related to welfare benefit claimants (for example 'benefit claimant', 'on welfare', 'jobseeker'), and ten distractor object words or phrases (for example 'snooker table', 'spoon', 'cupboard'). Stimuli were presented randomly without replacement.

In the study, each stimulus was presented in the centre of the screen for 650 ms before being replaced by the next one. Each trial was scored as a 'hit' (if the participant pressed the space bar for a target word before it disappeared), a 'correct rejection' (if the participant ignored a non-target word), a 'false alarm' (if the participant responded to a non-target word) or a 'miss' (if the participant ignored a target word). The trials were divided into two blocks. In the 'stereotype consistent' block, the target categories were 'Benefit claimants' and 'Negative words'. In the 'stereotype inconsistent' block, the target categories were 'Benefit claimants' and 'Positive words'.

For each block, I calculated a measure of sensitivity (labelled 'd') from the proportion of hits and false alarms, in line with the procedure outlined by Nosek and Banaji (2001). A high sensitivity score indicates that the participant's responses in a block were very accurate (a high proportion of hits and a low proportion of false alarms).<sup>iii</sup> Higher sensitivity (accuracy) in the 'stereotype consistent' block (the block in which negative words and stimuli related to benefit claimants shared a response) indicates the presence of negative implicit attitudes towards benefit claimants. The difference in sensitivity between the two blocks is expressed in terms of Cohen's d (Cohen, 1977), which can be interpreted as a straightforward measurement of effect size (with figures of lower than 0.3 reflecting a small effect, 0.3 to 0.5 a medium effect and above 0.5 a large effect).

### **3.1.3 Explicit attitudes towards claimants**

After finishing the GNAT, participants completed a brief survey covering demographic characteristics, experience of unemployment and welfare benefit receipt, news media consumption

and political affiliation. This survey also measures two dimensions of explicit attitudes towards benefit claimants: explicit stereotypes about claimants and attributions for claimant status. The measurements used are:

### **Stereotyped beliefs about claimants**

Participants were given a list of positive and negative characteristics (such as responsible, intelligent, dirty, uneducated) and were asked whether they associated each characteristic a) more strongly with benefit claimants, b) more strongly with non-claimants or c) equally strongly/weakly with both groups (the full list of words is given in Table 1, below). The words were chosen to reflect a variety of potential stereotypes of this group (in line with Cozzarelli et al., 2001) and to relate to characteristics potentially relevant to deservingness criteria (for example, 'Lazy' and 'Responsible' relate to whether claimants are perceived to be at fault for their circumstances).

### **Attributions for claimant status**

Participants were asked which of the following reasons was the best explanation for why there are 'people in this country who are unemployed and claiming state benefits'.

- a. Luck.
- b. Laziness.
- c. Injustice.
- d. Economic forces.

The items were chosen to cover the four attributional domains outlined by Van Oorschot and Halman (2000): personal fate, personal blame, social blame and social fate.

## **3.1.4 Opinions on welfare support for unemployed people**

To determine the association between implicit and explicit attitudes and people's opinions about the support unemployed people should receive, participants were asked the following two questions, adapted from the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA, 2012):

1. 'About the level of benefits for unemployed people. Which of these two statements comes closest to your own view?
  - a. Benefits for unemployed people are too low and cause hardship.
  - b. Benefits for unemployed people are too high and discourage them from working.'



2. 'Listed below are six groups who receive money from the government through state benefits. For each group please say whether the amount they receive is too much, too little or about right:
  - a. Old-age pensioners.
  - b. Parents of children under 18.
  - c. Unemployed people.
  - d. Disabled people.
  - e. Employed people on low incomes.'

Participants were also asked the following question adapted from a UK Trades Union Congress (TUC) survey (TUC, 2013) to assess their support for a specific recent policy relating to unemployment benefits:

3. 'For at least the next three years, the government is limiting the increase in unemployment benefits to 1%. This is less than the current rate of inflation (i.e. the rate at which prices go up every year). To what extent do you support or oppose this policy? (strongly support, slightly support, slightly oppose, strongly oppose)

They were also asked the following novel question to assess their support for a hypothetical reduction in spending on unemployment benefits:

4. 'Some people have suggested that the government should reduce the amount of money they spend on unemployment benefits, and instead spend this money in other areas. To what extent would you support or oppose this suggested policy? (strongly support, slightly support, slightly oppose, strongly oppose)'

## 3.2 Analyses and results

### 3.2.1 Overall implicit attitude results

Sensitivity scores are significantly higher in the stereotype consistent block (benefit claimants and negative words) than in the stereotype inconsistent block (benefit claimants and positive words) (*Cohen's*  $d=0.46$ ;  $t(108)=7.52$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This indicates that on average, participants had significantly more difficulty with the task when benefit claimant stimuli were paired with positive words than when they were paired with negative words. This is evidence that respondents do indeed hold negative implicit attitudes towards benefit claimants.

In order to examine the association between implicit attitudes and other factors, I calculated a measurement of the strength of each participant's negative implicit attitudes towards claimants. In line with Devos and colleagues (2007), this was carried out by subtracting each participant's sensitivity scores in the stereotype consistent block from their scores in the stereotype inconsistent block. A high positive result indicates that the participant had substantially more difficulty with the task when benefit claimant stimuli were paired with positive words than with negative words. A negative result indicates that the participant had greater difficulty with the task when claimant stimuli were paired with negative words (indicating a positive implicit attitude towards claimants). Scores range from -0.73 to 1.44, with a mean of 0.32 and a standard deviation of 0.45. These scores were transformed to z-scores for use in further analyses.

### 3.2.2 Relationship between implicit and explicit attitudes

#### **Stereotyped beliefs**

Table 1 (below) shows the extent to which respondents explicitly reported associating each characteristic with benefit claimants or non-claimants. Although consistently large proportions of participants reported that they did not associate a given characteristic more strongly with either group, there is a clear pattern of negative words being associated with benefit claimants and positive words with non-claimants. Very few participants associated any of the negative words with non-claimants, and correspondingly few associated any of the positive words with claimants. On average, participants associated 3.5 (out of 6) negative and 0.3 (out of 6) positive words with benefit claimants. By contrast, they associated an average of 0.2 negative and 3.4 positive words with non-claimants. Of the list of 12 words, participants associated an average of 6.9 in a stereotype consistent way (negative with claimants and positive with non-claimants).

----TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE----

To examine the association between implicit attitudes and explicit stereotypes, I first used an ordinary least squares (OLS) model to regress the number of stereotype consistent word associations on their implicit attitude score. Contrary to expectations, no association is found: respondents with stronger negative implicit attitudes did not tend to attribute more negative characteristics to claimants and more positive characteristics to non-claimants ( $\beta=0.11$ ; 95% CI=-0.50, 0.69).

### **Attributions for claimant status**

Table 2 shows that the majority of participants endorsed 'Economic forces' as the best explanation for why some people were unemployed and claiming benefits, with 'Laziness' being the next most popular response.

---TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE---

A logistic regression model shows that a one standard-deviation increase in negative implicit attitude scores predicts a 28 per cent increase in the odds of attributing claimant status to laziness as opposed to any other factor. This suggests that respondents with more-negative implicit attitudes towards claimants were more likely to feel that claimants are responsible for their own situation. However, this association is not statistically significant at conventional thresholds (OR=1.28; 95% CI=0.82, 1.99).

### **Are implicit negative attitudes present in those with no explicit negative attitudes?**

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, implicit and explicit attitudes are positively correlated but theoretically separable. In order to test the extent to which implicit and attitudes towards benefit claimants can be separated, I re-ran the primary GNAT analysis for a restricted sample of participants with no explicit negative attitudes towards claimants. This sample comprises those who did not attribute claimant status to laziness and who did not explicitly associate the most hostile words (dirty, lazy) with claimants (N=36). In this sub-sample, the average difference in performance between the stereotype consistent and inconsistent GNAT trials remains significant (*Cohen's d*=0.35;  $t(35)=2.84$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), indicating that negative implicit associations are still present in this group.

## 3.2.3 Relationship between implicit attitudes and opinions about welfare support for unemployed people

### **Descriptive results**

A total of 33 per cent of respondents reported that they thought unemployed people receive too little money from the government. This is identical to the proportion who thought that parents of children under 18 receive too little. Substantially higher proportions reported that pensioners (69%), disabled people (50%) and poor people (54%) receive too little.

Participants are evenly divided on whether benefits are too high and discourage work or are too low and cause hardship (51% and 49% respectively). This is comparable with BSA results showing 54 per cent of respondents agreeing that benefits are too high and discourage work (BSA, 2012).

Similarly, participants are evenly divided on support for limiting increases in benefits (comparable to the results found in TUC, 2013) and on support for a hypothetical reduction in spending on unemployment benefits.

### **Analytical results**

To examine the effect of implicit attitudes on welfare opinions, I first created separate binary variables indicating whether respondents:

1. Thought that too little money is spent on unemployed people.
2. Thought that benefits are too high and discourage work.
3. Slightly or strongly supported a reduction in the rate at which unemployment benefits rose over time.
4. Slightly or strongly supported a reduction in spending on unemployment benefits.

For each outcome, three logistic regression models were fitted:

- Implicit only model: Predicting the outcome from implicit attitude strength alone.
- Explicit only model: Predicting the outcome from explicit attitudes only. This includes the two variables described above (whether respondents thought that laziness is the best explanation for unemployment, and the number of words respondents attributed in a stereotype consistent way) together with a measurement of overall political ideology (measured on a 1-7 scale with 1 being 'Strongly liberal' and 7 being 'Strongly conservative').
- Combined model: A model including all of the implicit and explicit predictors.

The results of these models are shown in Table 3.

---TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE---

These results show that in all four bivariate models, the associations between implicit attitudes and the outcome are in the expected direction. People with stronger negative implicit attitudes were less likely to think that unemployed people receive too little money through state benefits, were more

likely to think that benefits are too high and discourage work, and were more likely to support a hypothetical reduction in benefits spending. They were also more likely to support a limit on increases to unemployment benefits. However, this association is not statistically significant.

In terms of explicit attitudes, the most consistent result is for political conservatism. People who described themselves as more conservative were significantly less supportive of welfare benefits for unemployed people across the board. The other explicit attitude results are also generally in the direction one would expect. Attributing claimant status to laziness or having a stereotyped view of claimants relative to non-claimants (as measured by the number of stereotype consistent word associations) is generally associated with increased opposition to welfare support for unemployed people. However, these associations are not statistically significant at the conventional threshold.

In the combined models, the coefficients for all variables remain largely unchanged. This suggests that the effects of implicit and explicit attitudes are genuinely independent. Crucially for the purposes of this study, these results suggest that – over and above explicit attitudes – negative implicit attitudes towards benefit claimants can affect opinions on welfare support for this group. The magnitude of these effects is also relatively substantial: Table 3 shows that in three of the four models, a one standard-deviation increase in implicit attitude strength has an effect equivalent to a one-unit increase in the conservatism scale.

## 4 Conclusions

The empirical study described above provides the first direct evidence for the existence of negative unconscious attitudes towards unemployment benefit claimants. These attitudes are separable from explicit attitudes towards claimants, with evidence of negative implicit associations present even among participants who did not explicitly endorse negative beliefs or attitudes about claimants.

The study also provides initial evidence that implicit attitudes may play a role in judgments about the support unemployed people should receive from the welfare system. People with stronger negative implicit attitudes towards claimants were significantly less likely to think that unemployed people receive too little money from the welfare system, were significantly more likely to think that benefits are too high and discouraged work, and were significantly more likely to support an overall reduction in spending on unemployment benefits. These associations exist independently of political ideology and of explicitly reported attitudes and beliefs about claimants.

Before discussing the implications of these results, it should be noted that this is a small initial study and the results should therefore be treated with caution.<sup>iv</sup> The sample does not solely consist of university students (as is the case in many previous studies of implicit attitudes). However, this group is nevertheless over-represented in the sample. The sample is also geographically specific,

comprising people living in and around Oxford, an affluent town in Central Southern England. Overall findings on implicit and explicit attitudes are therefore unlikely to be representative of the UK population as a whole. Specifically, undergraduate students tend to be more politically liberal than the general public, and this may be reflected in more generous perceptions of unemployed people. The extent to which this may have affected the relationship between implicit attitudes and other factors is unknown. Further studies using other samples are therefore necessary before drawing firm conclusions.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study have significant implications for deservingness research. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, researchers such as Petersen (2012; Aaroe and Petersen, 2014) argue strongly for the importance of stereotyped attitudes and beliefs in determining people's deservingness opinions. Existing research on stereotypes of unemployed people focuses exclusively on explicit attitudes and beliefs. However, the results reported here suggest that – separate from their explicit attitudes – people have unconscious feelings about unemployed people: feelings which may have additional effects on their judgments about the deservingness of this group. If this is indeed the case, it suggests that by focusing only on explicit attitudes, deservingness research is missing an important piece of the picture.

Beyond the suggestion that deservingness research should consider implicit attitudes alongside the traditional focus on explicit measurements, these results also open up considerable scope for future work. One particularly useful avenue of research would involve further exploration of the *content* of people's implicit stereotypes. In the above study, I focus on general implicit attitudes towards benefit claimants (positive or negative). However, research on other stereotyped groups delves deeper into exploring which particular characteristics people implicitly associate with different groups (Amodio and Devine, 2006; Rudman and Ashmore, 2007). What attributes do people implicitly associate with unemployed people? How do these attributions differ across countries, and how do they relate to deservingness criteria? These are all open questions.

Additional questions remain around perceptions of other groups. In this chapter I focus specifically on unemployed people. However, people may also hold implicit stereotypes (positive or negative) about other groups receiving welfare support, including older people, single parents and the disabled (e.g. Perdue and Gutman, 1990). These stereotypes may also contribute to how deserving these groups are perceived to be. Further research is also needed into the development of these stereotypes, for example through media exposure. Addressing these questions would give us a deeper insight into how stereotypes operate in the formation of welfare attitudes. As a

consequence, they may also help to devise interventions to reduce the negative consequences for stigmatized groups.

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## Tables and figures

**Table 1: Percentage of respondents reporting associating negative and positive words with benefit claimants versus non-claimants (N=109)**

	<i>% associate more with claimants</i>	<i>% associate with neither</i>	<i>% associate more with non-claimants</i>
<u>Negative</u>			
Drug abuse	68.81	30.28	0.92
Uneducated	66.97	27.52	5.50
Dirty	40.37	59.63	0.00
Lazy	59.63	38.53	1.83
Depressed	61.47	30.28	8.26
Embarrassed	55.05	38.53	6.42
<u>Positive</u>			
Responsible	1.83	40.37	57.80
Intelligent	0.92	40.37	58.72
Happy	2.75	40.37	56.88
Healthy	6.42	25.69	67.89
Family oriented	13.76	62.39	23.85
Proud	0.92	28.44	70.64

**Table 2: Explanation favoured for why some people are unemployed and claiming benefits (N=109)**

Economic forces	55%
Laziness	27%
Injustice	14%
Luck	5%

**Table 3: Associations (odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals) between implicit and explicit attitudes and opinions on welfare policies (N=109)**

	<i>Receive too little money</i>			<i>Benefits too high</i>			<i>Support limit on increase</i>			<i>Support reducing spending</i>		
	I	E	C	I	E	C	I	E	C	I	E	C
Implicit attitude strength (z score)	<b>0.65*</b> (0.42,0.99)	-	<b>0.65<sup>†</sup></b> (0.40,1.05)	<b>1.81**</b> (1.17,2.79)	-	<b>1.87*</b> (1.16,3.02)	1.36 (0.91,2.03)	-	1.35 (0.87,2.08)	<b>1.59*</b> (1.05,2.41)	-	<b>1.61*</b> (1.03,2.52)
Attribute claimant status to laziness	-	0.44 (0.12,1.61)	0.49 (0.13,1.79)	-	1.91 (0.64,5.69)	1.75 (0.58,5.34)	-	1.19 (0.42,3.35)	1.12 (0.39,3.18)	-	1.20 (0.43,3.41)	1.10 (0.38,3.18)
# of stereotype consistent word associations	-	1.05 (0.90,1.23)	1.06 (0.90,1.25)	-	1.08 (0.93,1.26)	1.08 (0.92,1.27)	-	<b>1.15<sup>†</sup></b> (0.99,1.34)	<b>1.15<sup>†</sup></b> (0.99,1.34)	-	1.32 (0.97,1.32)	1.37 (0.97,1.33)
Conservatism (1-7)	-	<b>0.49***</b> (0.33,0.72)	<b>0.48***</b> (0.31,0.72)	-	<b>1.74**</b> (1.23,2.48)	<b>1.82**</b> (1.25,2.64)	-	<b>1.61**</b> (1.15,2.24)	<b>1.62**</b> (1.15,2.27)	-	<b>1.61**</b> (1.15,2.25)	<b>1.64**</b> (1.16,2.31)

\*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05, †p<0.10. I=Implicit only, E=Explicit only, C=Combined.

<sup>i</sup> The full study also includes an experimental manipulation intended to examine the effect of a priming exposure (an invented newspaper report). The results are not reported here but are given in full in de Vries (2015). The effect of the prime is statistically controlled in all of the analyses reported here.

<sup>ii</sup> More details on the GNAT procedure are given in the Web Appendix. Example implicit tasks, including the GNAT and the IAT, are available to try online at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

<sup>iii</sup> Three participants had sensitivity scores of 0 or less in one or both of the blocks. A score of 0 indicates chance responding, so these respondents were excluded from further analysis.

<sup>iv</sup> Although the sample size of 109 is comparable with the majority of studies of implicit attitudes (see Greenwald et al., 2009)