Journal of the Association for Consumer Research (2022), Vol. 7, no. 3

https://doi.org/10.1086/719586

Are Conservatives Less Likely Than Liberals to Accept Welfare?

The Psychology of Welfare Politics

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ABSTRACT

Research has shown that conservatives tend to oppose the distribution of welfare to other people. However, are conservatives less likely than liberals to accept welfare for themselves? We find that the difference in liberals' and conservatives' welfare enrollment depends on whether the welfare program has a work requirement policy. A natural field experiment shows that when the supplemental nutritional program (SNAP) had a work requirement, liberals and conservatives were equally likely to enroll in this program. In the absence of a work requirement, conservatives were less likely than liberals to enroll in it. Follow-up experiments replicate this result and demonstrate the underlying mechanism: conservatives' adherence to binding moral values (loyalty, authority, and purity; Graham, Haidt and Nosek 2009) makes them hesitant to accept welfare without a work requirement. Policymakers can deploy marketing messages to mitigate this effect and boost conservatives' enrollment in such welfare programs.

Keywords: Welfare Programs, Low-Income Consumers, Political Identity, Conservative Ideology, Moral Foundations

It is well known that conservative political leaders tend to oppose federal welfare programs. This is not only true of the leaders; conservative voters, even those of low-income, tend to disfavor welfare distribution policies (Gilens 2009; Skitka and Tetlock 1992, 1993). As far as we know, however, previous research has only examined attitudes when a third party is the recipient of welfare (i.e., "should the government provide economic assistance to other people?"). Because of the well-documented discrepancy between personal behaviors and social attitudes (Batson and Collins 2011), conservatives' aversion to welfare programs might not apply when conservatives need to accept welfare assistance for themselves. In other words, past research cannot speak to whether and how low-income conservatives eschew welfare programs for themselves (i.e., "should I accept economic assistance from the government?").

In this research, we examine whether individuals' willingness to accept welfare depends on their political orientation. Are conservatives less likely than liberals to accept welfare for themselves? If so, when and why does this difference occur? Moreover, what strategies can policymakers deploy to mitigate the discrepancy between liberals' and conservatives' welfare acceptance?

We suggest that decisions to participate in a welfare program are based on economic and moral considerations. However, the relative influence of these considerations can depend on (a) whether the program has a work requirement and (b) individuals' political ideology. We propose that liberals' decisions to participate are based largely on an economic cost-benefit analysis of the decision alternatives. To this extent, they are more attracted to a program if it does not have a work requirement than if it does. However, conservatives' decisions are governed not only by economic cost-benefit analysis but also by moral considerations. Conservatives' adherence to binding moral values (Graham et al. 2009; Haidt 2007) creates a moral aversion to accepting

welfare “handouts” and subsequently reduces their propensity to participate in welfare programs without work requirements. This tendency can prevent some conservatives from accepting the much-needed economic assistance designed to help them.

Consequently, we find that the difference in welfare enrollment between liberals and conservatives depends upon whether the welfare program has a work requirement. If it has such a requirement, conservatives are just as likely as liberals to enroll in it. If the welfare program does not have a work requirement, however, conservatives are less likely than liberals to enroll.

We examine our propositions in the context of a policy change for a federal welfare program. In 2009, the work requirement policy was waived for the U.S. federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly Food Stamps). This policy change served as a natural experiment for us to test our hypothesis. We analyze participation data prior to 2009 to show that when SNAP had a work requirement, liberal and conservative households were equally likely to enroll in the program. After 2009, however, when SNAP waived the work requirement, conservative households were less likely than liberal households to enroll in this program.

To confirm the implications of these results, we conducted preregistered controlled experiments using samples of low-income participants. These experiments replicate the findings of the field study and show that conservatives are less likely than liberals to enroll in welfare programs only when the program does not have a work requirement. Further, the studies demonstrate that conservatives' binding moral values (i.e., loyalty, authority, and purity; Graham, Haidt and Nosek 2009) drive this discrepancy. Finally, we show how policymakers can utilize marketing messaging strategies to mitigate this effect and boost conservatives' welfare participation in programs without work requirements.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Moral Foundations of Political Ideologies

Our conceptualization of liberals' and conservatives' welfare participation is based on the Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al. 2013, 2009; Haidt 2007; also see Jost 2020), which has been widely used the explain the moral underpinnings of political ideologies. This theory proposes that moral values are composed of two broad foundations. *Individualizing* foundations (care and fairness) emphasize protecting individuals and provide for individual rights in society. In contrast, *binding* foundations (authority, loyalty, and purity) emphasize the in-group's welfare. These foundations suppress individual autonomy and self-expression, thereby binding people into social entities such as families, clans, and nations (Graham and Haidt 2010). Notably, conservatives tend to endorse binding values more than liberals (see Kivikangas et al. 2021 for a meta-analysis).

One critical aspect of the binding values is that they motivate people to sacrifice their self-interest in service of their in-group's welfare (Haidt 2012). These values nudge people to place their country's welfare or their religious group's welfare above their own and decrease their willingness to engage in behaviors that might hurt or hinder the long-term success of their in-group. Extant research has utilized this theorization to show that the binding values lead people to exercise greater self-control in the quest to promote their in-group's success (Mooijman et al. 2018). We propose that the difference in conservatives' and liberals' adherence to binding moral values can explain the difference in their responses to welfare programs without a work requirement.

Work Requirements in Welfare Programs

Most welfare programs require participants to do some work in order to be eligible for welfare. To qualify for SNAP subsidies in the U.S., for example, low-income individuals have to work a minimum number of hours every week (Bolen and Dean 2017). Such work requirements have attracted much scrutiny and debate. Some people argue that imposing work requirements on welfare recipients creates an undue burden and prevents them from accessing much-needed aid (Krugman 2018). However, others argue that work requirements are necessary in order to stop misuse and prevent the free-rider problem (Groves and Ledyard 1977).

Although people often disagree about whether welfare programs *should* have a work requirement, they tend to concur that removing the work requirement will increase welfare enrollment. This is because removing work requirements reduces the costs of participation and encourages more unemployed people to enroll in the welfare program (Besley and Coate 1992). In fact, based on this reasoning, the federal government waived the work requirement policy in SNAP in 2009 with the specific intention of boosting welfare enrollment during the great recession (Bolen and Dean 2017). We suggest, however, that waiving the work requirement in welfare programs elicits different responses from liberals and conservatives.

Political Ideology and Work Requirement Waivers

We make two propositions. First, we propose that when the welfare program has a work requirement, both conservatives and liberals will view enrolling in the program as an economic decision, and they will not differ in their disposition to enroll. Second, we propose that conservatives will be less likely than liberals to enroll in a welfare program without a work requirement.

This is because regardless of political support and social attitudes, individuals' personal participation in welfare programs is usually an economic decision based on the perceived benefits of participation (Andrade 2002). If people are given money, they will accept it and use it. If accepting the money violates a moral principle, however, participation ceases to be a purely economic decision and is also influenced by intuitive moral judgments (Thaler 2015).

Consequently, welfare programs that have a work requirement are consistent with both liberals' and conservatives' moral intuitions. Liberals see it as a fair redistribution of societal wealth based on care and fairness foundations. Conservatives see it as reciprocal support from their in-group in return for the work allowed by their circumstances. Therefore, their behaviors converge, and both groups are equally likely to participate in such welfare programs.

When work requirements are waived, however, their behavioral responses diverge. Waiving these requirements further increases liberals' perceptions of the utility of the welfare program without violating any of their moral intuitions. Thus, they show a higher propensity to enroll in welfare programs without a work requirement. In contrast, waiving work requirements violates conservatives' social contract with their in-group. They feel they are not respecting the moral codes of their in-group and are consequently being disloyal. Their binding values, therefore, prompt them to place their in-group's welfare above their own and decreases their willingness to accept economic assistance that draws from the group's limited resources. If they accept a welfare handout without contributing back to the in-group by doing work, they feel that they are exploiting community resources and hindering the progress of their community. In other words, conservatives believe that accepting welfare without reciprocal work can make them a "burden" on their in-group. Formally we propose:

H1: Conservatives and liberals are equally likely to enroll in a welfare program that has a work requirement. However, conservatives are less likely than liberals to enroll in a welfare program that does not have a work requirement.

H2: Conservatives' participation in welfare programs is mediated by binding moral values.

Boosting Conservative's Welfare Participation

If conservatives' participation in welfare programs without a work requirement is indeed dampened by their adherence to the binding moral values, the effects should be mitigated by framing the welfare program as consistent with these values. Messages that are congruent with binding moral principles can increase recycling behaviors and charitable donations in the relevant communities (Kidwell, Farmer and Hardesty 2013; Winterich, Zhang and Mittal 2012). Employing a similar strategy could increase welfare enrollments. We therefore propose:

H3: Framing a welfare program without work requirements as benefiting in-group welfare will increase conservatives' willingness to participate in the program.

Overview of Studies

To test our predictions, we first analyze historic state-level SNAP participation data to examine how welfare participation differed across political ideology before and after the work requirement policy was modified in 2009. Subsequently, we run controlled preregistered experiments to establish causality and delineate the underlying theorization. Finally, we assess how redesigned outreach materials can counter conservatives' moral intuitions and boost their welfare enrollment. All experiments were preregistered. We report all procedural details and

supplementary analyses in the Web Appendix. De-identified data are posted on the open science framework website (https://osf.io/2rmnp/?view_only=f0aaa844695a40b1b4e2f72064a59010).

STUDY 1: NATURAL FIELD EXPERIMENT

Traditionally, SNAP had a work requirement stating that adults must be actively employed or engaged in community service for at least 20 hours a week in order to qualify for the welfare benefits[1]. In 2009, however, the federal government modified this policy to make it easier for state agencies to waive work requirements (Bolen and Dean 2017). Consequently, from 2009-2013, 42 states and the District of Columbia waived the work requirement for all their residents[2] (CBPP 2019). We analyze participation rates in these states both before and after the work requirement was modified. Specifically, we examined whether states showed welfare enrollment differences contingent on their Republican vote share and the work requirement policy.

Data

SNAP Participation Data. We acquired the state-level SNAP participation rate from the USDA public records (USDA 2020). This database provides participation rates for each state (a measure of the number of SNAP participants in a state in a given year divided by the estimated number of individuals with income below 125 percent of the poverty line in the state). Hence, this

[1] Exemptions are made for individuals with medical conditions or care-giving responsibilities. Individuals are also allowed a three-month grace period if they are currently searching for work.

[2] Texas and South Dakota did not waive the work requirement. Utah, Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska, Vermont, and New Hampshire did waive the work requirement in 2009, but they enforced it again soon after. Therefore, for the sake of simplicity we leave these states out of the analysis and only consider the states that waived the work requirement for the entire duration of 2009-2013. Note that including these states in the analysis does not alter the results.

participation rate indicates the percentage of poverty-prone individuals in a state that are enrolled in the SNAP program. Data were available for the years 2005-2013 for all 42 states of interest and the District of Columbia. The states that reported the lowest participation rate on average were California (*M* = 42.21%) and Colorado (*M* = 43.41%), whereas states that reported the highest participation rate were the District of Columbia (*M* = 88.55%) and Maine (*M* = 89.31%).

Politics Data. We acquired the state-level voter data from a public dataset (*U.S. President Election Data 1976–2016*). We acquired the percent of votes cast for the U.S. Republican presidential candidate in the state for the years 2004, 2008, and 2012. We then averaged the vote share across the years. Hence, for each state, we computed one republican vote share score. The states that reported the highest republican vote share were Oklahoma (*M* = 66.21%) and Idaho (*M* = 63.02%). And, states that reported the lowest republican vote share were the District of Columbia (*M* = 7%) and Hawaii (*M* = 27.06%).

Results

We combined the two datasets to examine the relationship between SNAP participation, work policy change, and Republican vote share across the states. The final database consisted of *N* = 387 (43 states x 9 years). We first divided the states into two groups based on vote share and calculated the mean SNAP participation rate for each group for each year. Figure 1 depicts a time series of SNAP participation rates. See Web Appendix A for descriptive statistics and correlations of variables.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Regression analysis. We then performed a linear mixed-model regression analysis of the SNAP participation rate as a function of the work requirement policy (0 = 2005-2008 work required; 1 = 2009-2013 work not required), standardized scores of the Republican vote share of each state, and their interaction. Further, we included a fixed effect of Year and random effects of State to control for any unobserved heterogeneity.

This analysis indicates that removing the work requirement had a significant positive increase on SNAP participation (B = .07, SE = .01, t = 6.79, p < .001). However, the interaction of the work requirement policy and Republican vote share was significant (B = -.03, SE = .004, t = -6.79, p < .001). Before the work requirement was removed, Republican vote share did not significantly predict SNAP participation (simple effect: B = -.01, SE = .02, t = -.53, p = .597). After the work requirement was removed, however, Republican vote share significantly predicted lower SNAP participation (simple effect: B = -.04, SE = .02, t = -2.55, p = .014).

Next, we performed a similar regression analysis controlling for variance in income levels, population size, welfare benefit amount, and SNAP administrative expenditures between the states. The results of this analysis were convergent with those of the main analysis. See Web Appendix A for all detailed results and regression tables.

Discussion

When SNAP had a work requirement, the Republican-leaning states and Democrat-leaning states recorded similar levels of welfare participation. However, after the work requirement was waived, the Republican-leaning states recorded lower levels of welfare participation. Thus, these results provide initial support for H1.

Nevertheless, this analysis is quasi-experimental. The state-level vote share data are correlated with other unobserved metrics, which might be driving our results. Furthermore, the federal government made some other changes to the SNAP program that might have influenced the participation rates ("A Short History of SNAP" 2018). Finally, these results did not delineate the role of moral values. To confirm our conclusions, therefore, we conducted some controlled experiments.

STUDY 2: A CONTROLLED REPLICATION

This experiment used a single-factor between-subjects design in which the presence of a work requirement was manipulated. We hypothesized that when work is required, there would be no difference in participation between conservatives and liberals. However, when work is not required, we expected conservatives to be less likely than liberals to participate in this welfare program. We also expected a similar difference between participants with high and low trait binding values. The study was preregistered (https://osf.io/t6efh)[3].

Method

Sample description. We recruited participants online through Amazon Mechanical-Turk. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to understand opinions and attitudes toward moral behaviors. We recruited a sample of low-income participants who might generally be eligible for welfare. Hence, sample filtering criteria were selected such that participants were

[3] This experiment was preregistered with binding values as the independent variable, but thereafter we decided to perform the analysis with political identity as the independent variable. Note that we report all the preregistered analyses. And, importantly, we find a convergent pattern of results when using either binding values or political identity as the independent variable.

required to be U.S. citizens with annual household incomes less than $50K. After employing these filtering criteria, 300 participants were allowed to complete the survey. From this pool, participants who indicated that they were not U.S. citizens (N = 2) or reported household income greater than $50K (N = 8) were removed. Further, participants who failed the attention check in the study were also removed (N = 2). These sample exclusion criteria were preregistered. The final sample consisted of 288 participants (Mean Household Income = 31.7K).

Binding Values. Participants were first administered the 30-item Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al. 2011). This widely used scale assesses a person's adherence to the five moral foundations through 30 morality statements (e.g., "Authority: Respect for authority is something all children need to learn," " Loyalty: People should be loyal to their family members, even when they have done something wrong," "Purity: I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural.") measured on a 6-point scale (0: *Strongly Disagree*; 5: *Strongly Agree*).

Welfare Program Stimuli. Next, participants were asked to complete a short unrelated word completion task, which was included to reduce possible demand effects. Then, participants were introduced to an ostensibly unrelated welfare program evaluation task. They were given information about a new governmental food assistance program, describing the enrollment procedure, the benefit amounts, the redemption method, etc. These details were identical to the existing SNAP program. However, we did not mention the word 'SNAP' to minimize any status-quo bias that might exist. Within each program description, we manipulated the work requirement policy. Participants in the *Work-Required* condition read that "*able-bodied adults*

must be actively employed for at least 20hrs/week. If a participant is unemployed, then they must engage in community service. Unemployed citizens are not eligible for this assistance." Participants in the *Work-Not-Required* condition read that "*there are no employment/working requirements. Unemployed citizens are eligible for this assistance.*" After reading the program description, participants responded to the question - "How likely are you to participate in this food assistance program?" (1 = Not at All, 7 = Extremely) on a continuous slider scale.

Next, to examine participants' intuitive moral judgments of accepting welfare handouts, we created a three-item measure – I think it is wrong to accept help from food assistance programs, if I don't deserve the money; I think it is wrong to accept help from food assistance programs, if it is a free handout; I think it is wrong to accept help from food assistance programs, if I don't contribute back to society. Participants responded using a seven-point bipolar scale (1: Strongly Disagree; 7: Strongly Agree*;* $\alpha = .76$, $M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.69$).

Then, participants' political identity was assessed using a self-report scale (1: *Liberal*; 7: *Conservative*). Finally, we assessed religiosity, collectivist beliefs (Singelis et al. 1995), and basic demographics. See Web Appendix B for detailed stimuli, means, and correlations.

Results

Participation Intention. We performed a linear regression analysis. SNAP participation intention was regressed on a dummy variable identifying the two work conditions (0 = Work Required, 1 = Work Not Required), standardized conservative political identity, and their interaction term. Additionally, we also controlled for demographic variables, religiosity, and collectivism. Finally, we also controlled for participant's previous history with the SNAP program.

As hypothesized, there was a significant interaction between conservative political identity and the work condition (B = -1.45, SE = .24, t = -6.19, p < .001). The interaction is depicted in Figure 1. When work is required, conservatives' intention to participate in the program did not differ from that of liberals' (B = .03, SE = .18, t = .17, p = .862). When work is not required, however, conservatives had a lower participation intention than liberals (B = -1.42, SE = .18, t = -8.07, p < .001). Concurrently, for liberals (at -1 SD), removing the work requirement led to a significant increase in welfare participation intention (3.81 vs. 5.65; B = 1.84, SE = .33, t = 5.57, p < .001). However, for conservatives (at +1SD), removing the work requirement led to a significant decrease in welfare participation intention (3.87 vs. 2.81; B = -1.07, SE = .34, t = -3.16, p = .002). Note, analysis without the covariates reveals the same pattern of results. See Web Appendix B for detailed results.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

The Effect of Trait Binding Values. A corresponding regression analysis was performed using trait binding values as the independent variable (analysis included the same controls as above). The interaction between binding values and the work condition was significant (B = -.89, SE = .25, t = -3.61, p < .001). When work was required, binding values did not affect participation intention (B = -.16, SE = .21, t = -.76, p = .446). When work was not required, however, binding values decreased participation intention (B = -1.06, SE = .20, t = -5.27, p < .001). An analysis without the covariates revealed the same pattern of results (see Web Appendix B).

Mediation by Trait Binding Values. Political ideology and binding values were correlated (r = .51, p <.001). To determine whether the effect of conservatism on participation intention was

mediated by binding values, we performed a mediation analysis using PROCESS Model 15 (Hayes, 2013). Conservative identity was associated with higher trait binding values (B = .49, SE = .05, t = 9.48, p < .001), replicating previous research (Kivikangas et al. 2021). Binding values mediated the effect of conservative identity on participation intention when work was not required (indirect effect = -.17 [-.34, -.01]). But binding values did not mediate the effect when work was required (indirect effect = -.07 [-.27, .13]).

Intuitive Moral Judgments. Next, we examined whether people with conservative political identities make harsher moral judgments of welfare handouts. A linear regression analysis (with demographic controls) shows that conservative identity was positively associated with moral judgments (B = .87, SE = .09, t = 8.99, p < .001). A mediation analysis demonstrated that conservatives' moral judgment of welfare handouts was mediated by their binding values (indirect effect = .13 [.07, .20]). Thus, conservatives' acceptance of welfare handouts was not simply an economic decision, but also a moral decision. See Web Appendix B for details.

Discussion

The results of this experiment replicate the findings of the natural field experiment. Conservatives are just as likely as liberals to participate in welfare programs with work requirements. However, conservatives are less likely than liberals to participate in the welfare program without work requirements. These effects are mediated by conservatives' adherence to binding moral values. Further, the moral judgments measure shows that conservatives have a greater moral aversion to accepting welfare handouts. The findings hold even after controlling for demographics, religiosity, and collectivist beliefs.

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY: MANIPULATING BINDING VALUES

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrate support for our hypotheses using trait measures of political identity and binding values. Although these individual difference measures are often useful in studying heterogeneity in the population, they do not establish the causal link between moral intuitions and welfare participation.

Therefore, we conducted a study to test the causal effect of binding values on shaping welfare participation. Due to space constraints, the detailed method and results of this study are reported in Web Appendix C. Briefly, the study used a 2(moral prime: binding values vs. individualizing values) x 2(policy: work required vs. work not required) design. We primed participants with either binding values or individualizing values using a procedure adapted from extant research (Mooijman et al. 2018). Participants read a short paragraph about an ancient Sumerian warrior, Sostoras, who was heralded for his moral standing and good deeds. In the *individualizing* condition, participants read a paragraph about how Sostoras was known for his "compassion, fairness, and equality…" In the *binding* condition, participants read a paragraph about how Sostoras was known for "purity, respect for tradition, and loyalty…"

Then, participants were introduced to the food assistance program evaluation task. They were presented with both the programs from study 2, one with a work requirement and one without a work requirement. The programs were presented individually in a randomized order. For each program, participants indicated their participation intention.

Analyses revealed a significant interaction of work policy and moral values prime ($F(1, 284) = 11.14$, $p = .001$, $n_p^2 = .04$). When work was required, priming binding vs. individualizing values did not influence participation intentions (3.82 vs. 3.88; $p = .822$). When work is not required, however, participants were less likely to participate in the welfare program if they were

primed with binding values than if they were primed with individualizing values (3.65 vs. 4.57; $p < .001$). Thus, these results show a causal influence of values such that priming binding values reduce participation in welfare programs without a work requirement. Consequently, they provide support for our central notion that conservatives' adherence to the binding values makes them averse to participating in welfare programs without a work requirement.

STUDY 3: FRAMING WELFARE MARKETING MATERIALS

This study evaluated a marketing implication of our findings. Specifically, we expected that the divergent responses of conservatives and liberals to the work requirement waiver should be mitigated when the marketing messages are congruent with binding moral values. Such value-consistent framing should alleviate conservatives' concerns about becoming a burden on society and decrease their hesitancy to enroll. Thus, we redesigned the SNAP information brochure to frame the program as benefiting in-group welfare and tested its effectiveness at generating welfare interest.

The study had three between-subjects conditions. Along with conditions employed in previous experiments in which a work requirement was or was not required, a third condition was added in which work was not required and the benefit of the program for group welfare was conveyed. We hypothesized that conservatives would be less likely than liberals to participate in a program with no work requirement. However, conservatives would be as attracted as liberals to the program if group welfare benefits were emphasized. The study was preregistered (https://osf.io/gsbxr).

Method

Sample. We recruited participants through MTurk using the same criteria as Study 2. The final sample consisted of 421 participants (Mean Household Income = 25.3K).

Welfare Program Stimuli. Participants were assigned randomly to three conditions. They were told that the purpose of the study was to evaluate a brochure for a new welfare program. First, they saw the introductory page of the brochure. This page was taken directly from the existing SNAP information brochure used by the U.S. government. However, we manipulated whether the program had a work requirement (condition 1) or did not have a work requirement (conditions 2 and 3). This work requirement manipulation was similar to the previous studies (see Web Appendix D).

On the next screen, participants were shown another page of the brochure containing a testimonial. In conditions 1 and 2, they read a testimonial that explained how the SNAP program had helped the participant to improve her family's health. This message was similar to the standard messaging deployed by the SNAP program (“SNAP Outreach Information” 2019). In condition 3, however, the testimonial explained how the SNAP program had helped the participant become a better member of the community. This testimonial acknowledged the hesitancy that people might have in accepting welfare but explained how accepting welfare could improve the welfare of their group collectively (see Web Appendix D for complete testimonials).

After seeing the brochures, participants indicated their participation intention for the SNAP program "How likely are you to participate in this food assistance program?" (1 = Not at All, 7 = Extremely) on a continuous slider scale. Then, participants' political identity was measured, and basic demographics were collected. We also measured participants’ previous

history with SNAP and measured their current employment status. See Web Appendix D for detailed stimuli.

Results

Participation Intention. Because conservative identity is a continuous variable and there were three conditions in the experiment, following Aiken, West and Reno (1991), we tested our hypotheses based on three linear regression models, one for each condition. See Web Appendix D for the detailed outputs of the regression models. As in previous studies, in condition 1, where work was required, conservative identity did not predict welfare participation (B = -.04, SE = .09, t = -.43, p = .670). In condition 2, where work was not required, conservative identity predicts lower welfare participation (B = -.29, SE = .09, t = -3.04, p = .003). In condition 3, where work was not required but group welfare benefits were mentioned, the effect of conservative identity was again not significant (B = -.08, SE = .09, t = -.91, p = .365). This indicates that emphasizing these group benefits eliminated the effect of work requirement waiver that was otherwise evident.

[Insert Figure 3 about here]

Results of a spotlight analysis, summarized in Figure 3, provided further insight into these effects. For liberals (-1 SD), removing the work requirement increased attraction to the welfare program when the default brochure is used (3.91 vs. 4.91; B = 1.00, SE = .35, t = 2.84, p = .005). However, emphasizing the group welfare benefit had no additional effect (4.91 vs. 5.07; B = .15, SE = .35, t = .44, p = .661).

In contrast, for conservatives (+1SD), removing the work requirement by itself had little influence on their attraction to the program (3.76 vs. 3.75 when the requirement was present vs. absent, respectively; B = -.01, SE = .37, t = -.02, p = .982). However, highlighting the group welfare benefits of the program increased conservatives' willingness to participate to a level equal to that of liberals (3.75 vs. 4.75; B = 1.00, SE = .37, t = 2.73, p = .007). Thus, conservatives reported a greater intention to participate only when the work requirement is waived and group welfare benefits were emphasized. The same analysis without covariates yielded a similar pattern of results. Further, participants' current employment status did not interact with the effects of political identity and work policy. See Web Appendix D for detailed results.

Discussion

This study replicated the findings of our previous studies and also demonstrated that the effects of political ideology on welfare participation can be mitigated by providing value-consistent marketing messages. Liberals report a greater intention to participate in the welfare program when the work requirement is waived, regardless of whether group welfare benefits were emphasized. However, conservatives report a greater intention to participate when both the work requirement is waived and group welfare benefits were emphasized together.

Note, our study design was motivated by practical considerations of how to increase conservatives' welfare participation when work requirements are waived. Therefore, we did not include the fourth cell (Work Required-Group Welfare Brochure) as this cell would not be relevant for policymakers. We acknowledge that this condition might add to an understanding of the phenomenon at hand, but its inclusion would not alter the conclusions drawn here.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A natural experiment and three controlled experiments combine to show that liberals and conservatives differ in their welfare participation contingent on the work requirement policy. Liberals' decisions to participate are based primarily on a cost-benefit analysis of the situation at hand. Therefore, they are typically more attracted to a welfare program when the work requirement is waived. In contrast, conservatives' decisions are governed to a greater extent by their adherence to binding moral values, which leads them to have a moral aversion to accepting welfare handouts. Consequently, when the welfare program does not have a work requirement, conservatives are generally less likely to enroll in the welfare program than liberals. Importantly, when the welfare program without work requirements is seen as benefiting in-group welfare, conservatives' interest in participating increases to the same level as that of liberals.

These findings are consistent with research in behavioral economics, which demonstrates that moral motives can shape economic decisions (Amir et al. 2005; Thaler 2015). Other research has also shown that consumers' political identity and moral values can play an important role in shaping consumer behaviors (Campbell and Winterich 2018; Goenka and van Osselaer 2019, 2021; Goenka and Thomas 2020; Jung and Mittal 2020; Kidwell et al. 2013; Olson et al. 2016; Ordabayeva and Fernandes 2018; Rao 2017; Reed, Aquino and Levy 2007). Still, other research has examined how low-income consumers' unique circumstances can shape their psychology and lead to sub-optimal decisions (Goldsmith, Griskevicius and Hamilton 2020; Hamilton et al. 2019). However, none of this previous research has examined how and why low-income consumers' moral intuitions can make them averse to accepting welfare. Our findings provide insight into these matters.

Practical Implications

This research has several practical implications for policymakers and federal agencies involved with welfare programs. First, it shows that liberals and conservatives do not always differ in welfare enrollment. Conservatives are less likely than liberals to enroll in welfare programs only when the program does not have a work requirement policy. Second, these results inform the ongoing debate surrounding the work requirement policy. Policymakers often believe that waiving work requirements should encourage welfare participation. However, our results show that waiving the work requirement policy does not uniformly increase welfare participation for all sections of lower-income individuals. Hence, this research can help policymakers understand the impact of their policy decisions and facilitate future welfare policies.

Furthermore, we show how government agencies can redesign welfare marketing materials based on these moral insights to boost conservatives' welfare participation. That is, agencies might redesign their marketing outreach materials (e.g., outreach brochures and website messaging) to frame the welfare program without work requirements in accordance with serving in-group welfare. Such redesigned brochures can increase the likelihood that conservatives will participate in welfare programs without a work requirement. Thus, this research showcases how marketing insights can be deployed to increase welfare enrollment and boost societal welfare.

Limitations & Future Directions

This research has limitations that suggest avenues for future investigation. First, our results are particular to demonstrating that conservatives are averse to government-provided welfare assistance without work requirements. Our findings do not suggest that conservatives are against accepting all forms of help. Conservatives might still seek out assistance from family,

community members, and other social institutions that could entail some form of reciprocity and may not be characterized as handouts. Thus, future research can explore conservatives' propensity to accept other types of assistance.

Second, although we demonstrate the role of moral values in shaping welfare behaviors, the choice to accept welfare might be multiply determined, and other mechanisms might also play a role in conjunction with the moral values. For example, conservatives might also wish to distance themselves from stigmatized groups that rely on welfare (Gilens 2009), which could make them hesitant to accept welfare handouts. Therefore, we encourage future research to explore these other mechanisms.

Finally, although our research consistently shows that conservatives are less likely than liberals to enroll in welfare programs without a work requirement, it does not speak to whether conservatives' enrollment in welfare programs reliably increases when a work requirement is waived. The results in Study 1 suggest that waiving the work requirement increases conservatives' willingness to enroll (but less than it affects liberals' willingness). However, the results of our controlled experiments suggest that waiving the work requirement does not increase (or can even reduce) conservatives' willingness to enroll. As noted earlier, the willingness to participate in a welfare program is presumably a joint function of both economic and moral considerations, and participation should depend on which consideration predominates. The situational and individual difference factors that affect the relative influence of these considerations are worth further consideration.

In this regard, the state-level data evaluated in Study 1 are aggregated over liberals and conservatives in each state, with the proportion of conservatives and liberals varying across the states. The increase here could be driven by the presence of the liberals in the red states. Second,

the state-level analysis has actual behavioral data on SNAP participation, whereas all the other studies have stated intentions to participate in SNAP. While conservatives might say (in survey questions) that they will not participate in SNAP programs without work requirements, their actual behaviors might be driven less by ideology and more by material self-interest. Our conclusions are based on the complete picture that is emerging across the studies, keeping in mind that some of the results are based on aggregated state-level behavioral data and some based on stated behavioral intentions. As such, we encourage future research in this realm to increase our understanding of how conservatives respond to work requirement waivers.

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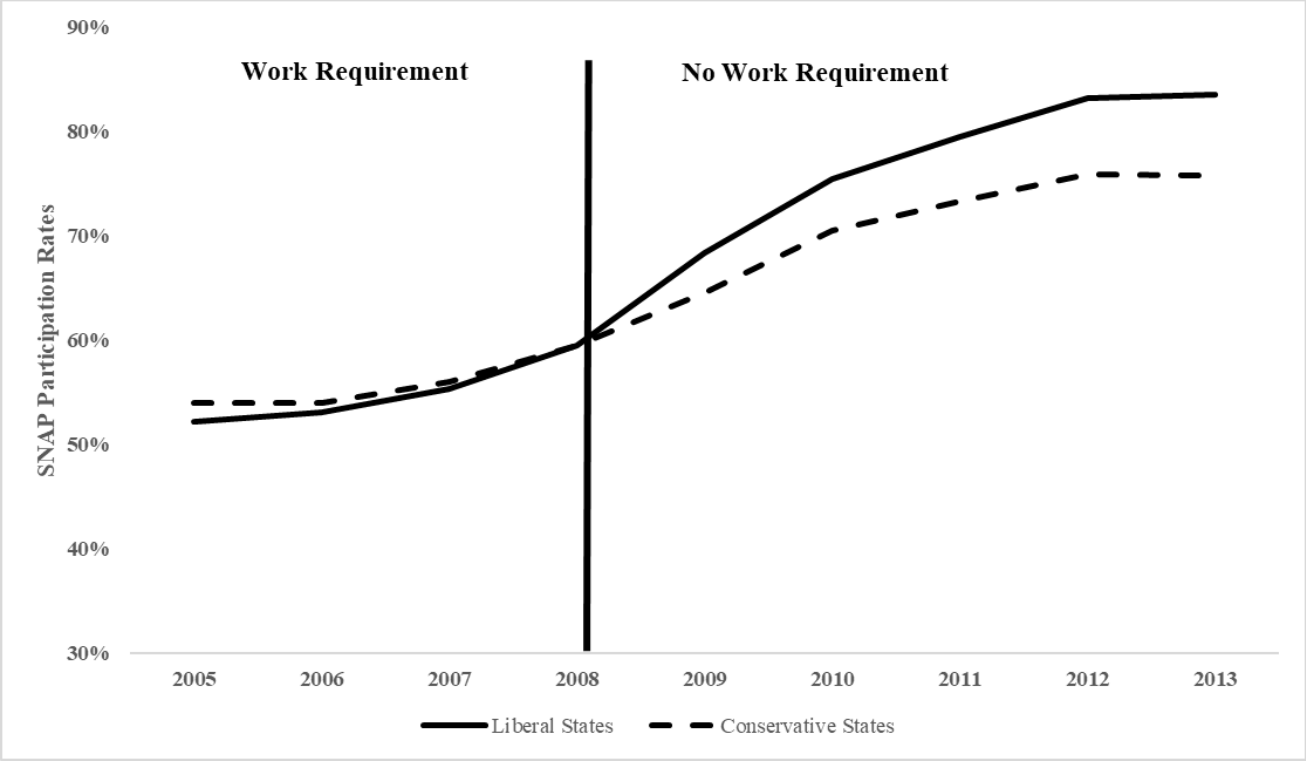
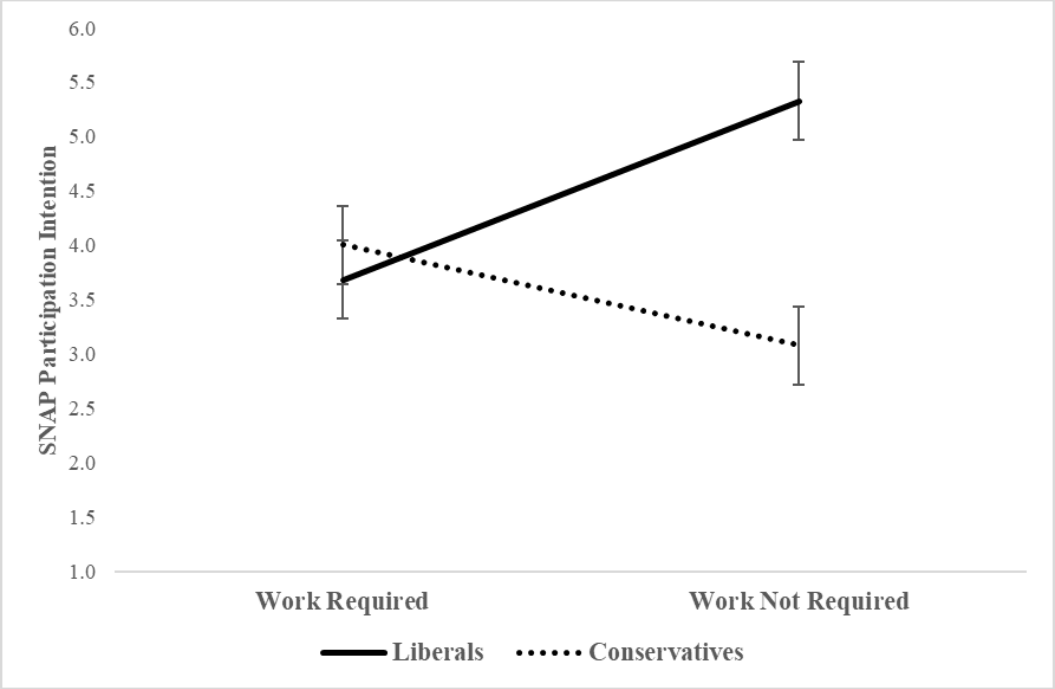
FIGURE 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SNAP PARTICIPATION AND REPUBLICAN VOTE SHARE ACROSS THE STATES (STUDY 1)



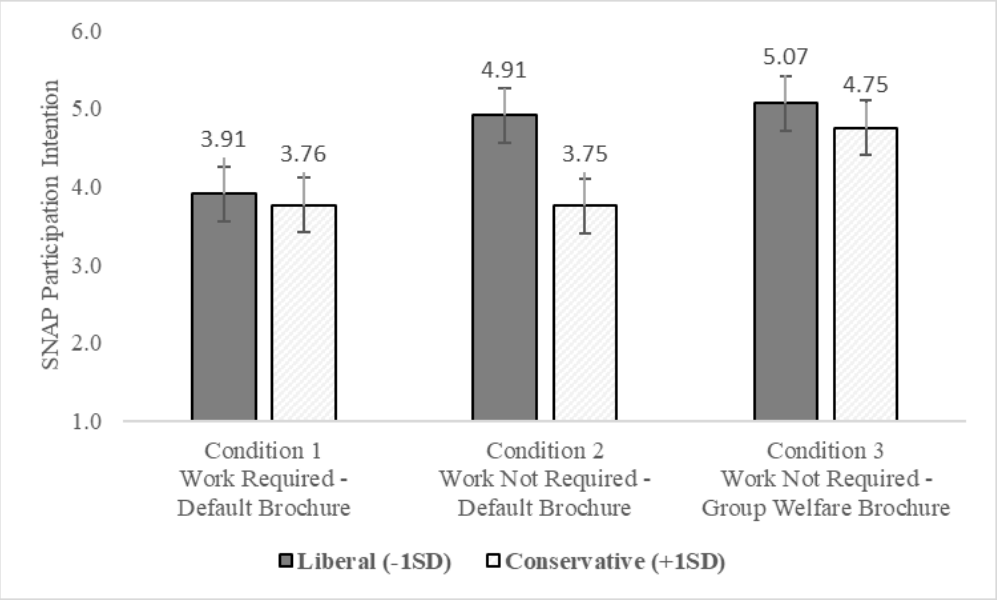
Note: Vertical axis represents the SNAP participation rate. Horizontal axis represents a time series. The states were divided into two equal groups based on Republican vote share. Values in the graph are the mean raw SNAP participation rates for the respective groups. The work requirement was waived in the year 2009.

FIGURE 2: PARTICIPATION INTENTION AS A FUNCTION OF CONSERVATIVE IDENTITY AND WORK REQUIREMENT (STUDY 2)



Note: Vertical axis represents the SNAP participation intention. Horizontal axis represents the work conditions. Participants were divided into two equal groups based on political identity and each line represents the mean for the respective groups. Errors bars represent ± 1 SE.

FIGURE 3: PARTICIPATION INTENTION AS A FUNCTION OF CONSERVATIVE IDENTITY AND BROCHURE CONDITION (STUDY 3)



Note: The vertical axis represents the SNAP participation intention. The horizontal axis represents the three brochure conditions. Bars represent means for participants at -1SD (liberal) and at +1SD (conservative). Errors bars represent ± 1 SE.

Are Conservatives Less Likely Than Liberals to Accept Welfare?

The Psychology of Welfare Politics

WEB APPENDIX

Shreyans Goenka & Manoj Thomas

WEB APPENDIX A

Study 1 Materials

Means and Standard Deviations (State-level Analysis)

	M	SD	Min	Max
SNAP Participation Rate	.67	.16	.33	1.08
Republican Vote Share	.47	.11	.07	.66
State GDP	$305,725	$344,368	$30,529	$2,262,771
State Poverty Count	1,157,205	1,209,699	79,512	7,886,948
Avg Monthly Benefits per Person	$115.78	$22.98	$75.38	$217.49
State's Admin cost	$134,230,292	$204,516,582	$14,769,100	$1,551,634,154
Year			2005	2013

Correlation Table (State-Level Analysis)

	SNAP Part	Repub	GDP	Pov. Count	Month Ben	Admin Cost
SNAP Participation	-					
Republican Vote Share	-.17***	-				
State GDP per capita	-.19***	-.24***	-			
State Poverty Count	-.15**	-.09	.95*	-		
Avg Monthly Benefits per Person	.54***	-.18***	.12*	.13*	-	
State's Admin cost	-.17***	-.22***	.96***	.91***	.14*	-
Year	.65***	-	.06	.09	.73***	.06

**p < .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001*

Quartile Means Analysis

The states were divided into quartiles based on their republican vote share. For each quartile, the mean SNAP participation rate was computed for each of the years. Values in the table below represent SNAP participation rate in the states for each year.

	Work Required				***Work Not Required***				
Quartiles Republican Vote Share	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Lowest	.54	.54	.57	.62	.71	.79	.83	.88	.89
2	.51	.52	.53	.57	.65	.72	.76	.78	.78
3	.54	.54	.56	.59	.65	.70	.74	.76	.76
Highest	.56	.57	.58	.62	.68	.73	.76	.77	.78

Regression Analysis

	Base Model				*Model with Control Variables*			
	B	*SE*	*t*	*P*	*B*	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	-57.40	3.75	-15.31	<.001	-61.74	4.29	-14.38	<.001
Work Requirement Removal	.07	.01	6.79	<.001	.06	.02	3.22	.001
Republican Vote Share in State	-.01	.02	-.53	.597	-.03	.02	-1.73	.090
Republican * Work Requirement Removal	-.03	.004	-6.79	<.001	-.04	.01	-7.04	<.001
Year (2005-2013)	.03	.002	15.46	<.001	.03	.002	14.41	<.001
State GDP (per capita)					-.10	.03	-3.76	<.001
State Poverty Count					.03	.02	1.39	.164
Avg. Monthly SNAP Benefits (per person)					.00	.01	.05	.958
State's SNAP Admin Expenses					.03	.02	1.88	.062
Covariance Parameters	*B*	*SE*	*Z*	*P*	*B*	*SE*	*Z*	*p*
Residuals	.002	.00	13.06	<.001	.002	.000	13.01	<.001
State Variance	.01	.002	4.43	<.001	.01	.002	4.33	<.001

We performed a linear mixed-model regression analysis. The SNAP participation rate was regressed on a dummy variable identifying the work requirement policy change (0 = 2005-2008 work required; 1 = 2009-2013 work not required), standardized scores of the Republican vote share of each state, and their interaction term. Further, we included a fixed effect of Year and random effects of State to control for any unobserved heterogeneity.

Results show that removing the work requirement had a significant positive increase on SNAP participation (B = .07, SE = .01, t = 6.79, p < .001). However, this effect was moderated by Republican vote share as the interaction between the policy dummy variable and the vote share was significant (B = -.03, SE = .004, t = -6.79, p < .001). Before the work requirement was removed, Republican vote share did not significantly predict SNAP participation (simple effect: B = -.01, SE = .02, t = -.53, p = .597). However, after the work requirement was removed, Republican vote share significantly predicted lower SNAP participation (simple effect: B = -.04, SE = .02, t = -2.55, p = .014). Spotlight analysis (Spiller et al. 2013) shows that, removing the work requirement led to a significant increase in SNAP participation for states at -1 SD republican vote share (B = .09, SE = .01, t = 9.11, p < .001). This effect was weaker for states at +1 SD republican vote share (B = .03, SE = .01, t = 3.03, p = .003). For states at +1.31 SD republican vote share, the effect of removing work requirement was not significant (B = .02, SE = .01, t = 1.96, p = .050).

Next, we performed another regression analysis with some covariates. We controlled for variance in income levels, population size, welfare benefit amount, and SNAP administrative expenditures between the states. We included the annual per-capita GDP of the state (standardized values; acquired from the national bureau of economic analysis), the number of people below the poverty line in the state (standardized; acquired from USDA database), and the average monthly SNAP benefits allocated per person in the state (standardized; acquired from USDA database) as covariates in the model. We also included the amount of administrative expenditure that a state incurs on the SNAP program (log-transformed, acquired from USDA database). We find convergent results.

WEB APPENDIX B

Study 2 Materials

Moral Foundations Scale

Graham, J., Nosek, B. A., Haidt, J., Iyer, R., Koleva, S., & Ditto, P. H. (2011). Mapping the moral domain. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 101(2), 366-385.

Food Assistance Program Stimuli

In this section, University researchers are interested in designing a new food assistance program. You will see a description of a specific food assistance program with its features. Please indicate how like you are to participate in the program.

Note, we are trying to understand YOUR personal preferences for this program, not general feasibility, implementation, costs, etc. So, please think about how likely you would be to enroll, given that it already exists.

WORK REQUIRED

This program offers nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families. Enrollment is through an online application. Monthly benefits (Range: $100-$1,000) are determined based on household size and income.

Program Description: After successful enrollment, you will receive a special debit card issued by the program (see above). The monthly budget allowance will be pre-loaded on this card every month. You must use this card to purchase eligible groceries/food items.

Program Eligibility: Participants must be a U.S. citizen. Able-bodied adults must be actively employed for at least 20hrs/week. If a participant is unemployed, then they must engage in community service. Unemployed citizens are not eligible for this assistance.

WORK NOT REQUIRED

This program offers nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families. Enrollment is through an online application. Monthly benefits (Range: $100-$1,000) are determined based on household size and income.

Program Description: After successful enrollment, you will receive a special debit card issued by the program (see above). The monthly budget allowance will be pre-loaded on this card every month. You must use this card to purchase eligible groceries/food items.

Program Eligibility: Participants must be a U.S. citizen. There are no employment/working requirements. Unemployed citizens are eligible for this assistance.

Below each program was the question –
How likely are you to participate in this food assistance program? (1: Not at All; 7: Extremely)
Slider Scale

Intuitive Moral Judgments Measure
I think it is wrong to accept help from food assistance programs, if I don't deserve the money
I think it is wrong to accept help from food assistance programs, if it is a free handout
I think it is wrong to accept help from food assistance programs, if I don't contribute back to society
(1: Strongly Disagree, 7: Strongly Agree).

Religiosity Measure
I see myself as someone who is very religious (1:Strongly Disagree; 7; Strongly Agree)

Collectivism Scale
Singelis, T. M., Triandis, H. C., Bhawuk, D. P., & Gelfand, M. J. (1995). Horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism: A theoretical and measurement refinement. Cross-cultural research, 29(3), 240-275.
12-item collectivism sub-scale

Means and Standard Deviations

	M	*SD*
Binding values	3.47	.97
Program Participation Intention	3.97	2.19
Moral Judgments of Welfare	3.98	1.68
SNAP History (1 = Yes, 0 = No)	.42	.49
Gender (1=Female, 0 = Male)	.56	.49
Age	37.97	12.09
Education	3.82	1.32
Race (1=White, 0=Other)	.74	.44
Income	3.37	1.30
Political Orientation (Conservative)	3.29	1.77
Religiosity	3.27	2.28
Collectivism	4.98	1.12

Correlations

	Bind	Part Int	Moral Judg.	Coll.	Relig	Snap Hist	Inc.	Pol
Binding values	-							
Program Participation Intention	-.24***	-						
Moral Judgments of Welf	.48***	-.19**	-					
Collectivism	.49***	.01	.26***	-				
Religiosity	.56***	-.17**	.26***	.37***	-			
SNAP History (1 = Yes, 0 = No)	.08	.14*	-.01	.13*	.12*	-		
Income	.08	-.02	.08	.19***	.05	.10	-	
Political Orientation (Conservative)	.51***	-.33***	.54***	.14*	.46***	.05	.01	-

**p < .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001*

Quartile Means Analysis

Participants were divided into quartiles based on their republican identity. Mean participation intention for each quartile was computed for the different work conditions. Values in table below depict mean participation intention.

Republican Quartiles	**Work Required Cond.**	**Work Not Required Cond.**
Lowest	3.76	6.16
2	3.80	4.60
3	4.00	3.86
Highest	3.63	2.12

Regression Table – Conservative Identity to Predict SNAP Participation

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	3.67	.70	5.25	<.001
Work Not Required	.39	.24	1.64	.103
Conservative Identity	.03	.18	.17	.862
Conservative * Work Not Required	-1.45	.24	-6.19	<.001
SNAP History (Yes)	.76	.24	3.12	.002
Gender (Female)	.17	.24	.73	.468
Age	.00	.01	.31	.758
Race (White)	-.06	.28	-.23	.819
Education	-.10	.09	-1.07	.284
Income	.03	.09	.32	.749
Religiosity	-.06	.06	-1.03	.305
Collectivism	.05	.12	.39	.691
R^2_{adj}		.22		
F Value		F (11, 276) = 8.40		
Model Sig.		$p < .001$		

Regression Table – Conservative Identity to Predict SNAP Participation (No Covariates)

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	3.79	.16	23.09	<.001
Work Not Required	.48	.23	2.08	.038
Conservative Identity	-.05	.17	-.30	.762
Conservative * Work Not Required	-1.34	.23	-5.77	<.001
R^2_{adj}		.20		
F Value		F (3, 284) = 25.45		
Model Sig.		$p < .001$		

Binding Values

Regression Table – Binding Values to Predict SNAP Participation

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	2.94	.79	3.69	<.001
Work Not Required	.29	.25	1.18	.240
Binding Values	-.16	.21	-.76	.446
Binding * Work Not Required	-.89	.25	-3.61	<.001
SNAP History (Yes)	.76	.26	2.57	.011
Gender (Female)	.17	.25	.66	.507
Age	-.00	.01	.14	.891
Race (White)	-.22	.29	-.73	.466
Education	-.04	.09	-.38	.704
Income	-.04	.09	-.40	.688
Religiosity	-.09	.07	-1.38	.168
Collectivism	.26	.13	1.98	.049
R^2_{adj}		.12		
F Value		F (11, 276) = 4.59		
Model Sig.		$p < .001$		

Regression Table – Binding Values to Predict SNAP Participation (No Covariates)

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	3.79	.17	21.78	<.001
Work Not Required	.41	.25	1.65	.101
Binding Values	-.09	.17	-.51	.611
Binding * Work Not Required	-.91	.25	-3.68	<.001
R^2_{adj}		.09		
F Value		F (3, 284) = 11.56		
Model Sig.		$p < .001$		

Intuitive Moral Judgments of Welfare

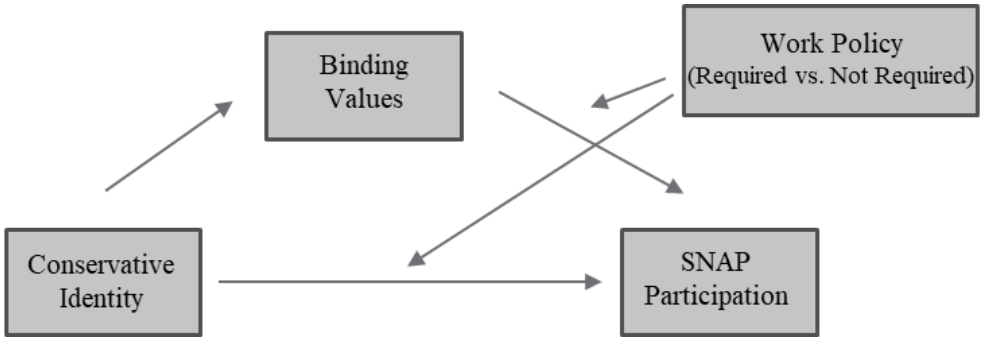
Regression Table – Conservative Identity to Predict Moral Judgments of Welfare

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	2.99	.49	6.01	<.001
Conservative Identity	.87	.09	8.99	<.001
SNAP History (Yes)	-.15	.17	-.87	.385
Gender (Female)	-.35	.17	-2.05	.041
Age	-.00	.01	-.33	.743
Race (White)	-.09	.19	-.46	.646
Education	-.08	.07	-1.18	.239
Income	.07	.07	1.13	.262
Religiosity	-.03	.05	-.63	.529
Collectivism	.30	.08	3.66	<.001
R^2_{adj}	.35			
F Value	*F* (9, 278) = 16.38			
Model Sig.	*p* < .001			

This regression analysis shows that conservative identity predicts greater endorsement of the moral judgments measure. Hence, conservatives report a greater moral aversion to accepting welfare handouts.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation pathway reported in main text.

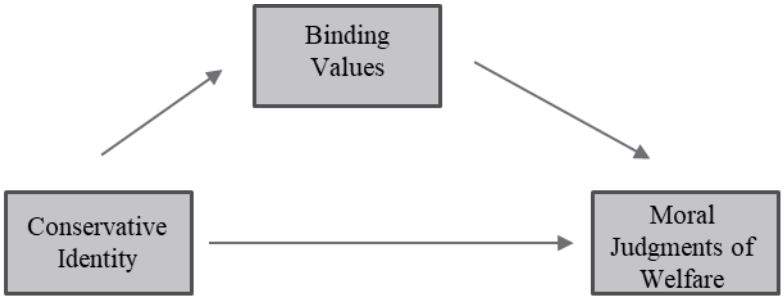


We performed a mediation analysis with demographic controls using PROCESS Model 15 (Hayes, 2013). First, we see that conservative identity is associated with higher trait binding values (*B* = .49, *SE* = .05, *t* = 9.48, *p* < .001), replicating previous research (Kivikangas et al. 2021). Further, we see that in the work-required condition, binding values do not mediate the effect of conservative identity on participation intention (indirect effect = -.07 [-.27, .13]). That is, the indirect path, conservative identity→binding values→ SNAP participation is not significant. However, in the work-not-required condition, binding values mediates the effect of

conservative identity on participation intention (indirect effect = -.17 [-.34, -.01]). These results show that conservatives' adherence to the binding values mediates their aversion to participating in welfare programs without work requirements. Note, the results show partial mediation as the effect of political ideology on SNAP participation remains significant in the mediation model.

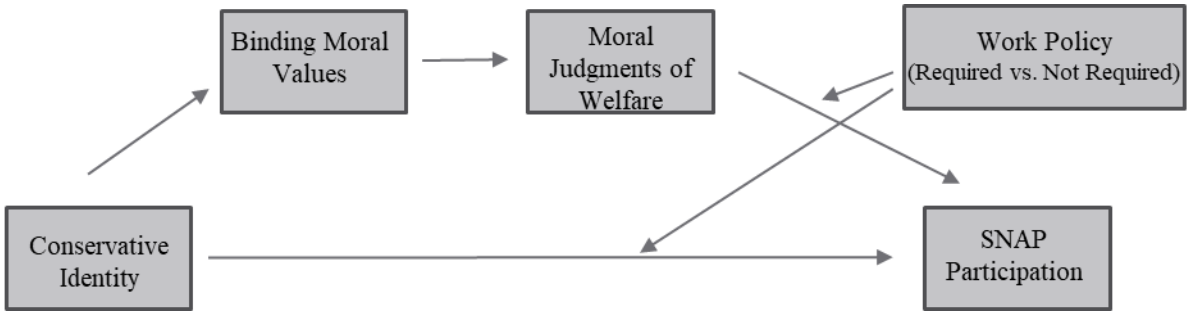
We performed two mediation analyses with the Moral Judgments of Welfare Measure.

1. Model 4



The indirect effect is significant = .13 [.07, .20]
This mediation analysis shows that conservative's adherence to the binding values increases their endorsement of the moral judgments measure.

2. Model 90



Indirect effect for work required condition = -.03 [-.10, .03]
Indirect effect for work not-required condition = .06 [.01, .13]

These results show that conservative's adherence to the binding values, increases moral judgments of welfare, which in turn reduces participation in welfare programs without work requirements.

WEB APPENDIX C

Supplementary Study Materials

This study was designed to test for causality. We sought the examine the causal effect of binding values on welfare participation. The study had a 2(moral prime: Individualizing vs. Binding) x 2 (Policy: Work Required vs. Work Not Required) mixed design. Where moral prime was manipulated between-subjects and work policy was manipulated within-subjects. We hypothesized that participants primed with binding values would be less likely than participants primed with individualizing values, to participate in a welfare program without work requirements. The study was preregistered (https://osf.io/xafc6).

Method

Sample Screening Method. We again recruited participants from MTurk. The sample filtering criteria were selected such that participants were required to be U.S. citizens with annual household income less than $50K. We used a prescreening measure to screen out any participants who indicated that they were not U.S. citizens or reported household income greater than $50K. Further, we also unobtrusively screened out participants who have previously participated in the SNAP program. We asked participants to select all forms of payment methods they have utilized to buy groceries (e.g., cash, debit card, EBT card). Participants who checked the 'EBT card' option were screened out of the study. This is because individuals who have previously benefited from a welfare program tend to hold strong positive attitudes towards that welfare program (Banerjee and Duflo 2011). Thus, we reasoned that individuals who have previously participated in the SNAP program would be primarily influenced by their past welfare experiences and might not be influenced by our subtle moral primes. Hence, this study was administered to low-income participants without any previous SNAP history. Two hundred eighty-nine participants were eligible to participate and were allowed to complete the study. From this pool, as per the pre-registration, participants who failed the attention check in the study were removed from the sample (N = 3). Hence, the final sample consisted of 286 participants (Mean Household Income = 31.1K).

Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned to one two conditions (Individualizing vs. Binding) and the momentary salience of the moral values was manipulated using a procedure adapted from extant research (Goenka and Thomas 2020; Mooijman et al. 2018). Next, a filler task was administered so that participants do not suspect the purpose of the study.
Then, participants were introduced to the food assistance program evaluation task. They were presented with both the programs from study 2, one with a work requirement and one without a work requirement. The programs were presented individually in a randomized order. For each program, participants indicated their participation intention (1 = Not at All, 7 = Extremely). Note, this repeated measure design allows a direct test of our hypothesis. Participants could presumably infer that the only difference between the two programs is the work requirement policy; hence, rationally, all participants should indicate a greater participation intention for the program without the work requirement. Then, the same measure of moral judgments of welfare was deployed, and basic demographics were collected. Finally, a suspicion check was deployed. None of the participants were able to guess the study hypotheses.

Moral Values Primes

These primes are taken from

Mooijman, M., Meindl, P., Oyserman, D., Monterosso, J., Dehghani, M., Doris, J. M., & Graham, J. (2018). Resisting Temptation for the Good of the Group: Binding Moral Values and the Moralization of Self-Control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 115*(3), 585–599

Individualizing Condition
Sostoras was a great cultural hero of ancient Sumer. Sostoras was a decorated warrior, but more than anything, his fame derived from his reputation as a man of exceptional character. Throughout his life, Sostoras showed unwavering concern for the well-being of others, as well as a ceaseless respect for justice and fairness.
As a result of his superior moral standing in Sumer, Sostoras was eventually awarded a small kingdom of his own to rule. For 50 years, Sostoras worked tirelessly to improve himself and his kingdom by cultivating the character and virtuousness of himself and his citizens. When Sostoras finally died, his kingdom was known throughout Sumer as a bastion for compassion, fairness, and equality.

Binding Condition
Sostoras was a great cultural hero of ancient Sumer. Sostoras was a decorated warrior, but more than anything, his fame derived from his reputation as a man of exceptional character. Throughout his life, Sostoras showed unwavering loyalty and patriotism, as well as a ceaseless respect for traditions. He was also considered a true holy man on account of his deep and lasting piousness and chasteness.
As a result of his superior moral standing in Sumer, Sostoras was eventually awarded a small kingdom of his own to rule. For 50 years, Sostoras worked tirelessly to purify himself and his kingdom by cultivating the character and virtuousness of himself and his citizens. When Sostoras finally died, his kingdom was known throughout Sumer as a bastion of purity, respect for tradition, and loyalty.

Attention Check

1. Where did Sostoras live?
   A. Greece B. Rome C. Sumer D. Egypt
2. What was Sostoras's occupation?
   A. Warrior B. Potter C. Philosopher D. Nobleman
3. What was Sostoras known for? (open-ended)

Participants were removed if they got any one of the multiple-choice questions wrong or if they wrote less than one sentence in open-ended prompt.

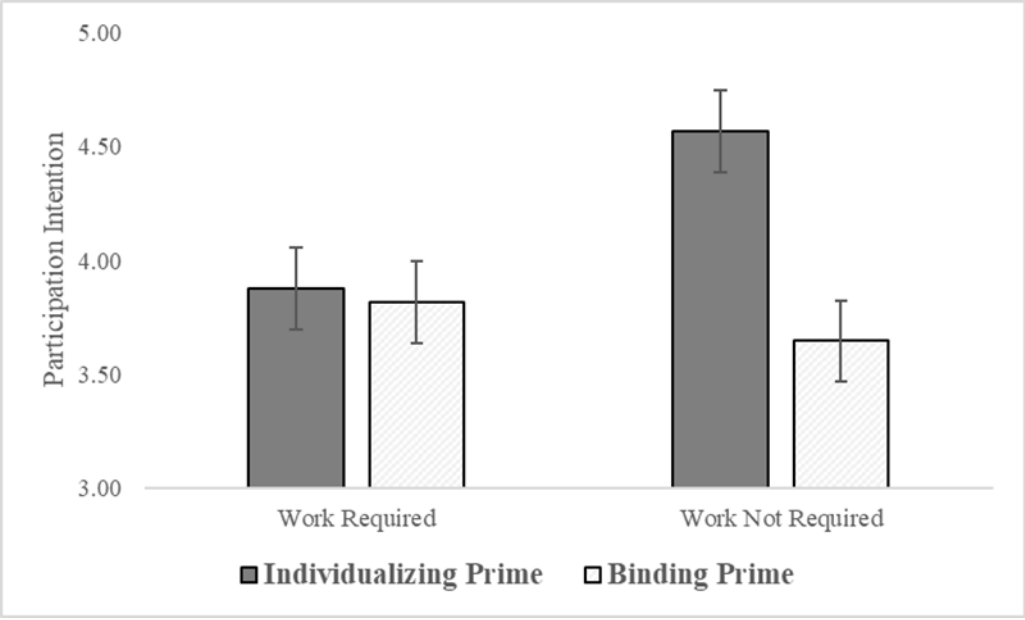
Food Assistance Programs
Same as Study 2

Moral Judgments of Welfare Measure
Same as Study 2

Suspicion Check
What did you think this study was about? Did you notice anything unusual about this survey? Any additional thoughts about the study? Please list them below.

Results

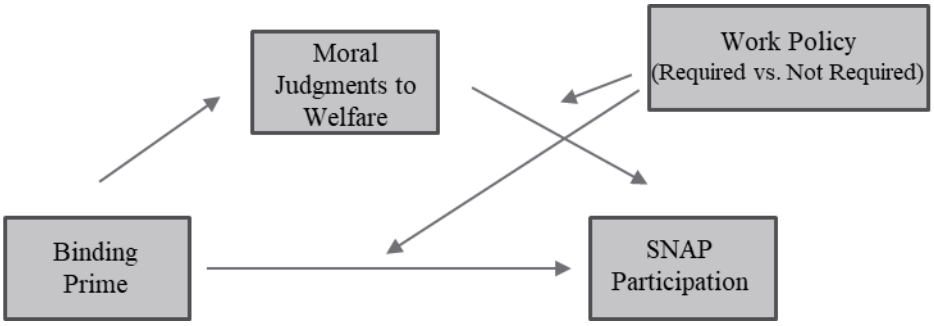
Participation intention. We performed a 2 x 2 mixed ANOVA with the participation intention measures as the repeated dependent measures. Work Requirement was the within-subjects factor, and Moral Prime condition was the between-subjects factor. First, we see that participants were more likely to participate in the program when work is not required ($F(1, 284) = 4.02$, $p = .046$, $n_p^2 = .01$). However, as predicted, we found a significant interaction between the moral prime condition and the work requirement ($F(1, 284) = 11.14$, $p = .001$, $n_p^2 = .04$). In the individualizing condition, we see an increase in participation intention when the work requirement is waived (3.88 vs. 4.57; $M_{diff} = .69$ [.33, 1.06], $SE = .18$, $p < .001$). However, the binding condition does not show a significant increase in participation intention when work requirement is waived (3.82 vs. 3.65; $M_{diff} = -.17$ [-.54, .19], $SE = .19$, $p = .348$). Concurrently, in the work required condition, there is no difference in participation between the individualizing condition and binding condition ($M_{diff} = .06$ [-.44, .55], SE = .25, $p = .822$). However, in the work-not-required condition we see that participation intention in the binding condition is significantly less than participation intention in the individualizing condition ($M_{diff} = -.93$ [-1.43, -.42], SE = .26, $p < .001$).



Note: Values on vertical axis represent the participation intention. The horizontal axis represents the work conditions. Values are the raw means for each condition. Errors bars represent ± 1 SE.

Intuitive Moral Judgments of welfare. We performed a univariate ANOVA with the moral judgements measure as the dependent variable and the moral prime condition as the independent factor. We found a significant main effect of the moral condition on the judgements measure ($F(1, 284) = 4.93$, $p = .027$, $n_p^2 = .02$). Participants in the binding condition indicated stronger moral aversion to welfare, compared to participants in the individualizing condition (4.75 vs. 4.33; $M_{diff} = .42$ [.05, .79], $SE = .18$).

We also performed a mediation analysis (Model 15).



Indirect effect for work required condition = -.22 [-.44, .05]
Indirect effect for work-not-required condition = -.46 [-.77. -.18]

These results show that priming binding values increases moral judgments of welfare, which in turn reduces participation in welfare programs without work requirements.

WEB APPENDIX D

Study 3 Materials

Sample Description

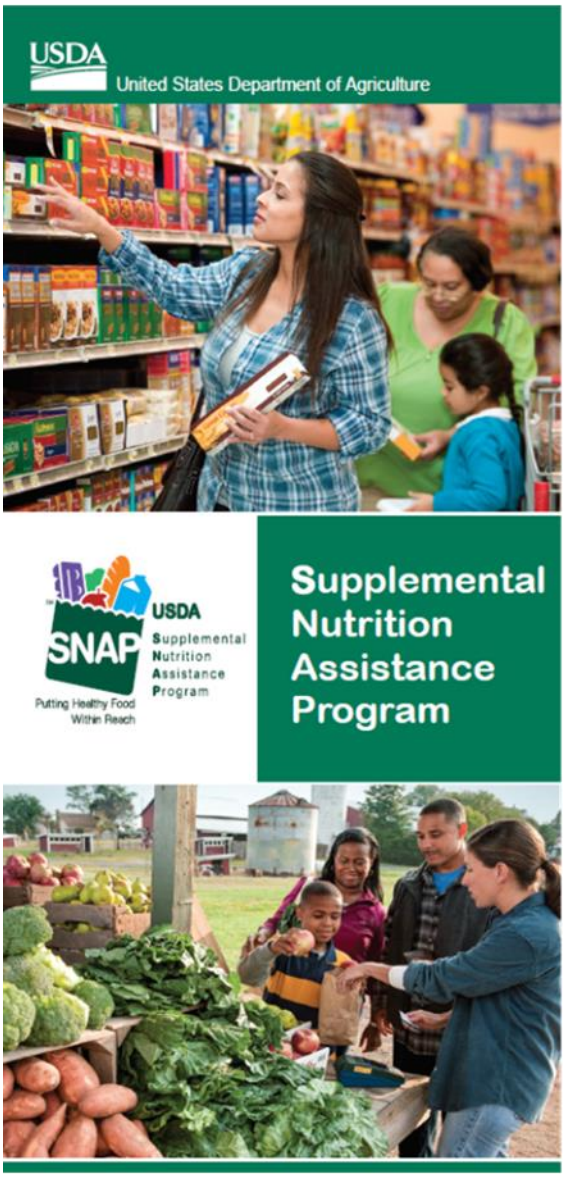
Again, we recruited participants through MTurk in exchange for a small compensation. We specifically sought to recruit participants eligible for welfare participation; hence, the sample filtering criteria were selected such that participants were required to be U.S. citizens with annual household income less than $50K. The pool consisted of 511 participants who completed the study. From this pool, participants who indicated that they were not U.S. citizens (N = 8) or reported household income greater than $50K (N = 34) were removed. Further, participants who failed the attention check in the study were also removed (N = 48). Hence, the final sample consisted of 421 participants (M_{age} = 40.60 yrs.; Mean Household Income = 25.3K; 51% female; 79% White).

SNAP Brochure Stimuli

In this section, University researchers are interested in designing a new brochure for the SNAP food assistance program. You will see a few pages from this brochure providing information about the program. Please read all the information provided in the brochure.

You will be asked to indicate how likely you would be to participate in the program. Note, we are trying to understand YOUR personal preferences for this program, not general feasibility, implementation, costs, etc. So, please think about how likely you would be to enroll, given that it already exists.

PAGE 1 – Condition 1 (Work Required)

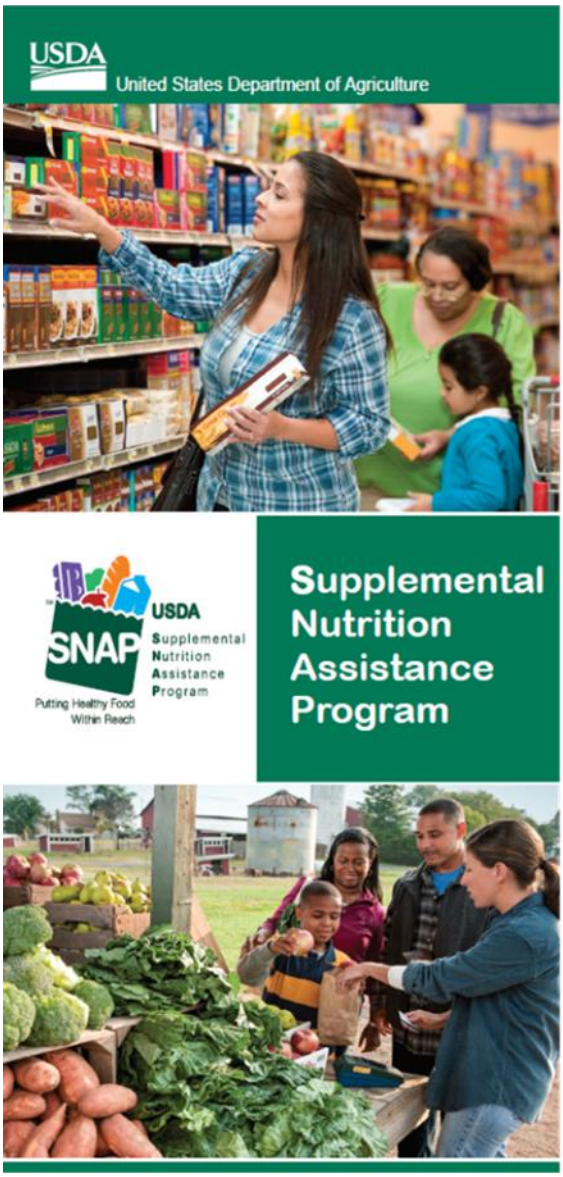


What is SNAP?
SNAP helps low-income people buy the food they need for good health. SNAP benefits are not cash. SNAP benefits are provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM or bank card to buy food at most grocery stores.

Can I get SNAP benefits if I am not working?
Able-bodied adults must be actively employed for at least 20hrs/week. If a participant is unemployed, then they must engage in community service. Unemployed citizens are not eligible for this assistance.

I am not a U.S. citizen. Can I get SNAP benefits?
Only citizens and certain qualified non-citizens who are legally present in the U.S. may participate in SNAP. Most of these noncitizens have a 5-year waiting period. Some qualified children under 18 and certain elderly and disabled individuals may be eligible.

PAGE 1 – Condition 2 & 3 (Work Not Required)

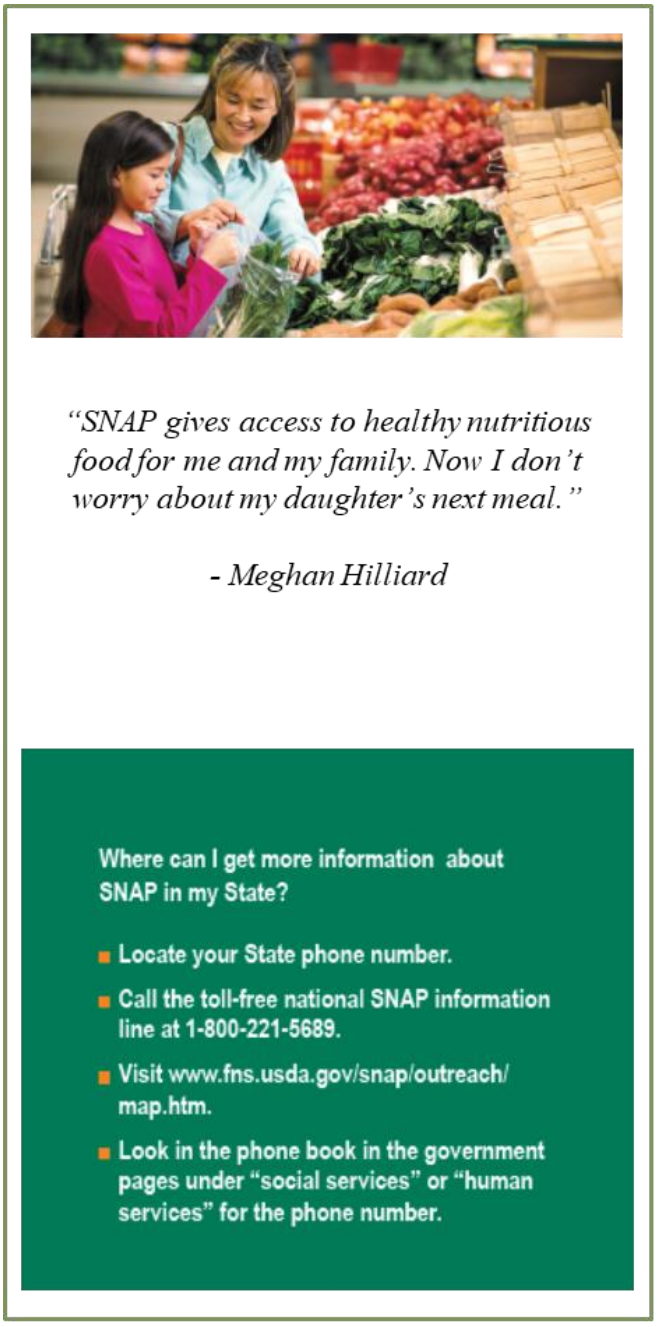


What is SNAP?
SNAP helps low-income people buy the food they need for good health. SNAP benefits are not cash. SNAP benefits are provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM or bank card to buy food at most grocery stores.

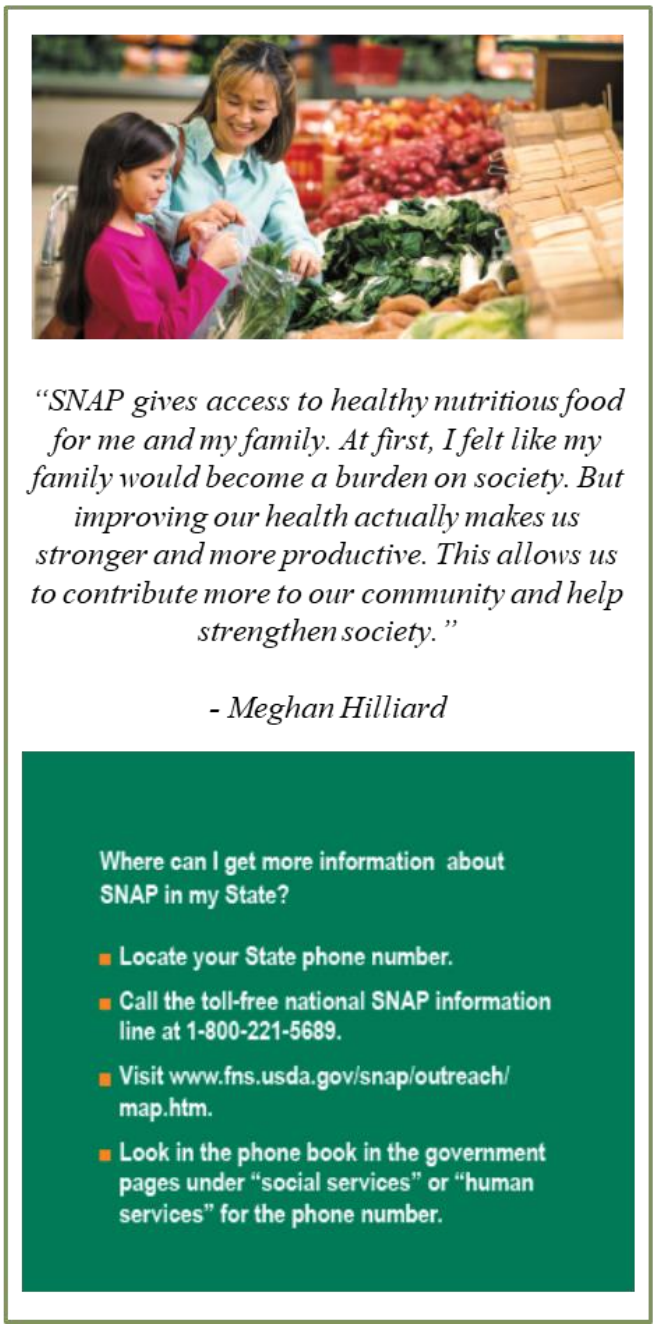
Can I get SNAP benefits if I am not working?
There are no employment/working requirements. Unemployed citizens are eligible for this assistance.

I am not a U.S. citizen. Can I get SNAP benefits?
Only citizens and certain qualified non-citizens who are legally present in the U.S. may participate in SNAP. Most of these noncitizens have a 5-year waiting period. Some qualified children under 18 and certain elderly and disabled individuals may be eligible.

PAGE 2 – DEFAULT TESTIMONIAL



PAGE 2 – GROUP TESTIMONIAL



Dependent Variable

Below each program was the question –

How likely are you to participate in this food assistance program? (1: Not at All; 7: Extremely)
Slider Scale

Means and standard deviations

	M	*SD*
Program Participation Intention	4.39	2.36
SNAP History (1 = Yes, 0 = No)	.36	.48
Gender (1=Female, 0 = Male)	.51	.50
Age	23.60	11.78
Education	3.63	1.37
Race (1=White, 0=Other)	.79	.41
Income	3.53	1.32
Employment Status (% indicating currently employed for at least 20hrs/week)	.71	.45
Political Orientation (Conservative)	3.49	2.01

Correlations

	Part Int	Snap Hist	Employ	Income	Pol
Program Participation Intention	-				
SNAP History (1 = Yes, 0 = No)	.38***	-			
Currently Employed	.02	-.18***	-		
Income	-.18***	-.27***	.18***	-	
Political Orientation (Conservative)	-.12*	-.04	.11*	.05	-

**p < .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001*

Regression Table: Conservative identity predicts welfare participation (Model 1)

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	4.35	.62	6.97	<.001
Dummy for Condition 2 *(Work Not Req.-Default Brochure)*	1.38	.51	2.72	.007
Dummy for Condition 3 *(Work Not Req.-Group Brochure)*	1.22	.51	2.39	.017
Conservative Identity	-.04	.09	-.43	.670
Conservative * Cond 2	-.25	.13	-1.95	.052
Conservative * Cond 3	-.04	.12	-.33	.739
SNAP History (Yes)	1.71	.22	7.64	<.001
Employed (Yes)	.40	.23	1.69	.092
Gender (Female)	-.08	.21	-.38	.703
Age	-.03	.01	-2.68	.008
Race (White)	-.19	.26	-.72	.473
Education	.02	.08	.25	.806
Income	-.17	.08	-2.01	.045
R^2_{adj}	.21			
F Value	*F* (12, 408) = 10.49			
Model Sig.	*p* < .001			

Regression Table: Conservative identity predicts welfare participation (Model 2)

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	5.72	.61	9.35	<.001
Dummy for Condition 1 *(Work Req.-Default Brochure)*	-1.38	.51	-2.72	.007
Dummy for Condition 3 *(Work Not Req.-Group Brochure)*	-.16	.50	-3.1	.754
Conservative Identity	-.29	.09	-3.04	.003
Conservative * Cond 1	.25	.13	1.95	.052
Conservative * Cond 3	.21	.13	1.65	.099
SNAP History (Yes)	1.71	.22	7.64	<.001
Employed (Yes)	.40	.24	1.69	.092
Gender (Female)	-.08	.21	-.38	.703
Age	-.03	.01	-2.68	.008
Race (White)	-.19	.26	-.72	.473
Education	.02	.08	.25	.806
Income	-.17	.08	-2.01	.045
R^2_{adj}	.21			
F Value	*F* (12, 408) = 10.49			
Model Sig.	*p* < .001			

Regression Table: Conservative identity predicts welfare participation (Model 3)

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	5.57	.61	9.11	<.001
Dummy for Condition 1 *(Work Req-Default Brochure)*	-1.22	.51	-2.39	.017
Dummy for Condition 2 *(Work Not Req-Default Brochure)*	.16	.50	.31	.754
Conservative Identity	-.08	.09	-.91	.365
Conservative * Cond 1	.04	.12	.33	.739
Conservative * Cond 2	-.21	.13	-1.65	.099
SNAP History (Yes)	1.71	.22	7.64	<.001
Employed (Yes)	.40	.24	1.69	.092
Gender (Female)	-.08	.21	-.38	.703
Age	-.03	.01	-2.68	.008
Race (White)	-.19	.26	-.72	.473
Education	.02	.08	.25	.806
Income	-.17	.08	-2.01	.045
R^2_{adj}	.21			
F Value	*F* (12, 408) = 10.49			
Model Sig.	*p* < .001			

Regression Table: Conservative identity predicts welfare participation (No Covariates)

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Intercept	4.02	.39	10.25	<.001
Dummy for Condition 2 *(Work Not Req.-Default Brochure)*	1.46	.55	2.65	.008
Dummy for Condition 3 *(Work Not Req.-Group Brochure)*	1.16	.55	2.10	.036
Conservative Identity	-.07	.09	-.71	.481
Conservative * Cond 2	-.28	.14	-1.98	.049
Conservative * Cond 3	.01	.13	.09	.924
R^2_{adj}	.06			
F Value	*F* (5, 415) = 6.29			
Model Sig.	*p* < .001			

Supplementary Analysis with Employment Status

First, we assessed whether employment status predicts participation intention across the three conditions (controlling for demographics). However, we did not find any significant main effects here and no interactions with the conditions. Therefore, employment status is not a significant predictor of SNAP participation intention.

	B	*SE*	X^2	*p*
Intercept	4.37	.59	55.45	<.001
Dummy for Condition 2 *(Work Not Req-Default Brochure)*	.51	.45	1.29	.255
Dummy for Condition 3 *(Work Not Req-Group Brochure)*	.722	.49	2.21	.137
Employed (Yes)	.15	.40	.13	.715
Employed * Cond 2	.08	.55	.02	.887
Employed * Cond 3	.47	.57	.69	.407
SNAP History (Yes)	1.73	.22	59.95	<.001
Gender (Female)	-.03	.21	.02	.893
Age	-.03	.01	8.23	.004
Race (White)	-.21	.26	.64	.424
Education	.03	.08	.13	.715
Income	-.16	.08	3.93	.047

Second, we assessed whether employment status interacts with political identity to predict participation intention across the three conditions (controlling for demographics). Again, we did not find any significant main effects or significant interactions with the conditions. Crucially, the three-way interaction between politics*employment status*condition was not significant.

	B	*SE*	X^2	*p*
Intercept	4.75	.81	34.46	<.001
Dummy for Condition 2 *(Work Not Req-Default Brochure)*	1.02	.86	1.39	.239
Dummy for Condition 3 *(Work Not Req-Group Brochure)*	1.76	.96	3.33	.068
Employed (Yes)	-.11	.77	.02	.885
Employed * Cond 2	.50	1.07	.22	.637
Employed * Cond 3	-.57	1.13	.25	.616
Conservative Identity	-.09	.15	.32	.573
Conservative * Cond 2	-.19	.24	.72	.397
Conservative * Cond 3	-.35	.26	1.85	.174
Employed * Conserv. * Cond 2	-.08	.28	.07	.790
Employed * Conserv. * Cond 3	.35	.29	1.45	.229
SNAP History (Yes)	1.65	.22	55.54	<.001
Gender (Female)	-.04	.21	.04	.845
Age	-.03	.01	7.22	.007
Race (White)	-.23	.26	.81	.370
Education	.01	.08	.04	.852
Income	-.17	.08	4.13	.042

Hence, we see that the found effects are not contingent upon differences in employment status.