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What is Your Prejudice? Predicting Prejudice Towards Greek Members

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What is your prejudice?: Predicting prejudice towards Greek members

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Abstract

Greek membership has been linked to prejudice toward others (Rhoads, 1995), but little research has examined prejudice toward Greek members. Participants completed individual difference measures related to prejudice as well as measures of religiosity, political orientation, gender, Greek membership, and Greek myths. Participants who perceived Greek members as more like themselves held fewer negative stereotypes of and more positive attitudes toward Greek members. Contact, including being a Greek member oneself, was also related to warmer attitudes toward Greek members. Individual difference factors that have predicted prejudice toward other groups (e.g., based on ethnicity or sexual orientation; RWA, SDO) did not relate to prejudice, suggesting that predictors of prejudice may vary depending on whether group membership is voluntary and/or whether a group is high or low status.

Introduction

Most of the research on predictors of prejudice has focused on attitudes toward disadvantaged groups, such as ethnic or sexual minorities (Jones & Dovidio, 2018), making it unclear whether certain individual differences predict prejudice per se, or only prejudice toward certain types of targets (Brandt & Crawford, 2019). In this study, we examined predictors of prejudice toward Greek (fraternity and sorority) members. Greek membership has been linked to prejudice toward others (Rhoads, 1995; Routon & Walker, 2016; Worthen, 2014), but there has been little research on prejudice toward Greek members. We examined whether several variables that have predicted prejudice in previous research (e.g., social dominance orientation (SDO), right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), contact) also predicted negative attitudes and stereotypes toward this group.

Measures

SDO ($\alpha = .93$; 16 items)
Belief in a hierarchical society

RWA ($\alpha = .80$; 6 items)
Adherence to authority and traditional values

Big Five ($\alpha = .54, .46, .48$; 6 items)
Five factor model of personality; agreeableness, conscientiousness, & openness

Similarity ($\alpha = .93$; 3 items)
How alike individuals believe they are to other groups

Contact ($\alpha = .88$; 4 items)
How often do you associate with other groups

Greek Myths ($\alpha = .90$; 17 items)
Author generated stereotypes about Greek life

Social distance ($\alpha = .92$; 6 items)
Willingness to be near other groups

Warmth ($\alpha = .95$; 3 items)
Feelings of favorability toward groups

Religiosity (1 item)
How religious a person is (e.g., not religious to very religious)

Political Orientation (1 item)
One's political stance (e.g., very conservative to very liberal)

For more information on measures and references see:

<https://osf.io/et7aj/>

Method

Sample 1: 47 male and 107 female undergraduate participants recruited from psychology classes at the University of Northern Iowa

- 91% White; 34% Moderate; 10.9% Greek members
- Age range 18-42 ($M = 24.1$); 96.8% between the ages of 18 and 22

Sample 2: 63 male and 74 female mTurk workers

- 72.5% White; 26.1% Liberal; 13.8% Greek members
- Age range 19-73 ($M = 23.7$); 25.3% between the ages 29 and 36

Procedure

- Participants read an informed consent and then completed personality measures in a randomized order as well demographic items such as Greek membership. This study was pre-registered. See: <https://osf.io/dszvt/> for more information.

Results

- The college sample reported fewer negative stereotypes of ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.57$ vs. $M = 2.89, SD = 0.65$; $d = 0.57, p < .001$) and less desired social distance from Greek members ($M = 3.77, SD = 0.90$ vs. $M = 4.04, SD = 0.72$; $d = 0.35, p = .004$) than the mTurk sample.
- Participants who perceived Greek members as more like themselves held fewer negative stereotypes and more positive attitudes (Table 1).
- More contact, including being a Greek member oneself, was related to less negative stereotypes and more positive attitudes.
- The only Big Five personality variable that predicted attitudes was agreeableness.

Conclusions

- Factors that have consistently predicted prejudice toward groups such as African Americans and women (e.g., SDO, RWA; Pratto et al., 1994; Whitley, 1999) did not predict prejudice toward Greek members.
- The only Big Five trait that predicted prejudice was agreeableness.
- Contact also predicted less prejudice, lending support to the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1955). People who perceived themselves as more like Greek members were also less likely to hold prejudices toward them.

Key Points

- Predictors of prejudice may vary depending on whether group membership is voluntary (e.g., Greek organizations) or not (e.g., race, gender) and/or whether a group is high or low status.
- Prejudice may be based more on social group identification when the target groups are voluntary and high in status, such as Greek organization members.

Table 1
B values for predictors of prejudice toward Greek members

	Greek Myth Acceptance	Warmth	Social Distance
SDO	-.03	.04	.06
RWA	-.09	.04	-.07
Openness	.02	-.05	-.02
Conscientiousness	-.06	-.09	-.01
Agreeableness	-.09*	.18***	.10*
Similarity	-.54***	.47***	.44***
Contact	-.14**	.11	.20***
Greek Membership	.12*	-.13*	-.04
Religiosity	.03	-.02	-.07
Biological Sex	-.08	-.05	.09
Political Orientation	-.07	-.01	.03
R^2	.56***	.45***	.40***
F	32.41***	19.68***	16.71***

Notes. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$. Biological Sex is coded as 1 (Male) and 2 (Female). Greek membership was coded as 1 (Yes) and 2 (No). Social distance was scored so that higher values indicate a greater willingness to be near the group. Greek Myth Acceptance is coded so that higher values indicate more negative views of the group. Warmth was coded so that higher values indicated more feelings of warmth toward the group.