Comparing Perceptions of Discrimination Prevalence to Discrimination Experiences Over Time

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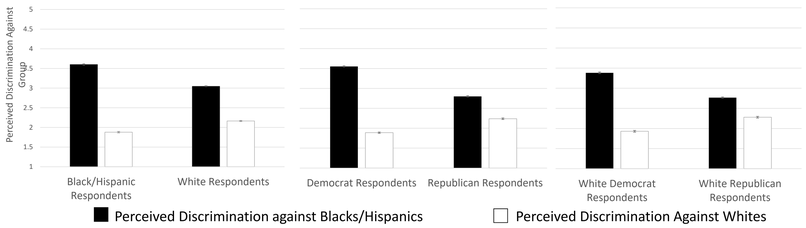
INTRO

- "reverse discrimination" implies zero-sum beliefs whereby reduced discrimination against minorities comes with increased discrimination against advantaged members [1]
- Do (racial, political) groups differ in racial discrimination perceptions? (Study 1)
- Do group discrimination perceptions match personal discrimination experiences among Whites and Non-Whites over time? (Study 2)

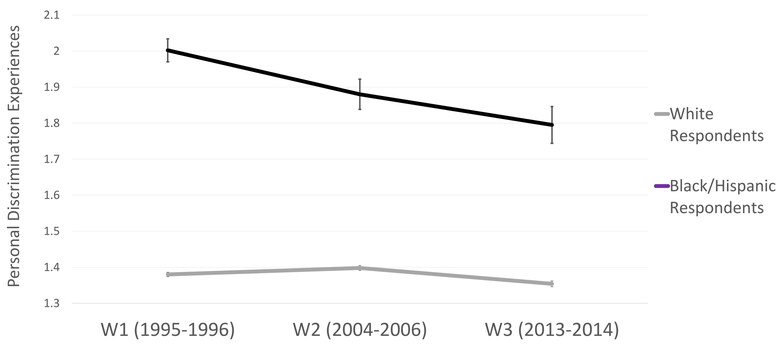
METHOD

- Study 1 (Perceptions): *N* = 9719
  - Political Party Identification, Race, "How much discrimination is there against..."
  - T-tests: compare perceptions of discrimination gap across respondent groups
- Study 2 (Reported Experiences): *N* = 5967
  - Race, "How often do you experience...", collected 1995/1996, 2004-2006, 2013/2014
  - Latent growth model and multiple groups analysis: assess difference in trajectory between Whites and non-Whites

RESULTS



Study 1. White, Republican, and White Republican respondents perceived that racial groups experience relatively more equivalent amounts of discrimination, compared to Black/Hispanic, Democrat, and White Democrat respondents respectively



Study 2. Both groups experienced a decline in discrimination. For non-Whites (*vs*. Whites) discrimination was higher initially, and decline was greater.

- Black/Hispanic, Democrat and White Democrat respondents perceived the discrimination gap was larger that what is suggested by personal reported discrimination experiences. Whites, Republicans, and White Republicans saw this gap as smaller than what is suggested by discrimination experiences.

DISCUSSION

- Discrimination does not appear zero-sum in manner; conditions appear to be improving for both racial minorities and Whites
- Whites and Republicans appear to *underestimate* the gap in anti-minority and anti-White discrimination whereas Blacks/Hispanics and Democrats appear to *overestimate* the gap

Despite popular rhetoric,

most people **do not perceive** that racial discrimination is zero-sum,

nor do discrimination experiences **act** in a zero-sum manner

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ADDITIONAL METHODOLOGICAL DETAILS AND RESULTS

Study 1 (Perceptions):

- Nationally representative samples (ANES, 2012, 2016; electionstudies.org), M_{age} = 49.62, *SD* = 17.17; 52.3% female, 47.3% male, 69.2% White, 15.8% Black, 15.0% Hispanic
- Political Party Identification: Democrat, Republican, Independent, something else
- Group Discrimination Perceptions: "How much discrimination is there in the United States today against..." Blacks, Hispanics, Whites

Study 2 (Reported Experiences):

- Wave 1 , N = 5967 (M_{age} = 46.87, *SD* = 12.85; 52.5% female, 47.5% male), 92.3% White, 2.1% Hispanic, 5.6% Black; Wave 2, N = 3792; Wave 3, N = 2558 (MIDUS, midus.wisc.edu).
- Participants who dropped out by Wave 3 more likely to be Black (*r* = .08***), Hispanic (*r* = .03*), male (*r* = .03**), less likely to be White (*r* = -.11***), reported more discrimination experiences at wave 1 (*r* = .06***)
- Personal Discrimination Experiences: 8 items, (e.g., "being treated with less courtesy than other people"); W1 α = .92; W2 α = .91; W3 α = .91

Differences between Respondent Groups in Discrimination Perceptions

	t	*df*	*p*	*d*
Perceived Discrimination Against Blacks/Hispanics				
White *vs.* Black/Hispanic Respondents	-26.55	8650	<.001	0.62
Republican *vs.* Democrat Respondents	-32.31	5713	<.001	0.87
White Republican *vs.* White Democrat Respondents	-22.70	3676	<.001	0.75
Perceived Discrimination Against Whites				
White *vs.* Black/Hispanic Respondents	13.06	8599	<.001	0.31
Republican *vs.* Democrat Respondents	14.01	5684	<.001	0.38
White Republican *vs.* White Democrat Respondents	11.77	3661	<.001	0.39
Perceived Gap in Discrimination Against Blacks/Hispanics *vs.* Whites				
White *vs.* Black/Hispanic Respondents	-27.89	8588	<.001	0.65
Republican *vs.* Democrat Respondents	-32.67	5675	<.001	0.88
White Republican *vs.* White Democrat Respondents	-24.91	3655	<.001	0.83

- Correlations between anti-White and anti-minority discrimination perceptions: White respondents (*r* = .02, ns), Black/Hispanic respondents (*r* < .01, ns), Democrat respondents (*r* = -.06***), White Democrat respondents (*r* = -.06*), Republican respondents (*r* = .16***), White Republican respondents (*r* = .19**)

Change in Discrimination Experienced by Racial Groups Over Time

- Intercepts: White *M* = 1.38, *SE* = 0.01, *p* < .001; Black/Hispanic *M* = 1.95, *SE* = 0.03, *p* < .001
- Slopes: White *M* = -0.01, *SE* < 0.01, *p* = .020; Black/Hispanic *M* = -0.09, *SE* = 0.02, *p* < .001
- Significant decrement in model fit after constraining the intercept means to equality, $\Delta \chi^2$ (1) = 215.08, *p* < .001, and when constraining slopes to equality, $\Delta \chi^2$ (1) = 714.80, *p* < .001.

Personal Discrimination Experiences Compared to Perceptions of Discrimination

	Discrimination Against Blacks/Hispanics								
	M	*SD*	range	*N*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*	$d_{perceived} - d_{experienced}$
Personal Discrim. Experiences Among B/H (S2)	1.74	0.69	1-4	154	31.14	153	<.001	2.51	
Perceived Group Discrimination Against B/H (S1)									
White Respondents	3.04	0.87	1-5	5999	269.56	5998	<.001	3.48	+0.97
Black/Hispanic Respondents	3.60	0.93	1-5	2653	198.39	2652	<.001	3.85	+1.34
Republican Respondents	2.80	0.82	1-5	2308	163.35	2307	<.001	3.40	+0.89
Democrat Respondents	3.55	0.90	1-5	3407	231.03	3406	<.001	3.96	+1.45
White Republican Respondents	2.76	0.80	1-5	1999	154.03	1998	<.001	3.45	+0.94
White Democrat Respondents	3.38	0.85	1-5	1679	162.86	1678	<.001	3.97	+1.46
	Discrimination Against Whites								
	M	*SD*	range	*N*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*	$d_{perceived} - d_{experienced}$
Personal Discrim. Experiences Among W (S2)	1.34	0.43	1-4	2404	153.81	2403	<.001	3.14	
Perceived Group Discrimination Against W (S1)									
White Respondents	2.16	0.92	1-5	5970	182.17	5969	<.001	2.36	-0.78
Black/Hispanic Respondents	1.88	0.97	1-5	2631	99.44	2630	<.001	1.94	-1.20
Republican Respondents	2.24	0.93	1-5	2300	115.73	2299	<.001	2.41	-0.73
Democrat Respondents	1.89	0.92	1-5	3386	119.39	3385	<.001	2.05	-1.09
White Republican Respondents	2.28	0.91	1-5	1992	111.87	1991	<.001	2.51	-0.63
White Democrat Respondents	1.93	0.87	1-5	1671	90.62	1670	<.001	2.22	-0.92
	Gap in Discrimination Against Blacks/Hispanics *vs.* Whites								
	M_{diff}	SE_{diff}	range	*N*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*	$d_{perceived} - d_{experienced}$
Gap in Discrim. Experiences Between B/H *vs.* W (S2)	0.40	0.04	1-4		10.63	2556	<.001	0.88	
Gap in Perceived Discrim. Against B/H *vs.* W (S1)									
White Respondents	0.88	0.02	1-5	5963	54.24	5962	<.001	0.70	-0.18
Black/Hispanic Respondents	1.72	0.03	1-5	2627	65.48	2626	<.001	1.28	+0.40
Republican Respondents	0.56	0.02	1-5	2295	23.71	2294	<.001	0.50	-0.38
Democrat Respondents	1.66	0.02	1-5	3382	73.33	3381	<.001	1.26	+0.38
White Republican Respondents	0.49	0.02	1-5	1988	19.85	1987	<.001	0.45	-0.48
White Democrat Respondents	1.45	0.03	1-5	1669	47.31	1668	<.001	1.16	+0.28

References

1. 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*, 215–218. doi: 10.1177/1745691611406922