### Introduction

**Research hypotheses:**

- **$H_1$:** Liberals will consider beliefs and behaviors to be more mentally representative of a racist than conservatives.

- **$H_2$:** Liberals will see race-related political beliefs/behaviors (such as opposing Affirmative Action or supporting stricter immigration policies) as more mentally representative of a racist across all four mental representation types when compared to conservatives.

### Methods

**Participants**

- $N = 1759$ Project Implicit users
- Age: 18-113, $M = 32.48, SD = 14.66$
- Race/Ethnicity: 57.8% Caucasian, 12.0% Black, 9.5% Asian, 12.3% Hispanic, 8.4% Other

**Condition**

- Subjects were given a self-report questionnaire surveying how they mentally represented racists across a broad range of beliefs and behaviors.
- Subjects were assigned to one of four mental representation types:
  - **Category Centrality**
  - **Generic Beliefs**
  - **Diagnosticity**
  - **Ease of Imagining**

**Question Topics:**

- Classic Beliefs
- Race-Related Political Beliefs
- Innate Differences
- Discomfort Around Blacks
- Unfamiliarity with Blacks
- Racial Humor
- Downplaying the Problem
- Cultural Beliefs
- Extrinsic Motivators
- Identity

**Measures**

- Mental Representation Response
- Black-White Implicit Association Test
- Explicit Racial Attitudes

### Results

**$H_1$:** Regressions showed liberal respondents rated beliefs and behaviors as significantly more representative of a racist in general than conservative respondents across all mental representation types:

- **Category Centrality:** $b = .312, p < .001$
- **Diagnosticity:** $b = .209, p < .001$
- **Ease of imagining:** $b = .123, p < .001$

**$H_2$:** Paired-sample individual t-tests showed Liberal respondents rated items in the **Race-Related Political Beliefs** category as significantly more representative of a racist than conservative respondents:

- **Category Centrality:** $t = -1.16, p < 0.001$
- **Diagnosticity:** $t = -4.76, p < 0.001$
- **Ease of imagining:** $t = -4.24, p < 0.001$
- **Generic Beliefs:** $t = -5.66, p < 0.001$

### Conclusions

- Liberals and conservatives do not mentally represent racism in the same way.
- An approach that takes this into account could produce a more effective dialogue around racist behavior.
- Race-related political beliefs (RRPBs), such as supporting Blue Lives Matter or opposing Affirmative Action can activate (or limit activation of) these mental representations.
- Liberals were more likely to label RRPBs as indicative of a racist, which could be due to an ideological emphasis on political correctness or racial awareness.
- Conservatives were less likely to label RRPBs as mentally representative of a racist, which could be due to wanting to distance a belief (such as supporting stricter immigration policies) from the label of racist.

### Future Research

- Investigating whether or not these different mental representations are stable or could be changed via intervention.
- Identifying specific traits associated with political ideology that are more predictive of mental representation.

### References