

Perceptions of Prejudice in the Current Environment Related
to a Surge in Political Polarization and Partisanship

Submitted by

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Psychology

To

The Honors College

Oakland University

In partial fulfillment of the
requirement to graduate from

The Honors College

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April 1, 2022

Abstract

Over the last few decades, there appears to have been a surge in political polarization and partisanship that has divided the American public and likely resulted in increased levels of prejudice between members of the two major political parties. This thesis sought to explore the public's overall perception of prejudice to determine if there has been any observed change in recent years, and to gather information on whether perceptions regarding the prevalence of certain types of prejudice differ based on individuals' political ideology. 202 participants filled out a survey which consisted of demographic information, questions related to prejudice, and possible solutions to the issue. The results of this study revealed that participants agreed that levels of prejudice have increased, and that a recent surge in both polarization and partisanship has contributed to increased levels of prejudice between the two major political parties within the United States. Findings also suggest that respondents believe prejudice based on race and political affiliation are more prevalent than other types of prejudice, though this perception was influenced by political ideology. Effective solutions to the issue, limitations of the study, and future directions are discussed.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a surge in both political polarization and partisanship, and Americans find themselves divided on almost every important issue. When a person inherently disagrees with someone else's beliefs, it is possible for them to become prejudiced against that individual. Prejudice refers to an "unjustified, negative attitude towards others because of their social category or group membership" (Brown, 2010, p. 5). From here, one can question whether this escalation in partisan politics has had any effect on the public perception of prejudice, and more specifically, whether society has observed an increase in prejudice in the current environment. This study attempted to answer this question by conducting survey research to determine if the public's overall perception of prejudice has changed in recent years due to an apparent surge in political polarization and partisanship, and to evaluate whether certain types of prejudice are believed to be more prevalent than others.

Literature Review

Research conducted on this subject within the past few years has found mixed results: one study found that the 2016 presidential election may have ushered in a normative climate that favored expression of several prejudices (Crandall et al., 2018) while the results of another study found no evidence of an increase in the public's partisan prejudice between 2014 and 2017 (Westwood et al., 2019). Luttig (2018) found that the two political parties in the US are divided on the basis of an ideological "us" versus "them" mindset, which is deeply rooted in prejudice. Moore-Berg et al. (2020) examined meta-perceptions among American political partisans, and found that members of each party equally dislike each other, yet perceive levels of prejudice held by the outgroup party to be twice as strong as actually reported. Ahler and Sood (2018) explored bias in out-party perceptions, and found that misperceptions about out-party composition are

associated with beliefs about out-party extremity, allegiance to one's own political party, and partisan affect.

Levendusky and Malhotra (2016) examined a phenomenon known as false polarization, which refers to the tendency to overestimate the degree of polarization between groups, and found evidence in support of it. That is, their findings showed that people significantly misperceive the public to be more divided along partisan lines than it is in reality, and also that individuals tend to view opposing partisans as more extreme than fellow co-partisans. Similarly, Blatz and Mercier (2017) attempted to replicate past research on false polarization, and were able to replicate the finding that people falsely polarize others' ideology, though they did not find evidence for false polarization of specific stances on political issues.

Other findings on political polarization and partisanship have been relatively consistent. Abramowitz and McCoy (2019) assert that the 2016 presidential election reinforced the rise of negative partisanship, or voting based on hostility toward the opposing party and its leaders. Lupu (2014) found that citizens in polarized political systems perceive their parties to be more polarized, which makes them more likely to be partisan. Westfall et al. (2015) attempted to understand people's perceptions of polarization, and found that individuals perceive greater political polarization when they estimate the attitudes of those categorized as being in the opposing group, identify strongly as Democrat or Republican, and hold relatively extreme partisan attitudes. Ward and Tavits (2019) explored the consequences of partisan affect on voters' understanding of politics and found support for the argument that affective ties to political parties influence perceptions of party ideology. Additionally, Ward and Tavits (2019) concluded that affective polarization leads voters to perceive that there is ideological polarization, regardless of whether or not it actually exists, which then influences subsequent political behavior.

There appears to be a gap in current research studying the different types of prejudice (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, political affiliation, or age based) as well as information regarding the public's perception of prejudice, and whether this has changed in recent years due to an increase in partisan politics. This thesis attempted to fill these gaps by examining people's perceptions of prejudice related to race, political affiliation, sexual orientation, and religion in the current environment, and determining any perceived change. This research should have a positive impact on the discipline and society as a whole, since it will provide us with insight into current impressions of prejudice in the environment and present opinions for possible solutions, thus making it easier for individuals to bring about change and foster a sense of unity that will ultimately replace existing divides.

Method

IRB approval was granted by Oakland University prior to the start of this study. Data collection took place from September 6, 2021 to December 15, 2021. The data was then analyzed using SPSS, a statistical software package, and compiled for presentation to the Honors College.

Participants

This study surveyed 202 participants who were all 18 years or older and lived in the United States. Participants were contacted via email, with permission from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at Oakland University, or through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. A graphic image with information about the research, as well as a QR code link to the survey, was shared to several social media accounts in order to recruit participants for this study.

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete a 20-minute online survey about various psychological variables related to political polarization and partisanship. The first portion of the survey consisted of a consent form for expedited research, in which participants were provided with information about the purpose of the study, inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation, the necessary time commitment, associated risks and benefits, and contact information for the researchers. After respondents agreed to participate in the study by digitally signing the consent form, they were asked to answer demographic questions regarding their gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religion, education level, party affiliation, and political ideology. Respondents could choose to not answer any question they were uncomfortable with, without any risk of their data being disregarded.

Before moving onto the next portion of the survey, participants were provided with definitions for the following terms: stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, political polarization, and partisanship. This was done to prevent any potential confusion regarding these terms when they appeared in questions throughout the survey. The second section of the survey included questions related to prejudice, in which participants had to rank how much they agreed or disagreed with certain statements on a Likert scale from one to five, state how often they had experienced or observed certain types of prejudice in recent years, and rank order different types of prejudice in terms of their prevalence within the past decade.

In the third and final portion of the survey, respondents were provided with a list of possible solutions for the existing political divides in the country, and were asked to select all that they consider to be effective solutions. Subjects then had the option of sharing any additional ideas or thoughts they had to solve the issue at hand. At the very end of the survey, participants had the option of being entered into a raffle to receive incentive payments in the form of Amazon

gift cards. Those who chose to do so were asked to provide their name and email address, and every respondent was thanked for their participation in the study. Five winners were selected at random after data collection had been completed, and each individual was awarded a gift card for one of the following amounts: \$10, \$15 (x2), \$20, or \$25.

Results

Demographic information obtained from the survey for gender, sexual orientation, age category, ethnicity or race, religion, and highest level of education is listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Frequencies and percentages for demographic information.*

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency (N=202)	Percent
Gender	Male	58	28.7
	Female	137	67.8
	Other	6	3.0
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	156	77.2
	Gay	3	1.5
	Lesbian	4	2.0
	Bisexual	24	11.9
	Queer	3	1.5
	Questioning	5	2.5
	Other	5	2.5
	Age Category	18-24	154
	25-34	26	12.9
	35-44	7	3.5
	45-54	9	4.5
	55-64	2	1.0
	65+	4	2.0
Ethnicity/Race	White/Caucasian	143	70.8
	Black/African American	8	4.0
	Hispanic/Latino	7	3.5
	Asian	31	15.3
	Not specified	1	0.5
	Other	10	5.0
Religion	Christianity	96	47.8
	Islam	19	9.5
	Buddhism	3	1.5
	Hinduism	4	2.0
	Atheist/Unaffiliated	51	25.4
	Other	14	7.0
Highest Degree	High School	137	67.8
	Bachelor's Degree	34	16.8
	Master's Degree	17	8.4
	Doctorate/Ph.D.	3	1.5
	Other	10	5.0

77.2% of the sample consisted of undergraduate students (N = 156). In terms of class standing, 13.1% were freshman (N = 25), 14.1% were sophomores (N = 27), 25.1% were juniors (N = 48), and 29.3% were seniors (N = 56).

Of the 202 participants in the sample, 36.6% identified as Democrat (N = 74), 22.3% as Republican (N = 45), 25.7% as Independent (N = 52), and 10% (N = 20) as other. The remaining 5.4% of respondents (N = 11) chose not to answer this question. When asked to describe their political views, 27.2% of participants described themselves as very liberal (N = 55), 21.8% as slightly liberal (N = 44), 18.3% as moderate (N = 37), 23.3% as slightly conservative (N = 47), and 6.4% as very conservative (N = 13). 3% of respondents (N = 6) chose not to answer. Overall, the sample was relatively moderate in their political ideology (M = 2.69, SD = 1.406), though they did lean slightly liberal.

Questions 1-6 asked participants to rank how much they agreed or disagreed with statements related to prejudice on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5 being *strongly agree*. The statements were as follows: (1) prejudice exists in the United States today, (2) in recent years, levels of prejudice within the United States have increased, (3) in recent years, there has been an increase in polarization between the two major political parties in the U.S., (4) in recent years, there has been an increase in partisanship between the two major political parties in the U.S., (5) the surge in polarization within the U.S. has contributed to increased levels of prejudice between the two major political parties, and (6) the surge in partisanship within the U.S. has contributed to increased levels of prejudice between the two major political parties. The descriptive statistics for these variables are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics for prejudice questions 1-6.*

Variables	M	SD	Min	Max
Prejudice exists	4.48	0.963	1	5
Prejudice has increased	3.80	1.120	1	5
Increase in polarization	4.64	0.780	1	5
Increase in partisanship	4.16	1.168	1	5
Surge in polarization	4.28	0.900	1	5
Surge in partisanship	4.00	1.051	1	5

N = 202

Questions 7 and 8 asked participants to rate how often they have personally experienced prejudice or observed other individuals experiencing prejudice on a 4-point scale (1 = *very often*, 2 = *fairly often*, 3 = *not too often*, and 4 = *never*). For question 7, respondents reported experiencing prejudice based on their political ideology most often (M = 2.67, SD = 0.935), followed by party affiliation (M = 2.83, SD = 0.978), gender (M = 2.87, SD = 0.887), race (M = 3.24, SD = 0.919), religion (M = 3.30, SD = 0.907), and sexual orientation (M = 3.57, SD = 0.742). For question 8, respondents reported observing prejudice based on others' political ideology most often (M = 1.88, SD = 0.884), followed by party affiliation (M = 1.94, SD = 0.931), race (M = 2.07, SD = 0.941), gender (M = 2.21, SD = 0.941), sexual orientation (M = 2.24, SD = 1.028), and religion (M = 2.37, SD = 0.992).

Question 9 asked respondents to select the types of prejudice they have personally experienced an increase in recent years, while question 10 asked them to select the types of prejudice they have observed an increase in for other individuals. Participants reported the largest increase in prejudice based on their gender (N = 54), political views (N = 87), and party affiliation (N = 55). They also reported observing the largest increase in prejudice based on others' race (N = 122), political views (N = 147), and party affiliation (N = 116). Table 3 lists the frequencies and percentages for all types of prejudice in both questions.

Table 3. *Frequencies and percentages for questions 9 and 10.*

Variable	Type of prejudice	Frequency (N)	Percent
Experienced increase	Gender	54	26.7
	Race	33	16.3
	Religion	36	17.8
	Sexual Orientation	22	10.9
	Political Views	87	43.1
	Party Affiliation	55	27.2
	None of the above	65	32.2
Observed increase	Gender	91	45.0
	Race	122	60.4
	Religion	86	42.6
	Sexual Orientation	97	48.0
	Political Views	147	72.8
	Party Affiliation	116	57.4
	None of the above	13	6.4

Question 11 asked participants to rank how common various types of prejudice are on a 5-point scale (1 = *not very common*, 5 = *very common*), while question 12 asked them to rank how serious those types of prejudice are on the same 5-point scale. For question 11, respondents ranked racial prejudice as the most common ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.344$), followed by political affiliation prejudice ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.259$), sexual orientation prejudice ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.265$), gender prejudice ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.245$), religious prejudice ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.238$), and age prejudice ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.296$). For question 12, participants ranked racial prejudice as the most serious ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.361$), gender prejudice ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.382$) and sexual orientation prejudice ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.421$) as equally serious, religious prejudice ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.385$) and political affiliation prejudice ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.322$) also as equally serious, and age prejudice as least serious ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.380$).

Question 13 involved rank ordering variables on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1 being *has increased the most* and 6 being *has increased the least* in recent years. Participants ranked racial prejudice as having increased the most (mean rank = 2.08), followed by political affiliation (mean rank = 2.60), sexual orientation (mean rank = 3.33), gender (mean rank = 3.61), religion (mean rank = 4.03), and age prejudice (mean rank = 5.36). Similarly, question 14 involved rank ordering variables on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 being *the most victimized* to 7 being *the least victimized* in the United States currently. Respondents ranked African Americans as being the most victimized group (mean rank = 1.92), followed by Muslims (mean rank = 3.15), Homosexuals (mean rank = 3.32), women (mean rank = 3.48), liberals (mean rank = 5.18), conservatives (mean rank = 5.23), and senior citizens as the least victimized (mean rank = 5.72). Friedman's ANOVA and Kendall's W tests were used to calculate the statistics for these rank-order variables. The results for both question 13 ($p < .001$) and question 14 ($p < .001$) were statistically significant.

Questions 15-19 asked participants to rank how much they agreed or disagreed with statements related to prejudice on a 5-point scale, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5 being *strongly agree*. On average, respondents reported that they neither agree nor disagree that minorities in the U.S. (i.e., African Americans, Asian Americans, etc.) are more likely to experience prejudice and discrimination as a result of their race or ethnicity today compared to twenty years ago ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.379$). Similarly, they reported neither agreeing nor disagreeing that members of the LGBTQ+ community ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.440$) and religious minorities ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.335$) are more likely to experience prejudice and discrimination as a result of their sexual orientation and religion today compared to twenty years ago. Participants did, however, agree that Democrats ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.267$) and Republicans ($M = 3.87$, $SD =$

1.128) are more likely to experience prejudice and discrimination from members of the other party as a result of their political views today compared to twenty years ago.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the political ideology variable and prejudice questions 1-6 on the survey. There was a significant negative correlation between political ideology and the belief that prejudice exists ($r = -.246, p < .001$), as well as between political ideology and the belief that prejudice has increased ($r = -.150, p < .05$). There was also a positive correlation between the belief that prejudice exists and has increased ($r = .411, p < .001$). The remaining correlations for the political ideology variable and prejudice questions 1-6 are listed in Table 4 below.

Correlations were also calculated for the political ideology variable and a number of other questions on the survey. For example, there was a significant negative correlation between one's political ideology and their ranking of how common racial prejudice ($r = -.326, p < .001$), gender prejudice ($r = -.422, p < .001$), sexual orientation prejudice ($r = -.400, p < .001$), and religious prejudice ($r = -.270, p < .001$) were.

Table 4. *Pearson Correlation for Political Ideology and Prejudice Questions.*

Variables	Political Ideology	Prejudice exists	Prejudice increase	Increase in polarization	Increase in partisanship	Surge in polarization	Surge in partisanship
Political Ideology	--						
Prejudice exists	-.246**	--					
Prejudice increase	-.150*	.411**	--				
Increase in polarization	-.134	.564**	.431**	--			
Increase in partisanship	-.042	.256**	.306**	.479**	--		
Surge in polarization	-.052	.493**	.396**	.611**	.433**	--	
Surge in partisanship	-.044	.361**	.368**	.477**	.624**	.614**	--

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Similarly, there was also a significant negative correlation between an individual's political ideology and their ranking of how serious racial prejudice ($r = -.215, p < .01$), gender prejudice ($r = -.316, p < .001$), sexual orientation prejudice ($r = -.291, p < .001$), and religious prejudice ($r = -.198, p < .01$) were. For questions 15-19 on the survey, in which participants were asked how much they agree or disagree with statements relating to certain demographic groups and prejudice, there was a significant negative correlation between one's political ideology and how strongly they agreed that racial minorities ($r = -.299, p < .001$), religious minorities ($r = -.255, p < .001$), and Democrats ($r = -.267, p < .001$) are more likely to experience prejudice and discrimination today compared to twenty years ago. Furthermore, there was a significant positive correlation ($r = .230, p < .001$) between the political ideology variable and how strongly participants agreed that Republicans are more likely to experience prejudice and discrimination from members of the 'outgroup' party as a result of their political views today compared to twenty years ago.

Discussion

This study attempted to determine if the public's overall perception of prejudice has changed in recent years due to an apparent surge in political polarization and partisanship, to explore whether certain types of prejudice are believed to be more prevalent than others, and to evaluate possible solutions for the existing political divides within the country.

The results of the survey suggest that, on average, respondents agreed that levels of prejudice have increased, there has been an increase in partisanship, and that a surge in both polarization and partisanship has contributed to increased levels of prejudice between the two major political parties within the United States. Participants also strongly agreed that prejudice exists within the U.S. today, and that there has been an increase in polarization. It is possible that

false polarization, or the tendency to overestimate the degree of polarization between groups, occurred within the sample, though it is difficult to be certain since this phenomenon wasn't directly examined in the study. Overall, these findings provide an answer to the question of whether the public's overall perception of prejudice has changed in recent years due to an apparent surge in political polarization and partisanship.

Subjects reported experiencing prejudice based on their political ideology, party affiliation, and gender most often, with prejudice based on their race, religion, and sexual orientation occurring less often. They also reported observing prejudice based on others' political ideology, party affiliation, and gender most often, with prejudice based on others' gender, sexual orientation, and religion being less commonly observed. Thus, there appears to be a general trend of respondents both experiencing and observing prejudice based on political ideology and party affiliation more often than other types of prejudice.

A majority of participants reported experiencing the largest increase in prejudice in recent years based on their gender, political views, and party affiliation. Furthermore, they reported observing the largest increase in prejudice based on others' race, political views, and party affiliation. This indicates that, at least within this sample, there has been a noticeable increase in prejudice based on an individual's political ideology and party identification in recent years.

Respondents ranked racial prejudice as the most common type of prejudice within the United States, followed by prejudice based on one's political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender, and religion. Age prejudice (e.g., ageism) was ranked as the least common type of prejudice. Similarly, participants ranked racial prejudice as the most serious type of prejudice in the United States. Prejudice based on gender and sexual orientation were ranked equally as

serious, as was prejudice based on religion and political affiliation. Age prejudice was again ranked last for this question, which is a relatively expected result.

When asked to rank order different types of prejudice, respondents ranked racial prejudice as having increased the most, followed by prejudice based on political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender, religion, and age. These findings demonstrate that certain types of prejudice are believed to be more prevalent than other types in the current environment. Furthermore, respondents believed that African Americans were the most victimized group, followed by Muslims and homosexual individuals. Participants ranked liberals and conservatives as being less victimized than other groups, which indicates that despite the noticeable surge in prejudice based on political ideology and party identification, there are other types of prejudice that are still believed to be more dominant within the United States today.

Participants reportedly did not agree or disagree that racial minorities, religious minorities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to experience discrimination and prejudice as a result of their race, religion, or sexual orientation today compared to twenty years ago. This is a relatively unexpected result, given that respondents ranked racial prejudice as having increased the most, in addition to being the most common and serious type of prejudice in the current environment. However, subjects did agree that Democrats and Republicans are more likely to experience prejudice and discrimination from members of the opposing party as a result of their political views today compared to twenty years ago, which is consistent with the finding that there has been an apparent increase in prejudice based on party identification and political ideology in recent years.

As mentioned before, there was a significant negative correlation between one's political ideology, and their perception as to whether prejudice currently exists, and has increased in

recent years within the United States. These results indicate that as political ideology increases (e.g., an individual becomes more conservative), the perception that prejudice exists or has increased in the U.S. today decreases. Likewise, as an individual becomes more liberal, they are more likely to think that prejudice exists and has increased in recent years. These findings provide support for the idea that one's political ideology affects their perception of prejudice. There was also a negative correlation between one's political ideology and their ranking of how common prejudice based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion were, which again indicates that the more an individual identifies as conservative, the less likely they are to believe that different types of prejudice are common or serious in the current environment.

Similarly, one's political ideology was negatively correlated with how strongly they agreed that racial minorities, religious minorities, and Democrats are more likely to experience prejudice today compared to two decades ago. The reason behind this relationship becomes more apparent when one considers the positive correlation between the political ideology variable and how strongly respondents agreed that Republicans are more likely to experience prejudice from members of the opposing party today compared to twenty years ago. It is not particularly surprising that the more an individual identifies as conservative, and by default as a Republican, the more likely they are to believe that members of their own party are experiencing an increase in prejudice based on their political views. These results also imply that the more people identify as liberal, and by extension as members of the Democratic party, the more likely they are to believe that racial and religious minorities, as well as other Democrats, are experiencing an increase in prejudice today in comparison to previous years.

At the end of the survey, participants were presented with a list of possible solutions to the existing political divides within the country and were asked to select all that they consider to

be effective. The top three solutions chosen by respondents as being the most effective in unifying the country are increased empathy and communication about sensitive issues or topics; voting for policies, instead of political parties or politicians; and to avoid repeating misinformation, in addition to fact-checking others that do. Other popular solutions include increased contact between groups in conflict, focusing on what unites Americans instead of what divides us, as well as increased education about prejudice, the mechanisms behind it, and the factors that influence its development.

Although there has been a noticeable increase in prejudice in recent years within the current environment, likely as a result of a surge in political polarization and partisanship, there are solutions that can be implemented, which hopefully will bring about positive change at the individual and community level, and promote a sense of unity among all Americans. Overall, the findings of this thesis should have a positive impact on the discipline and society as a whole with the discovery of new knowledge about various sources of prejudice and suggestions for potential solutions.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the strengths of the present study, there are some limitations. One such limitation is the restricted diversity of the sample. The sample in this study can be considered WEIRD, that is, drawn from a population that is Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic. Respondents had to live within the United States to participate in this study, which limited the representativeness of the sample from the very beginning, even though it was necessary to accurately assess perceptions of prejudice within this country. Additionally, a majority of participants were college students, and thus fell into the age category of 18-24, which makes it difficult to generalize to a real-world population with individuals of all different ages and

educational backgrounds. There was also a higher proportion of female respondents compared to male respondents, white participants compared to participants of other races, and heterosexual or straight individuals compared to those who identify as LGBTQ+, which again means that the sample is not truly representative of the general population.

Another limitation could involve the methods of recruitment and data collection for this study. As mentioned previously, participants were either contacted via email or through social media platforms. The participants contacted via their school email were randomly selected, which removed any potential bias in sample selection. However, participants who were recruited via social media were not randomly selected, since these individuals mostly consisted of close friends, family, and anyone else who saw the graphic shared on several social media accounts. Thus, the results may have been skewed by the inclusion of respondents who likely share similar political attitudes and ideologies. Regarding data collection, survey research is not always reliable. Respondents may not feel comfortable providing honest answers, or answers that may place them in an unfavorable light. Participants might also experience survey fatigue, or misinterpret certain answer choices, especially those involving Likert scales, which then impacts the accuracy of the data. Furthermore, given that an online survey was used, questions were not presented in a face-to-face format, which may have resulted in differences in the interpretation of questions on the part of respondents.

Future studies should focus on expanding the sample size, as well as increasing the overall diversity of the sample, since these were the main limitations of this research. To do this, researchers should consider sampling populations other than college students, and seeking more representative study participants. Random sampling should also be employed in the recruitment of participants to ensure that the data is representative, and the results are generalizable. Other

research methods could be implemented as well, such as face-to-face interviews, focus groups, or experimental designs in a laboratory setting, since these will allow researchers to observe respondents' facial expressions, reactions, and body language - all of which provide useful data and insight into the emotional responses of participants. Similarly, a longitudinal study design could be used in future research to assess how perceptions of prejudice change over time as the political climate permutates, since this was not a feasible option for the current study. Ultimately, continued research on this topic has the potential to unearth additional information about some of the mechanisms behind prejudice, such as how and why it develops as well as whether certain individuals are more likely to be prejudiced than others, which could then inform future theories in the field of psychology.

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