



# The Malleability of Prejudiced Mindsets: A Psychological Exploration Involving Race and Sexuality

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## Introduction

### Do people with prejudiced mindsets have the capacity for change? How do beliefs about prejudice change the way people interact?

- In our research, we explored how beliefs about the malleability of prejudiced mindsets influence interactions between groups.
- Study 1 investigated the relationship of race and the perception of prejudice as a malleable (changeable) or fixed mindset
- Study 2 further extended this line of research by looking at participant sexuality.
  - We hypothesized that minority group members would view prejudice toward their own group as more fixed than majority group members.

## Methods

### Participants

#### Study 1 (Race)

- Black (N=144) and non-Black (N=156) American participants (N=303)
  - Non-ack participant demographics:
    - 132 identified as White, 13 identified as Asian, 5 identified as Latine, and 6 identified as multiracial.

#### Study 2 (Sexuality)

- Gay and non-gay American participants (N=280)

### Methods

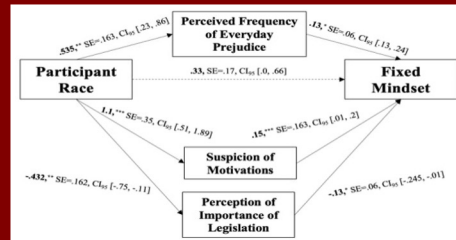
#### Study 1 & Study 2

- Online survey completed through Cloud Research
- Suspicion of Motivations Index (SOMI)
  - Used to obtain participants beliefs about the internal (personal) and external (social) motivations of others.
  - Also measures perceived frequency of everyday prejudice and perception of how important legislation is for discrimination prevention

## Results

### Study 1 (Race)

- Black participants viewed prejudice toward Black people as less malleable and more fixed (M=3.28, SD=1.41) than non-black participants (M=2.65, SD=1.42).
- Beliefs about malleability were mediated by group perception differences in the frequency of everyday prejudice and the impact of legislation on reducing prejudice
- Black participants scored higher on SOMI than non-black participants
  - Suspicion of non-Black people's underlying motivations (M=-0.59, SD=2.62) independently mediated group perception differences.



### Study 2 (Sexuality)

- No significant difference of mindset malleability across participants (no main effect)
  - Used regression analysis and independent samples t-test to look at mediating factors
- Gay participants rated microaggressions as occurring more often and being more harmful
- Gay participants rated the importance of legislation higher for indicating social change
- No significant difference of SOMI (Suspicion of Motivations Index) between groups

	Race Condition	Sexuality Condition
Target	3.28	3.12
Non-target	2.65	3.14
	Malleability Mindset Scores	

## Discussion

- Race condition is a visible trait, changing the dynamic of experienced prejudice
  - Historic precedent of interracial conflict within the United States may help explain SOMI scores
- The level of acceptance for LGBTQ+ individuals vary greatly across the country
  - This may impact participants' perceptions of social change and the malleability of prejudice depending on location
- Understanding what leads to beliefs about malleability and suspicion of motivations across groups may help us:
  - Encourage collective action and advocacy
  - Foster growth mindsets
  - Promote respectful intergroup communication

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