

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Honors College

Fall 12-2023

Religious Self-Identity and Racism

Alexandria Morgan

University of Maine - Main, alexbmorgan13@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/honors>



Part of the [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#), [Religion Commons](#), and the [Social Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Morgan, Alexandria, "Religious Self-Identity and Racism" (2023). *Honors College*. 843.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/honors/843>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors College by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

RELIGIOUS SELF-IDENTITY AND RACISM

by

Alexandria Banou Morgan

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors
(Psychology)

The Honors College

University of Maine

May 2025

Advisory Committee:

Jordan P. LaBouff, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychology and Honors, Advisor
Susan Bredlau, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Jennifer Blossom, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Psychology

ABSTRACT

This project is a replication of a study by Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff (2010) that subliminally primed American Christian participants to think about Christianity subconsciously and found increased prejudice towards Black Americans. This study is often cited to support the claim that “thinking about religion makes people more prejudiced,” despite not having been replicated effectively. Replicability is crucial to make appropriate claims.

We replicated the original study with updated explicit priming methods as well as updated racial prejudice scales with a recruited national sample of 500 white American Christians through Prolific.ac. Participants were randomly assigned to a priming condition, where they are asked to reflect on their identity as a Christian, American, an American Christian, or a neutral control group. After completing the prime, they were asked to complete a behavioral measure where participants were given three charities to which they were asked to donate a dollar to. They choose which charity to donate to such as, The Red Cross, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National Christian Foundation and could decide how much of their dollar they would like to send to each organization. No donation was actually made, and participants would be informed of the deception in debriefing. Next, they responded to a series of prejudice measures through a Likert scale.

We hypothesized that when American Christians are primed to think about their Christian identity or their Christian American identity, they will report greater prejudice toward Black Americans.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Nima and Ron Morgan. Thank you for always encouraging me to do the best that I can and to keep trying. I wouldn't have been able to complete this thesis without your support, encouragement, and understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Jordan LaBouff for allowing me to complete my thesis in the CRAB Lab under his supervision. I am infinitely grateful to have been able to learn from him throughout these three years. This thesis is the product of his guidance, patience, and wisdom. Dr. LaBouff has been an incredible mentor and I look forward to continuing to work with him in my remaining year at UMaine. I am grateful for the potential he saw in me, even in high school at the Maine State Science Fair. In a lot of ways, I have been able to succeed to the degree that I have, because of him.

Additionally, I'd like to thank Dr. Jennifer Blossom and Dr. Susan Bredlau for taking the time out of their busy schedules to serve on my committee. As well as Sally B. Barker and the entirety of the CRAB for their support and feedback.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge and thank my friends, Abby Powers, Jenna Cox, and Marissa Wood, and my family, for their continued moral support and their incredible patience needed to listen to me talk about this project in depth for the past three years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Religion and Prejudice	1
Religious Self Concept and Social Identity Theory	3
Conservatism, Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Fundamentalism	6
White Christian Nationalism	8
The Present Study	11
METHODS	14
Participants	14
Materials and Procedures	14
RESULTS	16
Sample Descriptive	16
Hypothesis Analysis	16
Behavioral Measure	18
Exploratory Qualitative Analysis	18
DISCUSSION	29
Summary and Conclusion	29
Limitations	30
Further Study	30
REFERENCES	32
APPENDICEIS	38
APPENDIX A: IRB Approval	39
APPENDIX B: Measures and Materials	40

Informed Consent	40
Priming Conditions	43
Manipulation Check	44
One Shot Measure of Christian Nationalism	44
Behavioral Measure – Donation Task	45
Measures of Symbolic and Realistic Threat	46
Update Modern Racism Scale	47
Symbolic Racism Scale	50
Demographic Screening	53
Debrief	54
AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHY	56

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 America Should Be Declared a Christian Nation	21
Table 1.2 Gender Identity Breakdown	21
Table 1.3 Political Affiliation	22
Table 1.4 Socioeconomic Status	22
Table 1.5 Age Descriptives	23
Table 1.6 Frequencies Across Conditions	23
Table 2. Bivariate Correlations	24
Table 3. Multiple Regressions Predicting Symbolic Racism	25

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Christian Identity vs. Christian Nationalism on Predicting Symbolic Racism	26
Figure 2. Manipulation Check: Differences in Identity Strength by Priming Condition	27
Figure 3. Differences in Prejudice by Priming Condition	27
Figure 4.1 Donation Task Results	28
Figure 4.2 Donation Task: Christian Nationalism	28
Figure 4.3 Donation Task: SRS Scales	28

INTRODUCTION

Religion and Prejudice

The relationship between religion and prejudice has been long studied. Most major religions promote love and care toward others as a staple of their teachings. For instance, people who are Christian tend to be more likely to volunteer (Petrovic et al., 2020). One study found that the likely explanation for this association lies in the values people may internalize from their religion. Meaning that it is likely that “internalized religious beliefs may increase volunteering by strengthening motivations to volunteer which are based upon humanistic concern for others” (Petrovic et al., 2020). Additionally, other studies show that when a religious person is asked to think about god, they are more likely to be more prosocial and give more resources to others (Pasek et al., 2023).

Research like this shows how powerful religion can be in influencing behavior and our worldview. Simply internalizing the group’s decided values can influence people to be kinder to one another and take care of others.

“All major world religions preach universal compassion. They call us to care for the welfare of all others—poor as well as rich, weak as well as strong, foe as well as friend (Burt 1957). In practice, religion often promotes a more circumscribed compassion. Those “others” who adhere to the moral, social, and political values that the religious hold dear are deemed worthy of care. Those who stray from or challenge these values are not.” (Batson et al., 2001)

Several studies have showed a positive correlation between religiosity to and prosocial behaviors like helping strangers, donating to charity, and open-minded attitudes toward others (Ahmed, 2009; Batson et al., 2001; Stavrova & Siegers, 2014)

Despite the evidence of how beneficial religion can be, recent research has shown that there is a positive relationship between religion and prejudice (Hunsberger, 1995).

As sociologist Christian Smith remarks, “The truth about religions is complex and challenging. Historically and today, religion involves plenty of good and bad, light and darkness, splendor and evil to go around” (Myers, 2012; Smith, 2012). Several studies have consistently found that Christian identity is associated with various kinds of prejudice such as racism, sexism, and homophobia (Van Assche et al., 2021).

There is consistent evidence that supports both the positive and negative consequences of religion. Gordon Allport perfectly encapsulates this complicated relationship by arguing, “the role of religion is paradoxical...it makes and unmakes prejudice” (Allport & Ross, 1967). For the last 50 years, psychologists studying religion have been attempting to tease apart the complex nature of religion. In particular, how religion might "make" prejudice.

In order to understand the relationship between religion and prejudice, we must understand what we mean by religion, and which parts of it or co-variates of it might be responsible for its relationship with prejudice. Religions are defined as having four distinct features that are not necessarily always present, including a belief system, ritual experiences, group membership, and a set of norms (Rowatt et al., 2014, p. 4). However, these features are flexible in the sense that different religions may put more emphasis on one feature compared to another.

It is important to understand that despite various researchers attempting to define religion, in practice, it is nearly impossible to do. As there are numerous religions, it's difficult to generalize. There is much debate over what constitutes a religion. Part of the complexity is when studies attempt to look across religions or even across different definitions of what a religion is or how religion is conceived and miss the important

nuance between facets of belief, behavior, group membership, or religions norms ((Rowatt et al., 2014) that might be associated with both certain kinds of religious groups and powerful intergroup bias. One of the reasons that religion and prejudice is a paradox is that it has been examined at too broad a level. To understand the relationship between religion and prejudice better, we're going to examine one specific context where religion and prejudice have been observed together - among white American Christians with prejudice towards Black Americans (see Hall et al., 2010 & LaBouff et al., 2012).

Hunsberger (1995) defines prejudice as, “a negative intergroup attitude involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral components” (p. 114). As a key element of religion is group membership, this unifying identity creates an in-group mentality where a member has decided they belong. However, with the inclusion of an in-group comes the exclusionary behavior of an out-group, a group to which the member does *not* belong (Ysseldyk et al., 2010, p 61). Inherently, this is where conflict and prejudice can grow.

Religious Self Concept and Social Identity Theory

Before we can discuss how religion might make and unmake prejudice, we must understand the effects of religion on its group members as group membership is a key element of a religion. Moving forward, we look at religion through the Social Identity Theory lens.

Social Identity Theory is a social psychology model for understanding and analyzing intergroup relationships across broad categories (Hogg et al., 2004; see also Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Specifically, this theory describes a social group as consisting of three or more members identifying in the same way, using the same definitions to base their identity from, and having clear definitions for inclusion and exclusions of their

group (i.e., who they are and who they are not). People use social categorization into the social constructed categories that are widely recognized by their society (e.g., race and gender) to make sense of social contexts (Hogg et al., 2004). In terms of Social Identity Theory, people will often use these categorizations as a basis for forming their own group's identity.

Being a member of a social group, specifically a religious social group can be very important to one's self-identity and can affect one's physical and mental well-being. For example, members of religious groups are consistently associated with greater physical and mental health, broader feelings of social support, meaning in life, and other positive personal outcomes (Cohen & Johnson, 2017). Studies have shown that struggling with one's religious membership can directly cause physical distress (Grubbs et al., 2016). Additionally, being a part of a group that balances feeling of individuality while still maintaining connection within the group, can promote better psychological well-being (Ysseldyk et al., 2010).

Belonging to a group can be integral to one's self-concept and provide a sense of community and a built-in support system. For example, when people feel threatened or challenged in their daily lives, they can turn to their groups for collective self-esteem and social support (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Additionally, because of this support system, there is an inherent protection of individual self-esteem. In order to maintain positive self-esteem the members of the group must determine themselves as the "better group" when comparing themselves to others (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). In other words, we all have a self-serving bias that even extends to the groups we align ourselves with so we must

imagine ourselves as better and more superior than other groups to maintain the image of ourselves that best benefits our well-being.

The available data suggest that group identity and membership is incredibly valuable, psychologically, and physically. Unfortunately, group membership can also have negative consequences. When we feel like resources or power are scarce or threatened, we might feel in conflict with other groups. Feeling that my group or my identity is threatened by other social groups is the foundation of intergroup bias - the tendency to see my group with a favorable bias, and other groups with a disfavorable one (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). This phenomenon of discriminating between groups can be understood from the perspective of The Integrated Threat Theory, a framework we will be implementing in our analysis (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

This theory comprises Realistic Threats (threats revolving around the conflict of resources) and Symbolic Threats (threats inspired by a conflict of values and beliefs). Integrated Threat Theory describes these patterns, suggesting that Realistic Threats and Symbolic Threats from other groups can create conflict. To desire to maintain power within the ingroup is a product of feeling threatened; “studies indicate that threat to the identity of the ingroup produces defensive reactions that increase the distance between groups and foment ingroup favoritism” (Wlodarczyk et al., 2014, p. 62).

Being part of a group important to one’s self-concept, like religion often is, leaves you vulnerable to the risk of feeling personally threatened as a part of that group. This feeling of threat doesn’t just affect the security of the group, but it becomes a personal attack to the group members once group identity becomes internalized. As a

result, the groups are more likely to take action to minimize these feelings of insecurity that often take the form of prejudice.

Social identities are already an important source of meaning in our lives.

Religious social identities, however, may be even more powerful than others because their meaning often extends beyond even the person's life and into their soul or eternity.

Religious social identities are a uniquely powerful source of benefits, and they may also be a uniquely powerful source of threats. If one threatens my racial group, it may limit my money or my access to other resources, or even threaten my life. But if someone threatens my religious identity, it may threaten my very being. Therefore, threats to one's religion or one's status in the religion may be perceived as more powerful than normal.

The group members may be motivated to establish intergroup disparities in order to maintain their own self-esteem and social power, "One of the strategies for achieving a positive ingroup distinctiveness is limiting the opportunities of other groups and their members." (Wlodarczyk et al., 2014, p. 62) The cost of the benefits of the in-group support are out-group bias, and religion is no exception.

Conservatism, Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Fundamentalism

If the benefits of these supernatural social identities also carry with them the risk of threat, that threat might (and has been observed to) lead to prejudice. But what is it about religion that promotes those feelings of threat and expressions of prejudice. Is it simply the importance of religion to one's self-concept (identity strength)? Or might it be facets of religiousness that might themselves be associated with threat and boundary maintenance - such that a combination of a religious identity with a threat-focused

worldview might lead to particularly strong expressions of prejudice. In other words, what is it *about* religion that leads to expressions of prejudice and discrimination?

Religion can be so integrated into someone's self-concept that it also becomes fundamental to their worldview, inevitably influencing daily actions, moral reasoning, and social and political attitudes (McDaniel et al., 2011). Those with religion as important to their self-concept tend to be high in feelings of superiority, self-righteousness, conventionalism, and the tendency to follow authority, which also correlate with the characteristics of people who score high on scales of right-wing authoritarianism (Hunsberger, 1995 & Ysseldyk et al., 2010).

To understand right-wing authoritarianism, we must understand religious fundamentalism as these two concepts are closely interlinked. Religious fundamentalism (RF) is the “unquestioning belief” that there is an undeniable truth found in a religious belief system and sacred religious practices must be preserved and protected (Womick et al., 2022; see also Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Here RF relates “to prejudice and discrimination against various kinds of targets, for instance, out-group members and/or people threatening their values such as members of other religions, atheists, women, racial targets, and gays and lesbians” (Blogowska & Saroglou, 2011, p. 44).

This is closely linked to right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) which can be defined as, “the covariation of authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism” (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Authoritarianism here refers to the tendency to set norms and punish those that happen to violate them. Consistently RF and RWA are strongly associated with one another when looking at prejudice (Blogowska &

Saroglou, 2011, p. 44). When religion is combined with these threat-focused authoritarian identities, it tends to be particularly associated with prejudice (Johnson et al., 2010).

One modern example of the intersection of religious social identities with authoritarian ideologies is occurring in modern American Christianity. A large proportion of White American Christians endorse a uniquely politically and socially conservative politico-religious identity which sees America as holding a covenant with God, feeding into the idea of American Exceptionalism (McDaniel et al., 2011).

White Christian Nationalism

Among white Christians in the United States a "new" facet of social identity has emerged both in the public and in scholarship - White Christian Nationalism. Recent research explains that Christian Nationalism may be responsible for increasing prejudice in America.

Leading Christian Nationalist researchers, Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry explain Christian Nationalism as

“Belief that the United States is a Christian nation is an instance where individuals perceive two different in-groups, one religious (Christians) and one political (U.S. citizens), as consisting of largely overlapping memberships. A person who views the United States as a Christian nation will likely believe (explicitly or implicitly) that to be a “true” American, one must be Christian. In the same way, even if they objectively know that not all Christians are Americans, they could still believe that “their” kind of Christians are American. Those who believe the United States is a Christian nation are displaying a relatively simplified social identity structure. And, as SIC [social identity complexity] predicts, when individuals perceive their religious and political group memberships as generally coinciding, a single convergent social identity is the result: Christian nationalism.” (Whitehead and Perry, 2015, p. 424)

Christian Nationalism is a belief system born from a combined American and Christian membership (Armaly et al., 2022, p 938). It is important to note that one does not need to

identify as Christian to have and support Christian Nationalist ideals as it's more than a religious identity (Perry, 2022, p13).

Certain traits can be observed among Christian Nationalists that are correlated with prejudice. For example, perceived victimhood has been noted as a predictor, which may look like internalizing feelings of victimhood or feeling as if the group itself is the target of victimization (Armaly et al., 2022). Additionally, the romanization of the American past as well as support for rigid boundaries surrounding national identity are also common qualities of Christian Nationalist beliefs that predict prejudice.

Christian Nationalism is more than just “civil religion,” which typically implies a unifying belief in American identity. Civil religion “often refers to America’s covenantal relationship with a divine Creator who promises blessings for the nation for fulfilling its responsibility to defend liberty and justice.” (Whitehead et al., p. 150). While Christian Nationalism, “draws its roots from ‘Old Testament’ parallels between America and Israel, who was commanded to maintain cultural and blood purity, often through war, conquest, and separatism.” (Whitehead et al., p. 150). From these roots comes an endorsement of racial prejudice as a supplement for this “cultural purity.”

This is an ideology that supports the influence of Christianity in elections and policies while also creating a nationalist identity (Perry, 2022, p13). Christian Nationalists tend to endorse islamophobia, racism, sexism, and anti-immigration values to justify preserving boundaries and hierarchies that support America’s foundational principles (Whitehead & Perry, 2020, p. 13).

This ideology is cultivated with this romanticized notion of America’s past, as well as a strong nationalistic identity that tends to exclude any outgroup that threatens the

perceived American identity (Davis & Perry, 202, p. 515). Research has shown that there are several factors that Christian Nationalism predicts, like voting preferences, racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic attitudes, favor of authoritarian control, and stricter punishments for government crimes. These studies emphasize the “perceived link between religiosity or fundamentalism and political intolerance may be due less to religion per se and more about perceived cultural and political threats” (Davis & Perry, 202, p. 516). Just like the work on Authoritarianism and Fundamentalism, Christian Nationalism appears to be a Right-Wing, threat-focused, authoritarian-minded ideology that is connected to a religious social identity, and thus might be catalyzing the more negative outcomes of having a religious social identity (e.g., prejudice and discrimination) as opposed to the more positive (e.g., prosociality, meaning, and health). These anti-outgroup behaviors appear to stem from the desire of control any threat that may alter the “American way of life.”

For instance, many immigrants who enter the United States identify as Christian. Yet, Christian Nationalism is a major predictor of anti-immigration attitudes (Al-Kire et al., 2022,). Also, White Christian Nationalists are more likely to express negative same-sex marriage beliefs than those who don't have their religious identity overlapping with their political identity (Whitehead & Perry, 2015). Regarding racism, White Christian Nationalists are more likely to tolerate police brutality towards Black Americans and are unwilling to recognize racial inequities based on their authoritarian values and desire for clear racial boundaries (Whitehead & Perry, 2020, p. 101-102). Again, the threat that these outgroups could challenge physical or financial security or the American culture (as they see it) creates fear and prejudice towards minoritized groups.

The Present Study

This study will focus on prejudice towards Black Americans as there have been long-standing associations between White American Christians endorsing anti-black values (Johnson et al., 2010). Recent literature has echoed that White Christian Nationalists, in particular, are more concerned about a racially diverse country over a religiously diverse country; this reinforces that Christian Nationalism is less concerned with its religious identity and more focused on its political and social power disguised in religious terminology (Perry et al., 2023). With rising racial tensions and police brutality in the United States felt globally we must begin to understand what institutions allow for continued prejudice towards Black Americans.

Several studies, many described above, have previously investigated the relationship between religion and prejudice through a social identity lens and investigated the role of authoritarianism in that relationship. For example, one study showed that when participants are showed nationalistic symbols such as the American flag, they may exhibit more nationalistic beliefs under certain contexts (Becker et al., 2012). However, few studies have attempted to use experimental means to manipulate social-identity importance and attempt to tease apart the causal relationship between religion, these threat-focused authoritarian identities, and prejudice. One such study was conducted by Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff (2010), who subliminally primed American Christian participants to think about Christianity subconsciously and found increased prejudice towards Black Americans.

Priming in psychology is the process of exposing a participant to some form of information that activates a “social representation” that then influences behavior or

attitudes (Molden, 2014, p 3). In the case of the Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff (2010) study, they used a lexical decision task, where participants were given a series of letters in which they had to determine if these letters were either words or non-words. To sublimity bring the Christian identity to the forefront of the subconscious, in the religious priming condition, participants were shown religious words extremely briefly (35ms), outside of their conscious awareness, between trials. In the control condition, the brief words shown were neutral and unrelated to religion. Then participants responded to measures of prejudice (Johnson et al., 2010). They found that when primed with religious concepts, there was a positive relationship between the Christian Identity and prejudice towards Black Americans.

However, priming research in social psychology has been rightly critiqued as limited and in desperate need of replication (Watanabe & Laurent, 2021). The Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff (2010) study is no different. The overall effects of priming appear to be incredibly limited and bring subliminal methods (as used in the Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff (2010) study) into question without rigorous replications (van Elk et al., 2015). Unfortunately, this study is still cited to support the claim that “thinking about religion makes people more prejudiced,” despite using limited methods and lacking effective replication and validation.

In this study, we seek to conceptually replicate and extend the Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff 2010 study by experimentally priming participants' religious, American, or religious-American social identities through a more reliable supraliminal reflection on the importance of those identities to their self-concept. We will investigate the relationship between these reflections, their associated social identities, endorsement of Christian

Nationalism, and explicit prejudice towards black Americans among White American Christians. We hypothesize that:

H1 - There will be a correlation between Christian identity, American identity, American Christian identity, and prejudice.

H2 – Christian Nationalism will have the strongest relationship with prejudice towards Black Americans.

H3 - When white American Christians are primed to think about their identity as Christian or American Christians, they will report greater prejudice toward Black Americans.

In addition to testing our three hypotheses, we will also do an exploratory examination of responses to the prime (i.e., what participants say about why their identities are important to them). As evidence suggests from the literature, there are certain characteristics that can consistently be found among different identities. For instance, feelings of victimization can be found in the language used by those who endorse a Christian Nationalist identity. To further understand these patterns, we will examine the free-response answers for evidence of feelings of victimization, prosociality, negative and positive associations with their given identity, Christian Nationalist rhetoric, and ingroup or outgroup themes.

METHODS

Participants

Participants (n=486) were recruited using Prolific.ac with eligibility parameters restricted participants to those that currently reside in the United States and indicated a religious affiliation as “Christianity” as well as those who identified as “white” using Prolific.ac’s prescreening feature. Participant ages ranged between 18 and 85 ($M=44.10$, $SD=14.82$). The sample political affiliation was 43.4% conservative, 17.4% neutral, and 39.3% liberal.

Materials and Procedure

Participants were invited to fill out a survey through Prolific that was completed and collected through Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com>). After consenting, participants were assigned to one of four conditions. Conditions one through three asked participants to reflect on a specific part of their social identity. They were asked to “Spend the next several minutes reflecting on your identity as a [Christian/American/Christian American]. Using complete sentences, write down at least three things about why this identity is important to you. My [X] identity is important to me because...” Condition four was a neutral prime that asked participants to describe the steps required to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich (see Appendix B, Priming Conditions).

Each prime was designed to require at least two minutes of reflection and a minimum of seventy-five words to ensure detailed answers. After, participants were asked how important their identity as a Christian, American, or Christian American is to how they think about themselves on a 1-5 item scale (e.g., my Christian identity is: not at

all important to me, slightly important, moderately important, very important, or extremely important). Next, participants were given an additional single-item measure of Christian Nationalism where they rated on a 1-5 item scale (e.g., strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, and strongly agree) the statement “American should be declared a Christian Nation” (Al-Kire et al., 2022).

After the priming and single measurement of Christian Nationalism, all participants were directed to complete a behavioral task involving resource allocation. The task explained that participants were given a dollar to which they could donate to a charity of their choosing (i.e. the Red Cross – a neutral affiliated charity, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], and the National Christian Foundation [NCF]). (see Appendix B, Behavioral Measure – Donation Task)

We utilized a brief measure of symbolic and realistic threat (two items adapted from Stephan & Stephan, 2000), an adapted Modern Racism scale (items adjusted to fit contemporary racial issues in the US like Black Lives Matter), and the Symbolic Racism Scale (Henry & Sears, 2002; McConahay, 1983) to measure prejudice towards Black Americans (See Appendix B for a full copy of the survey as seen by participants).

RESULTS

Sample Descriptive

Our recruited sample yielded $N=468$ viable responses from a nation-wide online sample of white American Christians. The sample ranged between ages 18-85 ($M= 44.1$; $SD=14.84$); around 43.4% of the sample identified as conservative while 39.3% identified as liberal (See Table 1.1-1.6 for full population descriptive). Of the sample, 25.3% agreed that America should be declared a Christian Nation while, 23.5% neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 1.1).

Hypothesis Analysis

First, we examined the relationship between the threat and prejudice variables and found no significant difference across priming conditions. Our Symbolic Racism Scale (SRS) had the strongest correlations to prejudice compared with the other scales of anti-black prejudice, including the adapted modern racism scale and measure of symbolic and realistic threat. Therefore, we used the SRS as our outcome variable for all subsequent analyses. Table 2 shows the descriptive and correlations between each scale.

The first hypothesis predicted that there would be a correlation between Christian identity, American identity, American Christian identity, and prejudice. To test hypothesis one, we examined correlations between Christian identity, political orientation, Christian Nationalism, and prejudice. We found a significant, strong positive correlations between prejudice towards Black Americans (SRS) and Christian ID (.25), Conservative political affiliation (-.65) and especially endorsement of Christian Nationalism (.51) (see Table 2 for all correlations).

Hypothesis two predicted Christian Nationalism would have the strongest relationship with prejudice towards Black Americans. Therefore, we explored the multivariate relationships between these variables in a series of linear regression analyses. To test hypothesis two, we entered Christian identity, Christian Nationalism, and conservative political affiliation into a regression equation to predict prejudice. We found that Christian Nationalism and political conservatism are independent predictors of prejudice. However, when controlling for Christian Nationalism and political conservatism, Christian Identity no longer predicts prejudice¹ (see Table 3). In fact, Christian identity is positively and significantly associated with tolerance toward Black Americans when controlling for Christian Nationalism and political conservatism.

We probed the interaction between Christian Nationalism and Christian identity in predicting prejudice. Ultimately, we observed a significant interaction noted in Figure 1. We found that Christians low in Christian Nationalism are likely to think and respond differently than those who do endorse Christian Nationalist views. In fact, those high in Christian Nationalism and low in Christian identity tended to have the highest expressed prejudice.

Hypothesis three predicted that when White American Christians are primed to think about their identity as a Christian or American Christian, they will report greater prejudice toward Black Americans. So, to test hypothesis three, we ran a manipulation check to see if the participants in the Christian identity condition had higher Christian

¹ As Table 1 indicates, these predictor variables are highly intercorrelated and thus violate the independence of predictors assumption of a multiple regression. Results should be interpreted cautiously. We can't definitively say that religion, political affiliation, or Christian Nationalism are responsible for prejudice towards Black Americans. These variables are so closely intertwined, that we have no way to tease them apart clearly enough to see which variable is the driving force in prejudice. Especially since we know that these identities are often correlated with one another (i.e. those that strongly identify with Christianity tend to also identify as being politically conservative).

identity importance than those in the control or other conditions. We found that identity seemed to increase in strength after the prime, but the pattern is rather inconsistent. For instance, in the Christian identity condition, strength in Christian identity did increase, but so did strength in American Christian identity. Yet in the American Christian condition, Christian identity doesn't show the same kind of increase (see Figure 2).

After the manipulation check, we conducted an analysis of variance across conditions to see the effect of priming on participant's prejudice toward Black Americans. We found that the primes didn't cause significant differences between conditions on prejudice. In other words, the primes don't appear to effectively influence prejudice (see Figure 3), but do seem to slightly influence identity importance.

Behavioral Measure

After the participants were administered the prime and one-shot measurement of Christian Nationalism, they were given a donation task as a behavioral measure. We found no association between priming condition and differences in donation (see Figure 4.1). Greater Christian identity strength was associated with a greater probability of donating to the NCF. Higher Christian Nationalism and higher racism scores were associated with fewer donations to the NAACP (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

Exploratory Qualitative Analysis

Through the process of coding and analyzing the qualitative responses, there were several themes that supported existing literature on the types of beliefs and attitudes people may have based on the part of their identity we asked them to reflect on. For instance, in the nationalist prime (i.e., "Spend the next several minutes reflecting on your identity as an American. Using complete sentences, write down at least three things about

why being an American is important to you.”) nearly every response mentions how they value freedom - personal or political - and there is a strong sense of pride in the country.

“Identifying as an American is an important part of who I am, as it does stand for the freedoms I enjoy as being an American. I understand that in many other countries developed or developing, do not have the same freedoms and are ruled by a dictatorship. As an American, I can speak freely on my opinions, practice a religion of my choice, and for the most part walk freely outside of my door, without fear of being harmed just because of who I am, and what I believe in.”

In the Christian identity prime (i.e., “Spend the next several minutes reflecting on your identity as a Christian. Using complete sentences, write down at least three things about why being a Christian is important to you.”), many typical Christian values are stated as important to their identity, revolving around prosocial themes like treating others with kindness or caring for others. Or more direct statements revolving around the importance of having a life path and a set of morals that come from Christianity. For example, one response explained,

“Christianity provides me a sense of purpose and meaning in life through my belief in a higher power and an afterlife. Christian teachings, like love, forgiveness, and compassion, serve as a moral guide for me. I feel a sense of community and belonging in the church.”

However, the most interesting data came from the Christian Nationalist prime (i.e. the Christian Nationalist prime asked, “Spend the next several minutes reflecting on your identity as an American Christian. Using complete sentences, write down at least three things about why being an American Christian is important to you.”). There was a noticeable shift from the parochiality exhibited in the Christian prime to a more ingroup focus. Additionally, there are elements of victimization in which participants express that they feel they may not have the full American experience or a sense that they are a part of a disappearing and threatened group. For instance, one participant wrote,

“I guess being an American to me is having partial freedom. We have a lot more freedom than some other countries and I'm thankful for that. I like the option of having as many kids as I want and no one is there to tell me I can't. Where else can just be a lazy bum and have the government take care of you?”

Consistently there is evidence that shows Christian Nationalist believe they are victims of criticism and feel they are “under attack,” but there is also a sense of superiority that is also evident in many responses where they feel that the entire country ought to be run based on Christian values as that is the “right way to live.” These responses tended to endorse more Christian Nationalist values than the other two conditions. For instance, one response said,

“I believe in the 10 commandments as an American Christian. I feel the country should be ran by the 10 Commandments and it will be a better place. The United States needs to get back to God the way the country began.”

Despite only being asked to reflect on the importance of these identities, participants consistently shared more, allowing us to reflect on various trends in identities like Christian Nationalism that match the literature.

Table 1. Sample Descriptives & Frequencies

Table 1.1 – America Should be Declared a Christian Nation

America should be declared a Christian nation

	N	%
Strongly disagree	175	36.0%
Somewhat disagree	74	15.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	114	23.5%
Somewhat agree	53	10.9%
Strongly agree	70	14.4%

Table 1.2 - Gender Identity Breakdown

What is your gender identity? (Select one): - Selected Choice

	N	%
Male	237	48.8%
Female	246	50.6%
Choose not to disclose	1	0.2%
Missin... System	2	0.4%

Table 1.3 – Political Affiliation Breakdown

Please indicate the extent to which you consider yourself politically liberal or conservative

	N	%
Extremely Conservative	38	7.8%
Conservative	107	22.0%
Slightly Conservative	65	13.4%
Neutral	84	17.3%
Slightly Liberal	69	14.2%
Liberal	95	19.5%
Extremely Liberal	26	5.3%
Missin... System	2	0.4%

Table 1.4 – Socioeconomic Status

Think of this slider as representing where people stand in your country of residence. On the TOP of the scale (10) are people who are the best off - those with most money, education, and most respected jobs. At the BOTTOM (1) are the people who are the worst off- those with the least money, education, and least respected of jobs or no job. Where would you place your family as you were growing up on this scale? Select the number that represents your family.

	N	%
10	2	0.4%
9	4	0.8%
8	38	7.8%
7	98	20.2%
6	99	20.4%
5	100	20.6%
4	64	13.2%
3	58	11.9%
2	17	3.5%
1	6	1.2%

Table 1.5 -Age Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What is your age (in years)?	485	18.00	85.00	44.1031	14.83775
Valid N (listwise)	485				

Table 1.6 – Descriptives Across Conditions

Statistics In Manipulation Check and One Shot Measure of Christian Nationalism

		How important are the following identities to how you think about yourself? - My Christian identity	How important are the following identities to how you think about yourself? - My American identity	How important are the following identities to how you think about yourself? - My identity as a specifically American Christian	America should be declared a Christian nation	Please indicate the extent to which you consider yourself politically liberal or conservative
N	Valid	486	485	485	486	484
	Missing	0	1	1	0	2
Mean		3.53	3.42	2.94	2.52	3.88
Median		4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	4.00

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 Christian ID	--									3.56	1.31
2 American ID	.34**	--								3.43	1.10
3 Chr-Am ID	.66**	.68**	--							2.96	1.29
4 Christian Nationalism	.45**	.35**	.53**	--						2.52	1.43
5 Political Liberalism	-.41**	-.32**	-.38**	-.48**	--					3.86	1.77
6 Symbolic Threat	.10*	.18**	.21**	.36**	-.22**	--				1.90	1.03
7 Realistic Threat	.15**	.26**	.25**	.41**	-.43**	.64**	--			2.23	1.16
8 Modern Racism	.04	.11*	.18**	.22**	-.14**	.46**	.51**	--		3.61	.48
9 Symbolic Racism	.25**	.34**	.37**	.51**	-.65**	.50**	.74**	.39**	--	3.50	1.55

Table 3. Multiple Regressions Predicting Symbolic Racism

Predictor	Std β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>R</i>²	Sig. <i>F</i> Change
Step 1				.06	< .001
Christian ID	.249	5.55	< .001		
Step 2				.42	< .001
Christian ID	-.021	-.55	.580		
Liberalism	-.660	-17.09	< .001		
Step 3				.48	< .001
Christian ID	-.112	-2.89	.004		
Liberalism	-.558	-14.21	< .001		
Christian Nationalism	.293	7.29	< .001		

Figure 1.

Christian ID * Christian Nationalism

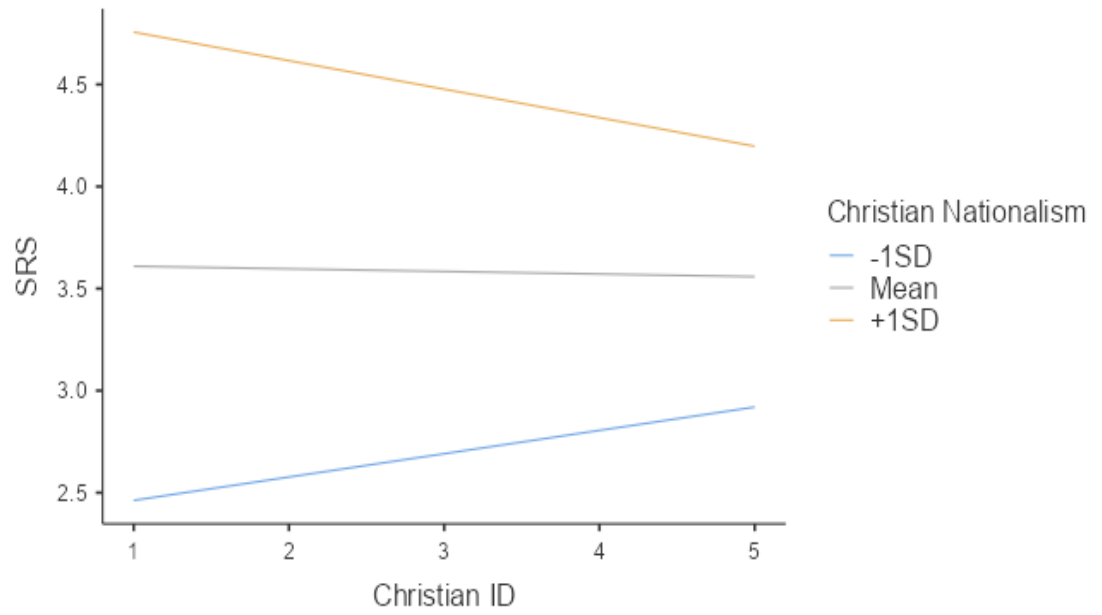


Figure 2. Manipulation Check: Differences in Identity Strength by Priming Condition

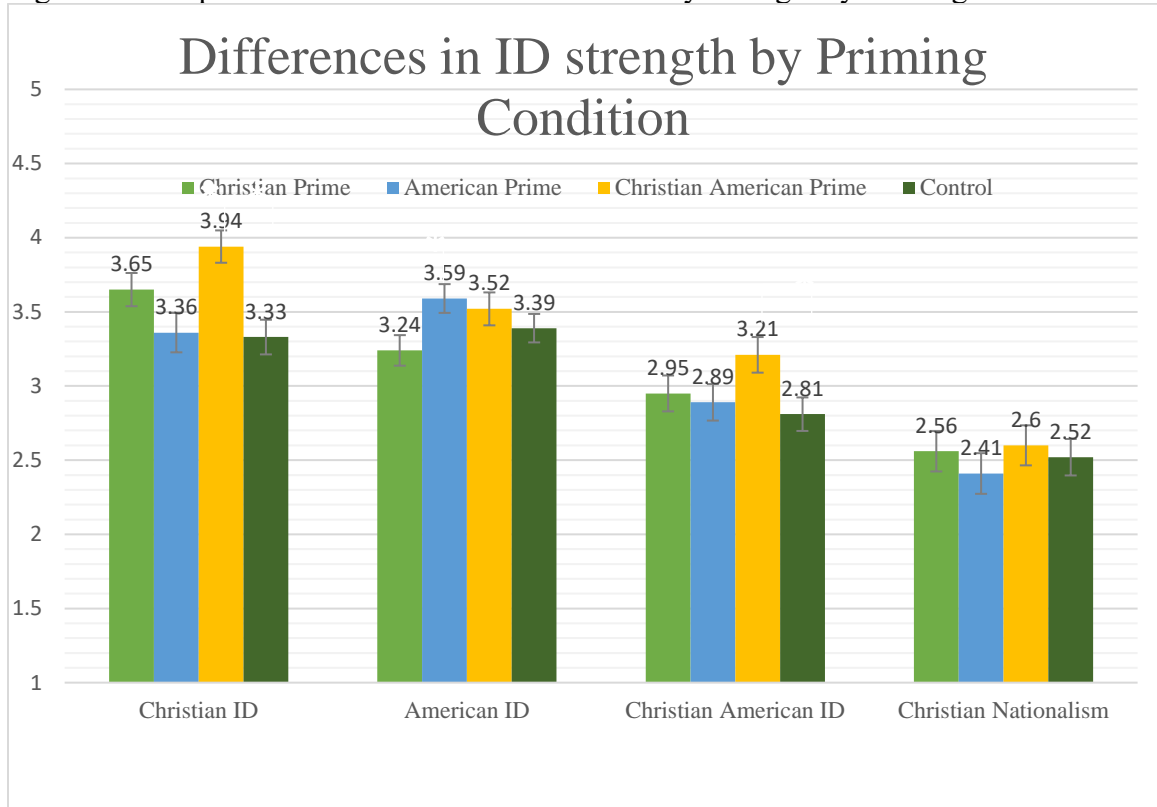


Figure 3. Differences in Prejudice by Priming Condition

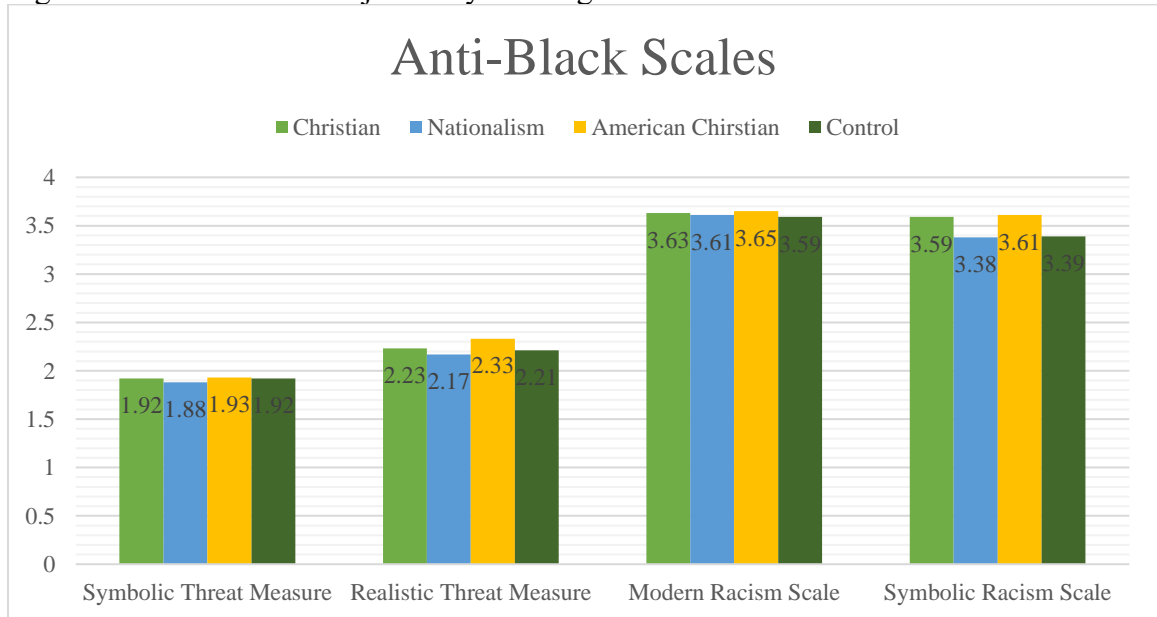


Figure 4.1 Donation Task Results

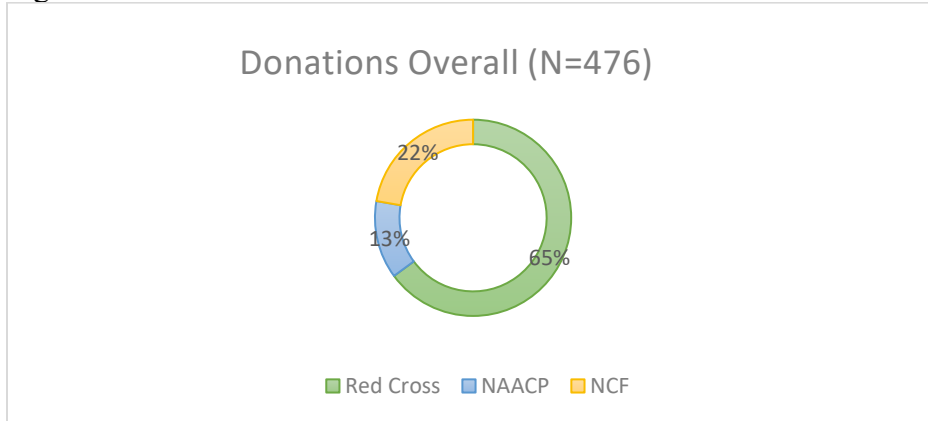


Figure 4.2 Christian Nationalism

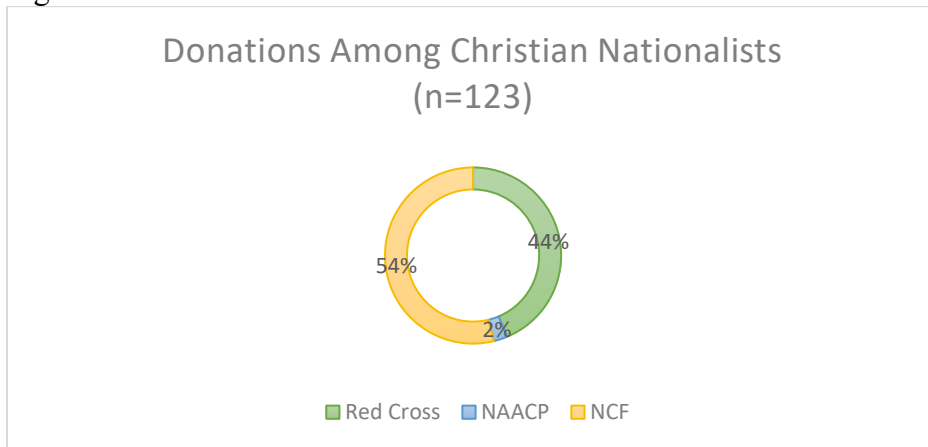
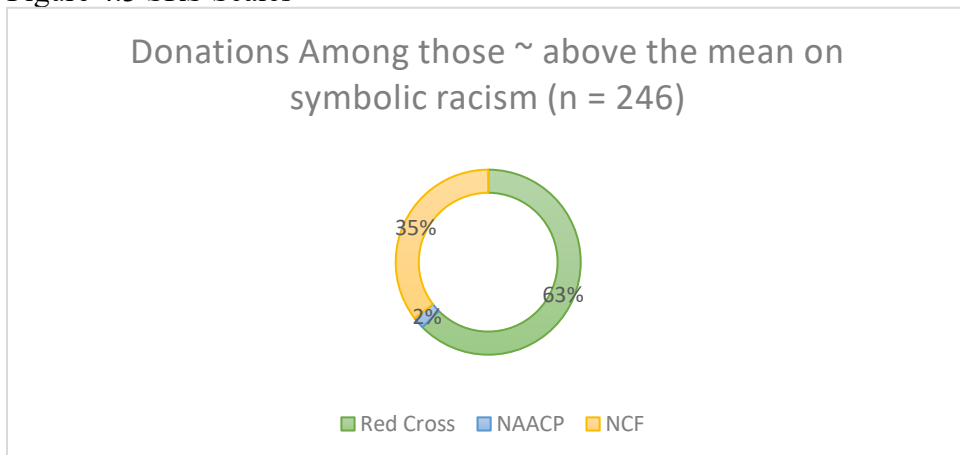


Figure 4.3 SRS Scales



DISCUSSION

Summary and Conclusion

In this study, we found that Christian Nationalism was the single best predictor of anti-black attitudes and in-group favoritism in a donation task. Further, we found that although Christian Identity was associated with greater prejudice on the surface, when controlling for Christian Nationalism and political conservatism, Christian identity is associated with significantly more positive attitudes towards Black Americans. This suggests that the intersection of Christian identity and conservative authoritarian ideologies leads to anti-black attitudes, but that Christian identity alone may predict more egalitarian attitudes overall. A pattern consistent with the findings of Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff (2010).

This study also found that priming methods for social identities are challenging. Asking participants to reflect on their identities did appear to increase the importance of those identities and related identities significantly, if weakly. However, those primes did not result in significant differences in attitudes towards Black Americans. This seems to suggest that the underlying differences that already exist between participants in terms of their endorsement of Christian Nationalism and racism are likely stronger than a reflective priming manipulation could overcome.

Through the qualitative analysis we found elements of the romanization of the American past, self-victimization, and prejudiced attitudes that supports existing literature that suggest these traits are associated with the Christian Nationalism identity. Additionally, in analyzing the Christian identity prime responses, we found links of the prosociality (e.g., exhibiting of the desire to help others) and morality (e.g., gaining a

moral compass from religious teachings) that is characteristically described in the literature surrounding the benefits of religion. These findings further explain the nuances between religion and prejudice in suggesting that Christian Nationalism, an ideology that is not necessarily religious based, is a significant predictor in anti-black prejudice and therefore, may be the driving factor in prejudice, not religiosity alone. The traits observed in the Christian identity prime further supports our finding that Christian identity tends to lean toward tolerance towards Black Americans when you control for Christian Nationalism and political conservatism. The qualitative responses give us insight into the beliefs of White American Christians and help us to make sense of our main findings.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to our study that should be noted. For one, the sample size was relatively underpowered after we removed those that failed to answer the primes sufficiently. Additionally, our prime for the “American Christian” category yielded mixed responses as it appears there may have been a misunderstanding of what we had intended “American Christian” identity to mean.

The most significant limitation came from our inability to deduce the effectiveness of our primes. As previously discussed, there wasn’t a large enough correlation to say that the primes had a significant effect on prejudice. But there wasn’t an absence of a correlation to argue that primes had no effect.

Further Study

Turning toward future explorations, we plan to use this study as the pilot in a registered report of a follow-up study with more power. This study will increase the

sample size in an attempt to learn more about the relationship between priming and its effect on prejudice.

Additionally, we plan to collect more data surrounding prejudice toward transgender populations under the assumption that hypothetically, what drives prejudice towards this population is not religion itself but Christian Nationalism and the desire to maintain power against any group that threatens the ideal “American way life” decided by Christian Nationalists themselves. Again, we would use over priming methods to add evidence either in support or against the validity of prime.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, A. M. (2009). Are Religious People More Prosocial? A Quasi-Experimental Study with Madrasah Pupils in a Rural Community in India. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 48*(2), 368–374. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01452.x>
- Al-Kire, R., Pasek, M., Tsang, J.-A., Leman, J., & Rowatt, W. (2022). Protecting America's borders: Christian nationalism, threat, and attitudes toward immigrants in the United States. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 25*(2), 354–378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220978291>
- Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. (1992). Authoritarianism, Religious Fundamentalism, Quest, and Prejudice. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 2*(2), 113. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327582ijpr0202_5
- Armaly, M. T., Buckley, D. T., & Enders, A. M. (2022). Christian nationalism and political violence: Victimhood, racial identity, conspiracy, and support for the Capitol attacks. *Political Behavior, 44*(2), 937–960. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-021-09758-y>
- Atkins, R. (2014). Instruments Measuring Perceived Racism/Racial Discrimination: Review and Critique of Factor Analytic Techniques. *International Journal of Health Services, 44*(4), 711–734. <https://doi.org/10.2190/HS.44.4.c>
- Batson, C. D., Eidelman, S. H., Higley, S. L., & Russell, S. A. (2001). “And Who Is My Neighbor?” II: Quest Religion as a Source of Universal Compassion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 40*(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0021-8294.00036>
- Becker, J. C., Enders-Comberg, A., Wagner, U., Christ, O., & Butz, D. A. (2012). Beware of National Symbols: How Flags Can Threaten Intergroup Relations. *Social Psychology, 43*(1), 3–6. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000073>
- Blogowska, J., & Saroglou, V. (2011). Religious Fundamentalism and Limited Prosociality as a Function of the Target. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 50*(1), 44–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2010.01551.x>

- Cohen, A. B., & Johnson, K. A. (2017). The Relation between Religion and Well-Being. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 12(3), 533–547. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-016-9475-6>
- Davis, J. L., Love, T. P., & Fares, P. (2019). Collective Social Identity: Synthesizing Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory Using Digital Data. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 82(3), 254–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272519851025>
- Davis, J. T., & Perry, S. L. (2021a). White Christian nationalism and relative political tolerance for racists. *Social Problems*, 68(3), 513–534. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaa002>
- Davis, J. T., & Perry, S. L. (2021b). White Christian nationalism and relative political tolerance for racists. *Social Problems*, 68(3), 513–534. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaa002>
- Deslandes, C., & Anderson, J. R. (2019). Religion and Prejudice Toward Immigrants and Refugees: A Meta-Analytic Review. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 29(2), 128–145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2019.1570814>
- Diener, E., Tay, L., & Myers, D. G. (2011). The religion paradox: If religion makes people happy, why are so many dropping out? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(6), 1278–1290. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024402>
- Dolan, E. W. (2023, June 11). *Christian nationalism and biblical literalism independently predict conspiracy thinking, study finds*. PsyPost. <https://www.psypost.org/2023/06/christian-nationalism-and-biblical-literalism-independently-predict-conspiracy-thinking-study-finds-165550>
- Gronfeldt, B., Cislak, A., Marinthe, G., & Cichocka, A. (2023). When Less Is More: Defensive National Identity Predicts Sacrifice of Ingroup Profit to Maximize the Difference Between Groups. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 19485506231185406. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506231185406>
- Grubbs, J. B., Wilt, J., Stauner, N., Exline, J. J., & Pargament, K. I. (2016). Self, struggle, and soul: Linking personality, self-concept, and religious/spiritual struggle. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 101, 144–152. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.05.365>

- Hall, D. L., Matz, D. C., & Wood, W. (2010). Why Don't We Practice What We Preach? A Meta-Analytic Review of Religious Racism. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *14*(1), 126–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309352179>
- Henry, P. J., & Sears, D. O. (2002). The Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale. *Political Psychology*, *23*(2), 253–283. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00281>
- Hogg, M. A., Abrams, D., Otten, S., & Hinkle, S. (2004). The Social Identity Perspective: Intergroup Relations, Self-Conception, and Small Groups. *Small Group Research*, *35*(3), 246–276. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496404263424>
- Hunsberger, B. (1995). Religion and Prejudice: The Role of Religious Fundamentalism, Quest, and Right-Wing Authoritarianism. *Journal of Social Issues*, *51*(2), 113–129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1995.tb01326.x>
- Johnson, M. K., Rowatt, W. C., & LaBouff, J. (2010). “Priming Christian religious concepts increases racial prejudice”: Erratum. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *1*(3), 288–288.
- LaBouff, J. P., Rowatt, W. C., Johnson, M. K., & Finkle, C. (2012). Differences in Attitudes Toward Outgroups in Religious and Nonreligious Contexts in a Multinational Sample: A Situational Context Priming Study. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *22*(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2012.634778>
- Leander, N. P., Kreienkamp, J., Agostini, M., Stroebe, W., Gordijn, E. H., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2020). Biased hate crime perceptions can reveal supremacist sympathies. *PNAS Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *117*(32), 19072–19079. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1916883117>
- Leon McDaniel, E., Nooruddin, I., & Faith Shortle, A. (2011). Divine Boundaries: How Religion Shapes Citizens' Attitudes Toward Immigrants. *American Politics Research*, *39*(1), 205–233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X10371300>
- Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1992). A Collective Self-Esteem Scale: Self-Evaluation of One's Social Identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *18*(3), 302–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167292183006>

- McConahay, J. B. (1983). Modern Racism and Modern Discrimination: The Effects of Race, Racial Attitudes, and Context on Simulated Hiring Decisions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 9(4), 551–558. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167283094004>
- Molden, D. C. (2014). Understanding Priming Effects in Social Psychology: What is “Social Priming” and How does it Occur? *Social Cognition*, 32(Supplement), 1–11.
- Morrison, T. G., & Kiss, M. (2017). Modern Racism Scale. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (pp. 1–3). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1251-1
- Myers, D. G. (2012). Reflections on religious belief and prosociality: Comment on Galen (2012). *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(5), 913–917. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029009.supp>
- Pasek, M. H., Kelly, J. M., Shackelford, C., White, C. J. M., Vishkin, A., Smith, J. M., Norenzayan, A., Shariff, A., & Ginges, J. (2023). Thinking about god encourages prosociality toward religious outgroups: A cross-cultural investigation. *Psychological Science*, 34(6), 657–669. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976231158576>
- Perry, S. L. (2022). American religion in the era of increasing polarization. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 48, 87–107. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-031021-114239>
- Perry, S. L., Whitehead, A. L., & Grubbs, J. B. (2021). Prejudice and pandemic in the promised land: How White Christian nationalism shapes Americans’ racist and xenophobic views of COVID-19. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44(5), 759–772. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1839114>
- Perry, S. L., Whitehead, A. L., & Grubbs, J. B. (2023). Race over Religion: Christian Nationalism and Perceived Threats to National Unity. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 23326492231160530. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23326492231160530>
- Petrovic, K., Stukas, A. A., & Marques, M. D. (2020). Religiosity, motivations, and volunteering: A test of two theories of religious prosociality. *Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology*, 4(4), 157–168. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts5.68>

- Rowatt, W. C., Carpenter, T., & Haggard, M. (2014). Religion, prejudice, and intergroup relations. In V. Saroglou (Ed.), *Religion, personality, and social behavior*. (2013-26747-008; pp. 170–192). Psychology Press.
- Saroglou, V. (2016). Intergroup Conflict, Religious Fundamentalism, and Culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *47*(1), 33–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022115621174>
- Stavrova, O., & Siegers, P. (2014). Religious Prosociality and Morality Across Cultures: How Social Enforcement of Religion Shapes the Effects of Personal Religiosity on Prosocial and Moral Attitudes and Behaviors. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *40*(3), 315–333. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213510951>
- Van Assche, J., Bahamondes, J., & Sibley, C. (2021). Religion and Prejudice Across Cultures: A Test of the Threat-Constraint Model. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *12*(3), 287–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550620920966>
- van Elk, M., Matzke, D., Gronau, Q. F., Guan, M., Vandekerckhove, J., & Wagenmakers, E.-J. (2015). Meta-analyses are no substitute for registered replications: A skeptical perspective on religious priming. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*, 1365. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01365>
- Watanabe, S., & Laurent, S. M. (2021). Past Its Prime? A Methodological Overview and Critique of Religious Priming Research in Social Psychology. *Journal for the Cognitive Science of Religion*, *6*(1–2). <https://doi.org/10.1558/jcsr.38411>
- Whitehead, A. L., & Perry, S. L. (2015). A More Perfect Union? Christian Nationalism and Support for Same-sex Unions. *Sociological Perspectives*, *58*(3), 422–440. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121415577724>
- Whitehead, A. L., & Perry, S. L. (2020). *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*. Oxford University Press.
- Whitehead, A. L., Perry, S. L., & Baker, J. O. (n.d.). *Make America Christian Again: Christian Nationalism and Voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election* | *Sociology of Religion* | *Oxford Academic*. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://academic-oup-com.wv-o-ursusproxy02.ursus.maine.edu/socrel/article/79/2/147/4825283?ftag=MSF0951a18&logi>

n=true&token=eyJhbGciOiJub251In0.eyJleHAiOjE2OTA3MzA2OTksImp0aSI6IjZmM2I4NWE3LTAwY2MtNGQ5Ni04OGFhLTI2YTmWZDA3MThjYyJ9.

Włodarczyk, A., Basabe, N., & Bobowik, M. (2014). The perception of realistic and symbolic threat and its influence on prejudice, ingroup favouritism and prosocial response: The native population in the face of immigration. *Revista de Psicología Social*, 29(1), 60–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02134748.2013.878574>

Womick, J., Woody, B., & King, L. A. (2022). Religious fundamentalism, right-wing authoritarianism, and meaning in life. *Journal of Personality*, 90(2), 277–293. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12665>

Ysseldyk, R., Matheson, K., & Anisman, H. (2010). Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14(1), 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309349693>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB Approval

APPLICATION COVER PAGE

- ▣ **KEEP THIS PAGE AS ONE PAGE – DO NOT CHANGE MARGINS/FONTS!!!!!!!**
- ▣ **PLEASE SUBMIT THIS PAGE AS WORD DOCUMENT**

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS Protection of Human Subjects Review Board, 311 Alumni Hall

(Type inside gray areas)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jordan LaBouff EMAIL: Jordan.LaBouff@maine.edu
CO-INVESTIGATOR: Alexandria Morgan EMAIL: Alexandria.Morgan@maine.edu
CO-INVESTIGATOR: Sally Barker EMAIL: Sally.Barker@maine.edu
FACULTY SPONSOR: EMAIL:
(Required if PI is a student):
TITLE OF PROJECT: Priming and Black Prejudice
START DATE: On Approval PI DEPARTMENT: Psychology

STATUS OF PI: FACULTY/STAFF/GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE Faculty

If PI is a student, is this research to be performed:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | for an honors thesis/senior thesis/capstone? | <input type="checkbox"/> | for a master's thesis? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | for a doctoral dissertation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | for a course project? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | other (specify) | | |

Submitting the application indicates the principal investigator's agreement to abide by the responsibilities outlined in [Section I.E. of the Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects](#).

Faculty Sponsors are responsible for oversight of research conducted by their students. The Faculty Sponsor ensures that he/she has read the application and that the conduct of such research will be in accordance with the University of Maine's Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research. **REMINDER:** if the principal investigator is an undergraduate student, the Faculty Sponsor MUST submit the application to the IRB.

Email this cover page and complete application to umric@maine.edu.

FOR IRB USE ONLY Application # 2022-11-05 Review (F/E): E Expedited Category: I.L3.g
ACTION TAKEN:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Judged Exempt; category | Modifications required? | Accepted (date) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Approved as submitted. Date of next review: by | Degree of Risk: | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Approved pending modifications. Date of next review: by n/a | Degree of Risk: Minimal | |
| | Modifications accepted (date): 11/17/2022 | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Not approved (see attached statement) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Judged not research with human subjects | | |

FINAL APPROVAL TO BEGIN

11/17/2022
Date

10/2018

APPENDIX B: Measures and Materials

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project conducted by Jordan P. LaBouff, Ph.D. Alexandria Morgan, and Sally Barker, a professor, undergraduate, and graduate and psychology student respectively at the University of Maine. The purpose of the research is to understand relationships between our identities and our feelings about others.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

What Will You Be Asked to Do?

This survey is anonymous and should take about 10 minutes. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to reflect and write briefly about things that matter to you, and then answer several questions about yourself, your thoughts, and your beliefs.

Risks

Except for your time and inconvenience, you have no additional risks from participating in this study.

Benefits

While there are no direct benefits to you, it is hoped the self-reflection required by the questions will be valuable and enjoyable. This research will help us better understand how people's ideas about themselves influence their attitudes and perceptions.

Compensation

You will be paid \$1.70 (10min \$10/hour) for submitting an acceptable response to the survey. You must reach the finishing page of the survey and provide answers to crucial questions in order for your response to be accepted. At the end of the survey, you will be redirected to the Prolific.ac app and receive a URL that automatically captures the completion code for this study. Surveys considered unacceptable risk rejection per Prolific.ac's valid reasons for rejection policy - <https://researcher-help.Prolific.ac.co/hc/engb/articles/360009092394-Reviewingsubmissions-How-do-I-decide-who-to-accept-reject>"

Confidentiality

This study is anonymous. There will be no records linking you to the data. These anonymous data will be kept on a password protected computer indefinitely. The information collected from this study will be used in journal articles and conference presentations only in aggregate form to preserve privacy.

Voluntary

Participation is voluntary. If you choose to take part in this study, you may stop at any time. To earn payment, you must reach the finishing page of the survey. It is acceptable to skip occasional questions that you do not wish to answer. To earn payment and complete the study you must provide complete responses to crucial questions. Participants who wish to skip a majority of questions should return the survey.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Jordan LaBouff (jordan.labouff@maine.edu; 207/581-2826). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Compliance, University of Maine, 207/581-2657 (or e-mail umric@maine.edu). By clicking Yes below, you indicate that you have read the above information and agree to participate.

Do you wish to continue?

- Yes
- No

Priming Conditions

Christian Identity Prime

Spend the next several minutes reflecting on your identity as a **Christian**.

Using complete sentences, write down at least three things about why being a Christian is important to you. (Note: After 2 minutes the submit button will appear below; you should write as much as you are willing, but at least 100 characters).

American Identity Prime

Spend the next several minutes reflecting on your identity as an **American**.

Using complete sentences, write down at least three things about why being an American is important to you. (Note: After 2 minutes the submit button will appear below; you should write as much as you are willing, but at least 100 characters).

American Christian Identity Prime

Spend the next several minutes reflecting on your identity as an **American Christian**.

Using complete sentences, write down at least three things about why being an American Christian is important to you. (Note: After 2 minutes the submit button will appear below; you should write as much as you are willing, but at least 100 characters).

Control Prime

Send the next several minutes describing the process and details of making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in complete sentences. (Note: After 2 minutes the submit button

will appear below; you should write as much as you are willing, but at least 100 characters).

Manipulation Check

How important are the following identities to how you think about yourself?

	Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
My Christian Identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My American Identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My American Christian Identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

One Shot Measure of Christian Nationalism

America should be declared a Christian Nation

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

Behavioral Measure – Donation Task

We will donate one dollar on behalf of every participant in our study. You can choose how we donate this money on your behalf.

There are three organizations you may choose from below.

Please indicate how much of your dollar you would like to donate and to which organization below. (Ex. You could select one organization and enter 1.00, or you could select two and split it however you like - .60/.40 or all three, etc.)

- The Red Cross ___
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ___
- National Christian Foundation ___

Measures of Symbolic and Realistic Threat

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The values and beliefs of Black Americans are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black Americans get more from this country than they contribute	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Updated Modern Racism Scale

Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using the scale provided.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Some what Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.It is easy to understand the anger of black people in America.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Black Americans are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Discrimination against Black Americans is no longer a problem in the United States.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect to Black Americans than they deserve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In order to ensure you are paying attention fully, we are including some questions to verify you are reading each one carefully. For this question only, please select 'Somewhat disagree'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>5. Over the last few years, there has been an unnecessary push for the representation of black people in media (ie. television programs, black leading roles, unnecessary dialogue on racism).</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>6. Black Lives Matter is dangerous.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>7. Black Lives Matter is fighting for necessary change.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>8. Over the past few years, Black people have gotten more economically than they deserve.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>9. It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Black people would only try harder they could be just as well off as white people.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Black people to work their way out of the lower class.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Symbolic Racism Scale

Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using the scale provided.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Black people would only try harder, they could be just as well off as whites.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Black people should do the same.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Black leaders have been trying to push too fast.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Black people are responsible for creating much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>In order to ensure you are paying attention fully, we are including some questions to verify you are reading each one carefully. For this question only, please select 'Somewhat disagree'</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>5. Discrimination against Black people limits their chances to get ahead in the United States today</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>6. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Black people to work their way out of the lower class.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>7. Over the past few years, Black people have gotten less than they deserve.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>8. Over the past few years, Black people have gotten more economically than they deserve.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographic Screening

Gender

What is your gender identity? (select one):

- Male
- Female
- Genderqueer, neither exclusively male or female
- Additional gender category, please specify _____
- Choose to not disclose

Age

What is your age (in years)?

Ethnicity

What is your ethnicity?

- White/Caucasian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Hispanic
- Black/African American
- Other _____

Political Affiliation

Please indicate the extent to which you consider yourself politically liberal or conservative

- Extremely Conservative
- Conservative
- Slightly Conservative

- Neutral
- Slightly Liberal
- Liberal
- Extremely Liberal

Socioeconomic Status

Think of this slider as representing where people stand in your country of residence. On the TOP of the scale (10) are people who are the best off - those with most money, education, and most respected jobs. At the BOTTOM (1) are the people who are the worst off- those with the least money, education, and least respected of jobs or no job.

Where would you place your family as you were growing up on this scale?

Select the number that represents your family.

- 10
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

Debrief

Thank you for participating in our research project today. In this study, you were asked to reflect on your identity and your perceptions about groups of people. We want to understand how thinking about different parts of our identity (e.g., our

religion or our national identity) influences how we think about different minority groups in the US.

In this project, you were asked to allocate money to donate to different charities. In reality, no money will be donated as a part of this study. This question was designed as a measurement tool in the study to see how reflections on different parts of our identities might influence where we choose to direct resources. This is an imaginary task is a commonly used behavioral measure to understand how identity may influence charitable giving. No donation will be made to the charities as part of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Jordan LaBouff (jordan.labouff@maine.edu; 207/581-2826). Thank you for your time.

Please click the button below to be redirected back to Prolific and register your submission

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Alex B. Morgan was born and raised in Perry, Maine on January 10th, 2003. She graduated from Washington Academy in East Machias, Maine in 2021. Alex has a major in Psychology with a double minor in Neuroscience and Philosophy. Alex is a Maine Top Scholar recipient and has received the Interfaith Youth Core, Faith and Health Campus Grant and the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. She is also a 2023-2024 McGillicuddy Humanities Center undergraduate fellow.

Alex plans to spend her remaining year at the University of Maine further building off her thesis research and exploring different research interests independently. Upon graduating, Alex would like to pursue a doctorate in clinical psychology.

