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Perceiving the Poster: How Suspicion of Motives May Impact Perceptions of Potential Allies

Engaging in Online Activism

by

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Senior Honors Thesis

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Psychology Department
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Abstract

Social media posts signaling support for various social and racial justice movements have emerged as an important aspect of social media use. However, little research has investigated how these posts and the social media users behind them are perceived by members of disadvantaged groups—those the messages are presumably intended to “help.” Though the post’s content and poster’s identity are likely important, the primary aim of this study is to investigate an individual difference variable in the perceiver, specifically disadvantaged group members’ Suspicion of Motives Index (SOMI) scores, which measure a general tendency to perceive White individuals’ attempts at non-prejudice to be externally motivated. As predicted, participants of color with higher SOMI scores perceived White social media users who engage in online activism more negatively and reported less desire to affiliate with them (*less positive feelings*) than those with lower SOMI scores. Discussion focuses on the potential real-world implications for and of would-be allies engaging in online activism efforts.

Perceiving the Poster: How Suspicion of Motives May Impact Perceptions of Potential Allies Engaging in Online Activism

In recent years, there has been an explosion of online activism on social media platforms whereby individuals signal their support for social and racial justice movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Stop Asian Hate, #MeTooMovement, etc.) on their social media accounts. These social media users could be labeled as potential allies (i.e., advantaged group members who use their relatively privileged status to act on behalf of disadvantaged group members). Previous research has examined the myriad of motivations, internal (i.e., aligned with personal values) and external (i.e., driven by societal pressures), that potential allies may have for engaging in these actions and have observed that individuals may hold multiple motivations simultaneously (Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Kutlaca et al., 2020; Radke et al., 2020). Regardless of the motivations behind these posts and the attempts to signal allyship, historically marginalized group members on social media (i.e., those that the posts are attempting to benefit in some way) could be perceiving these posts more negatively. One characteristic that might influence these perceptions is an individual's suspicion of White peoples' (i.e., the potential allies) motives measured through the Suspicion of Motives Index (Major et al., 2013). Previous research on the Suspicion of Motives Index (SOMI) has found that people of color who are more chronically suspicious of White people's nonprejudiced behavior tend to have higher feelings of uncertainty and threat during interactions with White people (Lloyd et al., 2017; Major et al., 2016). Little research has examined how these chronic suspicions apply to social media platforms, related online interactions, and/or subsequent interpersonal consequences.

How Activism Efforts Can Backfire

Generally, the primary aim for engaging in any form of activism is to communicate support for the cause at hand or the group associated with the justice movement. These levels of support can be observed offline, but increasingly online. Social media platforms frequently relay messages of social and instrumental support for its users, and researchers have observed that these social support benefits are stronger online than offline (Liu et al., 2018). This may be because social media platforms and other social networking sites are better equipped to facilitate displays of support online through the ability to reach a larger audience than offline interactions may initially reach. This perceived general support may extend to allyship signals (i.e., communicating *support* for justice movements and/or confronting bias), which have been linked to a greater sense of safety among disadvantaged group members in offline interactions (e.g., Hildebrand et al., 2020). Circulation of such supportive posts may raise awareness of these movements, why these movements exist, and potential resources that people could utilize if they desire (Bowman Williams et al., 2021), as well as provide identity-safety cues to members of marginalized groups.

It is also very logical and plausible that there could be inadvertent harms to would-be allies engaging in (online) activism. Researchers have already observed the backfiring of allyship attempts in the real world via adverse reactions to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. These initiatives aim to signal the value the organization places on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and though these signals *are* being communicated, they ultimately may have an adverse impact on DEI metrics. For example, researchers have observed that company employees report decreased support, rather than increased support, for discrimination claims made by ethnic minority employees due to the presence of pro-diversity initiatives and presumed

fairness at the company (Dover et al., 2020). Similarly, some have questioned whether these social media posts supporting racial justice or social justice movements are *performative* or *optical allyship* (Jennings, 2020). Optical allyship is thought to be mostly motivated by the desire to increase the poster's reputation and social standing more than affecting social change, and posts being perceived as optical allyship can have deleterious effects contrary to their actual message or intent. Thus, like implemented DEI initiatives, online activism may be working against its ostensible goals (i.e., promoting and encouraging anti-racist beliefs, values, and actions; signaling support to historically marginalized group members and others).

Perceptions and Suspicions of Potential Allies

As activism efforts continue to rise, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) individuals appear to have preferences for what allies should be doing (e.g., acquiring and demonstrating knowledge about other racial/ethnic communities, actively confronting bias, etc.) while also inferring potential allies' internal or external motivations (Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Radke et al., 2020; Park et al., 2022; Johnson & Goh, 2022). It makes sense that BIPOC individuals would be paying attention to these motives because those motives are theorized to predict different behaviors on the part of allies. Internal motivations of potential allies may result in behavioral outcomes that place the needs of the disadvantaged group above the needs of the advantaged group (i.e., engaging in normative (e.g., petition signage, peaceful protests, etc.) and non-normative actions (e.g., boycotts, disruptive sit-ins, etc.) in both public and private), while external motivations may result in behavioral outcomes that place the needs of the advantaged group or of the self above the needs of the disadvantaged group (e.g., engaging in more normative actions in public than in private) (Radke et al., 2020).

Some research has observed that Black students at predominantly White institutions perceive participation in online social activism as integral to Black social networking site use (Flanagan, 2022). It is unclear whether Black individuals perceive online social activism as an integral part of SNS use across *all* social media users (i.e., for all racial-ethnic identities). However, it is apparent that some Black individuals are already chronically suspicious of White individuals and perceive their motivations during in-person interactions as more disingenuous than genuine (Burns & Granz, 2022; Kunstman et al., 2022; Sandstrom et al., 2019). There is a high propensity for potential allies to be viewed as driven by external motivations (Burns & Granz, 2022). Thus, this extant chronic suspicion of White individuals in the context of intergroup contact may extend to online interactions (e.g., online activism).

Though White individuals may be sending positive signals (attempting to appear nonprejudiced), disadvantaged group members may still view the interactions negatively (LaCrosse et al., 2015). The Suspicion of Motives Index (SOMI), inspired by Plant and Devine's measure of internal and external motivations to control prejudice, has previously been used to investigate Black individuals' perceptions of White facial expressions (e.g., neutral faces and smiles) (Lloyd et al., 2017; Kunstman et al., 2016,) as well as Latinas' perceptions of feedback from White individuals (Major et al., 2016). Researchers have observed that high-SOMI participants more accurately distinguish real smiles from fake smiles of White individuals and that high-SOMI participants perceive White smiles as more threatening compared to their low-SOMI counterparts (Kunstman et al., 2016). Similarly, researchers found that classification images of White individuals displaying neutral expressions and smiles shown to high-SOMI participants (compared to low-SOMI participants) were both classified as less trustworthy, less authentic, and sometimes more hostile (Lloyd et al., 2017). Moreover, Latinas with greater

suspicion of White peers' motives for acting positively towards minorities viewed these actions as more disingenuous White peers were aware of participants' ethnicities. relative to when peers were not aware (Major et al., 2016).

Study Aims

This research aims to extend past literature by integrating research on suspicions of motives with perceptions of potential allies engaging in online activism. There are potential implications of whether one would want to affiliate with someone in the real world after an online interaction. Negative perceptions of these posts may have implications for relationship formation (not just relationship quality as shown in previous research), which is one of the reasons why this work is important. Recent research has explored the connection between perceived allyship and relationship quality by examining how LGBT+ individuals (i.e., a historically marginalized group) perceive others as their allies and the relevant consequences of this perceived allyship with findings supporting a positive association with perceived allyship and relationship quality (Chen et al., 2023). This research adds to the current literature through its investigation of possible relationship formation between historically marginalized group members, who vary in chronic levels of suspicion, and potential allies interacting via social media, specifically by viewing Instagram posts associated with a college or university roommate context.

Given previous findings, we investigated whether participants' SOMI scores would predict differing perceptions of would-be allies by historically marginalized group members and whether these differing perceptions would have negative consequences for relationship formation. Specifically, we expect that historically marginalized group members with higher SOMI scores will perceive White social media users who post online activism more negatively

(less positive feelings) and report less desire to live with them than those with lower SOMI scores. Additionally, we planned to test a few different conditions under which suspicion of motives might be operating including (1) gender identity, (2) the presence of other ally-related cues, specifically involvement in Greek life, and (3) stigma consciousness.

Affiliation with (traditionally White) Greek life may be antithetical to preferred ally behaviors as students of color at various colleges and universities have organized “Abolish Greek Life” movements, primarily on social media (Nguyen, 2020). Because of these movements, it is possible that people of color with high levels of suspicion might be particularly sensitive to this interest in or affiliation with traditional White Greek life as a cue on social media.

Stigma consciousness is the expectation that one will be discriminated against due to their identity (Pinel, 1999). Participants may vary in levels of stigma consciousness, which could signal the importance of race in participants’ interactions with others (Pietri et al., 2018). Stigma consciousness may interact with participants’ levels of suspicion towards potential allies, as it communicates the salience of one’s identity (e.g., racial identity) when perceiving interactions. Thus, this may result in increased negative emotions when an individual’s suspicion of motives is already heightened. For example, participants who report high levels of stigma consciousness and high levels of suspicion may report even lower levels of positive feelings toward potential allies, relative to participants who report lower levels of either stigma consciousness or levels of suspicion.

Methods

Procedure

Participants were recruited from the University of Richmond traditional undergraduate student population and from Prolific (<https://www.prolific.co/>), an online platform used primarily

by researchers for online participant recruitment, for a study on “first impressions of others on social media.” Despite the hypothesis and primary analyses being restricted to participants who self-identified as “people of color,” the survey was open to all University of Richmond traditional undergraduates, regardless of race. This omission of race-related information was done in order to observe all participants’ naive reactions to the social media user profiles. Recruitment messages were distributed via Spiderbytes, a daily email sent out to all University of Richmond students, as well as other emails and social media postings.

Prolific participants completed an initial prescreening survey before being able to access the main survey. Specifically, participants who met the following criteria in the prescreening were permitted access to the main study: those who were enrolled full time as an undergraduate at an institution that grants mostly bachelor's degrees or a mix, is primarily residential or a mix of residential and commuter, and is *somewhere in the middle to definitely selective* on the range of broad access to selective.

Study participation was incentivized by offering participants minimum compensation (i.e., course credit, a \$5.00 Amazon gift card, or a \$0.40-\$3.00 monetary incentive). Data collection was conducted in Spring 2023. The desired sample size of approximately 300 participants was determined by the amount of funding available to offer participants an appropriate level of monetary compensation for a study of this nature and also mirrored the Burns and Granz (2022) study.

This study was approved by the University of Richmond Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants provided informed consent before beginning the study. Additionally, this study was preregistered: aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=7GZ_796.

Materials

Recently, incoming first-years of universities have turned to Instagram to share interests about themselves (e.g., @URclassof2026, @UVAclassof26, @UGAbiosof2026, etc.) Therefore, we aimed to examine how Instagram profiles and their racial justice support posts were perceived by participants of color to explore their suspicions of these users' motives.

Additionally, we examined whether these profiles promoted enough trust and belonging that a participant would be favorable towards rooming with the poster in college.

The study took inspiration from the Pietri et al. (2018) study, which presented participants with a fictional company website that either displayed a female or male scientist who was either Black or White. Our study presented participants with a picture of either a White female- or male-presenting Instagram user profile after they expressed their desired roommate gender preference. Before participants made their selection, they saw the message “[recognizing] that the gender binary does not apply to everyone, and [they] will have a chance to indicate [their] own gender identity later.” The only difference between the White female-presenting and White male-presenting profile was that the user was either named “Emily Smith,” depicting a White female young adult or “Evan Smith,” a White male young adult. Immediately after viewing the profile, participants read introductory Instagram posts with captions that denoted that the user was an incoming first-year at a college or university. Participants were randomly assigned to view whether the female- or male-presenting user planned on “rushing and being a member of Greek life” or “joining the student activities board” at his or her university. Participants then viewed the profile’s number of posts, follower count, and following count on Instagram. Additionally, participants viewed identical Instagram posts of food, a sunset, and a post supporting the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement on the relevant profile they viewed

before completing the listed battery of measures. These social media profiles and associated Instagram posts and captions can be viewed in the Appendix.

Thus, this experiment had a 2-x-2 quasi-experimental design (White female interested in Greek life profile condition vs. White female not interested in Greek life condition vs. White male interested in Greek life condition vs. White male not interested in Greek life condition).

Participants

Participants were recruited from two populations: 80.7% from the University of Richmond undergraduate population and 19.3% from Prolific. Three participants were excluded for not completing the survey and an additional five participants were dropped from analyses because they met exclusion criteria for this study ($n = 5$ participants reported ages of 27 years or more, which were beyond our *emerging adulthood* range), leaving us with a final sample of $N = 238$.^{1,2}

People of Color Sub-sample

Some measures (as described below) were administered only to those who identified themselves as a person of color, and primary analyses in this study were restricted to these participants. When asked if participants identify as people of color, which we defined as “members of racial-ethnic groups that have been historically marginalized at selective and primarily White institutions,” 45.38% of the 238 who originally completed the survey ($n = 108$) self-identified as a person of color. The mean age of these participants was 20.05 years ($SD =$

¹ Note that, because not all participants completed all measures, N s and dfs differ across analyses.

² The mean age of participants was 19.98 years ($SD = 1.41$, $min = 18$, $max = 26$). The largest racial-ethnic categories of this sample were White (40.8%), East Asian (13.9%), Bi- or Multiracial (13.9%), Latinx (9.7%), Black (6.7%), South Asian (7.1%), and Middle Eastern/North African (1.3%). The remaining 4.2% of participants preferred not to answer. In terms of academic class for the 2022-2023 academic year, 30.3% identified themselves as First-years, 24.4% as Sophomores, 21.8% as Juniors, and 23.5% as Seniors. Females were overrepresented in the sample with 68.1% identifying as female, 29.0% as male, and 2.0% as genderqueer/gender non-conforming. The median yearly household income of the participants in the study was between \$100,000 and \$119,999. Finally, 22.7% are currently a member of a Greek organization at their college or university, 73.5% said they were never a member, and 3.8% said that they were no longer a member.

1.49, *min* = 18, *max* = 26). The largest racial-ethnic categories sampled were East Asian (27.8%), Latinx (15.7%), South Asian (15.7%), Black (14.8%), Bi- or Multiracial (14.8%), and Middle Eastern/North African (2.8%). The remaining 6.5% of participants preferred not to answer.

In terms of academic class, 28.7% identified themselves as (for the 2022-2023 academic year) First-years, 23.1% as Sophomores, 20.4% as Juniors, and 27.8% as Seniors. Females were overrepresented in the sample with 63.9% identifying as female, 32.4% as male, and 1.8% as genderqueer/gender non-conforming. The median yearly household income of the participants in the study was between \$60,000 and \$79,999. Finally, 11.1% were currently a member of a Greek organization, 84.3% said they were never a member, and 4.6% said that they were no longer a member.

Measures

Measures administered (described below) assessed a variety of constructs including participants' suspicion levels and emotional responses toward the social media profile. All measures and supplementary materials included in the study can be viewed in the Appendix.

Impressions of the User Profile (Adapted from Pietri et al., 2018).

Positive Feelings. Participants' levels of positive feelings felt toward the social media user were measured using the combined 8 items of *perceived feelings* (e.g., "I think I would like to live with [Emily/Evan]"; "I think I could 'be myself' around [Emily/Evan]"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) and *affirmation* (e.g., "[Emily/Evan] would create a feeling of connection with me"; "[Emily/Evan] would be interested in what happens to me"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) (Purdie-Vaughn et al., 2008). Results were averaged together to create a single composite score in which higher scores indicated greater positive feelings toward the social media user ($\alpha = .92$).

Perceived Similarity. Participants' perception of similarity with the social media user was measured using 4 items (e.g., "[Emily/Evan] seems similar to me"; "[Emily/Evan]'s values and my values are similar"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Results were averaged together to create a single composite score in which higher scores indicated greater perception of similarity ($\alpha = .90$).

Suspicion of Motives Index (Major et al., 2013).

Perceived Internal Motivations. Participants' perceptions of White individuals' internal motives to act in nonprejudiced ways were measured using 5 items (e.g., "It is in accordance with their personal values to be unprejudiced," "It is personally important to them not to be prejudiced"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Responses were averaged together to create a single composite in which higher scores indicated greater perceptions of internal motivations ($\alpha = .81$).

Perceived External Motivations. Participants' perceptions of White individuals' internal motives to act in nonprejudiced ways were measured using 5 items (e.g., "They think other people would be angry with them if they acted prejudiced," "They feel pressure from others to act nonprejudiced"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Responses were averaged together to create a single composite in which higher scores indicated greater perceptions of external motivations ($\alpha = .86$).

Participants' Suspicion of Motives Index (SOMI) score was computed by subtracting participants' perceived internal motivations composite score from the perceived external motivations composite score where higher SOMI scores indicate greater chronic levels of suspicion.

Perception of Ally Characteristics (Adapted from Brown & Ostrove, 2013)

Participants' perceptions of the social media user's allyship and informed action were measured using 5 items (e.g., "[Emily/Evan] cares about issues related to people of color"; "[Emily/Evan] cares about issues related to racial justice"; "[Emily/Evan] is knowledgeable about racial-ethnic communities other than [her/his] own"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Results were averaged together to create a single composite score in which higher scores indicated greater perceptions of allyship characteristics ($\alpha = .86$).

Perceptions of Ally Behaviors (Adapted from Burns & Granz, 2022; Gurin et al., 2013)

Participants' perceptions of the likelihood of the social media user's participation in ally behaviors were measured using 14 items (e.g., "Make efforts to self-educate about race and racism-related issues"; "Attend a protest or march against racial justice"; "Join or participate in a group or organization that supports racial diversity, equity, and/or inclusion"; 1 = *extremely unlikely*, 6 = *extremely likely*). Results were averaged together to create a single composite score in which higher scores indicated greater perceptions of allyship behaviors of the target user ($\alpha = .93$).

Stereotype Content Model (Durante et al., 2013)

Competence. Participants' perception of the social media profile user's competence was measured using 5 items (e.g., "Competent"; "Independent"; "Confident"; 0 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). Results were averaged together to create a single composite score in which higher scores indicated greater perception of competence ($\alpha = .80$).

Warmth. Participants' perception of the social media profile user's warmth was measured using 5 items (e.g., "Warm"; "Trustworthy"; "Friendly"; 0 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*).

Results were averaged together to create a single composite score in which higher scores indicated greater perception of warmth ($\alpha = .91$).

Intergroup Contact (Adapted from Hayward et al., 2017)

Positive intergroup contact. Participants' past experiences of positive contact with members of other racial-ethnic groups were measured using 5 items (e.g., "Pleasant"; "Friendly"; "Welcoming"; 1 = *(almost) never*, 6 = *(almost) always*). Responses were averaged together to create a single composite in which higher scores indicated a greater history of positive experiences ($\alpha = .84$).

Negative intergroup contact. Participants' past experiences of positive contact with members of other racial-ethnic groups were measured using 7 items (e.g., "Unpleasant"; "Unfriendly"; "Discriminatory" 1 = *(almost) never*, 6 = *(almost) always*). Responses were averaged together to create a single composite in which higher scores indicated a greater history of negative experiences ($\alpha = .91$).

Stigma Consciousness (Adapted from Johnson & Pietri, 2020)

Participants' expectation that one will be discriminated against due to their identity was measured using 9 items, e.g., "When interacting with people, I feel like they interpret all my behaviors in terms of race and gender," and "Most people have a lot more negative thoughts about people of color than they actually express" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Johnson & Pietri, 2020). Responses were averaged together to create a single composite in which higher scores indicated greater feelings of stigma consciousness ($\alpha = .80$).

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations for all variables of interest can be found in Table 1.

Table 1*Correlation Matrix of All Variables*

	Suspicion of Motives	Positive Feelings	Perceived Similarity	Competence	Warmth	Ally Characteristics	Ally Behaviors	Positive Intergroup Contact	Negative Intergroup Contact	Stigma Consciousness
Suspicion of Motives	0.49 (1.31)									
Positive Feelings	-.30**	4.43 (1.18)								
Perceived Similarity	-.16†	.79**	3.90 (1.33)							
Competence	-.11	.50**	.48**	3.28 (0.66)						
Warmth	-.30**	.66**	.55**	.68**	3.52 (0.75)					
Ally Characteristics	-.34**	.70**	.59**	.43**	.61**	4.61 (1.00)				
Ally Behaviors	-.32**	.43**	.31**	.22*	.40**	.69**	4.00 (0.81)			
Positive Intergroup Contact	-.15	.15	.14	.02	.22*	.16†	.07	3.76 (0.87)		
Negative Intergroup Contact	.28**	-.21*	.01	-.06	-.19†	-.23*	-.20*	-.39**	2.70 (0.87)	
Stigma Consciousness	.43**	-.24*	-.03	-.08	-.23*	-.29**	-.23*	-.31**	.57**	4.63 (0.98)

Note. Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) appear in bold along the diagonal. Correlations between variables appear below the diagonal. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$

Does Suspicion of Motives Predict Positive Feelings?

In order to evaluate the relationship between suspicion of motives and various measures, Pearson's r correlation coefficients were calculated. Importantly, those with higher SOMI scores reported less positive feelings, $r(106) = -.30, p = .002$, toward the target.

Those with higher (versus lower) SOMI scores also reported marginally lower perceptions of similarity with the target, $r(106) = -.16, p = .092$. And, they perceived the target as less likely to exhibit ally-like characteristics, $r(106) = -.34, p < .001$, and behaviors, $r(106) = -.32, p < .001$.

Those with higher SOMI scores reported higher levels of negative intergroup contact, $r(106) = .28, p = .004$, and lower levels of positive intergroup contact, $r(106) = -.15, p = .123$, though the latter relationship was not statistically significant. Furthermore, those with higher SOMI scores also reported significantly higher levels of stigma consciousness, $r(106) = .43, p < .001$.

Moderation Analyses

In order to examine the relationship between each condition and positive feelings toward the target as a function of one's SOMI score, regression analyses were conducted predicting positive feelings from a condition variable, suspicion of motives, and their interaction term, using an SPSS macro created by Hayes (2013). Suspicion of motives was mean-centered prior to the analysis such that a score of zero represented the sample mean.

Gender

The main effect of suspicion of motives remained significant ($B = -0.25, SE = 0.08, p = .0031$), while the main effect of gender was not significant ($B = 0.30, SE = 0.24, p = .21$). These main effects were qualified by a marginally significant interaction term ($B = 0.31, SE = 0.18, p =$

.09), indicating that the relationship between suspicion of motives and positive feelings toward the target may differ as a function of the target's gender, though such a result should be interpreted with caution. Further probing of the simple associations separately for the female and male target is depicted in Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

Figure 1

The Relationship Between Suspicion and Positive Feelings for the Female Target

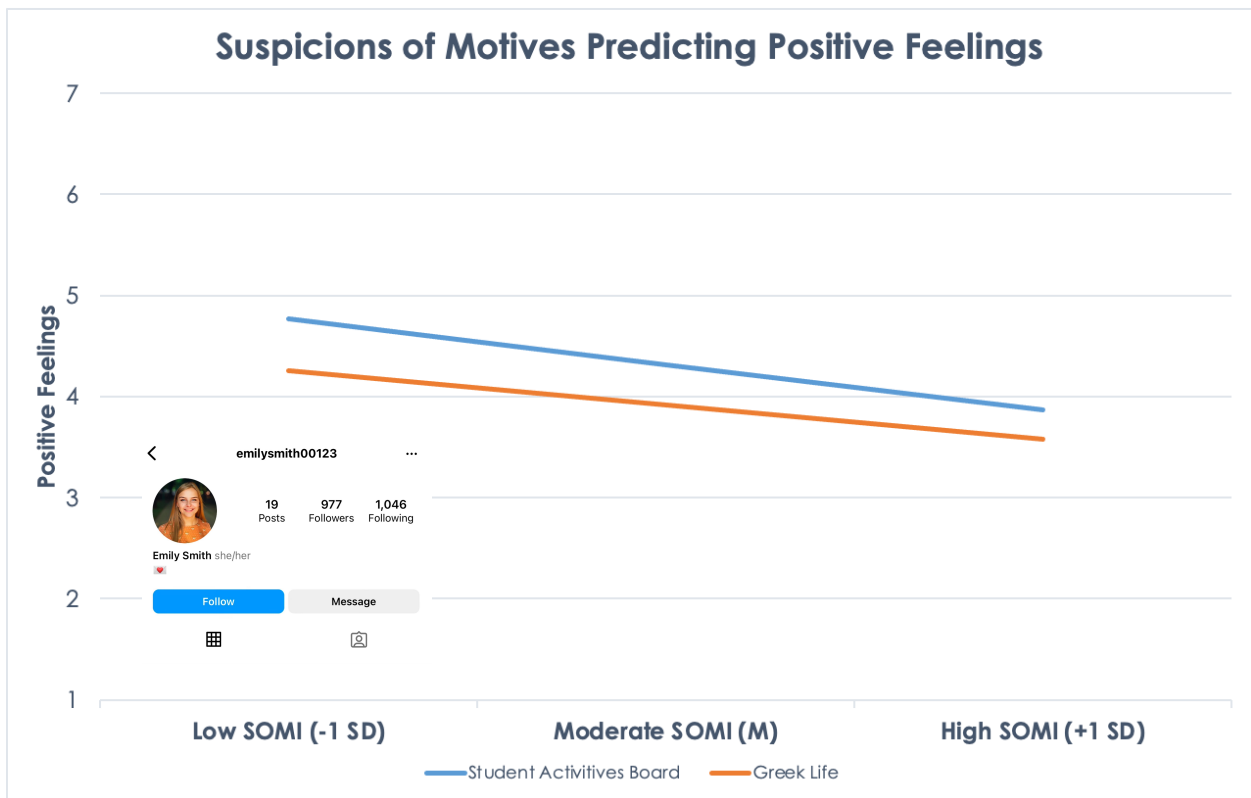
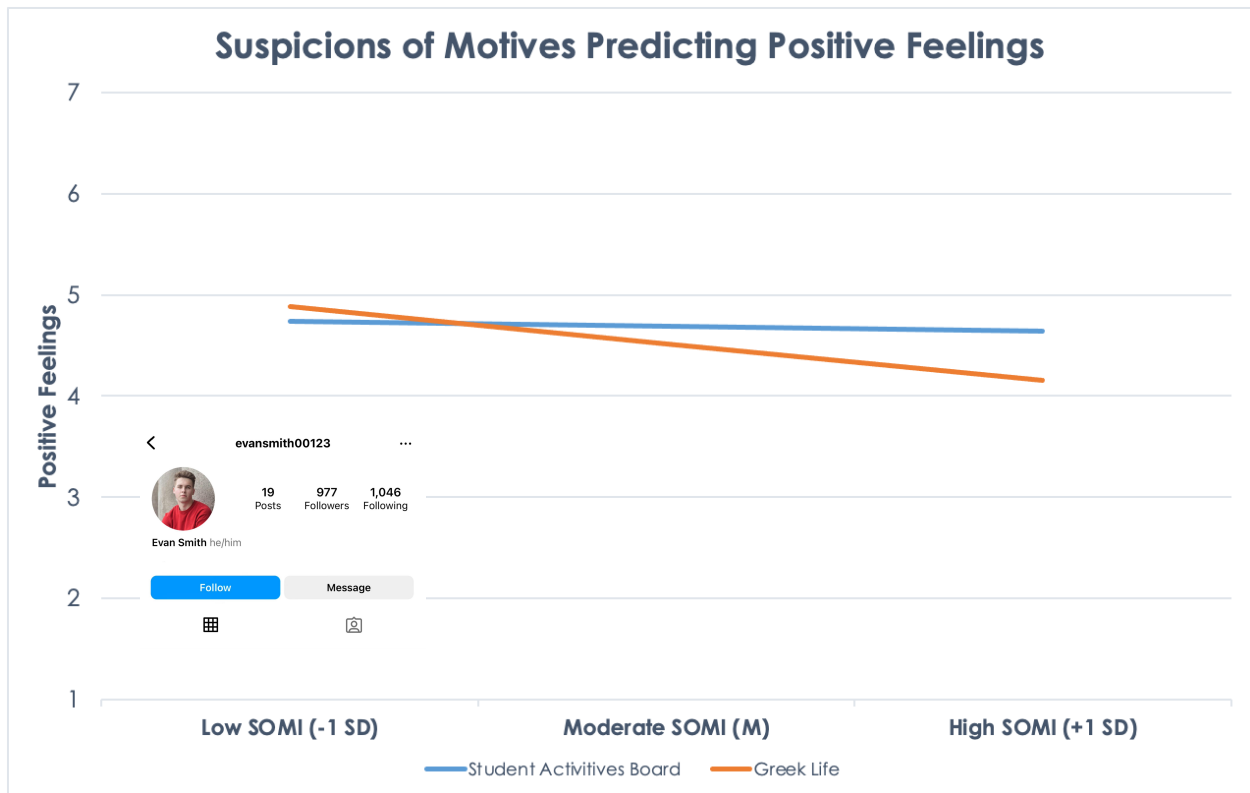


Figure 2

The Relationship Between Suspicion and Positive Feelings for the Male Target



(Non-)Greek Life Interest

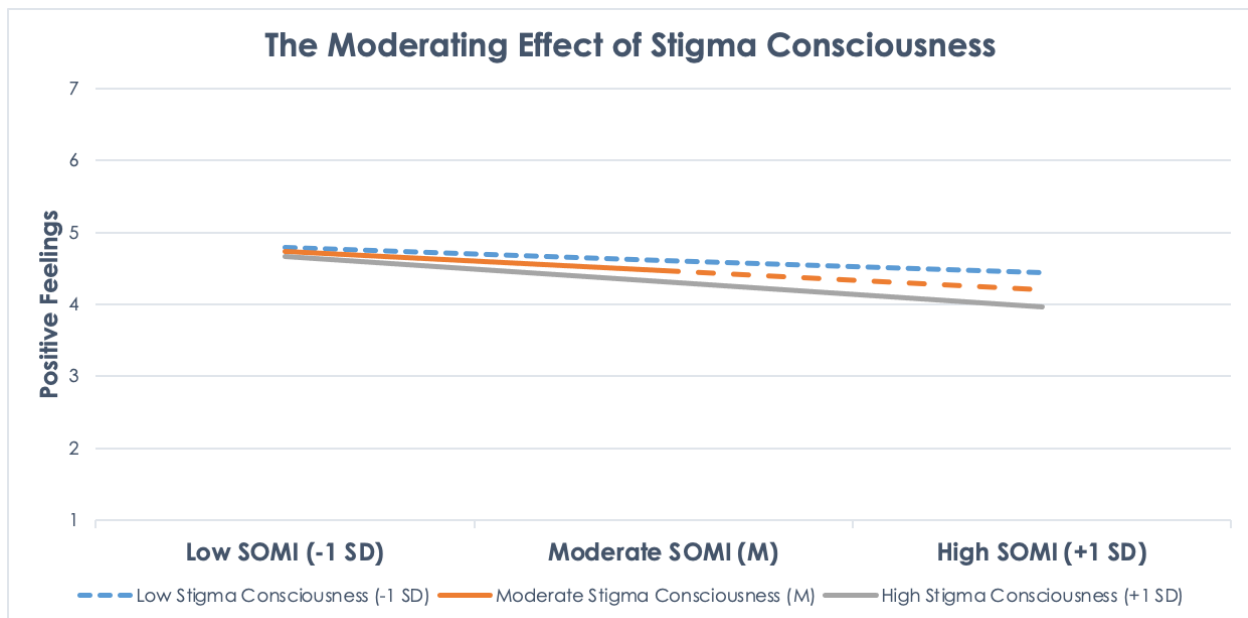
The main effect of suspicion of motives remained significant ($B = -0.26$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .002$), while the main effect of (non-)Greek Life interest was not significant ($B = -0.30$, $SE = 0.22$, $p = .17$). These main effects were not qualified by an interaction term ($B = -0.02$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = .90$), indicating the relationship between suspicion of motives and positive feelings toward the target did not differ as a function of the target's interest in Greek Life versus the student activities board. (Again, see Figures 1 and 2.)

Stigma Consciousness

Participants may vary in levels of stigma consciousness, which could signal the importance of race in participants' interactions with others (Johnson & Pietri, 2020; Pietri et al., 2018). To examine whether suspicion of motives and stigma consciousness interacted to predict positive feelings toward the target, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed. Suspicion of motives and stigma consciousness were mean-centered prior to the analysis such that a score of zero represented the sample mean. Only the main effect of suspicion was significant, such that higher levels of suspicion were associated with lower levels of positive feelings toward the target ($B = -0.20, SE = 0.09, p = .03$). The main effect of stigma consciousness ($B = -0.15, SE = 0.12, p = .22$) and the interaction term ($B = -0.07, SE = 0.08, p = .43$) failed to reach significance. This moderation analysis is depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Stigma Consciousness Moderation Analysis



Discussion

This study aimed to examine whether individual differences in people of color's suspicion of motives predicted lower positive feelings toward White social media users who engage in online activism. We find support for our hypothesis: People of color with higher levels of suspicion reported lower positive feelings toward the target, observed through the statistically significant negative correlation between levels of suspicion and positive feelings. The findings highlight the robustness of SOMI as a predictor of participants' perceptions, as it remained a statistically significant predictor of levels of positive feelings when examining target gender and expressed interest in (non-)Greek life and when controlling for stigma consciousness.

The present results extend current knowledge on perceptions of allies (e.g., Burns & Granz, 2022; Major et al., 2013) and further discussion on how these perceptions influence real-world interpersonal consequences. This study is similar to previous studies on the Suspicion of Motives Index as it investigates participants' chronic levels of suspicion and how their SOMI scores impact their perceptions of White individuals' (i.e., potential allies') nonprejudiced actions (Chen et al., 2023; Kunstman et al., 2016; LaCosse et al. 2015; Lloyd et al., 2017; Major et al. 2016). And, it also extends previous work by investigating how levels of suspicion apply to an online context (i.e., social media), integrating impression formation (Pietri et al., 2018). Recent research on the nascent signs of online social identities has discussed the role of performative allyship as a form of credibility maintenance (i.e., strategic management) among social media 'influencers' whose posts in support of racial justice movements are viewed as more externally motivated than driven by personal values (Wellman, 2022). Our study extends this perception of credibility maintenance from social media influencers to 'layperson' social media users through the context of choosing roommates via social media profiles. Additionally,

we explored the effects of social media interactions on relationship formation and found that there may be prevention of intergroup contact between people of color and potential allies.

This study and the results are meaningful because online activism has become more and more frequent, alongside its offline counterpart (Greijdanus et al., 2020) Online activism has become a significant part of social media use with frequent posts being posted by potential allies. While the actual motivations behind posting support for various justice movements are important, it is just as important to consider how these posts are being perceived by members of historically marginalized groups highlighted by various justice movements.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study's primary finding is that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between levels of suspicion and positive feelings toward the target. We acknowledge that there may be other reasons for this negative correlation. For example, a participant with negative perceptions of the White-presenting target may later report more general suspicion of White people's motives. Alternatively, previous negative experiences with White people might both create chronic suspicion and influence perceptions of this study's particular target. Future research should investigate the causal relationship between suspicion and perceptions by manipulating perceived internal/external motivations in order to understand how these suspicion levels may impact intergroup contact.

This study also utilized a hypothetical scenario, as participants were not actually choosing a roommate, which limits the ecological validity of our findings. However, our study scenario is highly relevant to the recent lived experiences of our participants. Most of our participants are likely familiar with this roommate-choosing scenario if their first-year roommates were not randomly assigned by the university. Thus, this hypothetical is a very

plausible experience for current social media users. Still, future research should investigate the ecological validity of these findings by generalizing these findings to real-world behaviors through the consideration of other factors in real-world scenarios.

We also observed that the negative relationship between levels of suspicion and positive feelings was not moderated by (non-)Greek-life interest, gender identity, or stigma consciousness. It is possible that our data analyses were underpowered when running moderation analyses, as we did not meet our preregistered recruitment goal of $N = 300$, thus contributing to another limitation of this study. We aim to collect more data to observe how increased participants impact our current results. Despite the relationship between SOMI and positive feelings not being significantly moderated by (non-)Greek-life interest, Greek life is generally a large part of predominantly White institutions. Future research should explore the role of Greek life affiliation on relationship formation between people of color and potential allies and whether involvement with Greek life functions as an identity-threat cue to which people with varying levels of suspicion attend.

Lastly, as previous research has utilized feedback and the neutral and positive facial expressions of White individuals (i.e., cues), future research should investigate what cues social media users are honing in on. Online environments are arguably very ambiguous settings and, concurrently, incredibly dynamic settings. Some cues that may be displayed on social media include pronouns, who comments on a person's profile, what the comments say, who they follow, who follows them, brands worn and shown, and story content versus page content, to name a few. Future research should identify the cues that social media users pick up on. If so, it should also be confirmed whether they are accurately assessing these cues. Previous research on suspicion of motives has frequently observed that racial-ethnic minority individuals with higher

levels of suspicion identify White individuals' motives for engaging in nonprejudiced behaviors more accurately than racial-ethnic minority individuals with lower levels of suspicion (LaCosse et al., 2015; Kunstman et al., 2016). Thus, it is important to consider what cues racial-ethnic minority social media users hone in on in a social media context to assess the efficacy of online activism posted by White social media users.

Ultimately, this study found a significant negative correlation between SOMI scores and positive feelings, suggesting that suspicion of motives acts as a consistent predictor of lower reported positive feelings toward a White individual engaging in online racial justice activism. This study and its findings are worth nothing because it is important to consider how these posts are being perceived by members of historically marginalized groups highlighted by various justice movements. Participants' levels of suspicion remained a robust predictor of participants' negative perceptions toward White social media users. This may have implications for interracial relationship formation (i.e., contact between advantaged group members and historically marginalized group members) in the real world if people of color's suspicion negatively impact perceptions of White individuals.

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Appendix

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the First Impressions on Social Media study. The purpose of this study is to examine how we form impressions of others on social media. You will be asked to view a social media profile and then report your perceptions of the individual shown. We will also ask you about your individual beliefs and experiences, as well as basic demographic information (for example, age, gender identity, and racial-ethnic identity).

Please keep in mind:

- You must be **at least 18 years old to participate**.
- We estimate that **it will take approximately 15 minutes on average** to complete. If you do not have the time to complete this survey, please close the browser now.
- In this survey, we are particularly interested in learning more about how social media content may influence whether an individual would want to live with someone else in a college or university roommate context. Though gender-inclusive and gender-flexible housing options are becoming more common, many colleges and universities still require same-gender roommates. We recognize that the gender binary does not apply to everyone, and those who choose to continue will have a chance to indicate their own gender identity later in the study. However, **if you are uncomfortable choosing a female potential roommate (female housing) or male potential roommate (male housing), you should not continue with the survey.**

If you are at least 18 years old, have 15 minutes to complete the survey now, and are comfortable choosing female housing (a female roommate) or male housing (a male roommate), please proceed to the next page to complete the Consent Form.

ConsentsampA

First Impressions on Social Media Study
University of Richmond IRB Study Number URIRB230219
Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study to examine how we form impressions of others on social media. Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the researchers (listed below) for more information.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how we form impressions of others on social media. The study should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to view a social media profile and then report your perceptions of the individual shown. We will also ask you about your individual beliefs and experiences, as well as basic demographic information (for example, age, gender identity, and racial-ethnic identity).

Contact Information

This research is being conducted by Principal Investigator Kathrina Durante under the mentorship of Faculty Advisor Kristjen Lundberg. If you have any questions about the project, you may contact Ms. Durante at kathrina.durante@richmond.edu and/or Dr. Lundberg at klundber@richmond.edu.

Possible Risks

The risks associated with this study are minimal. That is, the risks for completing this study are no more than the risks experienced in daily life. If you do experience any discomfort during the study, remember you can stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study and, in the event of significant distress, choose to contact your healthcare provider for support.

Possible Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this project, but you may get some satisfaction from contributing to this investigation. You will also receive one unit of research participation credit.

Confidentiality of Records

Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that your individual results will remain confidential. However, as with any research process, the risk of a breach of confidentiality is always possible. Nevertheless, to the best of the investigators' abilities, your answers in this study will remain anonymous and confidential. Participants are identified by a unique 5-digit identification number only, which allows the researchers to grant participation credit without asking for your name, email address, or other identifying information. And, once the study is completed, we will completely "deidentify" our data. Any identifiers that are inadvertently collected will be removed from the identifiable private information and only then will the information be used for future research studies.

Use of Information and Data Collected

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us. Your responses will not be associated with you by name and the data you provide will be kept secure. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

Protections and Rights

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the University of Richmond's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research at (804) 484-1565 or irb@richmond.edu for information or assistance.

Statement of Consent

The study has been described to me and I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that my responses will be treated confidentially and used only as described in this consent form. I understand that if I have any questions, I can pose them to the researcher. I have read and understand the above information and I consent to participate in this study by clicking "Continue." Additionally, I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

- "Yes, I agree; I wish to begin the study." (Continue)
- "No, I do not agree; I do not wish to participate."

ConsentsampB

First Impressions on Social Media Study **University of Richmond IRB Study Number URIRB230219** **Consent Form**

You are being asked to take part in a research study to examine how we form impressions of others on social media. Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the researchers (listed below) for more information.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how we form impressions of others on social media. The study should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to view a social media profile and then report your perceptions of the individual shown. We will also ask you about your individual beliefs and experiences, as well as basic demographic information (for example, age, gender identity, and racial-ethnic identity).

Contact Information

This research is being conducted by Principal Investigator Kathrina Durante under the mentorship of Faculty Advisor Kristjen Lundberg. If you have any questions about the project, you may contact Ms. Durante at kathrina.durante@richmond.edu and/or Dr. Lundberg at klundber@richmond.edu.

Possible Risks

The risks associated with this study are minimal. That is, the risks for completing this study are no more than the risks experienced in daily life. If you do experience any discomfort during the study, remember you can stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study and, in the event of significant distress, choose to contact your healthcare provider for support.

Possible Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this project, but you may get some satisfaction from contributing to this investigation. You will also have the opportunity to receive a \$5.00 Amazon gift card for your participation. Please note that people who withdraw from the study early will not have the opportunity to request a gift card for their participation.

Confidentiality of Records

Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that your individual results will remain confidential. However, as with any research process, the risk of a breach of confidentiality is always possible. Nevertheless, to the best of the investigators' abilities, your answers in this study will remain anonymous and confidential. Participants who wish to request a \$5.00 Amazon gift

card will be asked to provide their email address within a separate survey form that is not linked to the original survey responses. This list of participants will never be shared beyond the primary research team. Once the study is completed, we will completely "deidentify" our data. All identifiers will be removed from the identifiable private information and only then will the information be used for future research studies.

Use of Information and Data Collected

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us. Your responses will not be associated with you by name and the data you provide will be kept secure. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

Protections and Rights

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the University of Richmond's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research at (804) 484-1565 or irb@richmond.edu for information or assistance.

Statement of Consent

The study has been described to me and I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that my responses will be treated confidentially and used only as described in this consent form. I understand that if I have any questions, I can pose them to the researcher. I have read and understand the above information and I consent to participate in this study by clicking "Continue." Additionally, I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

- "Yes, I agree; I wish to begin the study." (Continue)
- "No, I do not agree; I do not wish to participate."

ConsentsampC

First Impressions on Social Media Study
University of Richmond IRB Study Number URIRB230219
Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study to examine how we form impressions of others on social media. Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the researchers (listed below) for more information.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how we form impressions of others on social media. The study should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to view a social media profile and then report your perceptions of the individual shown. We will also ask you about your individual beliefs and experiences, as well as basic demographic information (for example, age, gender identity, and racial-ethnic identity).

Contact Information

This research is being conducted by Principal Investigator Kathrina Durante under the mentorship of Faculty Advisor Kristjen Lundberg. If you have any questions about the project, you may contact Ms. Durante at kathrina.durante@richmond.edu and/or Dr. Lundberg at klundber@richmond.edu.

Possible Risks

The risks associated with this study are minimal. That is, the risks for completing this study are no more than the risks experienced in daily life. If you do experience any discomfort during the study, remember you can stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study and, in the event of significant distress, choose to contact your healthcare provider for support.

Possible Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this project, but you may get some satisfaction from contributing to this investigation. You will also receive a \$3.00 for your participation. Please note that those who withdraw from the study early (return their submission via Prolific), complete the study exceptionally quickly (a response time more than three standard deviations below the average), or provide two or more text entry or narrative answers that indicate low-quality, nonsensical responding will not receive payment for their participation.

Confidentiality of Records

Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that your individual results will remain confidential. However, as with any research process, the risk of a breach of confidentiality is always possible. Nevertheless, to the best of the investigators' abilities, your answers in this study will remain anonymous and confidential. Once the study is completed, we will completely "deidentify" our data. All identifiers will be removed from the identifiable private information and only then will the information be used for future research studies.

Use of Information and Data Collected

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us. Your responses will not be associated with you by name and the data you provide will be kept secure. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

Protections and Rights

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the University of Richmond's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research at (804) 484-1565 or irb@richmond.edu for information or assistance.

Statement of Consent

The study has been described to me and I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that my responses will be treated confidentially and used only as described in this consent form. I understand that if I have any questions, I can pose them to the researcher. I have read and

understand the above information and I consent to participate in this study by clicking "Continue." Additionally, I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

- "Yes, I agree; I wish to begin the study." (Continue)
- "No, I do not agree; I do not wish to participate."

Introduction

Welcome to the study! As you read previously, we are particularly interested in learning more about how social media content may influence whether an individual would want to live with someone else in a college or university roommate context.

Though gender-inclusive and gender-flexible housing options are becoming more common, many colleges and universities still require same-gender roommates. We recognize that the gender binary does not apply to everyone, and you will have a chance to indicate your own gender identity later in the study.

For now, which of the following is more likely for you?

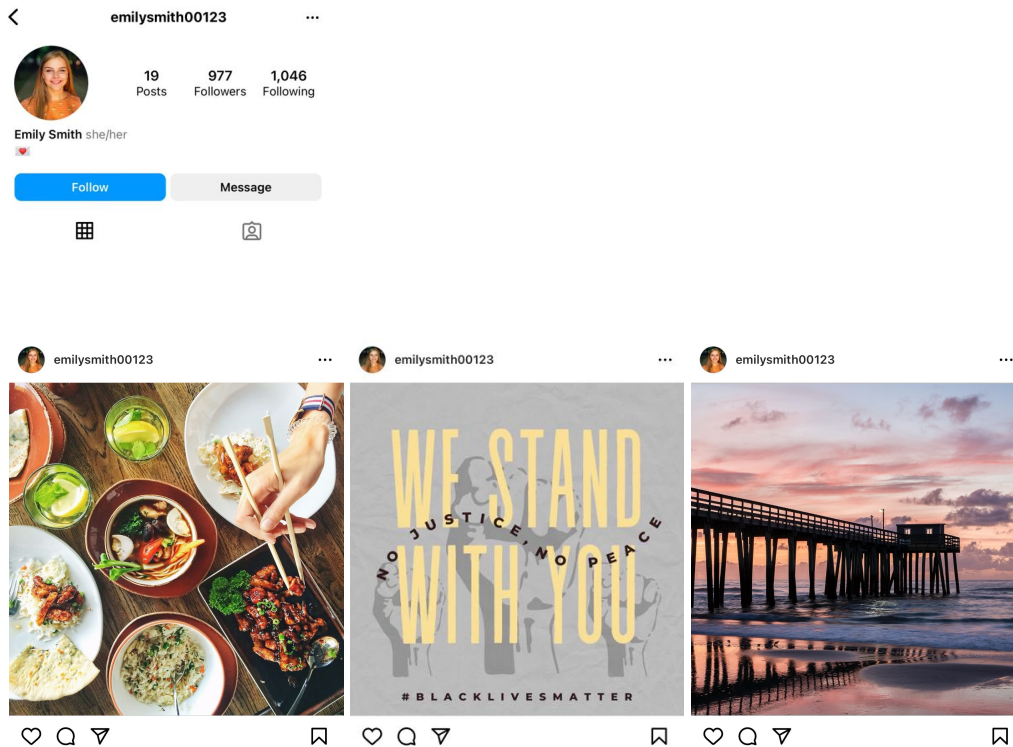
- A female roommate (female housing)
- A male roommate (male housing)

User Profile F GL

Thank you. Now, imagine you are an incoming first-year at a college or university much like your own. As you prepare for your first year at college, you are eager to meet new people and begin connecting with your future classmates. You would like to find a roommate, too. You find a social media page on Instagram dedicated to your incoming class year at your institution and see this introductory post:



You decide to click on the profile to find out more about Emily. As you scroll through Emily's social media profile, you also find some posts that were previously uploaded.



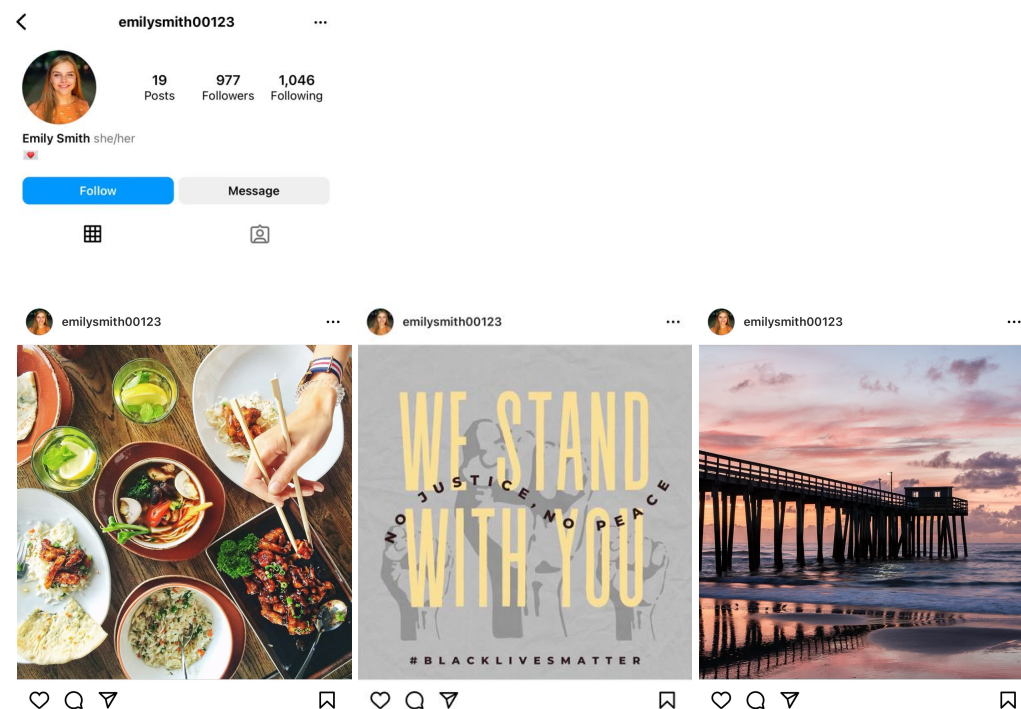
User Profile F NGL

Thank you. Now, imagine you are an incoming first-year at a college or university much like your own. As you prepare for your first year at college, you are eager to meet new people and

begin connecting with your future classmates. You would like to find a roommate, too. You find a social media page on Instagram dedicated to your incoming class year at your institution and see this introductory post:



You decide to click on the profile to find out more about Emily. As you scroll through Emily's social media profile, you also find some posts that were previously uploaded.



User Profile M GL

Thank you. Now, imagine you are an incoming first-year at a college or university much like your own. As you prepare for your first year at college, you are eager to meet new people and begin connecting with your future classmates. You would like to find a roommate, too. You find a social media page on Instagram dedicated to your incoming class year at your institution and see this introductory post:



You decide to click on the profile to find out more about Evan. As you scroll through Evan's social media profile, you also find some posts that were previously uploaded.





User Profile M NGL

Thank you. Now, imagine you are an incoming first-year at a college or university much like your own. As you prepare for your first year at college, you are eager to meet new people and begin connecting with your future classmates. You would like to find a roommate, too. You find a social media page on Instagram dedicated to your incoming class year at your institution and see this introductory post:



evansmith00123 Hi all! My name is Evan Smith, and I am so excited to be a part of [University Name] next year! I plan on majoring in [...]. I love going out, but also love staying in with friends! I also plan on joining the student activities board.

Feel free to reach out if you are looking for a roommate or just to talk! Can't wait to meet everyone!

You decide to click on the profile to find out more about Evan. As you scroll through Evan's social media profile, you also find some posts that were previously uploaded.

< **evansmith00123** ...

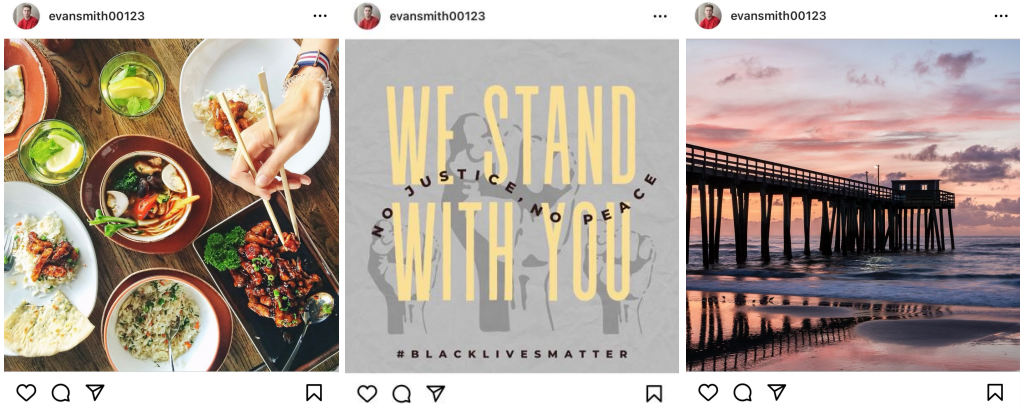


19 Posts 977 Followers 1,046 Following

Evan Smith he/him

Follow Message

📖 📷



Profile SCM

< **emilysmith00123** ...



19 Posts 977 Followers 1,046 Following

Emily Smith she/her

Follow Message

📖 📷

< **evansmith00123** ...



19 Posts 977 Followers 1,046 Following

Evan Smith he/him

Follow Message

📖 📷

After reflecting on what you have learned about $\{e://Field/name\}$, tell us a little about your first impressions of $\{e://Field/pronoun2\}$. We are going to ask you some specific questions in a few minutes, so here you can just write a few notes to yourself (and us) about your initial thoughts.

< emilysmith00123 ...



19 Posts 977 Followers 1,046 Following

Emily Smith she/her

Follow Message

Grid Profile

< evansmith00123 ...



19 Posts 977 Followers 1,046 Following

Evan Smith he/him

Follow Message

Grid Profile

To what extent do you think $\{e://Field/name\}$ is:

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Good-natured	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assertive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Impressions of User Profile

Please rate the extent of your (dis)agreement with the statements on this and the following pages by considering what you think is **most likely** true based on your first impressions of $\{e://Field/name\}$.

$\{e://Field/name\}$ seems similar to me.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

I can identify with $\{e://Field/name\}$.

Strongly
disagree

Disagree

Slightly
disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

$\{e://Field/name\}$'s values and my values are similar.

Strongly
disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

Most likely, \${e://Field/name} and I care about similar issues.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

I think I would like to live with \${e://Field/name}.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

I think I could 'be myself' with \${e://Field/name}.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

I think I would be treated fairly by \${e://Field/name}.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

I think my values and \${e://Field/name}'s values would align.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

\${e://Field/name} would create a feeling of connection with me.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

#{e://Field/name} would be interested in what happens to me.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

#{e://Field/name} would be respectful toward me.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

{e://Field/name} would be nonjudgmental toward me.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

Perceptions of Ally Characteristics

Many campuses are actively working to create and support a diverse community of students and to foster intercultural competence among community members. At the same time, concerns about racial justice, microaggressions, and other forms of bias are common on college campuses.

First, do you identify as a "person of color"? (We will ask for more detailed information about your racial-ethnic identity later.)

Note that, for the purposes of this question and upcoming questions, "people of color" refers to members of racial-ethnic groups that have been historically marginalized at selective and primarily White institutions.

- Yes
- No

Thanks. Now, how do you think $\{e://Field/name\}$ would fit in on a college campus dealing with issues of racial diversity, (in)justice, inclusion, etc.?

Please answer each of the following questions by considering what you think is **most likely** true of $\{e://Field/name\}$ based on your first impressions.

$\{e://Field/name\}$ cares about issues related to people of color.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

$\{e://Field/name\}$ wants to help people of color succeed.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

\${e://Field/name} cares about issues related to racial justice.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

\${e://Field/name} understands \${e://Field/pronoun} own racial-ethnic identity.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

$\{e://Field/name\}$ is knowledgeable about racial-ethnic communities other than $\{e://Field/pronoun\}$ own.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

How likely do you think it is that {e://Field/name} would do each of the following?

	Extremely unlikely	Moderately unlikely	More unlikely than not	More likely than not	Moderately likely	Extremely likely
Express outrage or empathy about racial injustice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Join or participate in a group or organization that supports racial diversity, equity, and/or inclusion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get together with others to challenge racial discrimination and injustice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoid topics of race in conversation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Express understanding or sympathy about racial injustice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Extremely unlikely	Moderately unlikely	More unlikely than not	More likely than not	Moderately likely	Extremely likely
Make efforts to get to know people from other racial-ethnic backgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote multiculturalism and inclusion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Show support for racial justice on social media accounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not speak out against injustice out of fear of making a mistake or stepping on toes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acknowledge privileges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Extremely unlikely	Moderately unlikely	More unlikely than not	More likely than not	Moderately likely	Extremely likely
Privately challenge an individual for prejudiced thinking or behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Publicly challenge an individual for prejudiced thinking or behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attend a protest or march against racial injustice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make efforts to self-educate about race and racism-related issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Suspicion of Motives

Thank you. You are now moving on to a new section. Here, we are interested in learning more about you: your own beliefs and tendencies.

To be clear: We are interested in what YOU think, feel, and do, which may differ from what others think, feel, and do. We expect that participants will have a wide variety of responses. If we are to learn anything useful, it is important that you respond to each of the questions openly and honestly. We are not evaluating you or your individual responses. Please remember that all your responses are confidential and will not be linked to your identity.

To what extent do you think that, in general or on average, when White people act in a nonprejudiced way towards members of racial-ethnic minority groups it is because...

It is personally important to them not to be prejudiced.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

It is in accordance with their personal values to be unprejudiced.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

They believe it is wrong to use stereotypes about members of racial/ethnic minority groups.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

They are personally motivated by their beliefs.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

It is important to their self-concept to be unprejudiced.

Strongly
disagree

Disagree

Slightly
disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

They want to avoid negative reactions from others.

Strongly
disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

They feel pressure from others to act nonprejudiced.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

They think other people would be angry with them if they acted prejudiced.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

They want to avoid disapproval from others.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

They are trying to act politically correct.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Intergroup Contact

Thinking about White American people, how often have you experienced interactions with them that are...

	(Almost) never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	(Almost) always
Comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intimate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpleasant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Welcoming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	(Almost) never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	(Almost) always
Unfriendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Awkward	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pleasant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	(Almost) never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	(Almost) always
Uncomfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Threatening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discriminatory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Stigma Consciousness

To what extent do you (dis)agree with each of the statements below?

Stereotypes about race and gender have not affected me personally.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Slightly
disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

I never worry that my behaviors will be viewed as stereotypical of my race or gender.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Slightly
disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

When interacting with people, I feel like they interpret all my behaviors in terms of race and gender.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

Most people do not judge other people on the basis of their race and gender.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

Being my race and gender does not influence how people act with me.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Slightly
disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

I almost never think about my race or gender when I interact with people.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Slightly
disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

Most people have a lot more negative thoughts about people of color than they actually express.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

I often think that people are accused of treating people of color unfairly.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

Most people have a problem viewing people as color as equals.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Slightly
disagree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Slightly
agree

Agree

Strongly
agree

Attention Check

Which of the following was true of $\{e://Field/name\}$? Please check all that apply.

- Was planning to join Greek Life
- Was planning to join the student activities board
- Posted in support of Black Lives Matter
- Posted in support of LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- Posted a picture of the ocean at sunset
- Posted a picture of a group of people at a formal event

Demographics

Thank you. You are almost finished. Before you go, it is helpful for us to learn just a bit more about who is completing our surveys.

What is your age (in years)?

Which of the following best describes you?

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Agender
- Gender fluid
- Gender queer
- Not listed here or prefer to self-describe:
- Prefer not to answer

Are you transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

What is your racial/ethnic identity? Please check all that apply. You may also include additional information on the lines following each response choice.

- African-American, Black, African, Caribbean
- East Asian-American, East Asian
- European-American, White, Anglo, Caucasian
- Hispanic, Latino(a,x), Chicano(a,x), Spanish Origin
- Middle Eastern, North African
- Native American, American Indian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- South Asian-American, South Asian
- Not listed here or prefer to self-describe:
- Prefer not to answer

What is your year in school (i.e., for the 2022-2023 academic year)?

First-year

Sophomore Junior

Senior

Are you an international student?

 Yes No

Are you a member of a Greek organization at your college or university?

 Yes, I am currently a member of a Greek organization. No, I am no longer a member of a Greek organization. No, I was never a member of a Greek organization.

What is your or your primary caregivers' yearly household income? If you do not know, please guess.

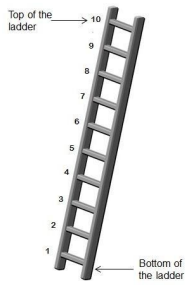
 Under \$40,000 \$40,000-\$59,999 \$60,000-\$79,999 \$80,000-\$99,999 \$100,000-\$119,999 \$120,000-\$139,999 \$140,000-\$159,999 \$160,000-\$179,999 \$180,000-\$199,999 \$200,000-\$249,999 \$250,000-\$299,999 \$300,000 and over

Please indicate the highest level of education that your parents (or primary caregivers) have attained.

	Some school	High school diploma	Some college	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Masters degree	Graduate or professional degree (Ph.D., M.D., J.D.)
Primary caregiver #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Primary caregiver #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Think of this ladder as representing where people stand **in the United States**. **At the top of the ladder** (rung 10) are the people who are the best off—those who have the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. **At the bottom of the ladder** (rung 1) are the people who are the worst off—who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no job. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom. Where would you place you and your family on this ladder? Click the number of the rung where you think you stand at this time in your life, relative to other people in the United

States.



1
Bottom
of the
ladder

2

3

4

5

6

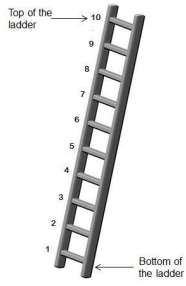
7

8

9

10
Top of
the
ladder

Think of this ladder as representing where students stand **at your college or university**. **At the top of the ladder** (rung 10) are the students who have the highest standing. **At the bottom of the ladder** (rung 1) are the students who have the lowest standing. Where would you place yourself on this ladder? Click the number of the rung where you think you stand at this point in time, relative to other students at your college or university.



1
Bottom
of the
ladder

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10
Top of
the
ladder

Please indicate your political identity on social issues (e.g., abortion, gun control, gay rights).

*I am _____ on **social issues**.*

Strongly
liberal

Moderately
liberal

Slightly
liberal

In the
middle

Slightly
conservative

Moderately
conservative

Strongly
conservative

Funnel Debriefing

What do you think today's study is about?

Do you think you know the hypothesis(es)? Please take your best guess.

Please include any additional comments below.

Debriefing

Thank you so much for your participation!

Sometimes in research it is necessary not to tell the participants the hypothesis (for example, disclosing questions about race and prejudice) as done in this study, because we want to recruit a broad sample and assess genuine responses. The general purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of potential allies on social media who are engaging in racial justice activism. **If you want to read more about current social science research being conducted on allyship**, we recommend the two articles below as a starting point:

- Burns, M. D., & Granz, E. L. (2023). "Sincere White people, work in conjunction with us": Racial minorities' perceptions of White ally sincerity and perceptions of ally efforts. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 26(2), 453-475.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302211059699>
- Ostrove, K. T., & Brown, J. M. (2017). Are allies who we think they are?: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 48, 195-204.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12502>

We appreciate your help in advancing social science research and better understanding attitudes toward allies and online activism.

We thoroughly emphasize that **the social media user profiles included in this study are not real people and featured royalty-free images from Pixabay.**

Additionally, we ask that you **please do not disclose our research procedures and/or the purpose of this study** to anyone who might participate in this study in the future as doing so could affect the results. The success of this study requires that participants have no idea in advance what the study is about, as we are interested in participants' genuine perceptions. Thus, please keep the study measures **confidential**. If anybody asks you about the experiment, please just tell them that it was a study about first impressions of social media users.

Please remember that, **if any of your experiences during this survey have left you feeling psychologically unwell**, we strongly encourage you to contact your healthcare provider.

If you have questions or would like to talk with the principal researchers, you may contact Principal Investigator Kathrina Durante (kathrina.durante@richmond.edu) or Faculty Advisor Kristjen Lundberg (klundber@richmond.edu). If you would like to talk with the Institutional Review Board (the committee that oversees human research ethics at the University of Richmond), please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Richmond at irb@richmond.edu.

Please click the arrow below to submit your survey. Once your response has been recorded, the Principal Investigator will, in turn record your one unit of research participation credit. Thank you again!

As you will recall, for completing this research study, you are eligible to receive a \$5.00 Amazon gift card. We are also interested in having your contact information so that we may ask for your participation in future research studies. Clicking the arrow below will submit your survey responses and send you to a second (and separate) survey in which you may enter the email address at which you would like to receive your gift card and/or consent to being contacted.

Please click the arrow below to submit your survey. Thank you again!

Blank

Wait one moment to be redirected...