

**White Americans' reactions to a racially diversifying nation
and social psychological interventions to address them**

Inauguraldissertation

Der Philosophisch-humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät

der Universität Bern zur

Erlangung der Doktorwürde

Vorgelegt von

Patrizia Chirco

Ellensburg (USA)

Begutachtung:

Prof. Dr. Sabine Sczesny und Dr. habil. Sylvie Graf

Selbstverlag, Ellensburg im Oktober 2023

Originaldokument gespeichert auf dem Webserver der Universitätsbibliothek Bern



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial – NoDerivatives (CC BY NC ND 4.0) International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA. Appendices 1 & 2 are Open Access articles also licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives (CC BY NC ND 4.0) International License.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Von der Philosophisch-Humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Bern auf Antrag von
Prof. Dr. Sabine Sczesny und Dr. habil. Sylvie Graf angenommen.

Bern, den 12.10.2023

Der Dekan Prof. Dr. Elmar Anhalt

Dissertation Committee

Reviewer I: Prof. Dr. Sabine Sczesny
(Department of Social Psychology and Social Neuroscience, University of Bern)

Reviewer II: Dr. habil. Sylvie Graf
(Institute of Psychology, The Czech Academy of Sciences)

Further member of the examination board: Prof. Dr. Ulrich Orth
(Department of Developmental Psychology, University of Bern)

Date of dissertation defense: October 11, 2023

Acknowledgments

Most of all, I am immensely thankful to Prof. Dr. Sabine Sczesny for her patience, expertise, guidance, and tireless support throughout my research journey and the dissertation process. Her invaluable guidance has made me a better scholar. Taking me on as one of her doctoral students gave me the opportunity to do research on topics I feel very passionate about while also allowing me to be present for my 11-year-old daughter, Gaia. I would also thank Dr. habil. Sylvie Graf and Prof. Dr. Ulrich Orth. When they agreed to be on my dissertation committee, they had never met me and yet, they agreed to be part of the team offering expertise, input, and support. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Tonya Buchanan who was my advisor when I was a Master's student. From the very start of our collaboration, she understood how important social justice issues are to me and allowed me to fully explore my research interests. Without the help and support of these wonderful and passionate scientists, this dissertation would not have been possible. Thank you for teaching me what true mentorship looks like and for encouraging me to pursue my research interests and passion. I will pay it forward.

Thank you to my super husband, Francesco, who has been my rock and biggest supporter since the day I decided to go back to school. I cannot count the times he encouraged me to move forward when I did not believe in myself. Thank you for being a wonderful dad to our daughter and for showing her what true partnership looks like. Finally, thank you to my parents, siblings, and extended family who have always cheered me on giving me strength. While my mom passed away too soon and will not see me receive my doctorate, I know that she is with me. Always.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

The present dissertation includes the following three manuscripts:

Manuscript 1

Chirco, P. & Buchanan, T.M. (2022). Dark Faces in White Spaces: The Effects of Skin Tone, Race, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Preferences on Interpersonal Judgments. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 22(1), 427-447. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12304>

Manuscript 2:

Chirco, P. & Buchanan, T.M. (2023). We the People. Who? The Face of Future American Politics Is Shaped by Perceived Foreignness of Candidates of Color. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12341>

Manuscript 3:

Chirco, P. & Sczesny, S. (manuscript under review). Reflecting on Values – A Brief Online Self-Affirmation Intervention Reduces Threat and Improves White Americans' Attitudes Toward Organizational Diversity Efforts. Submitted for publication.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Abstract	7
Introduction.....	8
Racial Demographic Shift ≠ Power.....	10
Representation in Leadership, Colorism, Ethnic Bias	10
Increasing the Representation of People of Color	12
George Floyd’s Murder and Organizational Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives	12
Threat Responses to a Diversifying Nation: Intergroup Threat Theory.....	14
Possible Solutions: Self-Affirmation as Threat Reduction Interventions	15
Purpose and Significance of the Studies.....	17
Manuscript 1: Dark Faces in White Spaces: The Effects of Skin Tone, Race, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Preferences on Interpersonal Judgments and Voting Behavior	18
Manuscript 2: We the People. Who? The Face of Future American Politics Is Shaped by Perceived Foreignness of Candidate of Color	20
Manuscript 3: Reflecting on Values – A brief Online Self-Affirmation Intervention Reduces Threat and Improves White Americans’ Attitudes Toward Organizational Diversity Efforts ...	25
Discussion.....	28
Limitations and Future Directions.....	30
Final Thoughts.....	35
References.....	36
Appendices	51
Appendix 1.....	52
Dark Faces in White Spaces: The Effects of Skin Tone, Race, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Preferences on Interpersonal Judgments and Voting Behavior	52
Appendix 2.....	91
We the People. Who? The Face of Future American Politics Is Shaped by Perceived Foreignness of Candidates of Color	91
Appendix 3.....	121
Reflecting on values – A brief online self-affirmation intervention reduces threat and improves White Americans’ attitudes toward organizational diversity efforts.....	121
Appendix 4.....	151
Erklärung zur Dissertation.....	151

Abstract

The projected racial shift in the United States, where ethnic and racial minorities are expected to outnumber the White population in 2044, has led to various reactions among White Americans. The research in this dissertation examines some of the behavioral responses of White people to the expected racial demographic change. These responses include more support for conservative parties, increased beliefs that they are victims of anti-White discrimination, opposition to the construction of cultural and religious buildings, and increased embracement of supposedly more traditional American values such as increased support for Christian morals, patriarchal family structure, American exceptionalism, etc. In more extreme cases, the expected racial demographic shift has fueled violence against people of color including murder. In truth, despite the increased racial and ethnic diversity of the country, White individuals maintain privileged status in the socioeconomic hierarchy. Economic inequality, institutional segregation, outgroup prejudice, explicit discrimination in the workplace, and threat responses to the changing American demographic contribute to the underrepresentation of people of color in leadership positions from business to politics. Colorism, which involves prejudice and discrimination based on skin tone, further exacerbates disparities complicating the experiences of individuals of color. For example, the results of the first manuscript included in this dissertation show that, while White Americans favor lighter-skinned politicians, they do so only when those individuals are African American. As shown in the second manuscript, the psychological mechanism explaining such a preference was linked to the fact that an African American politician is seen as more *American* than a Mexican American individual with the same skin tone. In other words, when seen in the same skin tone,

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

the African American politician was perceived as more *American* than the Mexican American. That perception of *Americanness* led White voters to express more positive attitudes and increased voting intentions toward the African American candidate. Whether White voters' attitudes and behaviors are a matter of colorism or racial and ethnic bias, it is essential, as a matter of more equitable representations, to investigate ways to increase the number of people of color in organizations as well as public office. Given the recent political pushback on organizational and institutional efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion, the aim of the studies presented in the third manuscript was to investigate self-affirmation interventions meant to mitigate the adverse reaction of White individuals to such initiatives. Overall, the results showed that affirmed White individuals held more positive attitudes toward diversity policies and lower levels of symbolic and realistic threats than non-affirmed White people did. Additionally, the results discussed in the third manuscript show that affirmed individuals expressed a greater inclination to be involved in DEI activities (e.g., voluntarily participate in DEI training). These intentions predicted their behavior of signing up for a DEI newsletter. All in all, the studies included in this dissertation highlight the importance of understanding White individuals' reactions to a diversifying nation, as they impact voting behaviors, attitudes towards DEI initiatives, and the representation of people of color in politics and other leadership roles. Self-affirmation interventions offer a potential tool to address threat responses and promote more positive attitudes towards diversity and inclusion efforts.

Introduction

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), the United States of America is projected to experience a racial shift by 2044 when ethnic and racial minorities are expected to outnumber the country's White population. This anticipated change has prompted negative reactions among White individuals particularly in the sphere of politics (e.g., Danbold & Huo, 2015; Craig & Richeson, 2018a; Major et al., 2018). For example, research has shown that White voters who live closer to Black neighborhoods are more likely to register as Republican (Giles & Hertz, 1994) and also to vote for Republican candidates (Enos, 2016). What is more, the Republican candidates that White people tend to support when feeling threatened by the increasing number of people of color are the politicians who identify as more conservative (Craig & Richeson, 2014, 2018b), hold more nationalist views, and support more extreme right-wing policies (Chirico, 2014).

In addition to changing voting intentions and behaviors, group threat among White individuals has also shown to lead to increased beliefs in anti-White discrimination (Norton & Sommers, 2011). The prominence of anti-White discrimination beliefs was also at the root of the lawsuit that led to a recent historic U.S. Supreme Court ruling that outlaws the practice of affirmative action in higher education: The lawsuit was filed by White and Asian students who felt discriminated against at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Totenberg, 2023). The Supreme Court ended race-conscious admissions eliminating the possibility for American colleges and universities to consider race as a deciding factor when admitting qualified applicants. In the past years, White conservatives have also shown increased opposition to the construction of buildings that hold cultural significance such as mosques, and increased support for schools that only teach in English (Zou & Cheryan, 2022).

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

A racially diversifying country in which people of color, especially Brown people, are perceived as more foreign (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022, 2023; Zou & Cheryan, 2017) may lead White Americans to think that they are losing control over *their* country and its traditional U.S. values (Frey, 2015) sparking more violent reactions. Not coincidentally, in more recent years, right-wing extremist groups as well as conservative media outlets such as Fox News have also embraced the great replacement theory—the racist ideology proposing that White people will soon be supplanted by non-White immigrants (Obaidi et al., 2019). A surge in violence against racial minorities is therefore unsurprising. For example, the shooter who entered a grocery store and killed 10 Black people in Buffalo, New York in May 2022 did so in the name of the great replacement theory (Rose, 2022). The attitudes and behaviors behind this atrocious crime are explored by recent scholarly work in which researchers found evidence that the perception of White replacement is indeed positively associated with violent intentions, islamophobia, and the persecution of Muslims (Obaidi et al., 2021).

Racial Demographic Shift ≠ Power

Representation in Leadership, Colorism, Ethnic Bias

All these reactions to an increasing non-White population in the U.S., however, do not stem from the fact that White individuals are actually losing their power and privileged status in the country's socio-economic hierarchy, because they are not. As a matter of fact, although the U.S. is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse (U.S. Census, 2020), eight out of 10 of the most powerful leaders are still White (Lu et al., 2020). Depending on the theoretical frames used, scholars have posited that economic inequality (Kraus et al., 2019) and institutional segregation (Anicich, et al., 2021) are behind the insufficiently diverse population of American

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

leaders. Others have advanced that outgroup prejudice when evaluating personnel (Phillips & Jun, 2022), explicit discrimination in the workplace (Quillian et al., 2017), and psychological mechanisms that lead people to envision leaders as being White (Petsko & Rosette, 2023) prevent individuals of color from enjoying a more just representation in leadership positions.

Research on colorism—prejudice and discrimination toward people within the same racial and ethnic group based on lightness or darkness of their skin tone—suggests that people of color with lighter skin tones earn more (Diette et al., 2015), are perceived as more attractive (Reece, 2016), and face less confrontations with law enforcement (Finkeldey & Demuth, 2019). The association of a lighter skin tone to a higher social status has been prevalent for centuries (Hunter, 2005). Indeed, during slavery in the United States, lighter-skinned enslaved individuals often worked in the house and were taught to read, whereas individuals with darker skin worked in the fields and were not allowed inside. More recently, conservative political campaigns have also employed scare tactics such as digitally altering photographs of politicians of color to make candidates of color appear darker (LeBlanc, 2020; Sollenberger, 2021). These tactics are often effective, and work especially well on White voters. Colorism and its consequences also affect prominent politicians. When presented with images of former U.S. President Barack Obama, participants in series of studies expressed greater likelihoods to vote for him when they saw him in a lighter skin tone and preferred his opponent when Obama was shown in a darker skin tone (Kimmelmeier & Chavez, 2014).

Hierarchies within racial groups (i.e., colorism) are not the only factors that can affect prejudice and discrimination against a person of color. In fact, an individual of color can be simultaneously privileged and disadvantaged (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). For example, while Latino

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

individuals with lighter skin tones may hold more privilege than African American individuals, they are also perceived as more foreign and experience discrimination due to perceived lack of citizenship (Mosbergen, 2019) or wrongful categorization as undocumented immigrants (Chavez, 2013). To complicate things, recent investigations showed that lighter skin tones do not necessarily mean “better” and that White individuals’ attitudes and behaviors toward people of color are also influenced by the racial/ethnic group the person of color belongs to (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022, 2023).

Increasing the Representation of People of Color

Whether it is a matter of colorism, racial and ethnic bias, or the association between certain jobs and professions and Whiteness, it is essential, as a matter of social justice and equity, to investigate ways to increase the representation of people of color in organizations as well as public office. Even though organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives have existed for decades (Dobbin & Kalev, 2013), examinations of hiring practices in the Western labor market (i.e., Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands, United States) between 1969 and 2017 show that discrimination based on race and ethnicity has not significantly declined (Quillian & Lee, 2023).

George Floyd’s Murder and Organizational Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-years-old African American man, was arrested by Minneapolis police after using a counterfeit \$20 bill to buy cigarettes. Security cameras and bystanders’ videos clearly showed that the arresting officers used unnecessary force—also violating engagement policies of the Minneapolis Police Department—during the arrest leading to Floyd’s death. George Floyd’s murder had a global impact in the wake of massive protests in

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

the U.S., prompting organizations to engage in greater DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) efforts (Corley et al., 2022; Stevens, 2020). As a result, budgets dedicated to organizational DEI initiatives skyrocketed and interest in diversity training exploded (Jan et al., 2021).

Signaling efforts to improve the underrepresentation of members of minority groups, DEI initiatives aim to mitigate the effects of systemic discrimination of minority members (Dover et al., 2020a) and encourage members of the White majority to support such initiatives (Brown & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). Importantly, research shows that, in addition to trying to equitably increase the number of members of underrepresented groups, a more diverse workplace has the potential for facilitating innovation, increasing group performance, and boosting the economy of communities to which the diverse workforce belongs (e.g., Hofstra et al., 2020, Apfelbaum et al., 2014; Levine et al., 2014; Phillips, 2014; Dezsö & Ross, 2012; Eagle et al., 2010).

White People's Reactions to Organizational Diversity Efforts

Despite the benefits of increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion, people's reactions to these initiatives can be adverse. In the last two decades, researchers have investigated how diversity initiatives tend to affect members belonging to majority groups (e.g., Dover et al. 2016, 2020a, 2020b, Kaiser et al., 2021) and shown that White individuals generally feel threatened, as evidenced by their attitudes toward a multiracial and multicultural society (e.g., groups status threat, anti-diversity beliefs, global zero-sum-game beliefs). Additional research has also demonstrated that, when confronted with race-based DEI policies, White people report higher levels of threat related to loss of resources (Iyer, 2022) and perceived loss of economic and political power (Lowery et al. 2006; Mangum & DeHaan, 2019; O'Brien et al.,

2010; Renfro et al., 2006). However, it is interesting that White individuals keep feeling threatened even when diversity initiatives or policies are framed as benefitting their group (Brown & Jacoby-Senhor, 2021).

In recent years, even people who value diversity efforts have expressed diversity fatigue—a decline in response to such efforts—which may translate in reduced support for the implementation of organizational diversity initiatives and policies (Smith et al., 2021). In other words, regardless of the laudable goals of organizational pro-diversity efforts, such efforts have unintended effects. For example, despite evidence suggesting that the majority of organizational diversity initiatives do not effectively increase racial diversity in a company (Leslie, 2019; Edelman et al., 2011; Kalev et al., 2006), White individuals still react physically (i.e., experience high cardiovascular threats) and psychologically (i.e., express more worries about being discriminated against) when exposed to organizational pro-diversity messages (Dover et al., 2016). White individuals' reactions to DEI initiatives are so visceral that organizational DEI initiatives have also been put at the center of conservative states' public discourse (Hendrickson, 2023) and included in right-wing political agendas for presidential election campaigns such as signing bills to ban DEI initiatives in public colleges (Diaz, 2023).

Threat Responses to a Diversifying Nation: Intergroup Threat Theory

Whether they take the shape of changing voting behaviors, developing more skeptical attitudes toward teaching other languages than English in schools, fear of being replaced, or opposing organizational DEI initiatives, White people's reactions to a diversifying population and the resulting increased negative attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are important to understand. These reactions not only stand in the way of more equitable

representations of people of color in organizations and institutions, but they also fuel dangerous drifts toward populism (Berman, 2021) and violence from right-wing extremist groups (Obaidi et al., 2019).

These perceived threats can be understood using the social psychological frame of intergroup threat theory (ITT) which analyzes the relationship between prejudice and threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). According to this theory, prejudice against members of the outgroup is caused by the perception of symbolic and realistic threats which then influence individuals' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses (Bahns, 2017). Whereas symbolic threats pertain to perceptions of threats to a group's values, norms, worldview, morals, belief systems, etc., perceived realistic threats involve more tangible resources such as jobs, housing, political power, social status, etc. (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Major et al., 2016; Zou & Cheryan, 2022). Because symbolic and realistic threats can be powerful predictors of hostility and even violence against outgroup members (Obaidi et al., 2019), it is crucial to examine how these threats can be reduced and how they might affect attitudes and behaviors toward efforts to promote and increase more equitable representations of people of color in organizations and institutions.

Possible Solutions: Self-Affirmation as Threat Reduction Interventions

Threat responses (i.e., symbolic and realistic threats) are at the root of White people's reactions to organizational and institutional DEI efforts (e.g., Iyer, 2022; Rios et al., 2018; Dover et al., 2016; Wilkins et al., 2015; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005). In the past, scholars have explored strategies to address and consequently reduce threat responses and objections to DEI initiatives, for example by emphasizing in-group benefits (vs. non-benefits) or making

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

underrepresented groups unidentifiable in hiring policies to increase support for affirmative action (Ellemers et al., 2010; Ritov & Zamir, 2014). However, a recent review of the literature about such approaches highlights limited evidence supporting their successful implementation (Iyer, 2022). An interventional approach that, to our knowledge, has not been used as a strategy to lower threat responses to DEI initiatives is the use of self-affirmations.

According to self-affirmation theory, which originates from dissonance theory, self-affirming thoughts may lower the psychological defense mechanisms brought by cognitive dissonance reduction (Steele, 1988). Self-affirmation posits that, people try to maintain their perception of the Self as good and moral and when their self-integrity is threatened, they display physical stress (Keough & Markus, 1998) and tend to defend their self-views by maladaptively denying or rationalizing the threat (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Fortunately, these perceived threats can be reduced by self-affirmation interventions that entail encouraging people to think about core values such as their relationship with friends and family (Cohen & Sherman, 2014).

When used correctly, self-affirmation interventions have long-lasting positive downstream consequences (Cohen et al., 2006), which is why they have successfully been implemented in a myriad of domains including research that focused on improving health behaviors such as reducing the drive to drink, smoke, and eat (e.g., Logel & Cohen, 2012; Polivy & Herman, 2002; Ward & Mann, 2000) and in investigations involving the reduction of threat experienced by low-income (Fotuhi et al., 2021) and racial/ethnic minority individuals in educational settings (e.g., Sherman et al., 2013). More recently, researchers found that when affirmed, White teachers working in schools predominantly serving students belonging to

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

minoritized groups reported having better relationships with their students and generally felt better than non-affirmed White teachers did (Brady et al., 2023). Self-affirmation functions by enabling individuals to manifest the already existing qualities, beliefs, and psychological commitments that form the foundation of their self-integrity. Self-affirmation provides an opportunity to assert significant values by allowing people to articulate the importance of those values expressing commitments to them (Sherman et al., 2021). When affirmed, people feel less fear, threat, and pain (Master et al., 2009) as well as reassurance that that despite threats and adversities, life is fine (Cohen & Sherman, 2014). In addition to serving as a buffer against threat, self-affirmation also reduces defensiveness in, for example, denying responsibility for failure or taking credit selectively for their own success (Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

Purpose and Significance of the Studies

The main purposes of the research conducted for this dissertation were the following:

- 1) examine White individuals' reactions to an increasingly diversifying nation as they impact voting behaviors as well as attitudes toward organizational and institutional DEI efforts aimed at a more equitable representation of people of color in the American workforce.
- 2) investigate the potential of self-affirmation interventions as threat reduction strategy toward DEI initiatives, which we found to offer a promising approach to address such threat responses and promote more positive attitudes toward diversity and inclusion efforts.

Of the three scientific articles included in this dissertation, the first two (Manuscripts 1 & 2) experimentally investigated factors (i.e., skin tone, perceived Americanness) that influence White individuals' interpersonal judgments and voting behaviors toward political candidates of color. Given the adverse effects that an increasingly diversifying nation has on White

individuals, the third article included in this dissertation examined White people's attitudes toward organizational pro-diversity initiatives, and the potential of self-affirmation interventions to improve those attitudes (Manuscript 3). In other words, in addition to underscoring the importance of understanding factors that stand in the way of more equitable representations of people of color in leadership roles, the present studies examined social psychological interventions that aim to effectively improve the negative attitudes and reduce threat responses triggered by organizational pro-diversity initiatives and efforts, especially those experienced by members of the overrepresented group. A short summary of the three manuscripts is provided below.

Manuscript 1: Dark Faces in White Spaces: The Effects of Skin Tone, Race, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Preferences on Interpersonal Judgments and Voting Behavior

Taking an intersectional approach, the aim of the three experimental studies in the first manuscript was to investigate factors that influence White voters' perceptions of political leaders of color. Informed by literature on the association between lighter skin tones and perceived suitability for leadership positions (Petsko & Rosette, 2023; Rosette et al., 2008), participants in Study 1 were randomly assigned to see the same African American political candidate with either a light or dark skin tone and then asked about their interpersonal judgments, feelings, and voting intentions toward the candidate. As hypothesized, the data showed that when shown the same African American political candidate, participants (mostly White) favored the one they had seen in the lighter skin tone.

In Study 2, we recruited a more diverse sample of participants in order to be able to compare differences in judgments between White and non-White voters. To understand

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

whether the findings would generalize to political candidates belonging to other racial/ethnic groups, we included a Mexican American political candidate who was also shown in either a light or dark skin tone. More precisely, given the research design—2 (Skin tone: lighter vs. darker) x 2 (Ethnicity: Mexican American vs. African American)—participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions and then, once again, asked about their interpersonal judgments, feelings, and voting intentions toward the candidate. In line with expectations, the data once again suggested that White participants preferred the relatively lighter-skinned political candidate who self-identified as African American.

Considering the findings of Studies 1 and 2, one of the aims of Study 3 was to better understand the nuanced skin tone bias that the participants showed. To do so, participants were randomly assigned to see the same candidate in what is considered a Brown skin tone (midpoint of continuum of skin tone from the image set) who either identified as African American or Mexican American. Partially replicating previous research (Kimmelmeier & Chavez, 2014), an additional aim of Study 3 was to examine whether participants would experience a skin tone memory bias (i.e., error in how light or dark the candidate's skin tone is remembered to be). Consequently, in addition to their interpersonal judgments, feelings, and voting intentions, participants were also presented with an array of the political candidate's images for which the skin tone had been incrementally altered (lighter or darker). As hypothesized, the political candidate was remembered as having a lighter skin tone than he actually did and, interestingly, the lighter the candidate was remembered to be, the more positive were the participants' interpersonal judgments toward him.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Participants' racial group, however, was not the only demographic variable that affected our findings. In fact, the data showed that conservative individuals in our studies generally showed less positive attitudes toward the candidates of color. For example, compared to liberals, conservatives were less likely to vote for the candidates of color, expressed less warmth, and found the candidate to be less trustworthy and less believable.

This research importantly contributes to the academic literature in that it calls attention to the multitude of factors that are at play when White constituents are at the ballot. The findings of the present research confirm previous investigations on colorism effects—lighter skin tones are perceived more favorably (e.g., Diette et al., 2015; Ben-Zeev et al., 2014;)—but also show that interpersonal judgments toward a candidate of color are not only a matter of lighter skin = better. Instead, the data points to a more nuanced process. Specifically, Manuscript 1 provides evidence that when it comes to assessing a politician of color, White voters are influenced by the candidate's skin tone and the racial/ethnic group the candidate belongs to. That is, an African American candidate with a lighter skin tone (i.e., Brown) is perceived more positively than a Mexican American with the same skin tone. In light of a diversifying nation, the findings of this research may be of interest to scholars as well as to political activists and strategists working toward a more racially and ethnically representative American political landscape.

This manuscript was published in 2022 in *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*.

Manuscript 2: We the People. Who? The Face of Future American Politics Is Shaped by Perceived Foreignness of Candidate of Color

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

The main findings of Manuscript 1 highlighted that, when asked about their interpersonal judgments and voting intentions toward a political candidate of color, White voters were influenced by the intersection of the candidate's skin tone and race/ethnicity. This finding was partially attributed to the possibility that the Mexican American candidate might have been perceived as foreign (Zou & Cheryan, 2017) and therefore, in the eyes of American voters, not eligible to hold office. Given that this hypothesis was not directly tested in the set of studies described in Manuscript 1, the main purpose of Manuscript 2 was to replicate the findings of Manuscript 1 and build on them by examining if perceived Americanness of the political candidate of color would affect the relationship between the political candidate's racial/ethnic group and the participants' interpersonal judgments. More precisely, we expected that White individuals would generally show more positive judgments toward the African American than the Mexican American political candidate. Furthermore, we anticipated that White participants would perceive an African American candidate as more American than a Mexican American candidate and that this psychological process (i.e., perceiving the African American candidate as more American) would lead White individuals to express more positive interpersonal judgments toward the candidate. While not the main purpose of Manuscript 2, we also expected that, like our findings in Manuscript 1, the data would suggest a skin tone memory bias. In particular, we hypothesized that even though participants were shown the candidate in the same skin tone (i.e., Brown), they would generally remember the African American as having a darker skin tone than the Mexican American candidate. We also anticipated that the lighter participants would remember the candidate to be, the more positive judgments they would express toward the candidate.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

To test the hypotheses, we replicated the method in Study 3 of Manuscript 1 in that the participants were randomly assigned to see the same political candidate of color (only Brown skin tone) who self-identified as either African American or Mexican American. In addition to the same interpersonal judgments and voting intention measure used in the first manuscript, we also collected the participants' ratings on the candidates' perceived Americanness (Devos & Banaji, 2005). Specifically, while seeing the image of the political candidate, participants were asked how American they perceived the person in the images to be. In line with expectations, the data suggested interaction effects of participant racial group and candidate race/ethnicity on interpersonal judgments which included voting intentions. In other words, whereas non-White individuals did not show any preference for an African American vs. a Mexican American candidate, White voters clearly favored the African American over the Mexican American political candidate. When looking at perceived Americanness, the data supported our hypotheses as well in that White voters perceived the African American candidate as more American than the Mexican American candidate. To understand whether the perception of Americanness could explain the participants' interpersonal judgments, we conducted a simple mediation which showed that, indeed, the perception of Americanness partially influenced the relationship between candidate race/ethnicity and interpersonal judgments.

In the matter of the participants' skin tone bias, we found partial support for our hypotheses. Again, the political candidate who self-identified as African American was remembered as having a darker skin tone than the Mexican American candidate. However, skin tone memory bias (how light or dark the candidate's skin tone was remembered to be) did not influence the participants' interpersonal judgments. While in Manuscript 1 the data showed

that skin tone memory bias predicted interpersonal judgments toward the candidate, the findings presented in Manuscript 2 did not. It is important to note that we did not use the same tool to measure skin tone bias in the experiments reported in Manuscript 1 and the experiment presented in Manuscript 2. Whereas participants' skin tone memory bias in the first set of studies (Manuscript 1) was measured more objectively in that we showed participants an array of images of the same candidate whose skin tone had been altered incrementally (from light to dark) and asked to pick the candidate they thought they had seen at the beginning of the experiment, participants in the more recent experiment (Manuscript 2) were asked to rate the lightness or darkness of the candidate's skin tone more subjectively using a thermometer that ranged from 0 (*very light*) to 100 (*very dark*).

Confirming the influence of people's demographic variables on their attitudes (e.g., Gerber et al., 2010, 2011) and in line with the findings presented in Manuscript 1, we also found that the participants' political affiliation affected our outcomes of interest. Compared to liberals, conservatives viewed the candidates of color as less American, less patriotic, and also expressed less positive interpersonal judgments about them.

The findings reported in Manuscript 2 replicate and validate those presented in Manuscript 1. Once more, the data showed that, when it comes to evaluating politicians of color, White conservative voters are influenced by the candidate's perceived foreignness as well as relative skin tone. As the nation is becoming more diverse and in light of the findings of the studies reported in Manuscript 1 and 2, it is crucial to investigate and understand factors that create more barriers to equitable representations of people of color in leadership roles—political and otherwise.

This manuscript was published in 2023 in *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*.

Manuscript 3: Reflecting on Values – A brief Online Self-Affirmation Intervention Reduces Threat and Improves White Americans’ Attitudes Toward Organizational Diversity Efforts

The objective of the studies described in Manuscripts 1 & 2 was to investigate factors such as colorism and ethnonationalism that stand in the way of fair representativeness of people of color in politics. Because White people’s threat responses to organizational pro-diversity initiatives (e.g., Dover et al., 2016, 2020a) might impede efforts to increase more equitable representations of people of color in the workforce, the purpose of the studies reported in Manuscript 3 was to examine ways to reduce such threats and improve attitudes toward diversity efforts using brief social psychological interventions. Across two experiments, we investigated the impact of brief online self-affirmation interventions on White individuals’ perceived symbolic and realistic threats, their attitudes toward diversity policies, as well as their intentions of being more involved in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities.

Specifically, participants in Study 1 were randomly assigned to one of two self-affirmation conditions: affirmed vs. non-affirmed. After the intervention, all participants were shown an organizational pro-diversity message (Dover et al., 2016) and then asked about their attitudes toward diversity policies and perceptions of symbolic and realistic threats. In line with our hypotheses, the data suggested that compared to non-affirmed individuals, White affirmed people held more positive attitudes toward diversity policies and also reported lower levels of symbolic and realistic threats. Would affirmed individuals show more intentions of being involved in organizational DEI activities such as participating in DEI training as well? Would the affirmed participants’ improved attitudes toward diversity policies and the decreased perception of symbolic and realistic threats affect their involvement in organizational DEI

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

activities (e.g., voluntarily participate in DEI training)? These were the questions that we wanted to answer in Study 2.

As in Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to one of two self-affirmation conditions: affirmed vs. non-affirmed. Participants were then shown the organizational pro-diversity message and asked about their attitudes toward diversity policies and their perceptions of symbolic and realistic threats. Additionally, we measured the participants' *intended* involvement in DEI activities (i.e., likelihood to voluntarily participate in DEI training, likelihood to sign petitions to increase DEI efforts, likelihood of encouraging co-workers to participate in DEI training). The participants' *actual* involvement in DEI activities was measured by asking them whether or not they wanted to sign up to receive a newsletter with information about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In line with our expectations, our findings confirmed those of Study 1 in that affirmed White individuals reported lower perceptions of symbolic and realistic threats and expressed more positive attitudes toward diversity policies than non-affirmed White individuals did. Our data also suggested that, compared to non-affirmed participants, affirmed individuals showed more *intended* involvement in DEI activities. Contrary to our expectations, however, affirmed participants did not show more *actual* involvement in DEI activities in that they were not more likely to sign up to receive a newsletter than were non-affirmed individuals. As a matter of fact, 81% of all participants in Study 2 did not express any interest in signing up for the diversity newsletter. Nevertheless, our data showed that, compared to the other dependent variables in the study (i.e., symbolic and realistic threats, positive attitudes toward diversity policies), only

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

intended involvement in DEI activities uniquely predicted the participants' likelihood to sign up for a diversity newsletter.

Lastly, through mediation analyses, we also found evidence that the relationship between self-affirmation and intended involvement in DEI activities was fully mediated by positive attitudes toward diversity policies. In other words, affirmed participants reported more positive attitudes toward diversity policies, and more positive attitudes toward diversity policies were related to more intended involvement in DEI activities.

All in all, the findings of Studies 1 and 2 provide evidence that brief online self-affirmation interventions effectively improve people's attitudes toward organizational pro-diversity efforts. In other words, when affirmed, people experience less symbolic and realistic threats as well as show more positive attitudes toward diversity policies and intended DEI activities. The results of Studies 1 and 2 were both intriguing and encouraging. However, the fact that in the research reported in Manuscript 3, self-affirmation did not influence people's behavior makes it crucial to keep investigating ways to shape positive behavior toward organizational DEI efforts.

This manuscript was submitted for publication.

Discussion

White Americans are reacting in several ways to the demographic growth of ethnic and racial minorities in the country. These reactions range from questioning the eligibility of politicians of color (Rizzo, 2020; Kessler, 2011), embracing more extreme right-wing policies (Chirico, 2014), and believing in anti-White discrimination (Norton & Sommers, 2011) to increasing opposition to culturally significant buildings, support for schools to only teach in English (Zou & Cheryan, 2022), and citing racist ideologies to justify violence against people of color (Rose, 2022). More recently, conservative legislators in the United States have also taken steps to actively undermine organizational DEI efforts by, for example, introducing legislature that would prohibit universities from hiring DEI officers and cutting the universities' budgets allocated for DEI initiatives (Varn, 2023). In this historical context, the findings of the studies included in this dissertation have several implications. Firstly, they inform scholars and professionals about the multitude of factors that influence White individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward people of color in leadership positions. Secondly, they provide novel evidence of the effects of self-affirmation interventions meant to lower symbolic and realistic threats experienced by White people when they are exposed to organizational pro-diversity efforts as well as improve their attitudes toward diversity policies and increase their involvement in DEI activities.

Manuscript 1 provides evidence of the multitude of factors that influence White voters when they evaluate political candidates of color. When shown different candidates of color, White constituents were affected by both the candidate's skin tone and the racial/ethnic group the candidate belonged to. These findings are in line with recent research (Zou & Cheryan,

2017) on the re-organization of the racial stratification in the U.S. due to an increasingly diversifying demographic. More precisely, the findings conveyed in Manuscript 1 support the notion that the hierarchical positioning of members belonging to minorized groups in the United States occurs along two distinct dimensions: perceived inferiority and perceived cultural foreignness. For example, based on this research, one might expect that, although African American individuals might be perceived as inferior to Mexican American people because of their darker skin tones, the former may be viewed more positively than the latter who may be regarded as both inferior in societal hierarchy and more foreign than members of other groups. The dimension of foreignness was of particular interest in the studies reported in Manuscript 1 because the biased categorization of people of color as not *American* likely influenced the White participants' voting intentions as well as their interpersonal judgments.

In fact, the results presented in Manuscript 2 confirm that White voters prefer a relatively lighter-skinned African American to a Mexican American political candidate and that the perception of a candidate's Americanness influenced their attitudes which included voting intentions. In other words, the Mexican American politician was perceived as less American and that perception explained, in part, White voters' interpersonal judgments toward that candidate. Further, the findings of Manuscript 2 about the effects of skin tone memory bias (how light or dark the skin tone of the candidate was remembered to be) align with previous investigations (e.g., Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014; Chirco & Buchanan, 2022) such that the African American individual was remembered as having a darker skin tone than he actually had in the image participants saw. In addition to informing scholars and political strategists working toward a more representative political landscape, the results presented in Manuscripts 1 and 2

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

highlight the intricate aspects involved in voters' attitudes emphasizing the need to better understand the various factors (e.g., effects of symbolic and realistic threats) that shape attitudes and behaviors (including voting behaviors) in an increasingly diversifying nation.

White people's reactions to a diversifying population and the resulting increased negative attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are important to understand and counteract because they stand in the way of more equitable representations of people of color in organizations and institutions. Manuscript 3 provides initial evidence of the effectiveness of self-affirmation interventions to mitigate White people's negative attitudes toward efforts to diversify the American workforce more equitably. Results of the studies reported in Manuscript 3 confirmed our expectations and showed that affirmed White individuals reported lower levels of symbolic and realistic threats and also expressed more positive attitudes toward diversity policies and more intended involvement in DEI activities when confronted with organizational pro-diversity messages. On the whole, our findings align with previous work (e.g., Lannin et al., 2019; Sherman & Hartson, 2011; Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988) and extend it by showing that self-affirmation interventions are effective even when it comes to lowering threat responses and improving attitudes toward organizational DEI initiatives.

Limitations and Future Directions

The research discussed in this dissertation is not without limitations. However, these limitations uncover potential areas of investigation for future research. While, originally, we were mostly interested in studying White voters' behaviors, a more diverse sample would have allowed us to examine potential voting patterns of members belonging to underrepresented groups, which could help with shedding more light on current and future political trends. In

fact, media report that, during the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Latino voters played a key role in several battleground states such as Arizona (Mendez, 2021). It might also be worthwhile to investigate whether group dynamics and potential intragroup conflicts between Asian and Black individuals (Demsas & Ramirez, 2021; Huang, 2021; Kim 1998) may influence Asian voting behaviors toward a Black political candidate and vice versa. Further, given that in the studies presented in Manuscripts 1 and 2, the political candidates identified as either Mexican American or African American, follow-up research could also examine whether putting on the ballot a political candidate who identifies as Asian American or, for example, Puerto Rican (the second-largest group of Hispanic origin in the U.S.) might yield different results.

The studies outlined in Manuscript 3 were concerned with examining self-affirmation interventions to lower White individuals' threat responses and improve their attitudes toward organizational DEI initiatives and efforts. Also mindful of the limitation acknowledged above about the conflicts that can arise between minoritized groups, future studies should investigate whether organizational and institutional DEI initiatives might fuel intragroup competition exacerbating possible discord (e.g., Georgeac & Rattan, 2023). For instance, in light of the recent decision of the U.S. Supreme Court ending race-conscious admission programs at colleges and universities—which was the culmination of a lawsuit filed by White and Asian students against Harvard and the University of Carolina at Chapel Hill (Totenberg, 2023)—we might see a future increase in intragroup conflict and competition between Asian individuals and members of other marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

In regards to the design of the studies presented in Manuscript 3, it is important to note that our decision not to manipulate the presence (vs. the absence) of the pro-diversity

organizational message was informed by findings from previous research (Dover et al., 2016), which showed that White participants who read a neutral message (vs. pro-diversity message) did not show any threat responses. However, regardless of previous and present findings, it might be worthwhile to explore whether including a company's neutral message, or experiment with different framings of diversity (e.g., business vs. fairness), may yield different results. In fact, given that organizational pro-diversity efforts have become more prominent and used more frequently in political propaganda since 2020, including a company's neutral message may return different results recorded by Dover and colleagues in 2016.

To boost the theoretical contribution of the studies reported in Manuscript 3, future investigations could, for example, add experimental conditions to compare the effects of self-affirmation vs. group-affirmation on the outcomes of interest. While in recent studies (Jun et al., 2021), scholars have found that participants in the self-affirmation (bolstering or affirming the Self) condition showed more positive attitudes toward health-related outcomes on college campuses than those in the group-affirmation (bolstering or affirming important group values) did, investigating different approaches to lower White individuals' threat responses to DEI efforts might prove helpful.

In terms of outcomes, while the self-affirmation intervention was efficacious in reducing perceived symbolic and realistic threats, the fact that symbolic and realistic threats did not mediate the relationship between self-affirmation and the participants' intended involvement in DEI activities as expected warrants further examination. Indeed, initial evidence of an exploratory survey revealed that the mere presence of the term *diversity* elicited the association between the word diversity and racial/ethnic minority but not other

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

underrepresented groups (e.g., LGBTQ+ groups, religious minorities, people with disabilities, etc.). In other words, when White people read an organizational pro-diversity message, they more often believe that the company is favoring racial and ethnic minorities even when there is no clear reference to racial and ethnic groups (Chirco & Sczesny, 2022). Interestingly, recent studies have provided evidence that, when companies and institutions use the term *diversity* broadly (i.e., without clearly including demographic information about the groups most discriminated against), attempts of diversifying their workforce backfire (Kirby et al., 2023). Keeping these findings in mind, it might be interesting to analyze whether the implicit association between the presence of term *diversity* in organizational statements and the group that is perceived to most likely benefit from such efforts might mediate or moderate White individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward organizational DEI efforts.

It can be argued that self-affirmation, which works to reduce threats perceived by the Self and not the ingroup (Steele, 1988; Sherman et al., 2007), might not be effective in lowering symbolic and realistic threats which are usually attributed to group threats (Stephan et al., 2009). However, research has also shown that self-affirmation fosters more positive attitudes toward outgroups (Lindsay & Creswell, 2014) affecting group-based responses (Jun et al., 2021; Derks et al., 2009) effectively reducing perceived threats and endorsement of discriminatory policies (Badea et al., 2018). While our findings warrant further investigations, the fact that the self-affirmation intervention in the present set of studies effectively reduced group-based threat responses (i.e., symbolic and realistic threats) makes these findings valuable to the contribution to the current literature. In any case, understanding how to lower more stable threats from organizational pro-diversity initiatives is fundamental especially given the

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

increasing resentment of White Americans who feel discriminated against by such efforts (Norton & Summers, 2011; Wilkins & Kaiser 2014; Rasmussen et al., 2022). To boost the theoretical contribution of the studies reported in the present set of studies, future investigations could, for example, add experimental conditions to compare the effects of self-affirmation vs. group-affirmation on the outcomes of interest. While in recent studies (Jun et al., 2021), scholars have found that participants in the self-affirmation (bolstering or affirming the Self) condition showed more positive attitudes toward health-related outcomes on college campuses than those in the group-affirmation (bolstering or affirming important group values) did, investigating different approaches to lower White individuals' threat responses to DEI efforts might prove helpful.

In addition to White individuals' attitudes, it was also important to us to investigate whether self-affirmation would also impact individuals' behavior such as actually signing up for a DEI newsletter. Given that 80% of all participants, no matter whether affirmed or not, did not express any interest of signing up for such a newsletter, study replications should consider adopting different behavioral measures. We assumed that not signing up for the newsletter might have been due to the behavioral measure itself in that signing up for a newsletter entails receiving regular emails in possibly already full inboxes and unsubscribing from it to stop receiving them. Hence, replications of our studies could employ behavioral measures that require participants to make a less troublesome commitment (Moreau et al. 2021) such as asking participants to sign a petition or show their support by using a *Like* button.

Lastly, the question of whether the effects of self-affirmation interventions in regards to organizational DEI efforts endure over time remains unanswered and further research is

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

needed to ascertain this additional limitation. A more thorough explanation of the limitations of the studies presented in this dissertation can be found at the end of each manuscript.

Final Thoughts

In light of the many ways White Americans are reacting to the diversification of their country, the studies included in this dissertation provide novel evidence of the dynamics and psychological mechanisms that might influence such adverse reactions.

The first two manuscripts importantly contribute to the literature and discipline underscoring the complexity of factors (i.e., skin tone, racial/ethnic group, perceived foreignness) that influence White individuals' voting behavior when politicians of color are on the ballot. The third manuscript presents an innovative approach to the well-established social psychological intervention of self-affirmation to mitigate those reactions. All three manuscripts have important theoretical and practical implications in that they inform scholars, political strategists, and DEI professionals about ways to lower, and possibly remove, barriers that stand in the way of a more equitable representation of people of color in leadership roles of American business and political life.

References

- Anicich, E. M., Jachimowicz, J. M., Osborne, M. R., & Phillips, L. T. (2021). Structuring local environments to avoid racial diversity: Anxiety drives Whites' geographical and institutional self-segregation preferences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 95(2), Article 104117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104117>
- Apfelbaum, E. P., Phillips, K. W., & Richeson, J. A. (2014). Rethinking the baseline in diversity research: Should we be explaining the effects of Homogeneity? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9(3), 235–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614527466>
- Bahns, A. J. (2017). Threat as justification of prejudice. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 20(1), 52–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430215591042>
- Ben-Zeev, A., Dennehy, T. C., Goodrich, R. I., Kolarik, B. S., & Geisler, M. W. (2014). When an “educated” Black man becomes lighter in the mind’s Eye. *SAGE Open*, 4(1), 215824401351677. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013516770>
- Brady, S. T., Griffiths, C.M. & Cohen, G.L. The affirmed (White) teacher in a cross-race context. *Soc Psychol Educ* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-023-09812-z>
- Brown, N. D., & Jacoby-Senhor, D. S. (2021). Majority members misperceive even “win-win” diversity policies as unbeneficial to them. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000372>
- Chaney, K. E., Sanchez, D. T., & Remedios, J. D. (2016). Organizational identity safety cue transfers. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 42(11), 1564–1576. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216665096>
- Chavez, L. R. (2013). *The Latino threat*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Chirco, P. & Buchanan, T.M. (2023). We the People. Who? The face of future American politics is shaped by perceived foreignness of candidates of color. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12341>

Chirco, P. & Buchanan, T. M. (2022). Dark faces in white spaces: The effects of skin tone, race, ethnicity, and intergroup preferences on interpersonal judgments and voting behavior. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 22(1), 427-447.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12304>

Chirco, P. & Sczesny, S. (2022, April 27-May 1). *Group differences in the perception of the term diversity may influence the effects of pro-diversity messages*. [Conference presentation]. Western Psychological Association 2022, Portland, OR, United States.
<https://westernpsych.org/convention-programs-archive/>

Chirico, J. (2014). *Globalization: Prospects and Problems*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Cohen, G. L., & Sherman, D. K. (2014). The psychology of change: Self-affirmation and social psychological intervention. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 333–371.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115137>

Colby, S. L. & Ortman, J., M. (2015). *Projections of the size and composition of the U.S. population: 2014 to 2060*:
<http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf>

Corley, T. Pamphile, V., & Sawyer, K. (2022, September 22). *What has (and hasn't) changed*

about being a Chief Diversity Officer. Harvard Business Review.

<https://hbr.org/2022/09/what-has-and-hasnt-changed-about-being-a-chief-diversity-officer>

Craig, & Richeson, J. A. (2018a). Majority no more? The influence of neighborhood racial diversity and salient national population changes on Whites' perceptions of racial discrimination. *RSF : Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 4(5), 141–157. <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2018.4.5.07>

Craig, & Richeson, J. A. (2018b). Hispanic population growth engenders conservative shift among non-Hispanic racial minorities. *Social Psychological & Personality Science*, 9(4), 383–392. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617712029>

Craig, M. A & Richeson, J. A. (2014). On the precipice of a “Majority-Minority” America: Perceived status threat from the racial demographic shift affects White Americans' political ideology. *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1189–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614527113>

Demas, J. & Ramirez, R. (2021, March 16). The history of tensions—and solidarity—between Black and Asian American communities, explained. *Vox*.

<https://www.vox.com/22321234/black-asian-american-tensions-solidarity-history>

Devos, & Banaji, M. R. (2005). American = White? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(3), 447–466. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.3.447>

Dezsö, & Ross, D. G. (2012). Does female representation in top management improve firm performance? A panel data investigation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33(9), 1072–1089. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.1955>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Diaz, J. (2023, May 15). Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signs a bill banning DEI initiatives in public colleges. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/15/1176210007/florida-ron-desantis-dei-ban-diversity>
- Diette, T. M., Goldsmith, A. H., Hamilton, D., & Darity, W. (2015). Skin shade stratification and the psychological cost of unemployment: Is there a gradient for Black females? *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 42(1-2), 155–177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12114-014-9192-z>
- Dobbin, F. & Kalev, A. (2013). The origins and effects of corporate diversity programs. In Q. M. Robertson (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity and Work* (pp. 253-281). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199736355.013.0015>
- Dover, T. L., Major, B., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020a). Cardiovascular, behavioral, and psychological responses to organizational prodiversity messages among racial/ethnic minorities. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 136843022094422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220944222>
- Dover, T., Kaiser, C. R., & Major, B. (2020b). Mixed signals: The unintended effects of diversity initiatives. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 14(1), 152–181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12059>
- Dover, T. L., Major, B., & Kaiser, C. R. (2016). Members of high-status groups are threatened by pro-diversity organizational messages. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 62, 58–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2015.10.006>
- Eagle, N., Macy, M., & Claxton, R. (2010). Network diversity and economic development. *Science* 328(5981), 1029–1031. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1186605>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Edelman, L. B., Krieger, L. H., Eliason, S. R., Albiston, C. R., & Mellema, V. (2011). When organizations rule: Judicial deference to institutionalized employment structures. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 117(3), 888–954. <https://doi.org/10.1086/661984>
- Ellemers, N., Scheepers, D., & Poppa, A. M. (2010). Something to gain or something to lose? *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 13, 201–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430209343296>
- Enos, R. D. (2016). What the demolition of public housing teaches us about the impact of racial threat on political behavior. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1), 123–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12156>
- Finkeldey, J. G., & Demuth, S. (2019). Race/ethnicity, perceived skin color, and the likelihood of adult arrest. *Race and Justice*, 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368719826269>
- Fotuhi, O., Ehret, P. J., Kocsik, S., & Cohen, G. L., (2021). Boosting college prospects among low-income students: Using self-affirmation to trigger motivation and a behavioral ladder to channel it. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000283>
- Frey, W. H. (2015). *Diversity explosion: How new racial demographics are remaking America*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Georgeac, & Rattan, A. (2023). The business case for diversity backfires: Detrimental effects of organizations' instrumental diversity rhetoric for underrepresented group members' sense of belonging. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 124(1), 69–108.
- Gerber, A., Huber, G., Doherty, D., Dowling, C., & Ha, S. (2010). Personality and political

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- attitudes: Relationships across issue domains and political contexts. *American Political Science Review*, 104(1), 111-133.
- Gerber, A. S., Huber, G. A., Doherty, D., Dowling, C. M., Raso, C., & Ha, S. E. (2011). Personality traits and participation in political processes. *The Journal of Politics*, 73, 692–706.
[https://doi.org/ 10.1017/S0022381611000399](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381611000399)
- Giles, M. W. & Hertz, K. (1994). Racial threat and partisan identification. *The American Political Science Review*, 88(2), 317–326. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944706>
- Hendrickson, S. (2023, May 17). *Ohio Senate Oks higher education bill limiting diversity training*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/ohio-higher-education-bill-diversity-training-40a525ea280918be454fb85d588f8e37>
- Hofstra, B., Kulkarni, V. V., Munoz-Najar Galvez, S., He, B., Jurafsky, D., & McFarland, D. A. (2020). The diversity-innovation paradox in science. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS*, 117(17), 9284–9291.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1915378117>
- Huang, T. J. (2021). Perceived Discrimination and Intergroup Commonality Among Asian Americans. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 7(2), 180–200. <https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2021.7.2.09>
- Hunter, M. (2005). *Race, gender, and politics of skin tone*. Routledge.
- Iyer, A. (2022). Understanding advantaged groups’ opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies: The role of perceived threat. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 16(5). <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12666>
- Jan, T., McGregor, J., & Hoyer, M. (2021, August 23). *Corporate America’s \$50 billion promise: A*

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Post analysis of racial justice pledges after George Floyd's death reveals the limit of corporate power to effect change. The Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2021/george-floyd-corporate-america-racial-justice/>

Jun, J., Wen, T. J., & Wu, L. (2021). The effects of self vs. group affirmation and message framing on college students' vape-free campus policy support. *Health Communication*, 36(11), 1441–1451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1767446>

Kaiser, C. R., Dover, T. L., Small, P., Xia, G., Brady, L. M., & Major, B. (2021). Diversity initiatives and White Americans' perceptions of racial Victimhood. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672211030391>

Kalev, A., Kelly, E., & Dobbin, F. (2006). Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate Affirmative Action and diversity policies. *American Sociological Review*, 71(4), 589–617. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100404>

Kemmelmeier, M., & Chavez, H. L. (2014). Biases in the perception of Barack Obama's skin tone. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 14(1), 137–161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12061>

Keough, K. A. & Markus, H. R. (1998). On being well: The role of the Self in building the bridge from philosophy to biology. *Psychological Inquiry*, 9(1), 49–53.

Kessler, G. (2011, April 28). A look at Trump's "birther" statements. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/post/a-look-at-trumps-birther-statements/2011/04/27/AFeOYb1E_blog.html?itid=lk_inline_manual_11

Kim, E. H. (1998). "At Least You're Not Black": Asian Americans in U.S. race relations. *Social*

- Justice*, 25(3 (73)), 3–12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29767082>
- Kirby, T. A., Pascual, N. R., & Hildebrand, L. K. (2023). The dilution of diversity: Ironic effects of broadening diversity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 49(8) 1-16., <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231184925>
- Kraus, M. W., Onyeador, I. N., Daumeyer, N. M., Rucker, J. M., & Richeson, J. A. (2019). The misperception of racial economic inequality. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 14(6), 899–921. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619863049>
- Lannin, D. G., Vogel, D. L., Gyll, M., & Seidman, A. J. (2019). Reducing threat responses to help-seeking information: Influences of self-affirmations and reassuring information. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 66(3), 375–383. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000313>
- Leslie, L. M. (2019). Diversity initiative effectiveness: A typological theory of unintended consequences. *The Academy of Management Review*, 44(3), 538–563. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0087>
- Levine, S. S., Apfelbaum, E. P., Bernard, M., Bartelt, V. L., Zajac, E. J., & Stark, D. (2014). Ethnic diversity deflates price bubbles. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS*, 111(52), 18524–18529. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1407301111>
- Logel, C. & Cohen, G. L. (2012). The role of the Self in physical health: Testing the effect of a values-affirmation intervention on weight loss. *Psychological Science*, 23(1), 53–55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611421936>
- Lowery, B. S., Unzueta, M. M., Knowles, E. D., & Goff, P. A. (2006). Concern for the in-group and opposition to affirmative action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 961–974. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.6.961>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Lu, D., Huang, J., Seshagiri, A., Park, H., & Griggs, T. (2020, September 9). Faces of power: 80% are White, even as U.S. becomes more diverse. *New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/09/us/powerfulpeople-race-us.html>

Major, B., Blodorn, A., & Major Blascovich, G. (2018). The threat of increasing diversity: Why many White Americans support Trump in the 2016 presidential election. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 21(6), 931–940.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216677304>

Mangum, M., & DeHaan, L. (2019). Entitlement and perceived racial discrimination: The missing links to White opinions toward affirmative action and preferential hiring and promotion.

American Politics Research, 47, 415–442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X18816709>

Master, S. L., Eisenberger, N. I., Taylor, S. E., Naliboff, B. D., Shirinyan, D., & Lieberman, M. D. (2009). A Picture's worth: Partner photographs reduce experimentally induced pain.

Psychological Science, 20(11), 1316–1318. [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02444.x)

[9280.2009.02444.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02444.x)

Mendez, L. (2021, January 19). Latino voters were decisive in 2020 presidential election. *UCLA Newsroom*. <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/latino-vote-analysis-2020-presidential-election>

Moreu, G., Isenberg, N., & Brauer, M. (2021). How to promote diversity and inclusion in educational settings: Behavior change, climate surveys, and effective pro-diversity initiatives. *Frontiers in Education* (6). <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.668250>

Mosbergen, D. (2019, March 20). ICE has been wrongfully detaining U.S. citizens in Florida jails,

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

says ACLU. *HuffPost*. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ice-detainers-miami-florida-aclu_n_5c92c7c3e4b01b140d3536d9

Norton, M. I. & Sommers, S. R. (2011). Whites see racism as a zero-sum game that they are now losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(3), 215–218.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691611406922>

Obaidi, M., Kunst, J., Ozer, S., & Kimel, S. Y. (2022). The “Great Replacement” conspiracy: How the perceived ousting of Whites can evoke violent extremism and Islamophobia. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 25(7), 1675–1695.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302211028293>

Obaidi, M., Kunst, J. R., Kteily, N., Thomsen, L., & Sidanius, J. (2019). Living under threat: Mutual threat perception drives anti-Muslim and anti-Western hostility in the age of terrorism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(3), 670–670.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2555>

O’Brien, L. T., Garcia, D., Crandall, C. S., & Kordys, J. (2010). White Americans’ opposition to affirmative action: Group interest and the harm to beneficiaries objection. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 49, 895–903. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466610X518062>

Petsko, C. D. & Rosette, A. S. (2023). Are leaders still presumed White by default? Racial bias in leader categorization revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 108(2), 330–340.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001020>

Phillips, K. W. (2014, October 1). *How diversity makes us smarter*. Scientific American.
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

Phillips, L. T. & Jun, S. (2022). Why benefiting from discrimination is less recognized as

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

discrimination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 122(5), 825–852.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000298>

Polivy, J., & Herman, C. P. (2002). Causes of eating disorders. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 187–213. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135103>

Purdie-Vaughns, V., Steele, C. M., Davies, P. G., Dittmann, R., & Crosby, J. R. (2008). Social identity contingencies: How diversity cues signal threat or safety for African Americans in mainstream institutions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94(4), 615–630.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.4.615> Quillian, L., Pager, D., Midtbøen, A. H., &

Hexel, O. (2017, October 11). Hiring discrimination against

Black Americans hasn't declined in 25 years. *Harvard Business Review*.

<https://hbr.org/2017/10/hiring-discriminationagainst-Black-americans-hasnt-declined-in-25-years>

Quillian, L., & Lee, J. J. (2023). Trends in racial and ethnic discrimination in hiring in six Western countries. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS*, 120(6), e2212875120–e2212875120. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2212875120>

Reece, R. L. (2016). What are you mixed with: The effect of multiracial Identification on perceived attractiveness. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 43(2), 139–147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12114-015-9218-1>

Renfro, C. L., Duran, A., Stephan, W. G., & Clason, D. L. (2006). The role of threat in attitudes toward affirmative action and its beneficiaries. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36, 41–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9029.2006.00003>

Rios, K., Sosa, N., & Osborn, H. (2018). An experimental approach to Intergroup Threat Theory:

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Manipulations, moderators, and consequences of realistic vs. symbolic threat.

European Review of Social Psychology, 29, 212–255

Ritov, I., & Zamir, E. (2014). Affirmative action and other group tradeoff policies: Identifiability of those adversely affected. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 125, 50–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2014.04.002>

Rizzo, S. (2020, August 13). Trump promotes false claims that Harris might not be a natural-born U.S. citizen. *The Washington Post*.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/08/13/trump-falsely-claims-harris-might-not-be-us-citizen/>

Rose, S. (2022, June 8). A deadly ideology: how the “great replacement theory” went mainstream. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/08/a-deadly-ideology-how-the-great-replacement-theory-went-mainstream>

Rosette, A. S., Leonardelli, G. J., & Phillips, K. W. (2008). The White standard: Racial bias in leader categorization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(4), 758–777.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.4.758>

Scheepers, D., & Ellemers, N. (2005). When the pressure is up: The assessment of social identity threat in low and high status groups. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41, 192–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2004.06.002>

Sherman, D. K., Lokhandle, M., Müller, T., & Cohen, G. L. (2021). Self-Affirmation Interventions. In G. M. Walton & A. Crum (Eds.), *Handbook of wise interventions: How social psychology can help people change* (1st ed., pp. 63-99). The Guilford Press.

Sherman, D. K., Hartson, K. A., Binning, K. R., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Taborsky-Barba, S.,

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Tomassetti, S., Nussbaum, A. D., & Cohen, G. L. (2013). Deflecting the trajectory and changing the narrative: How self-affirmation affects academic performance and motivation under identity threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(4), 591–618. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031495>
- Sherman, D. K., & Hartson, K. A. (2011). Reconciling self-defense with self-criticism: Self-affirmation theory. In M. D. Alicke & C. Sedikides (Eds.), *Handbook of self- enhancement and self-protection* (pp. 128–154). New York, NY: Guilford Press
- Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 183–242. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(06\)38004-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38004-5)
- Smith, J. L., McPartlan, P., Poe, J., & Thoman, D. B. (2021). Diversity fatigue: A survey for measuring attitudes towards diversity enhancing efforts in academia. (2021). *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 27(4), 659–674. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000406>
- Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 21, 261–302. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60229-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60229-4)
- Stephan W. G., Stephan C. W. (2000). An integrated threat theory of prejudice. (S. Oskamp, Ed.) *Reducing prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 23–45). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. *Experimental Social Psychology*, 21, 261–302. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60229-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60229-4)

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., Morrison, K. R. (2009). Intergroup threat theory. (T. D. Nelson, Ed.), *Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination* (pp. 43-59). Taylor and Francis.
- Stevens, P. (2020, June 11). Companies are making bold promises about greater diversity, but there's a long way to go. *CNBC*. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/11/companies-are-making-bold-promises-about-greater-diversity-theres-a-long-way-to-go.html>
- Totenberg, N. (2023, June 29). Supreme Court guts affirmative action, effectively ending race-conscious admissions. *npr*. <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/29/1181138066/affirmative-action-supreme-court-decision>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *2020 Census Results*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/2020-census-results.html>
- Varn, K. (2023, March 6). As DeSantis, legislature weaponize diversity initiatives, many are enshrined in Florida law. *Tallahassee Democrat*. <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/politics/2023/03/06/desantis-weaponizes-dei-initiatives-as-many-are-enshrined-florida-law/69950245007/>
- Ward, A., & Mann, T. (2000). Don't mind if I do: Disinhibited eating under cognitive load. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 753-763. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.4.753>
- Wilkins, C. L., Wellman, J. D., Babbitt, L. G., Toosi, N. R., & Schad, K. D. (2015). You can win but I can't lose: Bias against high-status groups increases their zero-sum beliefs about discrimination. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 57, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2014.10.008>
- Wilton, L. S., Bell, A. N., Vahradyan, M., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020). Show don't tell: Diversity

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

dishonesty harms racial/ethnic minorities at work. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 46(8), 1171–1185. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167219897149>

Zou, L. X. & Cheryan, S. (2022). Diversifying neighborhoods and schools engender perceptions of foreign cultural threat among White Americans. *Journal of Experimental Psychology. General*, 151(5), 1115–1131. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0001115>

Zou, L. X., & Cheryan, S. (2017). Two axes of subordination: A new model of racial position. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112(5), 696–717.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000080>

Appendices

Appendix 1

Dark Faces in White Spaces: The Effects of Skin Tone, Race, Ethnicity, and Intergroup
Preferences on Interpersonal Judgments and Voting Behavior¹

Patrizia Chirco* and Tonya M. Buchanan**

University of Bern* and Central Washington University**

Patrizia Chirco, University of Bern and Central Washington University

Tonya M. Buchanan, Central Washington University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Patrizia Chirco, Department of
Psychology, Central Washington University, 400 East University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926.

Email: patrizia.chirco@cwu.edu

¹ This article was published as Dark faces in white spaces: The effects of skin tone, race, ethnicity, and intergroup preferences on interpersonal judgments. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 22(1), 427-447. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12304>. This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY NC ND 4.0) International License.

Abstract

Across three experimental studies, we explored how a political candidate's intersections of skin tone, race, and ethnicity affect voting preferences and interpersonal judgments (e.g., warmth, trustworthiness, expertise). Study 1 assessed whether White participants would favor a light-skinned (vs dark-skinned) African American candidate. Study 2 investigated participant (White vs non-White) voting preferences based on the interaction between candidate race/ethnicity and relative skin tone (lighter vs darker). In Study 3, we examined the influence of candidate race/ethnicity on voters' preferences as well as the accuracy and impact of memory for candidate skin tone. Supporting our hypotheses, White participants generally held more negative attitudes (e.g., expressed less warmth, perceived candidates as less trustworthy) and were less likely to vote for underrepresented candidates with darker skin tones than non-White participants were. Additionally, voters remembered politicians as having a lighter skin tone, and the extent of such bias predicted warmth, perceived trustworthiness, and expertise of the candidate. While candidate race/ethnicity on its own did not affect voting preferences and attitudes, it significantly influenced voters when race/ethnicity was associated with certain skin tones (i.e., Brown skin tone). Theoretical, practical, and political implications for judgments influenced by skin tone and race/ethnicity of candidates are discussed.

Keywords: skin tone bias, diversity, political candidates

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

During his 2020 reelection campaign to the U.S. Senate against the current chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Jamie Harrison, Sen. Lindsey Graham's campaign included a digitally altered photograph of Harrison that portrayed him with a skin tone notably darker than that of his actual complexion (LeBlanc, 2020). The same skin-tone-darkening tactic was also used by then appointed Republican Georgia Senator Kelly Loeffler during her campaign to the Senate against Rev. Raphael Warnock in 2020 (Sollenberger, 2021). These tactics are often effective and work especially well on White voters. For example, Caruso and colleagues (2009) found that White voters who believed that former President Barak Obama had a darker complexion than he actually did were less likely to vote for him. In addition to the potential impact on voting behavior, research suggests that an individual's skin color and tone also influence the perception of their citizenship status (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). When then Senator Obama ran for office in 2008, birtherism conspiracy theories were circulated in order to call into question his eligibility for the presidency of the U.S. (Server, 2020). Similar conspiracies were spread in 2020 by the Trump Administration regarding Vice President Kamala Harris when she was running for office (Wright, 2020).

Nevertheless, Obama became the first African American President in the history of the United States and Harris was elected Vice President. At the same time, conservatives have been focused on appealing more and more to the White constituency (Gramlich, 2020). Therefore, while White voters still make up the largest proportion of the American electorate, the rapid growth of the non-White population and the expected racial shift in the U.S. (Krogstad, 2019) make it essential for scholars to understand the factors that impact the appeal of

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

underrepresented political candidates to an increasingly diverse electorate, for which the intersections between skin tone, and race/ethnicity may be differently relevant.

Our social identities (e.g., race, gender, roles) not only determine how we see ourselves, but also influence how we make judgments and view those who are categorized as in/outgroup members (Hogg & Terry, 2000). According to social identity theory (SIT), leaders are thought of as representing a group's properties (Hogg, 2001) because they are part of a social system that shares group membership and group characteristics (Barreto & Hogg, 2017; Hogg et al., 2012)., Further, the sociofunctional approach to prejudice (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) suggests that affective and behavioral responses elicited by groups reflect the types of threat they elicit, resulting in different forms of discrimination, including but not limited to impacts on voting behavior (Franks & Sherr, 2014). Because skin tone is an important phenotypic group characteristic (e.g., Maddox, 2004; Stepanova & Strube, 2009, Chirco & Buchanan, 2021), people may often use this information when making interpersonal judgments. In fact, research suggests that voters use this visible characteristic as a heuristic to evaluate political candidates (Anderson et al., 2020) and choose the leaders that most likely represent them (Hogg, 2001).

Colorism and Racial Reorganization

Whereas racism relies on the belief that some races are superior to others, colorism, which is the idea that there are hierarchies within the races, takes the discourse even further and uniquely shapes people's social environments (Golash-Boza, 2016b). In the context of colorism, such hierarchies (i.e., skin color stratification) depend on skin tone: the darker a person's skin, the lower their position in society and the more difficult their access to resources (Hall, 2018; Golash-Boza, 2016a). The association between social status and skin tone has been

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

prevalent for centuries (Hunter, 2005). During slavery in the United States, for example, enslaved people with lighter skin tones worked in the house and were often taught to read, whereas individuals with darker skin worked in the fields and were not allowed inside.

The effects of colorism are ubiquitous. For example, lighter skin tones are more often associated with higher levels of perceived competence. In a series of studies, participants who were primed to associate the word *educated* with the photograph of a Black man (Ben-Zeev et al., 2014) exhibited a skin tone memory bias, remembering him as having a much lighter skin tone. These findings suggest the existence of a need to achieve cognitive consistency after a counter-stereotypical portrayal (Sherman et al., 2012) of a Black man—dark skin = educated. Not coincidentally, people of color with lighter skin tones have higher salaries (Diette et al., 2015) and are viewed as more attractive than Black Americans with darker complexions (Reece, 2016). Research on leadership categorization (Lord et al., 1982; Lord & Maher, 1991) further demonstrates the impact of colorism. In the United States, one of the perceived central characteristics of leadership is being White (Rosette et al., 2008), which leads White leaders to be evaluated more favorably than their lighter-skinned counterparts (Eagly & Karau 2002; Ensary & Murphy, 2003). Given vast research linking positive perceptions to Whiteness, it is not surprising that, within the same racial groups, individuals with lighter skin tones are punished less harshly in academic settings (Hannon et al., 2013), have fewer negative confrontations with the criminal justice system (e.g., Monk, 2019; Finkeldey & Demuth, 2019), and feel better physically and psychologically (e.g., Laidley et al., 2019; Louie, 2020).

Skin Tone, Racial, and Ethnic Bias in Politics

Skin tone bias does not spare prominent political figures. Kimmelmeier and Chavez (2014) found that participants expressed greater likelihood to vote for former President Obama when he was seen in a lighter skin tone, but favored his opponent when Obama was presented in a darker skin tone. Recent research has shown that media outlets such as newspapers portray politicians of color (i.e., former President Obama, and former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Dr. Ben Carson) differently depending on their readership. For example, it seems that, no matter the candidates' political party (Republican or Democrat), newspapers on the left of the political spectrum tend to favor images in which candidates of color appear lighter, while conservative newspapers find photographs in which the candidates' skin tone is portrayed as darker more appealing for publication (Kimmelmeier et al., 2021).

Skin tone, however, is not the only characteristic that affects an individual's placement in society's hierarchy. Because racial and ethnic minorities are disadvantaged along more than one dimension (Zou & Cheryan, 2017), a person of color may be privileged and disadvantaged at the same time. For example, whereas Latino individuals with lighter skin tones may face less prejudice than African American individuals with dark skin do as a function of skin tone bias, Latino people are generally seen as more *foreign* and, therefore, are more likely to experience specific types of discrimination due to perceived lack of citizenship (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021). As a consequence, ethnicity, in addition to skin tone, may affect voters' preferences for a political candidate (Anderson et al., 2020). This may help to explain why, whereas the Latino population is the largest ethnic group in the U.S. (United States Census Bureau, 2021), its members are still underrepresented in public office.

Current Research: Aims and Hypotheses

While research on perceptions of political candidates based on *independent effects* of skin tone, race, or ethnicity continues to grow, scholarly work on preferences for candidates of color based on the *combined or interactive effects* of voter demographics, candidate skin tone, and race/ethnicity remains limited. Therefore, the present set of studies extends prior work on the effects of constituents' demographic variables on voting preferences for candidates of color by taking an intersectional approach. We experimentally investigated the impact of candidates' skin tone and race/ethnicity on the voting preferences and interpersonal judgments (e.g., trustworthiness, expertise, ideologies) of White and non-White constituents. We also explored the relationship between these attitudes and judgments with voters' skin tone memory biases—that is, how light or dark the candidate is remembered to be. By understanding how a political candidate's skin tone and race/ethnicity affect White and non-White voters' perceptions of what, for example, a trustworthy candidate looks like, we can advance psychological research, inform political strategists about the impact of such factors on evaluations of diverse voter populations, and add to our knowledge about the increasingly diverse pool of political candidates and constituents that shape our democracy.

Broadly, we expected that skin tone memory bias would predict participants' attitudes, and that participant identity factors would affect the endorsement of a racially underrepresented candidate. Specifically, we expected that White participants would generally show more support for candidates with a lighter complexion. In line with research on the effects of comparison groups and reference groups on interpersonal judgments (e.g., Boyce et al., 2010; Richins, 1991), we also anticipated that candidates who identify as African American

would be received more positively than Mexican American candidates of the same skin tone, who may be seen as darker in relative skin tone for their group and higher in cultural foreignness. Conversely, we expected non-White participants, whose racial and ethnic identity may have been made salient by the most recent social justice movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter), to express more positive attitudes toward the more dark-skinned candidates and favor ingroup members (Jiang et al., 2019).²

Study 1

Method

Considering that light-skinned candidates are perceived as better leaders (Rosette et al., 2008) and dark-skinned leaders are judged less favorably (Lyness & Heilman, 2006), the goal of the first study was to understand whether participants would generally feel warmer toward, show more positive judgments, and be more inclined to vote for the African American candidate with lighter skin tone than the same candidate shown with a darker skin tone.

Participants

Assumptions underlying the a priori power analyses were based on the results of previous research (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021), medium to large effects ($d = 0.65$), $\alpha = .05$, and power ($1 - \beta$) set at .80. The projected sample size needed with this effect size (G*Power 3.1) was $N = 60$ for a between groups comparison (Faul et al., 2007). For each of our studies, we report all measures, conditions, data exclusions, and sample size determinations.

² The data set and full materials will be made available upon request. This work was not a part of a preregistered project.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

We sampled 90 MTurk workers ($M_{age} = 40.37$, $SD = 11.15$) who mostly identified as male (58%), White/Caucasian (83%), and conservative (45%).³ The study included participants over the age of 18 who received \$0.75 for their participation.

Materials

Participants saw images originally created using Poster 6™ to manipulate skin tone and facial physiognomy (Stepanova & Strube, 2012)⁴. These images were used in previous research on the impact of skin tone on immigration status (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021) and the role of skin color and facial features on racial categorization (Stepanova & Strube, 2009, 2012). The images selected for use in the present study differed only in skin tone: one image (lighter skin tone condition) was chosen from the middle point of the skin tone continuum and the other (darker skin tone condition) from the far end of the continuum.

Participants were asked a series of questions designed to assess voting intentions and interpersonal judgments. Specifically, participants were asked how warm they felt toward the candidate using a feeling thermometer that ranged from 0 (*very negative*) to 100 (*very positive*) in 10-point increments, and how likely they were to vote for the candidate. Additionally, participants rated their agreement with a series of statements designed to assess their views of the candidates' attributes and values (i.e., "This candidate seems trustworthy," "This candidate is an expert in his field", "This candidate will represent my group well", "This candidate has similar ideologies to mine," "I am confident that this candidate will fight for my rights") which they could rate using a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly*

³ Participants also identified as African American (7%), Asian (6%), Latino/Hispanic (2%), American Indian or Alaska Native (1%), and multiracial (1%).

⁴ Approval for all three studies was granted by the local Human Subjects Review Committee.

agree).⁵ Finally and in addition to demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, race), the participants' political orientation was collected using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Extremely Conservative*) to 7 (*Extremely Liberal*).

Procedure

Participants completed the study electronically on a personal device, and after providing informed consent, were randomly assigned to see one of two facial stimuli (between-subjects design). The facial stimuli were presented with a political statement not aligned with any particular political party; in it, the candidate informed voters that, "I am running to be your next District County Commissioner. As an African American of this district, the wellbeing of the entire community is very important to me and, if elected, I will listen to you and I will defend your rights." Participants rated how positive or negative they felt about the candidate using a feeling thermometer that ranged from 0 (*Very negative*) to 100 (*Very positive*) with 10-point increments. Additionally, participants expressed the likelihood they would vote for the candidate using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Extremely unlikely*) to 5 (*Extremely likely*). Before the attention⁶ and manipulation check, demographic questions, and debriefing, we measured the participants' interpersonal judgments via statements such as, "The candidate seems trustworthy" and "The candidate is an expert in his field" using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*).

Results

⁵ The complete set of measures can be found in the supplemental materials.

⁶ For all three studies, participants were told to select a particular response to reflect that they were indeed reading and responding thoughtfully.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Prior to statistical analysis, the data were screened for missing entries, skewness, kurtosis, and violation of assumptions. Out of the 90 entries, no missing values were found and only two participants failed to correctly answer the attention check question. Their inclusions, however, did not influence our findings; they were therefore included in the reported analyses. The values for skew and kurtosis showed that all measures were within the cutoff ranges recommended (Hair et al., 2010; Bryne, 2010); therefore, normal distribution was assumed. The participants' political ideologies were coded into categories representing *Conservative*, *Moderate*, and *Liberal* according to their responses. More precisely, participants who identified as extremely conservative, conservative, and slightly conservative were grouped into a newly created Conservative category and participants who self-identified as extremely liberal, liberal, and slightly liberal were placed into a new Liberal group. Finally, all participants who identified as moderate were left in that category.

We examined the effect of skin tone across our entire sample of participant judgments before moving on to test our more specific hypotheses about White respondents. Although the candidate's skin tone (light vs dark) did not appear to have a significant impact on the likelihood to vote for or warmth expressed toward the candidate (all $ps > .098$), an independent samples t-test showed that participants placed significantly more trust in the candidate with light skin ($M = 4.29$, $SD = .70$) than the candidate with dark skin ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .97$), $t(88) = 2.38$, $p = .020$, $d = 0.50$. We found that for our White participants, the candidate's skin tone also had a significant effect on judgments of expertise, $t(73) = 2.02$, $p = .047$, $d = 0.47$. That is, White participants perceived the candidate with lighter skin as having more expertise in his field ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.03$) than the candidate in the darker skin tone condition ($M = 3.41$, $SD = .83$).

A multiple regression analysis predicting voting intentions from warmth toward the candidate, perceived trust, expertise, perception of group representativeness, shared ideology, and perception that the candidate would fight for their interests was significant (see Table 1), $F(6, 83) = 43.08, p < .001, R^2 = .76$. Specifically, we found that more positive feelings toward a candidate ($\beta = .28, p = .001$) uniquely predicted greater likelihood to vote for that candidate, as did trust ($\beta = .22, p = .013$), and the perception that the candidate would represent the participant's group ($\beta = .34, p < .001$). Contrary to findings from previous research (Caruso et al., 2009; Kimmelmeier & Chavez, 2014; Anderson et al., 2020), there were no significant differences between conservatives and liberals on our outcomes of interest (all $ps > .220$).

Table 1

Summary of significant independent predictors of voting intentions from regression analysis.

Interpersonal Judgments	β	p	sr
Trust	.219	.013	.138
Represents my group	.335	<.001	.222
Feeling Thermometer	.276	.001	.184

Discussion

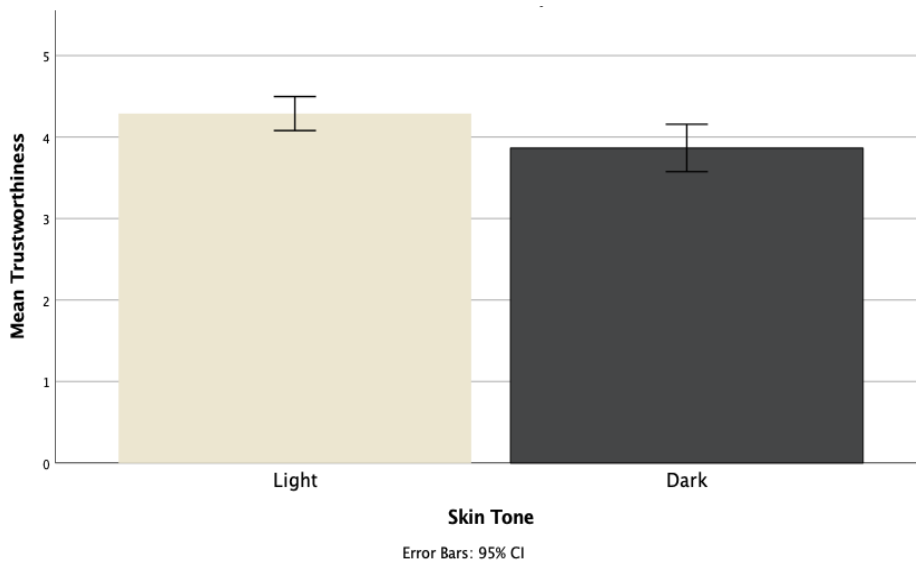
Study 1 provided initial evidence that African American political candidates with lighter skin tones are perceived as more suitable for office than those with darker skin. Participants seemed to perceive the candidate with darker skin as less trustworthy (see Figure 1), and White participants additionally perceived him as having less expertise than the lighter-skinned candidate. However, because most of our participants identified as White, we were not able to adequately explore possible group differences between White and non-White participants.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Therefore, we collected data from a more diverse and representative pool of participants for Studies 2 and 3.

Figure 1

Perceptions of trustworthiness toward the lighter vs darker-skinned candidate (White Participants)



Study 2

Method

Although we found evidence of skin tone bias, both candidates of color in Study 1 were African American. Therefore, to examine the extent to which these effects generalize to other types of candidates and the possible unique influences of the addition of candidate race/ethnicity, we conducted Study 2. As is the case for judgments of wealth, (e.g., Boyce et al., 2010), and attractiveness (e.g., Richins, 1991), reference/comparison groups and relative judgments likely play a role in colorism as well. An African American person may be categorized as having light skin, while a Mexican American individual with the same skin tone may be

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

viewed as having medium/dark skin. These relative (vs absolute) skin tone differences may create a more nuanced skin tone bias for evaluations of candidates of color. Further demonstrating the importance of exploring the impact of race/ethnicity in tandem with skin tone on the daily lives of people of color, recent research has shown that perceptions of people belonging to racial and ethnic minorities happen along two dimensions: perceived inferiority and perceived cultural foreignness (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Specifically, whereas African American people are regarded as more *American* than Latino and Asian individuals, they are perceived as inferior when compared to people who are White or Asian. Latino individuals, on the other hand, are generally seen as inferior *and* more foreign when compared to members of other groups. Therefore, the objective of Study 2 was to explore how skin tone (lighter vs darker), race/ethnicity (Mexican American vs African American), and their interaction influence participants' voting preferences and attitudes amongst White vs non-White participants.

Participants

As in Study 1 we calculated a projected sample size (G*Power 3.1) of $N = 128$ for a between groups comparison based on medium to large effects ($d = 0.65$), $\alpha = .05$, and power ($1 - \beta$) set at .80 (Faul et al., 2007). After removing the entry of one participant who did not agree to the informed consent, the present study included 156 MTurk workers ($M_{\text{age}} = 35.26$, $SD = 9.80$) over the age of 18 who received \$0.75 for their participation. Unlike in Study 1, non-White participants in Study 2 represented about a third of the entire sample. Specifically, 67% of the participants identified as White, 28% identified as African American, 3% as Asian, 1% as Hispanic/Latino, and the remaining 1% as multiracial. Most of the participants (51%) self-

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

identified as conservative, 41% reported being liberal, and the remaining 8% identified as moderate.

Materials

This study used a 2 (Skin tone: Lighter vs Darker) x 2 (Ethnicity: Mexican American vs African American) experimental between-subjects design. In addition to the conditions included in Study 1, we added conditions to Study 2 in which participants were shown images of the same candidate who self-identified as a Mexican American and whose skin tone was either light (far left of the continuum) or medium (middle of the continuum). To examine the impact of relative skin tone and in order to avoid effects of counter-stereotypical images (Power et al., 1996), participants were randomly assigned to see images with skin tones representing relatively lighter or darker skin tones for the described ethnic group (see Figure 2).

In addition to warmth felt toward the candidate measured using a feeling thermometer that ranged from 0 (*Very negative*) to 100 (*Very positive*), participants also expressed their voting intention by rating the question, “What is the likelihood that you would vote for him?” using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Extremely unlikely*) to 5 (*Extremely likely*).

Procedure

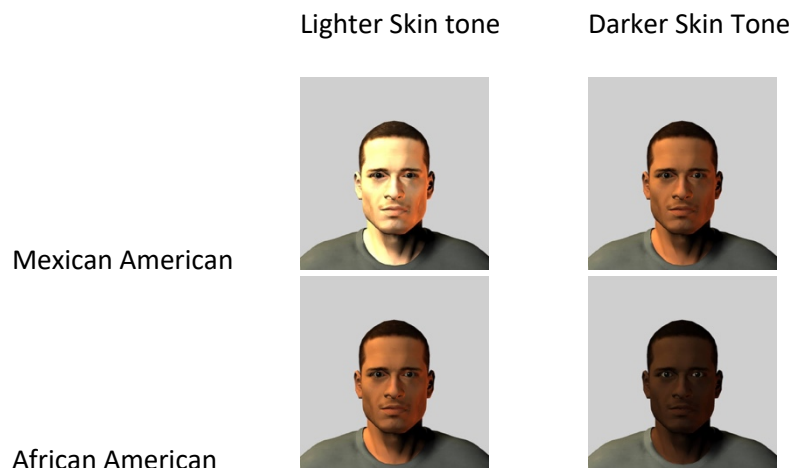
In all of the four conditions, participants were informed that the candidate in the image was running as the next District County Commissioner and were provided with a neutral candidate statement (same as in Study 1, but with the words “Mexican American” replacing “African American” in the relevant conditions). Next, participants were asked to rate how they felt about the candidate and how likely they were to vote for him. All participants answered

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

attention and manipulation check questions before moving on to demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, race).

Figure 2

Stimuli used in Study 2



Note: The rows represent the Race/Ethnicity conditions, and the columns represent the relative skin tone conditions.

Results

Prior to conducting a MANOVA to examine differences in voting likelihood and warmth felt, the assumption that the dependent variables were moderately correlated (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013) was tested. A Pearson product-moment correlation showed that the relationship between the two dependent variables (i.e., Likelihood Vote and Feeling Thermometer) was indeed moderate; $r = 0.62, p < .001$. Additionally, the computation of a non-significant Box's M test ($p = .299$) indicated homogeneity of covariance matrices of the dependent variables.

Results of the MANOVA to examine the overall effect of participants' racial group on the dependent variables suggested that the effect of participant racial group was significant, $F(2, 153) = 7.72, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$, such that White participants generally exhibited less positive

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

views of the candidates of color than non-White participants did. Follow-up 2(Candidate relative skin tone: light vs. dark) x 2(Participant racial group: White vs non-White) ANOVAs with warmth and voting intentions as dependent variables revealed a significant interaction between the participants' racial group (White vs non-White) and the candidates' skin tone (lighter vs darker) on the likelihood to vote for, $F(1, 156) = 7.73, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .05$, and warmth felt toward the candidates, $F(1, 156) = 5.53, p = .020, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Specifically, White participants felt warmer toward and were more likely to vote for the candidates in the *lighter* (vs darker) skin tone conditions, and non-White participants felt warmer toward and were more likely to vote for the candidates in the *darker* (vs lighter) skin tone conditions (see Figure 3). This effect was driven primarily by the darker skin tone conditions. Specifically, White participants were less likely to vote, $t(77) = -4.36, p < .001$, and expressed less warmth, $t(77) = -3.38, p = .001$, for the dark-skinned candidate than non-White participants were. We did not find the same differences when looking at the lighter-skinned candidate (all $ps > .420$).

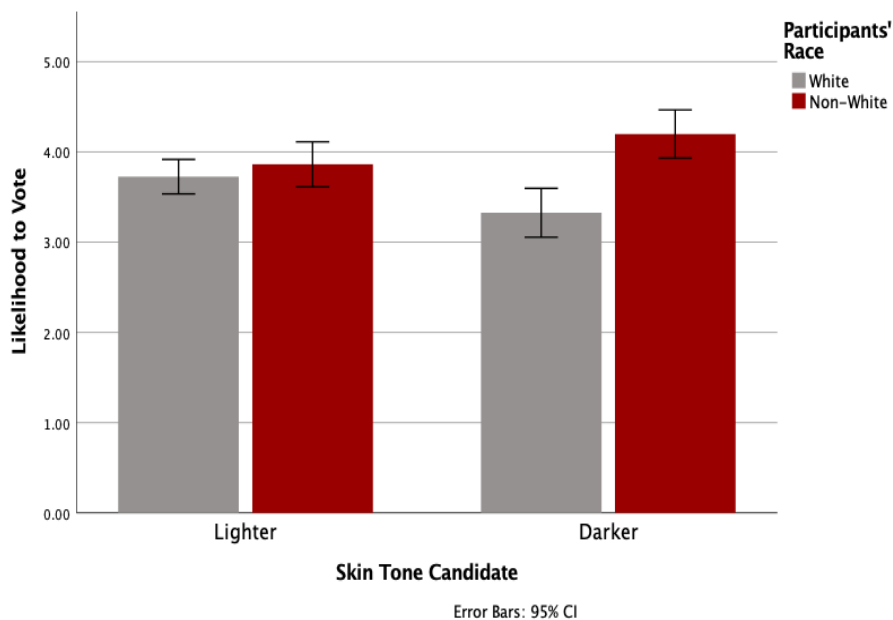
We controlled for candidates' skin tone (i.e., medium skin tone images only) and ran a two-way ANOVA to examine differences in voting intentions as a function of participants' racial group and the candidate's race/ethnicity. The data showed that interaction between participant racial group and candidate race/ethnicity was significant, $F(1, 78) = 4.63, p = .035, \eta_p^2 = .06$. Specifically, when presented with the identical image of a candidate, White participants expressed higher likelihoods to vote for the candidate identified as African American, while non-White participants favored the Mexican American candidate. We did not find the same interaction effects on warmth toward the candidates.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

As in Study 1, participants' political orientations were coded into categories representing *Conservatives*, *Moderates*, and *Liberals* according to their responses. Once again, there were no significant differences between conservatives and liberals on our outcomes of interest (all $ps > .256$).

Figure 3

Interaction effect between participants' race and candidates' skin tones on likelihood to vote



Note: Participant racial group (White vs non-White) x political candidates skin tone (lighter vs darker skin tone) interaction on likelihood to vote.

Discussion

Study 2 included a more diverse sample which allowed us to compare voting preferences between White and non-White participants and investigate the interaction effects of participants' racial groups, candidates' race/ethnicity, and skin tone. In line with findings in Study 1, the participants' political orientation did not influence their voting behavior, nor did it affect how warm they felt toward either of the candidates. Overall, however, and in line with

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

results from Study 1, we found that White voters generally preferred and were more likely to vote for candidates with lighter skin tones. Conversely, non-White participants were more likely to vote for and felt warmer toward the politicians presented in the darker skin tones.

Importantly, our data suggested that while the candidates' race/ethnicity on its own did not affect warmth toward and likelihood to vote for them overall, it significantly influenced voters when race/ethnicity was associated with specific skin tones (i.e., medium/Brown) most prominently associated with Mexican Americans (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021; Chavez, 2013). In addition to liking candidates in lighter skin tones, when presented with the same image of a candidate with the same skin tone, White participants were more likely to vote for the candidate identified as African American (vs. Mexican American). This preference highlights the idea that, similarly to previously documented interpersonal judgments (e.g., Boyce et al., 2010, Richins, 1991), skin tone bias is relative and often dependent on reference categories. An African American person may be categorized as having light skin while a Mexican American individual with the same skin tone may be viewed as having medium/dark skin. These relative (vs. absolute) skin tone differences may contribute to a more nuanced skin tone bias for evaluations of candidates of color such that when the same skin tone is perceived as relatively lighter per the reference group, more favorable judgments may result.

Study 3

Method

One of the main findings of Study 2 suggested that, when evaluating candidates who belong to racially underrepresented groups and presented with the same candidate image, White voters prefer an African American candidate for whom the skin tone may be perceived as

relatively lighter, whereas participants who identified as non-White prefer the Mexican American candidate portrayed in a relatively darker skin tone (Chavez, 2013). The results of Study 2 indicated that judging political candidates with darker skin tones is not only a matter of “lighter = better.” Instead, they suggested that relative judgments matter. Therefore, one of the aims of Study 3 was to replicate these interesting findings in another participant pool, focusing on the combined impact of participants’ racial group (White vs non-White) and candidate race/ethnicity (African vs Mexican American) on voting behavior and interpersonal judgments when the candidate is presented in the *Brown* skin tone (midpoint of continuum of skin tone from the image set). We expanded upon our previous studies by investigating whether interpersonal judgments and likelihood to vote would be predicted by the participants’ skin tone memory bias (i.e., errors in how light or dark they remembered the candidate’s skin tone to be). Finally, and partially replicating Kemmelmeier and Chavez’s (2014) research, we explored a possible alternative explanation of our results, examining whether the participants’ ratings on the Symbolic Racism Scale (Henry & Sears, 2002), which measures a subtler kind of racism with statements such as, “Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve,” could account for our findings.

Participants

Given the impact of Gen Z voters on the 2020 presidential election (Johnson Hess, 2020) and the importance of exploring the impact of skin tone on different demographics of voters, the data for Study 3 was collected from a pool of younger potential voters. According to a priori power analyses based on the results of previous research (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021), for medium to large effects ($d = 0.65$), $\alpha = .05$, and power ($1 - \beta$) set at .80, the projected sample

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

size needed (G*Power 3.1) was $N = 128$ for a between groups comparison (Faul et al., 2007). We sampled 190 ($M_{\text{age}} = 22.43$, $SD = 6.15$) undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a university in the Pacific Northwest who received extra credit for their participation. We did not find any missing values in the collected data and only one participant failed to correctly answer the attention check question. Because the inclusion of their data did not influence the findings, we included them in the reported analyses.

The participants identified as female (68%), male (28%), non-binary/third gender (3%), and 1% identified as other or preferred not to say. Fifty-one percent of participants were White, 20% identified as Latino/Hispanic, 12% as Asian, 9% as multiracial, 4% as African American, 2% as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Most of the participants were liberal 45%; the rest identified as moderate (33%) and conservative (22%).

Materials

In Study 3 we used a between-subjects design incorporating the same facial stimuli and materials used in the previous two studies. Specifically, participants were shown a candidate with *Brown* skin (midpoint in continuum) and were randomly assigned to one of two conditions in which the candidate's statement identified them as either a Mexican American or African American candidate (as in Study 2).

All participants expressed interpersonal judgments using the same measures used in Study 1 and Study 2 (presented in randomized order). To measure the participants' skin tone memory bias, we partially replicated Kemmelmeier and Chavez's study (2014) and drew from a pool of seven images displaying the same individual whose skin tone was manipulated in increments or decrements of 10% from the original. Before demographic questions and

debriefing, all participants were also presented with the 8-item Symbolic Racism Scale (Henry & Sears, 2002) which measures a more subtle type of racism (Kimmelmeier & Chavez, 2014).

Procedure

After electronically agreeing to the content of the informed consent, participants were asked to imagine that they were about to vote in an upcoming election and then randomly assigned to see the same candidate with *Brown* skin tone who either identified as a Mexican American or an African American candidate. After that, participants were asked how positive or negative they felt (i.e., feeling thermometer), how likely they were to vote for the candidate they saw, and rated statements such as, “The candidate represents my group well” using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). Then, we randomly assigned participants to either see an array of the slightly lighter six images (with image number four being the original/correct image) or an array of the slightly darker six images (with image number three being the original/correct image) and asked them to choose the image they believed they had seen at the beginning of the study. Before answering demographic questions and being debriefed, participants were asked to complete the 8-item Symbolic Racism Scale (Henry & Sears, 2002).

Results

An initial MANOVA⁷ examined the effects of participant racial group (White vs non-White) on the dependent variables of warmth, voting intention, perceived expertise, and perceptions of representing the participants’ group and fighting for their rights. In line with findings from

⁷ All assumptions for this analysis were met with the exception of the Box’s M test of equality of variance. However, because this test is overly sensitive, it can produce a significant result even when the sample sizes are equal (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013).

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Study 2, the data suggested that the effect of participant racial group was significant, $F(2, 184) = 4.02, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .10$, in that White participants generally expressed less positive judgments of the candidate of color than did non-White participants. Although the results of our two-way ANOVA examining differences in intentions to vote as a function of both participants' racial group and the candidate's race/ethnicity suggested that there was not a significant independent effect of ethnicity ($p = .481$), the interaction between participant racial groups and candidate race/ethnicity was, once more, significant, $F(1, 190) = 3.75, p = .054, \eta_p^2 = .02$. In line with results of Study 2, White participants were more likely to vote for the African American candidate ($M = 3.50, SD = 0.96$) than for the Mexican American candidate ($M = 3.11, SD = 1.17$), and non-White voters expressed more support for the Mexican American candidate ($M = 3.72, SD = 0.90$) than for the African American candidate ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.05$).⁸

Next, we ran a one-sample t-test which showed that, overall, skin tone memory bias was statistically significant, in that the candidate was remembered having a lighter skin tone than the one the participants had seen at the beginning of the experiment, $t(189) = -2.17, p = .031, d = -0.16$. Further, the data showed that the extent of the participants' skin tone memory bias predicted judgments of the candidate. Specifically, a Pearson product-moment correlation showed that lighter skin tone memory judgments were related to perceptions of more trustworthiness, $r(188) = -.15, p = .027$, and expertise, $r(188) = -.15, p = .034$.

As in Studies 1 and 2, the participants' political orientation was collected and coded into categories representing *Conservatives*, *Moderates*, and *Liberals*. The data showed a significant

⁸ The interaction is not attributable simply to racism, as the effect remains significant when controlling for the effect of symbolic racism, $F(1, 190) = 3.71, p = .056, \eta_p^2 = .02$

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

difference between conservatives and liberals for most of our outcomes of interest (See Table 2 for results). Specifically, independent samples t-tests showed that, generally, conservative participants viewed the candidates more negatively and were less likely than liberal participants to vote for the candidates of color. Further, we found that conservatives felt warmer toward the African American than the Mexican American candidate, $t(40) = 2.12, p = .040, d = 0.66$, and also rated the African American candidate to be more likely to fight for their interests, $t(40) = 3.36, p = .002, d = 1.05$. Although differences emerged from evaluations based on the candidate's ethnicity for conservative participants, this was not the case for our liberal participants ($ps > .207$).

Table 2

T-test results comparing Liberal and Conservative participants on candidate judgments and outcomes

	Mean Conservative	Mean Liberal	Statistic	df	p	d
Warmth felt toward candidate	57.38	72.82	-4.59	125	<0.001*	-0.87
Likely to vote for candidate	3.00	3.80	-4.37	125	<0.001*	-0.83
Candidate is likeable	3.55	3.91	-2.38	125	0.019	-0.45
Candidate is expert	2.60	2.96	-2.43	125	0.016	-0.46
Candidate shares my ideology	3.10	3.78	-3.65	125	<0.001*	-0.69
Candidate is trustworthy	3.21	3.75	-3.35	125	0.001*	-0.63
Candidate is believable	3.38	3.75	-2.61	125	0.010*	-0.49
Candidate represents my group	2.88	3.48	-3.26	125	0.001*	-0.62
Candidate fights for my interests	3.17	3.81	-3.81	125	<0.001*	-0.72
Skin tone memory bias	3.83	3.87	-0.15	125	0.880	-0.03

* Outcomes that remain significant using Bonferroni adjusted alpha levels.

Discussion

In line with the findings of Studies 1 and 2, results of Study 3 suggested that when White voters are given the option to vote for political candidates of color, they generally prefer politicians portrayed as having lighter skin tones. However, we also found that the processes that lead White constituents to differentially evaluate candidates of color is not simply a matter

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

of lighter skin being viewed as better. Instead, our findings suggest that relative judgments play a major role. An African American candidate may be more appealing to White voters than a Mexican American of the same skin tone, because the African American individual is perceived as having a relatively lighter skin tone for their racial/ethnic group and may be seen as *more American*. Given that we did not measure perceived cultural foreignness, we can only speculate based on previous research that the African American political candidate may have benefitted from being seen as lower in cultural foreignness and therefore higher in both the racial and skin tone hierarchy—the former being a product of race/ethnicity, and the latter being a product of the relative lightness of skin tone (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). In agreement with Kemmelmeier and Chavez’s (2014) findings, participants tended to remember the political candidate as having lighter skin tone than the candidate they saw at the beginning of the study. Additionally, we found that the warmer participants felt toward the candidate, the more they trusted him, and the more they perceived him as expert, the lighter they remembered his skin tone to be. While in Study 1 and 2 we did not find any evidence of partisanship influencing voter behavior and interpersonal judgments, the findings of Study 3 were in line with previous research in which partisanship influenced voting behavior (e.g., Caruso et al., 2009, Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014; Anderson et al., 2020). More precisely, our data suggested that the candidate’s ethnicity significantly influenced conservative (but not liberal) constituents. Specifically, we found that conservatives felt warmer toward the African American than the Mexican American candidate, and also rated the African American candidate to be more likely to fight for their interests. Although differences emerged for evaluations based on the candidate’s ethnicity for

conservative participants, this was not the case for our liberal participants. However, partisanship did not influence skin tone memory bias.

General Discussion

Taken together, the present series of studies provide evidence that White voters tend to prefer political candidates of color with relatively lighter skin tones whereas non-White voters are more inclined to support candidates with a relatively darker skin tone. In line with previous scholarly work (Martin & Blinder, 2020), our research demonstrates that while political candidates' race/ethnicity on its own does not affect their success at the ballot box, the interaction between the candidates' skin tone and their ethnicity may. When it comes to voting for politicians of color, White voters prefer light-skinned African American candidates whereas non-White constituents show more positive attitudes and voting behaviors toward darker-skinned candidates of color. We found mixed support for previous research in which participants' political orientation predicted skin tone bias (e.g., Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014; Anderson et al., 2020). Specifically, only data from Study 3 showed that political orientation significantly affected voting behavior; this finding should therefore be interpreted with caution. In contrast to the liberal participants, whose judgments did not differ based on candidate race/ethnicity, conservative voters expressed more positive attitudes toward the African American (vs Mexican American) candidate.

Overall, these findings can be explained by potential colorism effects that lead voters, White and non-White, to make judgments based not only on the lightness or darkness of a political candidate's skin tone, but possibly on the intersection between their skin tone and their ethnicity or race as well. It seems that, in line with research on interpersonal judgments

such as attractiveness (e.g., Richins, 1991), and wealth (e.g., Boyce et al., 2010), reference groups and relative judgments impact colorism and voting behavior as well. In line with previous research on skin tone memory bias (e.g., Ben-Zeev et al., 2014), findings from Study 3 show that, generally, the political candidates were remembered as having a lighter skin tone, and that more positive judgments (e.g., warmth felt, perceived expertise, trustworthiness) predicted such a recollection.

Important to note is that, contrary to the existing literature on ingroup colorism (e.g., Golash-Boza, 2016a, 2016b; Hall, 2018; Uzogara, 2019), our data suggests that non-White participants favored candidates with darker skin tones. Although an empirical question that is not yet answered, it is possible that when racial identity is made salient through, for example, contemporary social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter), people of color may further embrace and celebrate their race and ethnicity and support prototypical candidates of color to a greater extent, including those with darker skin tones. In fact, studies suggest that when racial and ethnic identities are made salient, certain cognitive processes are activated (e.g., Benjamin et al., 2010; Vecchi et al., 2019) which then may lead people to show more ingroup preferences (Jiang et al., 2019). Additionally, social identity theory suggests that in the eye of the evaluators, the perception of a prototypical leader changes depending on the group the evaluators belong to (Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 2006). In the instance of candidate preferences, this could mean that White voters may prefer more prototypical White candidates and non-White voters show more support for prototypical non-White exemplars.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our findings further highlight the intersections between electorate identity factors and political candidates' skin tone and race/ethnicity on interpersonal judgments and voting behavior. However, our sample only allowed us to investigate differences between broad categories (i.e., White and non-White participants). In fact, the size of key demographic groups in the sample from Study 1 prevented us from analyzing important participant characteristics (e.g., race, political orientation). Replicating these studies using a larger, more representative sample would allow us to explore voting preferences *among* racial minorities who may be more likely to endorse political candidates that they see as more likely to represent their group (Boudreau et al., 2019). In addition, presenting participants with computerized images of a potential, unknown District County Commissioner may have created an emotional distance (Gaither et al., 2019) which may have enabled participants to distance themselves from the political candidate portrayed. However, these same images have been successfully used in published research demonstrating that skin tone does, in fact, importantly influence social judgments (e.g., Stepanova & Strube, 2009). Furthermore, considering that digitized human images are used in many areas of psychology to control for potential confounding factors (e.g., Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2003; Strom et al., 2012) and that we were able to reproduce the pattern results of across three studies, we are more confident about the generalizability of our findings. However, it may be worthwhile to replicate the current set of studies by looking at real local elections using images of candidates of color whose names are on the ballot. We also purposefully chose not to explicitly mention the candidate's political party because 1) we wanted to solely focus on the effects of the candidate's skin tone on the variables that we measured and 2) at the local election level, not every candidate includes their political

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

affiliation in the voting information materials. Because of this omission, it is possible that participants may have answered in a socially desirable manner in order to avoid appearing biased. However, the fact that we found significant results even in the absence of a specific political party affiliation makes the findings of this study even more striking given the possibility that they may underreport the effect that skin tone has on voting intentions especially given the political polarization surrounding voters' attitudes on racial disparities ("Voters' attitudes," 2020). In addition to exploring skin tone effects on interpersonal judgments and voting behavior while highlighting additional intersecting identities (e.g., a woman of color, a LGBTQ+ candidate of color), future research should investigate whether the political affiliation of a candidate of color may influence or moderate voters' support along party lines.

Supported by previous research (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021; Zou & Cheryan, 2017), these findings may potentially suggest, that for some, a Mexican American political candidate might not be perceived as *American enough* and, therefore, might not be viewed as fit to represent the constituents' interests in public office. Future research that directly measures both prototypicality and cultural foreignness is essential for elucidating the role of these factors in the current work. We also would like to highlight the variability in skin tone that exist among those individuals who share a common racial/ethnic background, and the fact that the full range of variability in skin tone was not represented in the current research. For example, while our skin tone manipulations for the Mexican American candidate focused primarily on the skin tone *Brown* because it is perceived as most closely associated with people from Mexico (e.g., Chavez, 2013; Chirco & Buchanan, 2021), we acknowledge the importance of the experiences of Afro-Latinos and those with darker skin tones whose identities highlight the complexities and

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

multiple dimensions of the intersections of skin tone, colorism, and racial/ethnic identities.

Because of these multiple dimensions, future studies should explore whether associations of darker skin tones with Latino or Hispanic ethnicities may yield different and interesting results.

Finally, given that the candidates in our studies were identified as either African American or Mexican American individuals, future studies could investigate whether emphasizing the candidates' racial/ethnic identities compared to highlighting their American identity may yield different results. Would candidates of color be perceived differently by White voters if they highlighted their ethnic identity by, for example, identifying as Asian American or Cuban American? Would White voters think that by identifying as, for example, Cuban American, a candidate does not show interest in being simply *American*?

Conclusion

The present studies underscore the complexity of factors that come into play when voters choose the politicians they think best represent them. Overall, our studies reaffirm the impact that skin tone, political ideology, and voter identity have on interpersonal judgments (e.g., Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014; Jardina 2019; Stephens-Dougan, 2021) and expand previous work on the importance of race/ethnicity as a heuristic used to judge political candidates (e.g., Anderson et al., 2020; Martin & Blinder, 2020). The results from our set of studies have important theoretical and practical implications, calling attention to the relevance of understanding the multitude of factors that influence voting behavior in an increasingly diverse nation, and informing scholars and political strategists who seek to work toward a more diverse and representative political landscape.

References

- Anderson, B., Bird, G., Kornrumpf, R., Macaluso, M., Mundkur, N., Swingholm, M., & Gainous, J. (2020). Ethnic cues, Latino skin tone, and voter preferences: An experimental test. *Social Science Quarterly*, 101(5), 1920–1935. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12845>
- Barreto, N. B., & Hogg, M. A. (2017). Evaluation of and support for group prototypical leaders: A meta-analysis of twenty years of empirical research. *Social Influence*, 12(1), 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510.2017.1316771>
- Benjamin, D. J., Choi, J. J., & Strickland, A. J. (2010). Social identity and preferences. *The American Economic Review*, 100(4), 1913–1928. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.100.4.1913>
- Ben-Zeev, A., Dennehy, T. C., Goodrich, R. I., Kolarik, B. S., & Geisler, M. W. (2014). When an “educated” Black man becomes lighter in the mind’s Eye. *SAGE Open*, 4(1), 215824401351677. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013516770>
- Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203805534>
- Boudreau, C., Elmendorf, C. S., & MacKenzie, S. A. (2019). Racial or spatial voting? The effects of candidate ethnicity and ethnic group endorsements in local elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(1), 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12401>
- Boyce, C. J., Brown, G. D., & Moore, S. C. (2010). Money and happiness: Rank of income, not income, affects life satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 21, 471–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610362671>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Caruso, E. M., Mead, N. L., & Balcetis, E. (2009). Political partisanship influences perception of biracial candidates' skin tone. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 106, 20168-20173. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0905362106>
- Chavez, L. R. (2013). *The Latino threat*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2010.523226>
- Chirco, P. & Buchanan, T. M. (2021). The (un)making of a citizen: The role of skin tone in perceived immigrant status and support for hostile immigration policy. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000283>
- Colarelli, S. M., Poole, D. A., Unterborn, K., & D'Souza, G. C. (2010). Racial prototypicality, affirmative action, and hiring decisions in a multiracial world. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 18(2), 166–173. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2389.2010.00498.x>
- Cottrell, & Neuberg, S. L. (2005). Different emotional reactions to different groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(5), 770–789. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.5.770>
- Diette, T. M., Goldsmith, A. H., Hamilton, D., & Darity, W. (2015). Skin shade stratification and the psychological cost of unemployment: Is there a gradient for Black females? *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 42(1-2), 155–177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12114-014-9192-z>
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573–598. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0033-295X.109.3.573>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Ensari, N., & Murphy, S. E. (2003). Cross-cultural variations in leadership perceptions and attribution of charisma to the leader. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 92(1), 52–66. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-5978\(03\)00066-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-5978(03)00066-9)
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39, 175-191. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193146>
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using SPSS: (and sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll)*. SAGE
- Finkeldey, J. G., & Demuth, S. (2019). Race/ethnicity, perceived skin color, and the likelihood of adult arrest. *Race and Justice*, 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368719826269>
- Franks, A. S., & Scherr, K. C. (2014). A sociofunctional approach to prejudice at the polls: Are atheists more politically disadvantaged than gays and Blacks? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 44(10), 681–691. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12259>
- Gaither, S., Chen, J., Pauker, K., & Sommers, S. (2019). At face value: Psychological outcomes differ for real vs. computer-generated multiracial faces. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 159(5), 592-610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2018.1538929>
- Golash-Boza, T. (2016a). Racialized and gendered mass deportation and the crisis of capitalism. *Journal of World - Systems Research*, 22(1), 38-44. <https://doi.org/10.5195/JWSR.2016.610>
- Golash-Boza, T. (2016b). *Race & racisms: A critical approach* (Brief ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

- Gramlich, J. (2020, October 26). *What the 2020 electorate looks like by party, race and ethnicity, age, education, and religion*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/>
- Hair, J., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J. & Anderson, R. E. (2010) *Multivariate data analysis (7th ed.)*. Pearson Educational International.
- Hall, R. E. (2018). The globalization of light skin colorism: From critical race to critical skin theory. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(14), 2133–2145.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218810755>
- Henry, P. J. & Sears, D. O. (2002). The symbolic racism 2000 scale. *Political Psychology*, 23, 253-283. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00281>
- Hogg, M. (2001). A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(3), 184-200. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0503_1
- Hogg, M., Fielding, K., Johnson, D., Masser, B., Russell, E., & Svensson, A. (2006). Demographic category membership and leadership in small groups: A social identity analysis. *Leadership Quarterly*, 17(4), 335-350. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.04.007>
- Hogg, M. A., van Knippenberg, D., & Rast, D. E. (2012). The social identity theory of leadership: Theoretical origins, research findings, and conceptual developments. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 23(1), 258–304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2012.741134>
- Hugenberg, K., & Bodenhausen, G. (2003). Facing prejudice: Implicit prejudice and the perception of facial threat. *Psychological Science*, 14(6), 640-643.
https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0956-7976.2003.psci_1478.x

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Hunter, M. (2005). *Race, gender, and politics of skin tone*. Routledge.

Jardina, A. E. (2019). *White Identity Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Jiang, C., Vitiello, C., Axt, J. R., Campbell, J. T., & Ratliff, K. A. (2021). An examination of ingroup preferences among people with multiple socially stigmatized identities. *Self and Identity*, 20(4), 569–586. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2019.1657937>

Johnson Hess, A. (2020, November 18). *The 2020 election shows Gen Z's voting power for years to come*. CNBC. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/18/the-2020-election-shows-gen-zs-voting-power-for-years-to-come.html>

Kemmelmeier, M., & Chavez, H. L. (2014). Biases in the perception of Barack Obama's skin tone. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 14(1), 137–161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12061>

Kemmelmeier, M., Nesbitt, I. S., & Erhart, R. S. (2021). Skin tone bias and the US presidency: The portrayal of a Black incumbent and a Black candidate in newspaper photographs. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12246>

Krogstad, J. M. (2019, August 21). *Reflecting a demographic shift, 109 U.S. counties have become majority non-White since 2000*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/21/u-s-counties-majority-nonWhite/>

Laidley, T., Domingue, B., Sinsub, P., Harris, K. M., & Conley, D. (2019). New evidence of skin color bias and health outcomes using sibling difference models: A research note. *Demography*, 56(2), 753–762. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0756-6>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

LeBlanc, P. (2020, July 29). *Lindsey Graham campaign ad features image of opponent with digitally altered darker skin tone*. CNN.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/28/politics/lindsey-graham-jaime-harrison-skin-tone-ad/index.html>

Lord, R. G., Foti, R. J., & Philips, J. S. (1982). A theory of leadership categorization. In J. G. Hunt, U. Sekaran, & C. Schriesheim (Eds). *Leadership: Beyond establishment views* (pp. 104-121). Southern Illinois University Press.

Lord, R. G. & Maher, K. (1991). *Leadership and information processing*. Unwin Hyman.

Louie, P. (2020). Revisiting the cost of skin color: Discrimination, mastery, and mental health Among Black adolescents. *Society and Mental Health*, 10(1), 1–19.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2156869318820092>

Lyness, K. S., & Heilman, M. E. (2006). When fit is fundamental: Performance evaluations and promotions of upper-level female and male managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91, 777-785. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.4.777>

Ma, D. S., & Correll, J. (2011). Target prototypicality moderates racial bias in the decision to shoot. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(2), 391–396.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2010.11.002>

Maddox, K. B. (2004). Perspectives on racial phenotypicality bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8(4), 383–401. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0804_4

Martin, N. S., & Blinder, S. (2020). Biases at the ballot box: How multiple forms of voter discrimination impede the descriptive and substantive representation of ethnic minority groups. *Political Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09596-4>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Monk, E. P. (2019). The color of punishment: African Americans, skin tone, and the criminal justice system. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(10), 1593–1612.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2018.1508736>

Power, J. G., Murphy, S. T., & Coover, G. (1996). Priming prejudice how stereotypes and counter-stereotypes influence attribution of responsibility and credibility among ingroups and outgroups. *Human Communication Research*, 23(1), 36–58.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1996.tb00386>.

Reece, R. L. (2016). What are you mixed with: The effect of multiracial Identification on perceived attractiveness. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 43(2), 139–147.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12114-015-9218-1>

Richins, M. L. (1991). Social comparison and the idealized images of advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(1), 71-83. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209242>

Rosette, A. S., Leonardelli, G. J., & Phillips, K. W. (2008). The White standard.: The racial bias in leader categorization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(4), 758–777.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.4.758>

Server, A. (2020, May 13). *Birtherism of a Nation*. The Atlantic.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/birtherism-and-trump/610978/>

Sherman, J. W., Allen, T. J., & Sacchi, D. L. M. (2012). Stereotype confirmation and disconfirmation. In B. Gawronski & F. Strack (Ed.), *Cognitive consistency: A fundamental principle in social cognition* (pp. 390-423). Guilford.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Sollenberger, R. (2021, January 4). *Kelly Loeffler's New Facebook ad darkens skin of Raphael Warnock, her Black opponent*. Salon. <https://www.salon.com/2021/01/04/kelly-loefflers-new-facebook-ad-darkens-skin-of-raphael-warnock-her-Black-opponent/>

Stepanova E. V. & Strube, M. J. (2012). The role of skin color and facial physiognomy in racial categorization: Moderation by implicit racial attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(4), 867-878. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.02.019>

Stepanova, E. V, & Strube, M. J. (2009). Making of a face: Role of facial physiognomy, skin Tone, and color presentation mode in evaluations of racial typicality. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 149(1), 66–81. <https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.149.1.66-81>

Stephens-Dougan, L. (2021). The persistence of racial cues and appeals in American elections. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24(1), 301–320. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-082619-015522>

Strom, M., Zebrowitz, L., Zhang, S., Bronstad, P., Lee, H., & Yovel, G. (2012). Skin and bones: The Contribution of skin tone and facial structure to racial prototypicality ratings (skin tone, face structure, race prototypicality). *PLoS ONE*, 7(7), E41193. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0041193>

Tabachnick, B., & Fidell, Linda S. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th ed.). Pearson Education. United States Census Bureau. (2021). *National population by characteristics: 2010-2019*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-detail.html>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Uzogara, E. E., & Jackson, J. S. (2016). Perceived skin tone discrimination across contexts: African American women's reports. *Race and Social Problems*, 8(2), 147–159.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-016-9172-y>

Uzogara, E. E. (2019). Who desires in-group neighbors? Associations of skin tone biases and discrimination with Latinas' segregation preferences. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 22(8), 1196–1214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430218788154>

Vecci, J., & Zelinsky, T. (2019). Behavioural challenges of minorities: Social identity and role models. *PloS One*, 14(7), e0220010–e0220010.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220010>

Voters' attitudes about race and gender are even more divided than in 2016. (2020, September 10). Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/09/10/voters-attitudes-about-race-and-gender-are-even-more-divided-than-in-2016/>

Wright, J. (2020, August 16). *Harris responds to Trump's birther attacks: "They're going to engage in lies"*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/16/politics/harris-trump-birther-attacks/index.html>

Zou, L. X., & Cheryan, S. (2017). Two axes of subordination: A new model of racial position.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 112(5), 696–717.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000080>

Appendix 2

We the People. Who? The Face of Future American Politics Is Shaped by Perceived Foreignness⁹
of Candidates of Color

Patrizia Chirco* and Tonya M. Buchanan**

University of Bern* and Central Washington University**

Patrizia Chirco, University of Bern and Central Washington University

Tonya M. Buchanan, Central Washington University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Patrizia Chirco, Department of
Psychology, Central Washington University, 400 East University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926.

Email: patrizia.chirco@cwu.edu

⁹ This article was published as We the People. Who? The face of future American politics is shaped by perceived foreignness of candidates of color. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12341>. This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY NC ND 4.0) International License.

Abstract

Pursuing a more equitable political representation of a country's demographics is essential both as a matter of principle and pragmatism (i.e., realpolitik). As such, the goal of the present study was to replicate and expand on research on the impact of voter race/ethnicity and ideology on voting behaviors and interpersonal judgments of political candidates of color from different racial and ethnic groups. After participants ($N = 282$) saw the same political candidate of color (randomly assigned to identify as Mexican American vs. African American), we assessed interpersonal judgments and behaviors (e.g., expertise, voting intentions), perceived Americanness, and memory for skin tone of the candidate. In support of hypotheses and previous research/theory, White voters expressed more positive interpersonal judgments toward the African American political candidate and rated him to be more American than the Mexican American political candidate. We expanded upon previous research by directly testing the role of perceived Americanness in the differential judgments of political candidates' race/ethnicity by White voters, with evidence supporting partial mediation. Our findings further showed that judgments toward a political candidate of color were also predicted by voters' political affiliation. Specifically, conservative (vs. liberal) voters generally expressed less positive interpersonal judgments toward the candidates of color and perceived them to be less American and patriotic. Ramifications related to these findings are discussed.

Introduction

We the People of the United States. These are the first words of the Constitution of the United States that officials swear to protect and defend when they take their Oath of Office. But who exactly is meant by *We*? One of the clauses in the Naturalization Act of 1790, which the United States Congress passed as one of the first pieces of legislation that defined citizenship as something only accessible to a particular group, states that only free White people who had been in the United States for at least two years were legally eligible for citizenship (Golash-Boza, 2016). Although criteria for citizenship have since expanded, research has shown that in terms of cognitive associations, even after centuries, to be American still means to be White (Devos & Banaji, 2005).

Although the melting pot metaphor as a symbol of the belief that the nation was created out of many has been central to American identity since the nation's founding (Citrin & Sears, 2014; Schildkraut, 2010), the United States has also had a long history of nativist feelings toward immigrants (Higham, 1955). While considered a nation of immigrants, anti-immigrant sentiment and policy has often been driven by fears that the newcomers would not assimilate into the American culture and change the country's core (Brimelow, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Tichenor, 2002). Consequently, a diversifying demographic of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020) may impact the perceived national identity fueling the re-organization of racial stratification in the U.S (Bonilla-Silva, 2004). Recent investigations into subordination of minority groups in the United States suggest that their hierarchical positioning occurs along two distinct dimensions: perceived inferiority and perceived cultural foreignness (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). In other words, research suggests that although an African American individual might be

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

perceived as inferior to an Asian person, they may be viewed more positively than a Latino individual who may be regarded as both inferior and more foreign than members of other groups.

The categorization of people of color as not American might be influenced by the perception that Brown skin tones are more often associated with certain geographical regions (e.g., Ngai, 2004; Chavez, 2013) and lack of citizenship (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021). The biased association between Brown skin tones and an individual's perceived foreignness can have negative, and even deadly consequences. For example, news reports documented *Brown* U.S. citizens being arrested and facing deportation by ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) because they were misidentified as undocumented immigrants (Mosbergen, 2019). In an even more tragic event, several shoppers perceived as undocumented immigrants because of their skin tone were shot and killed at a Walmart store in El Paso Texas (Bogel-Burroughs, 2019).

This biased processing—associating skin tone and perception of citizenship—not only affects immigrants and ordinary citizens but can have profound implications for the experience of prominent persons of color as well. “I heard it today that [Harris] doesn’t meet the requirements...” said former President Trump, referring to Vice President Kamala Harris when she announced her run for the position (Rizzo, 2020). In another instance, he raised questions about former President Barack Obama’s place of birth and, therefore, his eligibility to hold office in the United States (Kessler, 2011). The pattern of equating darker skin tone with foreignness continued when the former President asked, “Why don’t they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came?” referring to four U.S.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

congresswomen of color (i.e., representatives Ocasio-Cortez, Omar, Tlaib, and Pressley) implying their lack of American citizenship (Quilantan & Cohen, 2019). In short, immigrants, citizens, and even leaders/politicians of color face discrimination based on the association between their skin color/tone and perceived lack of citizenship.

Choosing a Leader: Social Identity Theory

Leaders/politicians of color face additional hurdles to having their citizenship questioned because of their phenotypical traits. Recent investigations on the relationship between skin tone and interpersonal judgments (e.g., perceived trustworthiness, voting behavior) found that voters' evaluations are influenced by a political candidate's skin tone (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Anderson et al., 2020). According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), people define their place and role in society and, by acknowledging a social group (e.g., family, political party) to which they belong (Tajfel, 1972), become emotionally attached to that (in)group, developing prejudice toward other (out)groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It is therefore unsurprising that, when choosing a leader, people select the leader (or politician) they think best represents them and their group (Hogg, 2001). This mechanism can help to explain why White voters express more positive interpersonal judgments about, and are more likely to vote for, a relatively lighter-skinned political candidate (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022).

Choosing a Leader: Leadership Categorization Theory

Even as the U.S. becomes more diverse—according to the U.S. Census (2020), 61.1% of the U.S. population is White—80% of the most powerful leaders are still White (Lu et al., 2020). Extensive research suggests that these disproportionate racial representations in places of power may be explained by structural factors such as economic inequality (e.g., Kraus et al.,

2019) and institutional segregation (e.g., Anicich et al., 2021), interpersonal influences such as outgroup prejudice when evaluating personnel (e.g., Philips & Jun, 2021), and explicit discrimination in the workplace (e.g., Quillian et al., 2017). Leadership categorization theory provides yet another explanation for the lack of proportional representation in positions of power. This theory argues that when people think of a leader, they envision a prototype and hold a mental image of what a leader looks like to them (Lord et al., 1984). That image is usually associated with Whiteness (Rosette et al., 2008; Petsko & Rosette, 2021).

Current Research: Aims and Hypotheses

While social identity and leadership categorization theory both explain certain mechanisms involved in categorizing and choosing a leader, recent empirical investigations show that the process may be more nuanced and that relative skin tone and perceived foreignness of political candidate, in tandem, may influence interpersonal judgments and voting intentions (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022). A set of studies suggested that, when political candidates who belong to racially underrepresented groups were presented to constituents with the same skin tone (i.e., Brown), White voters expressed more positive judgments toward the candidate who identified as African American than Mexican American (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022).

Although not directly tested, given prior research, this finding was attributed to a potential perception of cultural foreignness (Zou & Cheryan, 2017), in that White voters may have perceived the Mexican American candidate as less likely to be a citizen of the United States (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021) and, therefore, not eligible to hold office. Scholarship surrounding colorism and race/ethnicity (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2021, 2022; Zou & Cheryan, 2017; Devos & Banaji, 2005) has repeatedly shown that relatively lighter-skinned African Americans are

perceived more positively than individuals with darker skin tones and that Latinos struggle to be recognized as fully American. However, even as past scholarship highlights the independent effects of colorism and race/ethnicity on people's interpersonal attitudes and behaviors, experimental scholarship on the joint impact of voter demographics and the intersection of political candidates' skin tones and their race/ethnicity remains insufficient. Additionally, considering that the racial and ethnic composition of the United States is changing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020), it becomes increasingly critical to understand attitudes and behaviors that represent barriers to achieving more equitable representations in powerful spaces traditionally occupied primarily by White people. Hence, the goal of the present study was to replicate previous findings (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022) in which people's racial/ethnic group was found to correlate with the perception of their cultural foreignness (e.g., Zou & Cheryan, 2017). That is, researchers proposed that Latinos are often considered as more foreign than, for example, African Americans and that that process might influence attitudes toward that person (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022). To our knowledge, however, perceived Americanness of an individual has not yet been examined as a possible psychological mechanism that might explain White voters' interpersonal judgments toward the political candidates of color. Consequently, we tested a mediation model positing that perceived Americanness would mediate the relationship between the political candidate's racial/ethnic group and the participants' interpersonal judgments. Specifically, we hypothesized that White participants would perceive the African American (vs. Mexican American) candidate as more *American* and consequently show more positive judgments toward him.

Although not the primary focus of the current research, we also sought to replicate relevant findings from prior studies (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014) by examining whether skin tone memory bias (i.e., how light or dark the candidate's skin tone was remembered to be) would predict evaluations of the candidates. We expected that, to the extent that participants remembered the skin tone of the candidate as being relatively lighter, they would rate the candidate more positively. Supported by a previous body of research (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Anderson et al., 2020; Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014), we also expected that the voters' political affiliation would relate to our outcomes of interest. In particular, we anticipated that, compared to liberal participants, conservative voters would generally show less positive judgments toward the candidates of color.¹⁰

All in all, our hypotheses were as follows:

Primary Analyses

Hypothesis 1a: White participants will show more positive judgments toward the African American than toward the Mexican American political candidate.

Hypothesis 1b: White participants will perceive the African American as more *American* than the Mexican American political candidate.

Hypothesis 1c: Perceptions of candidate Americanness will mediate the effect of candidate race/ethnicity on interpersonal judgments for White participants.

¹⁰ The data set and full materials will be made available upon request. This work was not a part of a preregistered project.

Secondary Analyses

Hypothesis 2a: Participants will remember the African American political candidate as having a darker skin tone than the Mexican American candidate.

Hypothesis 2b: The lighter the skin tone of the candidate is remembered to be, the more positive judgments the participants show.

Hypothesis 3: Conservative participants will reveal less positive judgments toward candidate of color.

Method

Participants

Assumptions underlying the a priori power analyses were based on the results of previous research (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022), medium effects ($d = .25$), $\alpha = .05$, and power ($1 - \beta$) set at .95. The projected sample size needed with this effect size (G*Power 3.1) was $N = 268$ for a between groups comparison and simple mediation analyses (Faul et al., 2007).¹¹ We sampled 282 undergraduate students ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.63$, $SD = 4.50$) enrolled in psychology courses at a University in the Pacific Northwest.¹² Most of the participants identified as White (63%)¹³, female (67%), and held liberal political views (42%). For detailed demographic information, see Table 1. None of the participants failed to respond accurately to the attention check question and no participant's data point was excluded.

¹¹ A power sensitivity analysis run through the shiny package on R resulted in an observed power of .97 (Schoemann et al., 2017).

¹² We report all measures, conditions, data exclusions, and sample size determinations.

¹³ Other participants identified as Latino/Hispanic (15%), African American (6%), Asian (5%), other (5%), American Indian or Alaska native (3%), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (3%).

Table 1*Demographic information for participants*

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	-	-	20.63	4.50
Gender				
Female	188	67	-	-
Male	80	28	-	-
Other	14	5		
Political Orientation				
Liberal	117	42	-	-
Moderate	107	38	-	-
Conservative	57	20	-	-

Materials***Facial Stimuli***

Based on previous research (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021, 2022), we employed facial stimuli created by Stepanova & Strube (2009, 2012) who used software to manipulate both the facial physiognomy and the skin tone of the individual portrayed in the picture: from left of continuum (very light) to right of continuum (very dark). In line with earlier investigations, we presented participants in both conditions with an image of the same man pictured with what is considered a *Brown* skin tone (midpoint of skin tone continuum). When it comes to decision-making processes, people tend to evaluate the choices at their disposal and ultimately settle for the option perceived to be more advantageous to them (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Importantly, however, the choice people ultimately make is influenced by how the options at their disposal are perceived (e.g., Slovic, 1995; Thaler & Sunstein, 2008; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). The perception of these options can be influenced by labels which individuals use when they need to make a judgment between the options at hand (French & Smith, 2013) and

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

previous associations—positive or negative—with a given label (e.g., Breneiser & Allen, 2011; Kühn & Galliant, 2013; Lee et al., 2006). Accordingly, we used the labels Mexican American and African American to manipulate the candidates' race/ethnicity as part of a short political campaign statement (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

The same image was presented to participants in both conditions. In one condition, the candidate self-identified as African American and in the other condition as Mexican American.



Measures

In line with previous research (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022), while the image and statement of the political candidate was displayed, participants were asked to evaluate the candidate across several interpersonal and behavioral dimensions. Specifically, participants were asked to rate how they felt about the candidate using a feeling thermometer ranging from 0 (*very negative*) to 100 (*very positive*) in 10-point increments, and to express their voting intentions using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 5 (*extremely likely*). To assess their views regarding the candidates' attributes and values, participants rated statements such as "This candidate will represent my group well" and "The candidate is an

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

expert in his field” using 5-point Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).¹⁴

To directly measure perceived foreignness, we asked participants to rate how American they perceived the candidate in the image to be (Devos & Banaji, 2005). The 7-point Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (*not at all American*) to 7 (*absolutely American*). We also asked participants to rate how patriotic they perceived the candidate to be (Zou & Cheryan, 2017): 1 (*unpatriotic*) to 7 (*patriotic*). In line with prior studies (Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014; Chirco & Buchanan, 2022), participants were asked to rate how light they remembered the candidate’s skin tone to be by using a thermometer that ranged from 0 (*very light*) to 100 (*very dark*) in 10-point increments.

We measured participants’ political orientation using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*extremely conservative*) to 7 (*extremely liberal*) and used these scores to categorize participants as either conservative, moderate, or liberal.

Procedure

We utilized a 2 (Candidate race/ethnicity: Mexican American vs. African American) x 2 (Participant racial group: White vs. non-White) between-subjects design. Participants completed the study electronically on a device at a location of their choosing and, after providing informed consent, were informed about upcoming local elections to fill the spot of District County Commissioner. They were then randomly assigned to see an image of the same man in a *Brown* skin tone (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021, 2022) who was labeled as either Mexican American ($n = 144$) or African American ($n = 138$). While the image and a brief politically neutral

¹⁴ The complete set of measures can be viewed in the additional materials.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

statement was displayed, participants were asked to rate how they felt about the candidate and how likely they were to vote for him. Next, we assessed the participants' attitudes, their perception of the candidates' Americanness and patriotism, followed by the skin tone gradient measure to assess the participants' skin tone memory bias. Before being debriefed, participants answered demographic questions. All in all, the experimental procedure lasted between 10 and 15 minutes.

Results

Before moving to our primary data analysis, we conducted a principal component factor analysis of the interpersonal judgment items used by Chirco and Buchanan (Study 3; 2022). Results supported a one-factor solution, with the first eigenvalue of 4.02 and all subsequent λ s $< .81$. Consequently, we standardized and combined the measures to assess the participants' views about the candidates' attributes and values (i.e., warmth, voting intention, perceived expertise, perceptions of representing the participants' group and fighting for their rights) into a single index, with higher values signaling more positive interpersonal judgments toward the political candidate ($\alpha = .80$).

In line with prior investigations, we conducted a two-way ANOVA¹⁵, to examine the interaction effects of participant racial group and candidate race/ethnicity on interpersonal judgments toward the candidate. Replicating prior findings (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022) and supporting hypothesis 1a, the data pointed to an interaction between participant racial group and candidate race/ethnicity, $F(1, 282) = 3.92, p = .049, \eta_p^2 = .014$. As can be seen in Figure 2,

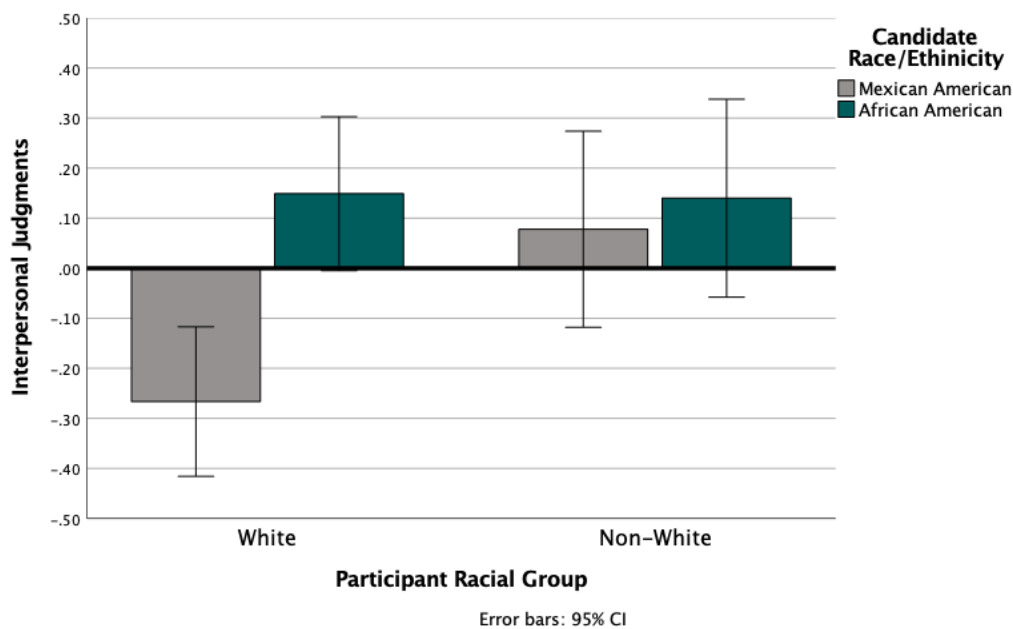
¹⁵ All assumptions for this analysis were met (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013).

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

White voters indicated more positive interpersonal judgments toward the African American ($M = 0.15$, $SD = 0.80$) than the Mexican American candidate ($M = -0.27$, $SD = 0.70$), while non-White participants exhibited no such preference ($p = .321$).

Figure 2

Interaction effect between participant racial group (White vs. non-White) and candidate race/ethnicity (Mexican American vs. African American) on interpersonal judgments.

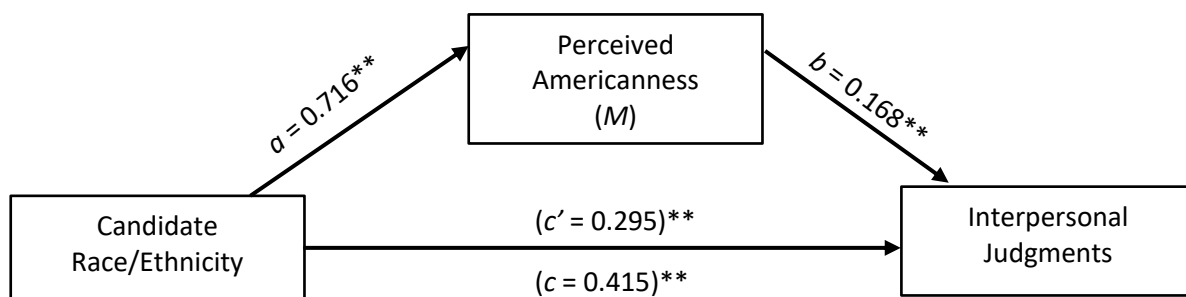


In line with prior theorizing (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022) suggesting that White voters may perceive a Mexican American political candidate as more foreign and consequently not eligible to hold office, we also found support for hypothesis 1b. Indeed, our data showed that White voters perceived the African American candidate ($M = 6.23$, $SD = 1.08$) as more *American* than the Mexican American candidate ($M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.39$), $t(175) = -3.81$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.57$. To explore whether these differences in perceived Americanness help explain White voters' preferences for different candidates of color, we conducted a simple mediation analysis using

the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) to examine if perceptions of Americanness mediated the effect of participant race/ethnicity on White voters' interpersonal judgments. In line with our hypotheses, results revealed a positive association between candidate race/ethnicity and perceived Americanness, and a positive association between perceptions of Americanness and interpersonal judgments, as well as a significant direct link between candidate race/ethnicity and interpersonal judgments (see Figure 3). A 95% bias-corrected confidence interval based on 10,000 bootstrap samples indicated that the indirect effect through perceived Americanness ($a*b = 0.120$, 95% CI [0.0476 to 0.2115]) was significant. In other words, the pattern of results suggested that perceptions of Americanness partially mediated the relationship between candidate race/ethnicity and interpersonal judgments. Hence, our data supported hypothesis 1c as well.

Figure 3

Mediating effect of perceived Americanness between the candidate race/ethnicity condition and interpersonal judgments.



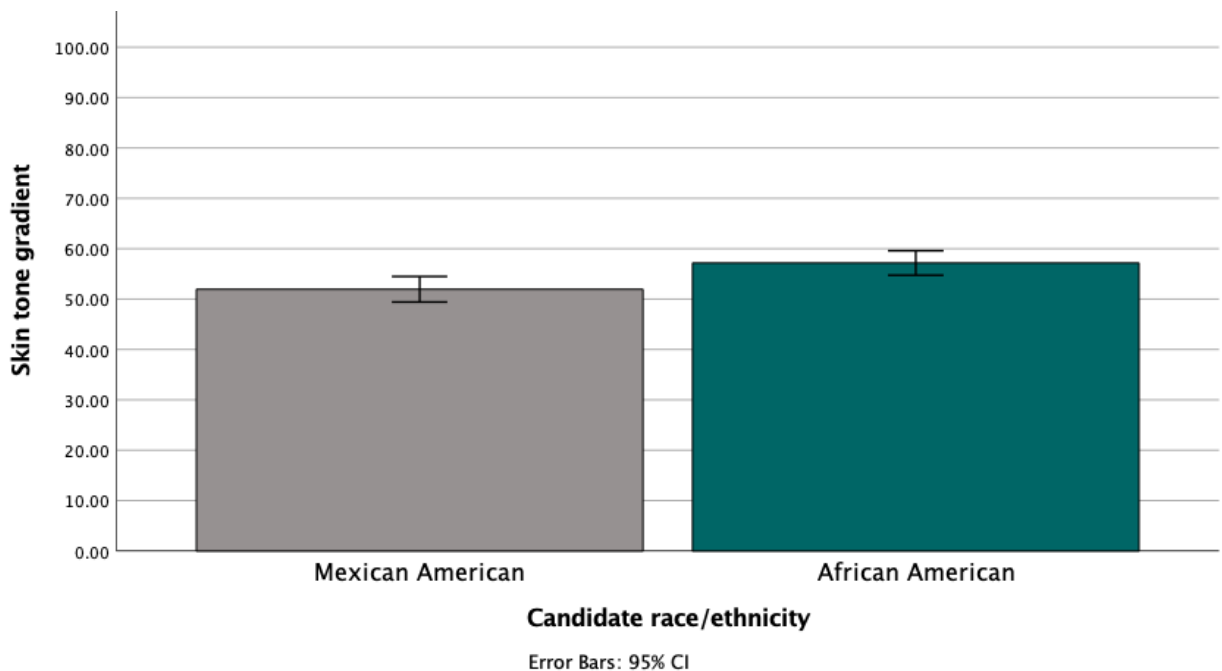
Notes: Candidate race/ethnicity condition was coded Mexican American = 1, African American = 2 $^{**}p < .001$

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Next, we explored whether participants would exhibit skin tone memory bias. In line with expectations (Hypothesis 2a) and as can be seen in Figure 4, while seen in the exact same skin tone, the African American candidate ($M = 57.17$, $SD = 14.40$) was generally remembered as having a darker skin tone than the Mexican American candidate ($M = 51.96$, $SD = 15.30$), $t(279) = -2.94$, $p = .002$, $d = -0.35$. While we found a significant effect of skin tone memory bias, our data showed that how light or dark the candidate was remembered to be did not significantly affect interpersonal judgments (all $ps > .07$). Hence, we did not find support for Hypothesis 2b.

Figure 4

Skin tone memory bias displayed by candidate race/ethnicity (Mexican American vs. African American).



Note. The higher the numbers on the skin tone gradient scale, the darker the skin tone of the candidate was remembered to be.

Finally, in line with previous findings (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022) and supporting hypothesis 3, our data showed that there was a significant difference between liberals and conservatives for most of our outcomes (see Table 2).¹⁶ Concretely, independent samples *t*-tests showed that, compared to liberals, conservative participants generally viewed the candidates of color as less American, $t(94.82) = -2.85, p = .003, d = -0.49$, less patriotic, $t(117.83) = -3.29, p < .001, d = -0.52$, and also expressed less positive interpersonal judgments, $t(90.78) = -3.20, p < .001, d = -0.56$.⁸

Table 2

T-test results comparing Liberal and Conservative participants on candidate judgments and outcomes

	<i>Mean Conservative</i>	<i>Mean Liberal</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Perceived Americanness	5.23	5.90	-2.85	94.82	0.03	-0.49
Interpersonal judgments	-0.23	0.18	-3.20	0.85	<.001	-0.56
Perceived patriotism	4.67	5.34	-3.29	117.83	<.001	-0.52

Discussion

With the intention of replicating results of previous studies (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022), we hypothesized that, when shown the same political candidate of color in the same skin tone (i.e., Brown), White voters would generally express more positive interpersonal judgments toward a candidate described as African American than toward one labeled as Mexican American. In line with previous investigations, the results of the present study showed that, unlike non-White voters, White constituents presented with a candidate of color prefer an African American over a Mexican American politician. It is important to note that the sample

¹⁶ Additional moderation analyses by political ideology for all models reported in the present study were not significant (*ps* ranged from .07 to .89).

⁸ Given that our sample contained more liberal ($n=117$) than conservative ($n=57$) participants, equal variance was **not** assumed

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

size at our disposal only allowed us to compare White and non-White participants. A larger sample size might have allowed us to explore potential differences within the non-White group, as this is a diverse group and is not homogenous in its political attitudes. For example, reports show that Latinos in certain states predominantly support conservative parties and are likely to play crucial roles in upcoming elections (Dominguez-Villegas, 2022). Recruiting from a more diverse pool of participants would also allow scholars to start exploring voting intentions of a changing American demographics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Important to note is also that the participants in the present study were undergraduate students from the Pacific Northwest and while Gen Z voters greatly impacted the 2020 presidential election (Johnson Hess, 2020), collecting data from older, and possibly more politically engaged individuals, might have yielded different results. However, support for our findings is bolstered by their ability to replicate previous research in which a more age diverse pool of candidates was used (Chirco & Buchanan, 2022).

Previous research has highlighted that Latinos in the U.S. are perceived as more culturally foreign than most other minorities (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). However, empirical investigations on how that perception may influence voting behaviors and political candidates' evaluations remain scarce. To address this gap in the literature, another aim of the present study was to test whether White voters' preferences toward an African American political candidate (vs. Mexican American) might be mediated by the perceived Americanness of the candidate. As anticipated, our data confirmed that White constituents considered the African American candidate as more American, and that that psychological process partially explained the relationship between the political candidate's race/ethnicity and those (White) voters'

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

evaluations of the political candidate. Because we used computerized images of politicians of color who were not known by our participants, it is possible that the participants might have distanced themselves from the candidate when expressing their voting behaviors and interpersonal judgments; research does in fact suggest that type of image (i.e., real vs. digitized) may affect categorization processes (e.g., Gaither et al., 2019). However, with the objective of reducing confounding factors (e.g., differences in facial features, attractiveness, familiarity), digitized images have been reliably used in psychological research in the past (e.g., Stepanova & Strube, 2009; Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2003; Strom et al., 2012). Regardless, future investigations should address this limitation by increasing the saliency for the participants by presenting them with images of real political candidates of color who are on the ballot in the participants' districts. We would also like to note that using a single image might have influenced the findings in that the idiosyncratic features of a specific image could produce unique results. Although using an array of different images might have increased external and construct validity (Wells & Windshitl, 1999), we remain confident about our results because they, once more, replicate previous empirical work (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021, 2022). Nevertheless, future explorations should consider using different sets of stimuli and consider increasing the number of stimuli by, for example, manipulating the physiognomy of the individual portrayed.

In line with existing research (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2021; Anderson et al., 2020; Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014), we also found support for our hypothesis involving voting intentions toward candidates of color and political partisanship. In fact, our data suggested once more that, compared to liberal voters, conservative participants expressed less positive

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

interpersonal judgments and viewed the candidates of color (no matter their racial/ethnic group) as less American and less patriotic.

We also explored whether participants would display the skin tone memory bias observed in previous studies (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014, Ben-Zeev et al., 2014). Interestingly, while the African American and Mexican American political candidates were shown in the same skin tone, participants tended to remember the African (vs. Mexican) American candidate as having a darker skin tone. While existing work on skin tone memory bias demonstrates that how light or dark a political candidate is remembered to be has an effect on evaluations of that individual (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014), the data collected in the present study did not suggest such an effect for our aggregate measure of interpersonal candidate judgments. This partial replication might be due to the fact that we did not measure the participants' skin tone memory bias using the same tool used in previous studies (e.g., Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Kemmelmeier & Chavez, 2014). Instead of using an objective measure such as a pool of images showing the same individual whose skin tone was manipulated, we opted for a more subjective measure and asked participants to utilize a skin tone gradient thermometer to rate how light or dark they remembered the candidate to be. Had we adopted the same skin tone memory bias measure used in previous investigations, we might have had findings consistent with previous research. Consequently, we recommend that researchers further consider differences that emerge between various measures of memory for skin tone.

Conclusion

Altogether, our findings replicate and validate previous scholarly work: Firstly, we found confirmation that the racial group to which voters belong (in this instance, White vs. non-White) significantly affects voting intentions toward political candidates of color. Secondly, we found additional evidence that participants' political affiliation significantly influences attitudes and behaviors when they choose a political candidate of color who should represent them. In short, our data suggests that White conservative voters are simultaneously affected by the relative skin tone and the perceived foreignness of political candidates and that these processes may influence the voters' evaluations and candidate choice at the ballot box.

These findings are worthy of note because pursuing a more equitable political representation of a country's demographics is important both as a matter of principle and pragmatism (i.e., *realpolitik*). On the one hand, the pursuit of equity in government is a matter of social justice. On the other, it is key to ensuring the survival of liberal democracies. While the demographic shift underway in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020) has been fueling a dangerous drift toward populism (Berman, 2021; Craig & Richeson, 2014), a similar phenomenon can also be triggered by a lack of action to realign the makeup of the ruling class with that of the electorate. A country which, in the face of a change in the proportions of its racial and ethnic groups, perpetuates government structures representing a historically privileged minority is more likely to suffer from increasingly violent social conflicts and see the proliferation of radicalized movements (Williams, 1993). In light of the findings of the present study and of the scholarship it reinforces, it remains imperative to explore and understand

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

factors that create more barriers to equitable representations of people of color in leadership roles—political and otherwise.

References

- Anderson, B., Bird, G., Kornrumpf, R., Macaluso, M., Mundkur, N., Swingholm, M., et al. (2020). Ethnic cues, Latino skin tone, and voter preferences: An experimental test. *Social Science Quarterly*, 101(5), 1920–1935. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12845>
- Anicich, E. M., Jachimowicz, J. M., Osborne, M. R., & Phillips, L. T. (2021). Structuring local environments to avoid racial diversity: Anxiety drives Whites’ geographical and institutional self-segregation preferences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 95(2), Article 104117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104117>
- Ben-Zeev, A., Dennehy, T.C., Goodrich, R.I., Kolarik, B.S. & Geisler, M.W. (2014). When an “educated” Black man becomes lighter in the mind’s Eye. *SAGE Open*, 4(1), 215824401351677. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013516770>
- Berman, S. (2021). The causes of populism in the west. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24(1), 71–88. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102503>
- Bogel-Burroughs, N. (2019, August 9) “I’m the shooter”: El Paso suspect confessed to targeting Mexicans, police say. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/09/us/el-paso-suspectconfession.html>
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2004). From bi-racial to tri-racial: Towards a new system of racial stratification in the USA. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27(6), 931-950.
- Boyce, C.J., Brown, G.D. & Moore, S.C. (2010). Money and happiness: Rank of income, not income, affects life satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 21, 471-475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610362671>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Breneiser, J. E., & Allen, S. N. (2011). Taste preference for brand name versus store brand sodas. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 13, 281–290.

Brimelow, P. (1996). *Alien nation: Common sense about America's immigration disaster*. Harper Perennial.

Chavez, L. R. (2013). *The Latino threat*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Chirco, & Buchanan, T. M. (2022). Dark faces in White spaces: The effects of skin tone, race, ethnicity, and intergroup preferences on interpersonal judgments and voting behavior. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 22(1), 427–447.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12304>

Chirco, P. & Buchanan, T. M. (2021). The (un)making of a citizen: The role of skin tone in perceived immigrant status and support for hostile immigration policy. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science* 7(4), 378–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000283>

Citrin, J., & Sears, D. O. (2014). *American identity and the politics of multiculturalism*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139028967>

Craig, & Richeson, J. A. (2014). More diverse yet less tolerant? How the increasingly diverse racial landscape affects White Americans' racial attitudes. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(6), 750–761. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167214524993>

Devos, & Banaji, M. R. (2005). American = White? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(3), 447–466. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.3.447>

Dominguez-Villegas, R. (2022, July 18). Latino voters will play pivotal role in 2022 U.S. Senate races. *UCLA Newsroom*.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39, 175-191
- French, A., & Smith, G. (2013). Measuring brand association strength: A consumer-based brand equity approach. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47, 1356–1367.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090561311324363>
- Gaither, S., Chen, J., Pauker, K. & Sommers, S. (2019). At face value: Psychological outcomes differ for real vs. computer-generated multiracial faces. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 159(5), 592–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2018.1538929>
- Golash-Boza, T. (2016). *Immigration Nation: Raids, detentions, and deportations in post-9/11 America*. New York: Routledge.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Methodology in the social sciences. Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Press.
- Higham, J. (1955). *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925*. Atheneum.
- Hogg, M. (2001) A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(3), 184-200. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0503_1
- Hugenberg, K., & Bodenhausen, G. (2003). Facing prejudice: Implicit prejudice and the perception of Facial threat. *Psychological Science*, 14(6), 640–643.
https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0956-7976.2003.psci_1478.
- Johnson Hess, A. (2020, November 18). *The 2020 election shows Gen Z's voting power for years to come*. CNBC. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/18/the-2020-election-shows-gen-zs-voting-power-for-years-to-come.html>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Kemmelmeier, M., & Chavez, H. L. (2014). Biases in the perception of Barack Obama's skin tone. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 14(1), 137–161.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12061>
- Kessler, G. (2011, April 28). A look at Trump's "birther" statements. *The Washington Post*.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/post/a-look-at-trumps-birther-statements/2011/04/27/AFeOYb1E_blog.html?itid=lk_inline_manual_11
- Kraus, M. W., Onyeador, I. N., Daumeyer, N. M., Rucker, J. M., & Richeson, J. A. (2019). The misperception of racial economic inequality. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 14(6), 899–921. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619863049>
- Kühn, S., & Gallinat, J. (2013). Does taste matter? How anticipation of cola brands influences gustatory processing in the brain. *PLoS ONE*, 8, e61569.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0061569>
- Lee, L., Frederick, S., & Ariely, D. (2006). Try it, you'll like it: The influence of expectation, consumption, and revelation on preferences for beer. *Psychological Science*, 17, 1054–1058. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01829.x>
- Lord, R. G., Foti, R. J., & De Vader, C. L. (1984). A test of leadership categorization theory: Internal structure, information processing, and leadership perceptions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 34(3), 343–378. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(84\)90043-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(84)90043-6)
- Lu, D., Huang, J., Seshagiri, A., Park, H., & Griggs, T. (2020, September 9). Faces of power: 80% are White, even as U.S. becomes more diverse. *New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/09/us/powerfulpeople-race-us.html>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Mosbergen, D. (2019, March 20). ICE has been wrongfully detaining U.S. citizens in Florida jails, says ACLU. HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ice-detainers-miami-florida-aclu_n_5c92c7c3e4b01b140d3536d9

Ngai, M. (2004). *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Phillips, & Jun, S. (2022). Why benefiting from discrimination is less recognized as discrimination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 122(5), 825–852. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000298>

Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. (2014). *Immigrant America: A portrait*. University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520959156>

Quilantan, B. & Cohen, D. (2019, July 19). Trump tells Dem congresswomen: Go back where you came from. *Politico*. <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/07/14/trump-congress-go-back-where-they-came-from-1415692>

Quillian, L., Pager, D., Midtbøen, A. H., & Hexel, O. (2017, October 11). Hiring discrimination against Black Americans hasn't declined in 25 years. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2017/10/hiring-discriminationagainst-Black-americans-hasnt-declined-in-25-years>

Richins, M.L. (1991) Social comparison and the idealized images of advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(1), 71-83. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209242>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Rizzo, S. (2020, August 13). Trump promotes false claims that Harris might not be a natural-born U.S. citizen. *The Washington Post*.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/08/13/trump-falsely-claims-harris-might-not-be-us-citizen/>

Rosette, A. S., Leonardelli, G. J., & Phillips, K. W. (2008). The White standard: Racial bias in leader categorization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(4), 758–777.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.4.758>

Schoemann, A. M, Boulton, A. J., & Short, S. D. (2017). Determining power and sample size for simple and complex mediation models. *Social Psychological & Personality Science, 8*(4), 379–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617715068>

Schildkraut, D. J. (2010). Americanism in the twenty-first century: Public opinion in the age of immigration. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511761249>

Slovic, P. (1995). The construction of preference. *American Psychologist, 50*, 364–371.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.50.5.364>

Stepanova E. V. & Strube, M. J. (2012). The role of skin color and facial physiognomy in racial categorization: Moderation by implicit racial attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(4), 867-878.

Stepanova, E. V, & Strube, M. J. (2009). Making of a face: Role of facial physiognomy, skin Tone, and color presentation mode in evaluations of racial typicality. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 149*(1), 66–81. <https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.149.1.66-81>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Strom, M., Zebrowitz, L., Zhang, S., Bronstad, P., Lee, H., & Yovel, G. (2012). Skin and bones: The Contribution of skin tone and facial structure to racial prototypicality ratings (skin tone, face structure, race prototypicality). *PLoS ONE*, 7(7), Article E41193.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0041193>

Tabachnick, B., & Fidell, Linda S. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.

Tajfel, H. (1972). Social categorization. English manuscript of “La catégorisation sociale.” (S. Moscovici, Ed.), *Introduction à la Psychologie Sociale*, Vol. 1, pp. 272–302). Paris: Larousse.

Tajfel, H. (1972). Social categorization (English manuscript of La catégorisation sociale). In S. + Moscovici, *Introduction à la Psychologie Sociale*, vol. 1 (pp. 272-302). Paris: Larousse.

Thaler, R. H. & Sunstein, C. R. (2008). *Nudge : improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*. Yale University Press.

The Constitution of the United States.

Tichenor, D. J. (2002). *Dividing lines: The politics of immigration control on America*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400824984>

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1981). *The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice*. *Science*, 211, 453–458. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.7455683>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *2020 Census Results*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/2020-census-results.html>

Von Neumann, & Morgenstern, O. (1944). *Theory of games and economic behavior*. Princeton University Press.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Williams, R.M. (1993). Racial Inequality and Racial Conflict: Recent Developments in Radical Theory. In: Darity, W. (eds) *Labor Economics: Problems in Analyzing Labor Markets*.

Recent Economic Thought Series, vol 29. Springer, Dordrecht.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-2938-1_8

Wells, G. L., & Windschitl, P. D. (1999). Stimulus sampling and social psychological

experimentation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25(9), 1115–1125.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672992512005>

Zou, L. X., & Cheryan, S. (2017). Two axes of subordination: A new model of racial position.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 112(5), 696–717.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000080>

Appendix 3

Reflecting on values – A brief online self-affirmation intervention reduces threat and improves
White Americans' attitudes toward organizational diversity efforts

Patrizia Chirco* and Sabine Sczesny**

*Patrizia Chirco, University of Bern and Central Washington University

( 0000-0002-9947-6775)

**Sabine Sczesny, University of Bern ( 0000-0002-1666-1263)

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Patrizia Chirco, Department of
Psychology, Central Washington University, 400 East University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926.

Email: patrizia.chirco@cwu.edu

Abstract

Promoting organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion might feel threatening to White individuals. We examined the effects of an online self-affirmation intervention to reduce White individuals' threat responses to such initiatives. Self-affirmed White individuals showed more positive attitudes toward diversity policies and lower levels of symbolic and realistic threats (Study 1). In Study 2 we also discovered that affirmed individuals expressed a greater inclination to be involved in DEI activities (e.g., voluntarily participate in DEI training). These intentions predicted their behavior of signing up for a DEI newsletter. Mediation analyses showed that self-affirmation led to more positive attitudes toward diversity policies which were related to more intended involvement in DEI activities. Our results highlight that self-affirmation interventions are effective and can lower threat responses to organizational DEI efforts. These findings are relevant to scholars and DEI specialists striving to work toward a more diverse and equitable work force.

Keywords: self-affirmation interventions, organizational diversity, realistic and symbolic threats, intergroup relations, DEI

Public Significance

Brief online self-affirmation interventions have the potential to improve attitudes toward organizational DEI efforts. Our findings are especially important given the recent political efforts to reverse and eliminate institutional DEI initiatives. All in all, the present research informs scholars and DEI professionals who strive for a more diverse and equitable work force and underscore the effectiveness of self-affirmation interventions positively influencing attitudes toward DEI efforts.

Reflecting on values – A brief online self-affirmation intervention reduces threat and improves White Americans’ attitudes toward organizational diversity efforts

While organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and trainings have existed for decades (Dobbin & Kalev, 2013), since the murder of George Floyd in 2020, antiracist movements have heightened the sense of urgency among American companies to introduce and promote initiatives aimed at increasing the diversity of their workforce (Stevens, 2020). In addition to being a matter of social justice and equity, more diverse workplaces have the potential for facilitating innovation, increasing group performance, and boosting the economy of communities to which the diverse workforce belongs (e.g., Levine et al., 2014; Phillips, 2014; Dezsö & Ross, 2012).

Attitudes Toward Organizational Diversity Efforts: Responses to Perceived Threat

Despite the benefits of DEI, organizational pro-diversity messages may be perceived as threatening by White job applicants, who react to them physiologically and emotionally (Dover et al., 2016). In essence, when confronted with race-based DEI policies, White people reported higher levels of threat related to loss of resources (Iyer, 2022) and perceived loss of economic and political power (Mangum & DeHaan, 2019; O’Brien et al., 2010; Renfro et al., 2006). Interestingly, White individuals keep feeling threatened even when diversity initiatives or policies are framed as benefitting their group (Brown & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). In recent years, even people who value diversity efforts have expressed diversity fatigue—a decline in response to DEI pushes—which may translate in reduced support for the implementation of organizational diversity initiatives and policies (Smith et al., 2021). One likely factor explaining such reactions is demography. The United States of America is projected to experience a racial

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

shift by 2044 when ethnic and racial minorities are expected to outnumber the country's White population, which has prompted negative reactions among White individuals (e.g., Danbold & Huo, 2015; Craig & Richeson, 2014). For example, White voters who live closer to Black neighborhoods are more likely to register as Republican and to vote for Republican candidates, especially those holding more nationalist ideologies, and support more extreme right-wing policies (Enos, 2016; Craig et al., 2018). Perceived threat has also led to increased beliefs in anti-White discrimination (Norton & Sommers, 2011; Wilkins & Kaiser 2014; Rasmussen et al., 2022). Beliefs in favoritism toward minorities of color also was at the root of the lawsuit that led to the legal demise of affirmative action in higher education in 2023 (Totenberg, 2023).

Reactions to Organizational Diversity Efforts: Realistic and Symbolic Threats

In the framework of Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT), threats are grouped as either realistic (e.g., threats to tangible resources such as fear of loss of economic resources, political power, general welfare, etc.) or symbolic (e.g., threats to values, morals, etc.). These perceived threats predict White individuals' prejudice toward members of racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Maddux et al., 2008; Obaidi et al., 2019) possibly affecting those individuals' attitudes (e.g., anti-diversity policy beliefs) and behaviors such as refraining from applying for a position at a company that promotes pro-diversity initiatives (e.g., Brown & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021; Dover et al., 2016). Given the impact that symbolic and realistic threats can have on individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward pro-diversity initiatives, it becomes crucial to try to understand how those threats might be reduced.

Possible Solutions: Self-Affirmation as Threat Reduction Interventions

Scholars have used self-affirmation interventions to prompt a psychological process meant to reduce perceived threats (e.g., Hanel et al., 2023; Fotuhi et al., 2021; Cohen & Sherman, 2014). Encouraging people to think about core values such as their relationship with friends and family provides people with more psychological resources to focus on the positive aspects of the Self (Sherman & Cohen, 2006), thereby reducing threat perception and defensiveness (Schumann, 2014) as well as lowering insecurity (Stinson et al., 2011). Self-affirmation interventions have successfully been applied to a myriad of domains including in research on how to improve unhealthy behaviors like drinking, smoking, and eating (Logel & Cohen, 2012; Polivy & Herman, 2002; Ward & Mann, 2000) and studies on how to reduce threat experienced by low-income individuals (Fotuhi et al., 2021) and people who belong to racial/ethnic minorities in educational settings (e.g., Steele, 1997; Sherman et al., 2013). Scholars have also investigated how White people's self-image—also influenced by self-affirmation—impacts how they perceive and interact with diversity policies and racism (e.g., Lowery et al., 2012; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008; Phillips & Lowery, 2015). More recently, researchers found that when affirmed, White teachers working in schools predominantly serving students belonging to minoritized groups—a situation likely to elicit psychological threat—reported having better relationships with their students and generally felt better than non-affirmed White teachers did (Brady et al., 2023).

To our knowledge, while the negative effects that organizational pro-diversity initiatives have on people (both White and non-White) have been researched extensively (e.g., Dover et al. 2020a, 2020b; Kaiser et al., 2021; Georgeac & Rattan, 2023), the potential of self-affirmation for mitigating perceived threats and improving attitudes of White individuals toward

organizational DEI efforts remains relatively unexplored. Consequently, addressing this gap in the literature is both relevant and timely because it may provide a valuable tool to increase the success of organizational pro-diversity efforts and initiatives.

The Present Research: Aims and Hypotheses

The present set of studies extends prior work on the effects of self-affirmation by testing the general hypothesis that self-affirmation interventions might be an effective tool to lower threat responses, improve attitudes toward diversity policies, and increase people's intentions to be more involved in DEI initiatives. All in all, we expected that, when exposed to pro-diversity messages, affirmed White individuals¹⁷ would show more positive attitudes toward diversity policies, express lower levels of symbolic and realistic threats than would non-affirmed White individuals. We also expected that affirmed White individuals would show more intended as well as more actual involvement in DEI activities than would non-affirmed White individuals. Further, we hypothesized that White individuals' ratings of intended involvement in DEI activities (attitude) would predict their actual involvement in DEI activities (behavior) and that the relationship between self-affirmation intervention and intended involvement in DEI activities would be mediated by symbolic and realistic threats as well as positive attitudes toward diversity policies. Importantly, for the present set of studies we chose not to include a control condition (i.e., presence vs. absence of pro-diversity message) because previous investigations (Dover et al., 2016) found that only participants exposed to a pro-diversity message showed threat responses.

¹⁷ We focused on White Americans because, when confronted with DEI initiatives, they perceive more threat than individuals belonging to other groups do (e.g., Dover et al., 2016).

Study 1

We examined whether a self-affirmation intervention would lower symbolic (e.g., perceived threats to values) and realistic threats (e.g., perceived threats to welfare) as well as improve White people's attitudes toward diversity policies. Specifically, we tested whether affirmed (vs. non-affirmed) White individuals would report lower levels of symbolic and realistic threats and show more positive attitudes toward diversity policies.

Method

Participants and Design

The sample size was determined through a priori power analysis (G*Power 3.1; Faul et al., 2007) to detect effects with sufficient power, $d = .50$, $\alpha = .05$, $1 - \beta = 0.80$ and based on the smallest effect size of interest (Lakens, 2022). To account for attrition and potential data exclusion, we preregistered for $N = 250$.¹⁸ With approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), we sampled 250 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.49$, $SD = 10.81$) of whom 53% identified as male and 54% as liberal. All were over the age of 18, accessed the survey using their participants' accounts, and received \$1.20 for their participation. We used a simple between-subjects experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two self-affirmation conditions: affirmed vs. non-affirmed, shown a company's diversity statement, and asked questions about perceived symbolic threats, realistic threats, and their attitudes toward

¹⁸ All materials, data, research designs, preregistered hypotheses, planned statistical analyses of both studies, and syntax needed to reproduce analyses are openly accessible on the Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/79jf5/>).

diversity policies. The entire experiment lasted approximately 10 minutes. To ensure data quality, we used CloudResearch's approved participant pool (Hauser et al., 2022).

Materials and Procedure

For the selected intervention, individuals were asked to look at an 11-item list of values (e.g., creativity, religious values, relationship to friends and family), think about them, select the top two or three values, complete a short written assignment reflecting on when those values were most important to them, and then list and rank them by importance (e.g., Cohen & Sherman, 2014; McQueen & Klein, 2006). In the non-affirmed condition, participants were asked to think about values least important to them and write about why these values might be important to someone else. The *diversity statement*, previously employed in research concerned with understanding threat responses to diversity messages (Dover et al., 2016), was shown to all participants (see supplemental materials for prompt).

To assess their *attitudes toward diversity policies*, participants were asked to rate items such as "Policies meant to benefit racial minorities do more harm than good" (Brown & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021) using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*disagree*). The scores for this scale were recoded such that higher scores indicated more positive attitudes toward diversity policies. The participants' answers to the four statements were averaged to form the scale *Positive Attitudes toward Diversity Policies* ($\alpha = .90$).

To measure levels of *symbolic threats*, all participants responded to items such as "The identity of American companies is threatened because the workforce is diversifying too much" (adapted from Obaidi et al., 2019) using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*) with higher numbers signaling higher ratings of symbolic threats.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Participants' answers to the three statements were averaged and computed into the scale *Symbolic Threat* ($\alpha = .95$).

Realistic threats were assessed by asking participants to respond to items such as "Because of the diversifying workforce, White Americans have more difficulties in finding a job" (adapted from Obaidi et al., 2019) using an adapted 7-point-Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*) with higher ratings signaling higher perceptions of realistic threat. Participants' answers to the three statements were averaged to form the scale *Realistic Threat* ($\alpha = .95$).

Results

All assumptions for analyses were met (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013) and no missing values were found.¹⁹ Pearson's correlations showed that the relationships between the dependent variables (i.e., positive attitudes toward diversity policies, symbolic and realistic threats) were strongly correlated with coefficients ranging between $-.79$ and $-.84$.²⁰ Supporting our expectations, independent samples t-tests (see Figure 1) showed a significant difference between conditions²¹, $t(248) = -1.95$, $p = .026$, $d = -.25$, such that affirmed participants ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.59$) held more positive attitudes toward diversity policies than did non-affirmed individuals ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.77$). Similarly, our data supported our hypothesis that self-affirmation condition would affect White people's ratings of symbolic threat, $t(248) = -1.69$, $p =$

¹⁹ Throughout this article, we interpret p-values $> .05$ based on context and practical implications and not based on the conventional approach (Wasserstein et al., 2019).

²⁰ A table displaying means and standard deviations for all variables can be found in the supplemental materials.

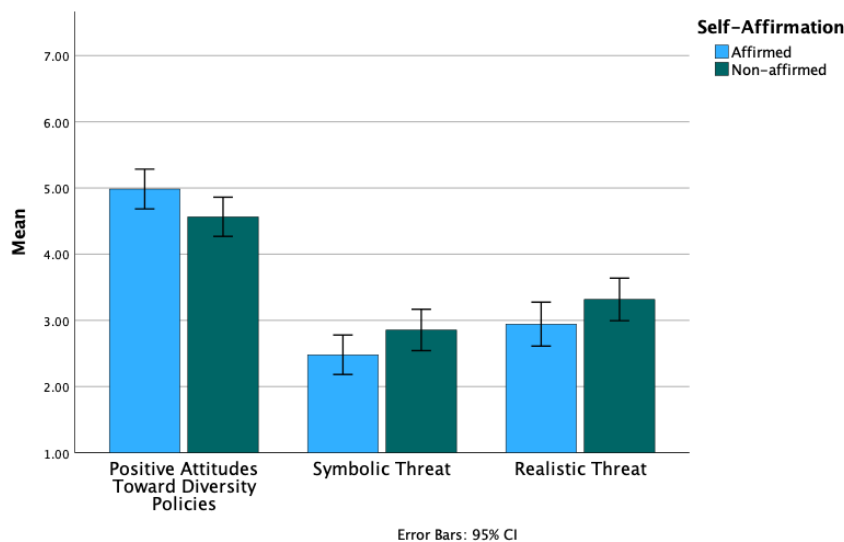
²¹ We ran exploratory analyses controlling for political affiliation and found that there was no interaction between self-affirmation (affirmed vs. non-affirmed) and political orientation (conservative vs. liberal) on our outcomes of interest (all $ps > .427$). These findings suggest that the intervention was effective for affirmed conservative individuals as much as it was for affirmed liberal individuals.

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

.047, $d = -.22$. Specifically, we found that affirmed participants ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.58$) reported lower levels of symbolic threat than did non-affirmed participants ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.86$). The results also showed that participants in the affirmed condition ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.74$) reported lower ratings of realistic threat than did those in the non-affirmed condition ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.92$); $t(248) = -1.59$, $p = .057^{22}$, $d = -.20$).

Figure 1

Outcomes of interest for each condition (Study 1)



Note. Participants' ratings for positive attitudes toward diversity policies and symbolic and realistic threats are shown for affirmed and non-affirmed conditions. Scales ranged from 1 to 7 with higher values signaling more positive attitudes or higher perceptions of threat.

Study 2

The results of Study 1 were intriguing. However, the question of whether affirmed people would also show more intended and actual behaviors toward organizational DEI efforts

²² Considering the smallest effect size of interest ($d = 0.5$), we performed equivalence tests for the realistic threat variable. Given equivalence bounds of $-.500$ and $.500$ (raw scale), we concluded that the observed effect between the groups affirmed vs. non-affirmed, $t(242.98) = 0.54$, $p = .294$, was not equivalent suggesting a significant finding.

was still unanswered. To answer this question, the aims of Study 2 were to replicate results from Study 1 and expand on them by investigating whether affirmed individuals would also show more active involvement in DEI activities. Further, Study 2 examined whether symbolic and realistic threats as well as positive attitudes toward diversity policies would function as underlying psychological mechanisms for people's intended involvement in DEI activities. Consequently, we tested a mediation model positing that symbolic and realistic threats as well as positive attitudes toward diversity policies would mediate the relationship between self-affirmation and intended involvement in DEI activities.

Method

Participants and Design

A priori power analyses for Study 2 were preregistered based on effects $d = .50$, $\alpha = .05$, $1 - \beta = 0.80$. However, the observed effect sizes of Study 1 ranged from $d = .20$ to $.25$. Hence, we used the obtained effect sizes from Study 1 to run a sensitivity analysis (Bartlett & Charles, 2022) using the jpower module in Jamovi which resulted in an observed power of 0.76. Our sample for Study 2 consisted of 252 individuals ($M_{\text{age}} = 42.62$, $SD = 13.01$) of whom 52% identified as female and 45% as liberal. All participants identified as White, were recruited via CloudResearch's approved participant pool (Hauser et al., 2022), and received \$1.50 for their participation. The experiment was a between-subjects design with two self-affirmation conditions (affirmed vs. non-affirmed).

Materials and Procedure

Again, the study was administered online, and participants accessed the survey link by accessing their accounts. The prompts for the self-affirmation conditions and the company's

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

pro-diversity statement were the same we used in Study 1. We also used the same measures as in Study 1 to assess the participants' positive attitudes toward diversity policies (four items; $\alpha = .87$), symbolic threat (three items; $\alpha = .94$), and realistic threat (three items; $\alpha = .95$). In addition, we measured their *intended involvement in DEI activities* with self-developed questions such as "Think about your workplace, how likely are you to voluntarily participate in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training?". The questions were answered using a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*).

Prior to data analysis, we conducted a principal component factor analysis which indicated that all five items loaded substantially on one factor (all $r > 0.89$). Thus, we combined the items into the scale *intended involvement in DEI activities*, with higher values signaling more intended involvement in DEI activities ($\alpha = .95$). We measured the participants' *actual involvement in DEI activities* by asking, "Would you like to sign up to receive more information about diversity, equity, and inclusion in a regular newsletter?" The participants answered with either *yes* or *no* and were provided with a space in which they could enter their email address if they were interested in receiving such information.

The procedure was identical to Study 1 except for the additional measures (i.e., intended and actual involvement in DEI activities). During the debriefing process, participants were informed that asking them about their intention to sign up to receive more information about DEI (actual involvement) was an outcome of interest of the study and that they would not receive such information. However, we provided participants with websites they could visit in case they were interested in accessing information and resources about DEI. All in all, the experiment lasted approximately 15 minutes.

Results

Once more, all assumptions for analyses were met (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013) and no missing values were found. Pearson's correlations showed that the relationships between the dependent variables (i.e., positive attitudes toward diversity policies, symbolic and realistic threats) were strongly correlated with coefficients ranging between $-.79$ and $-.78$.²³ In line with our hypotheses (see supplemental materials for Figure 2), the analyses revealed significant effects of self-affirmation on White people's attitudes toward diversity policies, $t(250) = 2.78, p = .003, d = 0.35$, symbolic threat, $t(250) = -2.37, p = .009, d = -0.30$, realistic threat, $t(250) = -2.35, p = .010, d = -0.30$, and intended involvement in DEI activities, $t(250) = 1.65, p = .051, d = 0.21$. Specifically, our findings replicated those of Study 1 and confirmed that affirmed White participants reported lower levels of symbolic and realistic threats and expressed more positive attitudes toward diversity policies than did non-affirmed White participants (See Table 1). Further, compared to non-affirmed participants, affirmed participants expressed higher rates of intended involvement in DEI activities.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations (SDs) From Study 2 Variables Across Conditions

	<u>Affirmed</u>		<u>Non-Affirmed</u>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Positive Attitudes toward Diversity Policies	5.02	1.47	4.49	1.56
Symbolic Threat	2.40	1.57	2.87	1.59
Realistic Threat	2.96	1.63	3.45	1.71
Intended Involvement in DEI activities	4.39	1.87	4.00	1.91

Note. $N = 252$

²³ A figure displaying the results for all variables can be found in the supplemental materials.

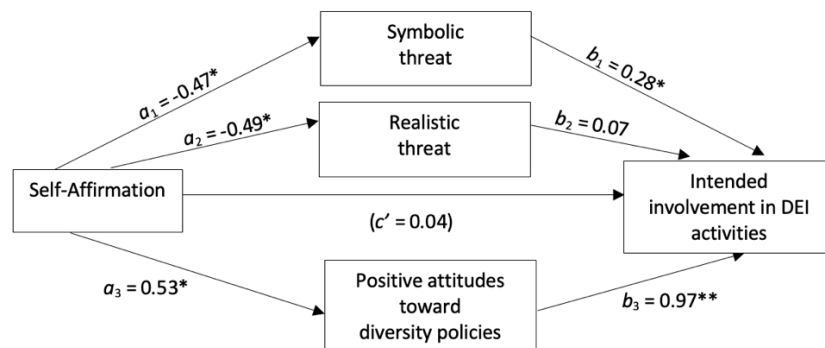
A Chi-square test of independence showed that, in contrast to our expectations, affirmed participants were not more likely to sign up for a diversity newsletter, $\chi^2 (1, N = 252) = 1.24, p = .265, \varphi_c = 0.07$.²⁴ Interestingly, the data showed that most of the participants in the study (81%) did not express any interest in signing up for the diversity newsletter. In line with hypotheses, a logistic regression showed that the overall model was significant; $\chi^2 (1, N = 252) = 34.93, p < .001$, and explained 21% (R^2_N) of the variance. That is, the data suggested that intended involvement in DEI activities significantly predicted participants' likelihood to sign up for a DEI newsletter, $\chi^2 (1, N = 252) = 25.63, p < .001$ (OR = 95% CI [0.4, 0.7]).²⁵ We further predicted that the relationship between the affirmation intervention and intended involvement in DEI activities was mediated by symbolic and realistic threats as well as positive attitudes toward diversity policies. Specifically, we predicted that self-affirmation indirectly influenced involvement intentions in DEI activities via symbolic threats, realistic threats, and attitudes toward diversity policies (see Figure 2).

²⁴ Because this result was related to a core hypothesis, we ran Bayesian analyses (Guel & Dickey, 1974) which provided support in favor of an absence of effect of self-affirmation on actual involvement in DEI activities ($BF_{01} = 2.763$, 95% CI [-0.277, 0.978]).

²⁵ For explorative purposes, we also investigated whether the other dependent variables in the study (i.e., symbolic and realistic threats and positive attitudes toward diversity policies) predicted the participants' intention to sign up for the newsletter. However, none of these outcomes reached the conventional threshold of significance (all $ps > .064$).

Figure 2

Mediation analyses predicting White participants' intentions of active involvement in DEI activities.



Note. Self-Affirmation condition was coded non-affirmed = 0, affirmed = 1; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

A parallel mediation analysis (PROCESS macro; Hayes, 2013) with 10,000 bootstrap resamples showed that, while symbolic threat, $a_1b_1 = -0.13$, 95% CI [-0.028, 0.01] and realistic threat, $a_2b_2 = -0.03$, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.07] did not mediate the relationship between self-affirmation and intended involvement in DEI activities, self-affirmation was indirectly related to intended involvement in DEI activities through its relationship with positive attitudes toward diversity policies, $a_3b_3 = 0.52$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.90]. That is, affirmed participants reported more positive attitudes toward diversity policies than non-affirmed participants ($a_3 = 0.53$, $p = .005$) and more positive attitudes toward diversity policies were related to more intended involvement in DEI activities ($b_3 = 0.97$, $p < .001$). The direct path indicated that positive attitudes toward diversity policies fully mediated the effect between self-affirmation and intended involvement in DEI activities ($c' = .004$, $p = .837$).

General Discussion

Our research adds to the literature on the effects of organizational diversity efforts on White individuals' attitudes and behaviors in several ways. First, we provide evidence of the effectiveness of self-affirmation in lowering perceptions of symbolic and realistic threats experienced by White people when exposed to organizational pro-diversity messages as well as improving their attitudes toward diversity policies. Second, in Study 2 we also find evidence that, when affirmed, White individuals report more intentions of being involved in DEI activities. Interestingly, our results further show that the extent to which affirmed people report higher levels of intent to be involved in DEI influences their actual involvement in such efforts. These findings are especially encouraging given that additional exploratory analyses showed that the intervention was effective in improving the attitudes even of conservative individuals who are more resistant to and more threatened by diversity efforts (Brown et al. 2022).

Contrary to our expectations, however, self-affirmation did not influence people's behavior (i.e., actual involvement in DEI activities) as 80% of all participants expressed no intention of signing up for the newsletter. While this might be due to a floor effect, it is possible that the current public attention that organizational pro-diversity initiatives are receiving (e.g., Hendrickson, 2023; Diaz, 2023) may have led participants to respond to the attitudinal measures in ways they believed to be positive and desired by society (An, 2015; Lanz et al., 2022). Yet, if social desirability bias was at play, it was not powerful enough to influence the participants' behavior. While past research on whether and how attitudes shape behavior suggests that this relationship is linear (e.g., Kraus et al., 1995; Clarkson et al., 2008), more

recent work has underlined that it is more complex (Bechler et al., 2021) and possibly influenced by moderating variables (Fazio & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005). Hence, it is plausible that the relationship between the participants' improved attitudes toward organizational diversity efforts and their behavior (signing up for the newsletter) was affected by factors such as perceived scarcity (Krosch & Amodio, 2019; Park et al., 2022) over resources (increasing diversity = fewer job opportunities for members of majority group). It is also possible that the deterrent was the behavioral measure we chose itself. That is, participants might have perceived agreeing to receive a regular newsletter as entailing too long a commitment and additional work such as unsubscribing. Further, given the prominence and pervasiveness of the topic of organizational DEI efforts, it is reasonable to assume that participants might have experienced saturation of requests about such initiatives (Smith et al., 2021). All in all, our findings are consistent with previous work (e.g., Lannin et al., 2019; Sherman & Hartson, 2011; Sherman & Cohen, 2006) and extend it by showing that self-affirmation interventions are effective even when it comes to lowering threat responses and improving attitudes toward organizational DEI initiatives.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our sample only allowed us to make inferences about White individuals. While they are the ones who report the highest levels of threat from pro-diversity efforts (e.g., Dover et al., 2016; Brown & Jacoby-Senhor, 2021; Kaiser et al., 2021), organizational pro-diversity messages can have negative effects (i.e., undermining anticipated sense of belonging and wish to join a company) on people belonging to underrepresented groups as well (Georgeac & Rattan, 2023). Therefore, future research should test self-affirmation interventions and DEI

using a demographically diverse sample. Given that participants' attitudes did not align with their behavior, and that symbolic and realistic threats did not mediate the relationship between self-affirmation and intended involvement in DEI activities, it might be worthwhile to replicate our study using a different behavioral measure that does not involve a long-term commitment such as signing a petition (Yuksel et al., 2020; Morales et al., 2017) and implementing behavioral measures that carry clear benefits for fostering diversity (e.g., Moreau et al. 2021). Examining perceived scarcity (e.g., Krosch & Amodio, 2019; Park et al., 2022) and diversity fatigue (Smith et al., 2021) as additional mediators or moderators might yield additional insight. The role of political orientation (Simpson et al., 2017), social dominance orientation (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010), or right-wing authoritarianism (Kauff et al., 2015), which have shown to function as moderators of symbolic and realistic threats, should also be looked into. It can be argued that self-affirmation, which works to reduce threats perceived by the Self and not the ingroup (Steele, 1988; Cohen & Sherman, 2014), might not be effective in lowering symbolic and realistic threats which are usually attributed to group threats (Stephan et al., 2009). However, self-affirmation appears to foster more positive attitudes toward outgroups (Lindsay & Creswell, 2014) affecting group-based responses (Jun et al., 2021; Derks et al., 2009) effectively reducing perceived threats and endorsement of discriminatory policies (Badea et al., 2018). The fact that the self-affirmation intervention in the present set of studies effectively reduced group-based threat responses (i.e., symbolic and realistic threats) makes these findings a valuable contribution to the current literature. To boost the theoretical contribution of the findings of the present set of studies, future research could, for example, compare the effects of self-affirmation vs. group-affirmation on the outcomes of interest. Lastly, because

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

organizational pro-diversity efforts have become more prominent and also used more frequently in political propaganda since 2020, it might be worthwhile to explore whether including a company's neutral message may now return different results than the lack of threat responses to a neutral (non-pro-diversity) message recorded by Dover and colleagues (2016).

Conclusion

This research highlights the powerful and beneficial impact that self-affirmation interventions have on lowering threat responses experienced by White individuals when exposed to companies' pro-diversity initiatives. Such threats can constitute barriers to the successful pursuit and implementation of organizational DEI efforts. Given that self-affirmation interventions are easy to implement and have positive and long-lasting effects, it might be advantageous to make them part of a company's culture.

References

- An, B. P. (2015). The role of social desirability bias and racial/ethnic composition on the relation between education and attitude toward immigration restrictionism. *The Social Science Journal (Fort Collins)*, 52(4), 459–467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2014.09.005>
- Badea, C., Binning, K., Verhiac, J.-F., & Sherman, D. K. (2018). In the aftermath of terrorism: Effects of self versus group affirmation on support for discriminatory policies. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 76, 421–428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.11.004>
- Bartlett, J. & Charles, S. (2022). Power to the people: A beginner’s tutorial to power analysis using jamovi. *Meta-Psychology*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.15626/MP.2021.3078>
- Bechler, C. J., Tormala, Z. L., & Rucker, D. D. (2021). The attitude–behavior relationship revisited. *Psychological Science*, 32(8), 1285–1297. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797621995206>
- Brady, S.T., Griffiths, C.M. & Cohen, G.L. The affirmed (White) teacher in a cross-race context. *Soc Psychol Educ* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-023-09812-z>
- Brown, N. D., & Jacoby-Senhor, D. S. (2021). Majority members misperceive even “win-win” diversity policies as unbeneficial to them. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000372>
- Brown, X., Rucker, J. M., & Richeson, J. A. (2022). Political ideology moderates White Americans’ reactions to racial demographic change. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 25(3), 642–660. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302211052516>
- Clarkson, J. J., Tormala, Z. L., & Rucker, D. D. (2008). A new look at the consequences of attitude

- certainty: The amplification hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(4), 810–825. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013192>
- Cohen, G. L., & Sherman, D. K. (2014). The psychology of change: Self-affirmation and social psychological intervention. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 333–371. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115137>
- Craig, M. A., & Richeson, J. A. (2014). On the precipice of a “majority minority” America: Perceived status threat from the racial demographic shift affects White Americans’ political ideology. *Psychological Science*, 25, 1189–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614527113>
- Craig, M. A., Rucker, J. M., & Richeson, J. A. (2018). Racial and political dynamics of an approaching “majority-minority” United States. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 667, 204–214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716218766269>
- Danbold, F. & Huo, Y. J. (2015). No longer “All-American”? Whites’ defensive reactions to their numerical decline. *Social Psychological & Personality Science*, 6(2), 210–218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550614546355>
- Derks, B., van Laar, C., & Ellemers, N. (2009). Working for the self or working for the group: How self- versus group affirmation affects collective behavior in low-status groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(1), 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013068>
- Dezsö, & Ross, D. G. (2012). Does female representation in top management improve firm performance? A panel data investigation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33(9), 1072–1089. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.1955>
- Diaz, J. (2023, May 15). Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signs a bill banning DEI initiatives in public

- colleges. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/15/1176210007/florida-ron-desantis-dei-ban-diversity>
- Dobbin, F. & Kalev, A. (2013). The origins and effects of corporate diversity programs. In Q. M. Robertson (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity and Work* (pp. 253-281). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199736355.013.0015>
- Dover, T. L., Major, B., & Kaiser, C. R. (2016). Members of high-status groups are threatened by pro-diversity organizational messages. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 62, 58–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2015.10.006>
- Dover, T. L., Major, B., & Kaiser, C. R. (2020a). Cardiovascular, behavioral, and psychological responses to organizational prodiversity messages among racial/ethnic minorities. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 136843022094422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220944222>
- Dover, T., Kaiser, C. R., & Major, B. (2020b). Mixed signals: The unintended effects of diversity initiatives. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 14(1), 152–181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12059>
- Duckitt, J., & Sibley, C. G. (2010). Right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation differentially moderate intergroup effects on prejudice. *European Journal of Personality*, 24(7), 583-601.
- Enos, R. D. (2016). What the demolition of public housing teaches us about the impact of racial threat on political behavior. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1), 123–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12156>
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical

- power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39, 175-191
- Fazio, R. H., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R. (2005). Acting as we feel: When and how attitudes guide behavior. In T. C. Brock & M. C. Green (Eds.), *Persuasion: Psychological insights and perspectives* (pp. 41–62). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Fotuhi, O., Ehret, P. J., Kocsik, S., & Cohen, G. L., (2021). Boosting college prospects among low-income students: Using self-affirmation to trigger motivation and a behavioral ladder to channel it. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000283>
- Georgeac, & Rattan, A. (2023). The business case for diversity backfires: Detrimental effects of organizations' instrumental diversity rhetoric for underrepresented group members' sense of belonging. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 124(1), 69–108.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000394>
- Gunel, E., & Dickey, J. (1974). Bayes factors for independence in contingency tables. *Biometrika*, 61, 545-557.
- Hanel, P. H., Roy, D., Taylor, S., Franjeh, M., Heffer, C., Tanesini, A., & Maio, G. R., (2023). Using self-affirmation to increase intellectual humility in debate. *The Royal Society* 10(2),
<https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.220958>
- Hauser, D.J., Moss, A.J., Rosenzweig, C. et al. (2022). Evaluating CloudResearch's Approved Group as a solution for problematic data quality on MTurk. *Behavior Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-022-01999-x>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Methodology in the social sciences. Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Press.

Hendrickson, S. (2023, May 17). *Ohio Senate OKs higher education bill limiting diversity training*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/ohio-higher-education-bill-diversity-training-40a525ea280918be454fb85d588f8e37>

Iyer, A. (2022). Understanding advantaged groups' opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies: The role of perceived threat. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 16(5). <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12666>

Jun, J., Wen, T. J., & Wu, L. (2021). The Effects of Self vs. Group affirmation and message framing on college students' vape-free campus policy support. *Health Communication*, 36(11), 1441–1451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1767446>

Kaiser, C. R., Dover, T. L., Small, P., Xia, G., Brady, L. M., & Major, B. (2021). Diversity initiatives and White Americans' perceptions of racial victimhood. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672211030391>

Kauff, M., Asbrock, F., Thörner, S., & Wagner, U. (2013). Side effects of multiculturalism: The interaction effect of a multicultural ideology and authoritarianism on prejudice and diversity beliefs. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(3), 305–320.

Kraus, S. J. (1995). Attitudes and the prediction of behavior: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21(1), 58–75.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167295211007>

Krosch, A., & Amodio, D. (2019). Scarcity disrupts the neural encoding of black faces: A

- Socioperceptual pathway to discrimination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 117(5), 859–875.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000168>
- Lakens, D. (2022). Sample size justification. *Collabra. Psychology*, 8(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.33267>
- Lannin, D. G., Vogel, D. L., Guyll, M., & Seidman, A. J. (2019). Reducing threat responses to help-seeking information: Influences of self-affirmations and reassuring information. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 66(3), 375–383. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000313>
- Lanz, L., Thielmann, I., & Gerpott, F. H. (2022). Are social desirability scales desirable? A meta-analytic test of the validity of social desirability scales in the context of prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality*, 90(2), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12662>
- Levine, S. S., Apfelbaum, E. P., Bernard, M., Bartelt, V. L., Zajac, E. J., & Stark, D. (2014). Ethnic diversity deflates price bubbles. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS*, 111(52), 18524–18529. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1407301111>
- Lindsay, E. K. & Creswell, J. D. (2014). Helping the self help others: Self-affirmation increases self-compassion and pro-social behaviors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 421–421.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00421>
- Logel, C. & Cohen, G. L., (2012). The role of the self in physical health: Testing the effect of values-affirmation intervention on weight loss. *Psychological Science*, 23, 53-55.
- Lowery, B. S., Knowles, E. D., Chow, R. M., & Unzueta, M. M. (2012). Paying for positive group

esteem: How inequity frames affect Whites' responses to redistributive policies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(2), 323–336.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024598>

Maddux, W. W., Galinsky, A. D., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Polifroni, M. (2008). When being a model minority is good...and bad: Realistic threat explains negativity toward Asian Americans. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34(1), 74–89.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167207309195>

Mangum, M., & DeHaan, L. (2019). Entitlement and perceived racial discrimination: The missing links to White opinions toward affirmative action and preferential hiring and promotion. *American Politics Research*, 47, 415–442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X18816709>

McQueen, A., & Klein, W. M. (2006). Experimental manipulations of self-affirmation: A systematic review. *Self and Identity*, 5, 289–354.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15298860600805325>

Morales, A. C., Amir, O., & Lee, L. (2017). Keeping it real in experimental research—Understanding when, where, and how to enhance realism and measure consumer behavior. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(2), 465–476.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx048>

Moreau, G., Isenberg, N., & Brauer, M. (2021). How to promote diversity and inclusion in educational settings: Behavior change, climate surveys, and effective pro-diversity initiatives. *Frontiers in Education* (6). <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.668250>

Norton, M. I., & Sommers, S. R. (2011). Whites see racism as a zero-sum game that they are

now losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(3), 215–218.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691611406922>

Obaidi, M., Kunst, J. R., Kteily, N., Thomsen, L., & Sidanius, J. (2019). Living under threat: Mutual threat perception drives anti-Muslim and anti-Western hostility in the age of terrorism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(3), 670–670.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2555>

O'Brien, L. T., Garcia, D., Crandall, C. S., & Kordys, J. (2010). White Americans' opposition to affirmative action: Group interest and the harm to beneficiaries objection. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 49, 895–903. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466610X518062>

Park, J., Eom, H. J., & Spence, C. (2022). The effect of perceived scarcity on strengthening the attitude–behavior relation for sustainable luxury products. *The Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 31(3), 469–483. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2020-3091>

Phillips, L. T & Lowery, B. S. (2015). The hard-knock life? Whites claim hardships in response to racial inequity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 61, 12–18.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2015.06.008>

Phillips, K. W. (2014, October 1). *How diversity makes us smarter*. Scientific American.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

Polivy, J., & Herman, C. P. (2002). Causes of eating disorders. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 187-213.

Rasmussen, R. , Levari, D. E., Akhtar, M., Crittle, C. S., Gately, M., Pagan, J., Brennen, A.,

Cashman, D., Wulff, A. N., Norton, M. I., Sommers, S. R., & Urry, H. L. (2022). White (but

Not Black) Americans continue to see racism as a zero-sum game; White conservatives (but not moderates or liberals) see themselves as losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 17456916221082111–17456916221082111.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916221082111><https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.4.615>

Renfro, C. L., Duran, A., Stephan, W. G., & Clason, D. L. (2006). The role of threat in attitudes toward affirmative action and its beneficiaries. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36, 41–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9029.2006.00003>

Schumann, K. (2014). An affirmed self and a better apology: The effect of self-affirmation on transgressors' responses to victims. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 54, 89–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2014.04.013>

Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 183–242. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(06\)38004-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38004-5)

Sherman, D. K., Hartson, K. A., Binning, K. R., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Taborsky-Barba, S., Tomassetti, S., Nussbaum, A. D., & Cohen, G. L. (2013). Deflecting the trajectory and changing the narrative: How self-affirmation affects academic performance and motivation under identity threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(4), 591–618. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031495>

Sherman, D. K., & Hartson, K. A. (2011). Reconciling self-defense with self-criticism: Self-affirmation theory. In M. D. Alicke & C. Sedikides (Eds.), *Handbook of self-enhancement and self-protection* (pp. 128–154). New York, NY: Guilford Press

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

- Simpson, A., Rios, K., & Cowgill, C. M. (2017). Godless in essence? Psychological essentialism, theistic meta-beliefs, and anti-atheist prejudice. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 119, 35-45.
- Smith, J. L., McPartlan, P., Poe, J., & Thoman, D. B. (2021). Diversity fatigue: A survey for measuring attitudes towards diversity enhancing efforts in academia. (2021). *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 27(4), 659–674.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000406>
- Steele, C. M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52, 613-629
- Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 21, 261–302.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60229-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60229-4)
- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., Morrison, K. R. (2009). Intergroup threat theory. In T. D. Nelson (Ed.), *Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination* (pp. 43-59). Taylor and Francis.
- Stevens, P. (2020, June 11). *Companies are making bold promises about greater diversity, but there's a long way to go*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/11/companies-are-making-bold-promises-about-greater-diversity-theres-a-long-way-to-go.html>
- Stinson, D. A., Logel, C., Shepherd, S., & Zanna, M. P. (2011). Rewriting the self-fulfilling prophecy of social rejection: Self-affirmation improves relational security and social behavior up to 2 months later. *Psychological Science*, 22(9), 1145–1149.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611417725>

REACTIONS TO A DIVERSIFYING NATION

Totenberg, N. (2023, June 29). Supreme Court guts affirmative action, effectively ending race-conscious admissions. *npr*. <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/29/1181138066/affirmative-action-supreme-court-decision>

Unzueta, M. M., Lowery, B. S., & Knowles, E. D. (2008). How believing in affirmative action quotas protects White men's self-esteem. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 105(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2007.05.001>

Ward, A., & Mann, T. (2000). Don't mind if I do: Disinhibited eating under cognitive load. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 753-763.

Wasserstein, R. L., Schirm, A. L., & Lazar, N. A. (2019). Moving to a world beyond " $p < 0.05$." *The American Statistician*, 73(sup1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00031305.2019.1583913>

Yuksel, U., Thai, N. T., & Lee, M. S. W. (2020). Boycott them! No, boycott this! Do choice overload and small-agent rationalization inhibit the signing of anti-consumption petitions? *Psychology & Marketing*, 37(2), 340–354. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21293>

Appendix 4

Erklärung zur Dissertation

Philosophisch-humanwissenschaftliche Fakultät
Dekanat
Fabrikstrasse 8, CH-3012 Bern

u^b

b
UNIVERSITÄT
BERN

Erklärung zur Dissertation

Hiermit bestätige ich, dass ich die Dissertation (Titel):

White Americans' reactions to a racially diversifying nation and social psychological interventions to address them.

im Fach Social Psychology

unter der Leitung von Prof. Dr. Sabine Sczesny

ohne unerlaubte Hilfe ausgeführt und an keiner anderen Universität zur Erlangung eines akademischen Grades eingereicht habe.

Datum September 2023

Unterschrift

