Opinion Science Podcast
Hosted by Andy Luttrell

Navigating Diversity with Maureen Craig
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Andy Luttrell:
Who is American? In the minds of many, it's white folks who are American. A whole of bunch of studies in psychology have shown that people mentally associate "White" with the notion of "America," and they do that more easily than they associate Americanness with Latino Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Native Americans. At some implicit level at least, a true America is wrapped up in race.

But obviously this idea is flawed from the jump, right? There have always been lots of different people living in the United States, contributing to all facets of the nation. But it's true. The clear majority of people in the U.S. have been white. But that's changing. For all sorts of reasons, the demographics in this country have been shifting, with non-white Americans occupying a growing proportion of the population. To the point that forecasters have been saying that there will come a day—in not too long—when White Americans will constitute less than half of the population.

I remember years ago—I think in like high school—I for some reason was watching Jay Leno, in the simple days when he was just hosting The Tonight Show. And he had a monologue joke about this. Set up: This is in the news, you hear about this? Apparently they're saying that someday soon, minorities in this country will be more than 50% of the population. Punchline: I guess that means they won't be minorities anymore! Hilarious. Honestly, my memory of this is likely way off, and I can't seem to find this one-minute slice of early-2000s TV anywhere—Google really let me down. But the point is, these demographic shifts have been a talking point for ages. And the other point is that Leno's monologue jokes were not very funny.

But like, we're in the future now. Or close to it. According to the 2020 Census—the most recent one we've got—if you look at kids under 18 in the U.S., most are not White. And for the first time on record, in the overall population, the number of White Americans declined since the last Census. Demographic change is afoot.

And it's not just raw numbers, it's everyday experience. I love how this Washington Post article from a few months ago puts it: "Deep in the bowels of the nation's 2020 Census lurks a quiet milestone: For the first time in modern American history, most White people live in mixed-race neighborhoods."

It's true. If we peer back at 1990, 78% of White folks in the U.S. lived in predominantly White neighborhoods. But as of 2020, that number's down to 44%.

So what does any of this mean for Opinion Science? Well, the question isn't so much whether the racial makeup of the U.S. is changing—it is. But how are these changes shaping people's own outlook on race, the value of diversity, and their responsibility to advocate for the fair treatment of everyone?

You're listening to Opinion Science, the show about our opinions, where they come from, and how they change. I'm Andy Luttrell. And I'm really excited this week to share a conversation with my friend, Maureen Craig. She's currently an Associate Professor of Psychology at New York University where she studies how diversity and inequality affect our relationships with others and our social and political opinions. In our chat, she shares the work she's done directly testing how people react to demographic shifts and changes in diversity, as well as her studies on who advocates for whom within social activism…and why. So enough about what we're going to talk about. Let's just jump into it.

Andy Luttrell:
You know, it's one of those things where it's like I think we all implicitly have this sense that there's a throughline to what we do until we actually have to articulate it, and then we go like, "Well, how do I communicate to you that this is all born from the same interest?" So, do you get the sense that your work is kind of a coherent extension of a set of core questions? Or a bunch of one-offs? How do you think about the grand totality of the stuff that you do?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. I do think that it is related, so all of the work that I do sort of stems from a very naïve thing that… When I was starting in this field, one of the big questions that I was always puzzled by is the fact that we have so many different social identities. We belong to so many different groups. And other people also have all of these different social identities. We belong to so many different groups. And I, a secret optimist, was like, "Well, why is it that when we look at other people, we always seem to kind of focus on the things that separate us instead of all these possible points of connection?" And so, that was the initial question that got me into being interested in social categorization, intergroup relations, how we get along with one another, and then from that, the actual work that I do basically all looks at some form of the question of how people respond to inequality and how they respond to diversity. And sometimes, maybe both.

Andy Luttrell:
How much was that in mind when you started this enterprise as opposed to just like, "Psychology seems interesting," like were you motivated by these particular kinds of questions to begin with?

Maureen Craig:
No, no. I thought I was gonna be a social categorization researcher.

Andy Luttrell:
Oh. Why would you want to do that?

Maureen Craig:
I don't… And that's why I have the one paper that's very social categorization. No, originally I was actually in engineering, so I was initially… I started at Purdue in the engineering program for civil engineering, and then I had a summer internship on a construction site, and to remind you, I was a 19-year-old girl, and so through that summer I kind of came to the realization that that field was not necessarily one that I would feel comfortable in for the next couple decades, so I had to figure out another major. And so, the one thing I kept coming back to was I really wanted to keep my psychology minor that I was already planning on doing because I thought it was so interesting, and eventually I realized like, "Oh, I think I actually just really like psychology. Maybe I should just go and do that and be a clinician," because that's what you assume that you have to do when you don't have anybody in social psychology in your family. You don't know what it is.

And so, I went into my second year of undergrad assuming I would be a clinician, and I took a stereotyping and prejudice class, and that's where I was exposed to the idea that this is a thing that you can study, and that is so fascinating. So, basically from there it became very clear that I really was interested in understanding stereotyping, prejudice, intergroup relations, and that sort.

Andy Luttrell:
What was it about engineering? I'm trying to picture how heartbreaking it was to walk away. Was this the kind of thing where you're like, I don't know, people are engineers, it seems fine? Or you're like I would have really liked to have done that?

Maureen Craig:
I would have. I think it's a little bit of a shame that it is a pretty common story for a lot of women in engineering. But I love puzzles. I love problem solving. And I just really like infrastructure, so civil engineering was a really great fit. But yeah, so I think the nice thing about the switch to research in psychology is that you still get to do a little bit of problem solving and puzzle solving, so I still get to do that sort of stuff. I just don't really get to do anything with infrastructure except some of the control conditions we use in some of our papers. I sneak in some infrastructure stuff. So, now you know.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah. The easter eggs have been revealed here.

Maureen Craig:
It's a great control condition because it's pretty neutral and most people don't care about it but I do.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah. You care enough to be able to write a control message about it.

Maureen Craig:
It's great.

Andy Luttrell:
That's a good back pocket skill. I mean, do you think you're not still a social categorization person? It strikes me in reading some of the stuff that you do, a lot of it is this very kind of categorical, like at what level am I categorizing people? At a sort of overarching minority majority, at some sort of more granular, one stigmatized group versus another? I mean, I don't really think you can work in the intergroup space without doing categorization, but it seems like that still is playing a role in a lot of the things that you look at.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. I think that's fair. Yeah. I think the piece of it that makes me feel like I shouldn't claim being a social categorization researcher is because in my head, that means that you measure people's… what category they're thinking of. And we, in my lab, typically don't do that. We are more interested in outcomes like what are your attitudes towards people of other groups? And then we kind of make inferences about which level of category you're thinking of based on your attitudes. So, if you're more positive towards someone who's a potential outgroup member, maybe that's because you're thinking of them as a potential ingroup member instead.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah. Right. So, it's not the process of categorizing, but you don't get to where you're going without some categorization happening.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Exactly.

Andy Luttrell:
So, I figure there's sort of two streams of things that you do that I wanted to get your take on, and the first, the thing I most often associate with you is the work on shifting demographics and how people react to those. And so, you among others have been playing with this dilemma… Well, recently, but also this goes back quite a ways, right? This notion that people are reacting to the diversity in their environments, right? Or in their local environment, or in their sort of abstract environment, so maybe just to center it, I don't know the best place to start, but as you think about it, what's the core dilemma that this whole program of work is trying to understand?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. So, the work you're talking about is some work that we've been doing now for almost 10 years, and it's basically trying to understand how people respond to information about increased diversity. And this is actually, this demographic trend towards increasing diversity is not necessarily new. You can actually, if you go back to look at old census reports where they typically put out little briefs about what's happening in the U.S. demographics, the idea that we're becoming more diverse and that at some point the U.S. population will be less than 50% white, that idea popped up in some reports in the '90s. But it really became, like in the media, when I was in grad school, so I remember seeing a lot of articles about the changing demographics in around 2008, 2009.

And so, what we were interested in, Jenn Richeson and I, was how people were responding to this information. Because there's a lot of work suggesting that when people think about outgroups as

being bigger in size, or growing, that to them sort of signals that that group is more powerful, and those types of feelings, if it's directed towards an outgroup, tend to be threatening. So, there's all this theory in sociology suggesting that, and a lot of work suggesting that, looking at actual sizes of different groups. But what was happening is that there was all this anticipated demographic change happening. So, we didn't necessarily know a ton about what happens when people are anticipating demographic change. Rob Outten had a great paper that came out in 2012 that was suggesting threat reactions.

So, the main reason we wanted to look at it more was one, this is a thing that's happening, which is kind of a common theme in the stuff I study. It's usually sparked by something that's happening in the world and we feel like we need to know more. But also, I love to read the op-eds, and so what was happening at this time where there was all this news about how changing demographics are happening, at some point we'll be less than 50% white, all of these op-eds were suggesting that this was obviously gonna mean great things for Democrats. Because what they seem to be thinking is that, "Okay, well, if this group that I assume is liberal is growing, then there will be more liberals and more Democrats."

And so, what we found is that basically among any group who does not see themselves as part of the group that's growing, information about another racial group growing leads to feelings of threat, and one of the consequences of feeling uncertain and threatened is that people try to sort of go back to traditions, and safety, and so that can translate into more conservative policy attitudes. So, it's kind of the opposite of what the pundits at the time were suggesting would happen.

Andy Luttrell:
So, the thing about the difference between that approach and some of the earlier ways of looking at diversity and its effects on people's attitudes is this categorical crossover, right? Do you think there's something special about the proposal that minority groups will someday occupy more than half of a population, right? Which just shifts what majority-minority means, as opposed to what the earlier work was just like, "Oh, the more represented these groups are, the more threat there potentially is," right? Is there something special added? Because a lot of the new work is specifically about majority-minority. Not just that this is a group that's getting bigger. It's that there's this line that's gonna get crossed. Does that seem important, or it just happens to be the story that we tell right now?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah, so theoretically that should be important. But so we've run a bunch of these studies, and we varied the manipulation that we use, so it's always some sort of information about increased diversity, so some of the articles we'll use this majority-minority terminology, where it kind of lumps together different minority groups. And so, that's sort of one of the earlier framings. We also have looked at versions of it where you use the framing, but then you highlight that a lot of this demographic change is driven by Hispanic Americans, so Black Americans are not expected to grow as a percentage of the total population, so you kind of add in a little bit of that, and then the more recent work, we've just stopped using majority-minority terminology at all and just talk about one group growing. And across those, you tend to find similar patterns.

So, yeah, theoretically it should, but in our studies on this we haven't found that the framing of increased diversity makes a huge difference.

Andy Luttrell:
And so, just to be clear about what you're finding, so the idea is like if white Americans perceive or have their attention drawn to a growth in representation of some minority group like Hispanic Americans in the population, it leads to what? What happens? When people pay attention to this, what is it that happens as a consequence?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah, so one thing that happens is it leads to thinking that this trend might mean bad things for the status of my group, right? So, as a white person encountering information about increased diversity, it activates the thought that this might mean that white people's status in society is gonna go down if this other group grows, and from that threat it can lead to feeling more negatively, expressing more negative attitudes towards racial minorities. Even the groups that are not necessarily presented as driving the effect, and it can also shift political attitudes towards the more conservative end of the spectrum. Again, kind of due to this wanting more stability idea.

Andy Luttrell:
So, these are all perceptions, right? And there's some other indication that… Is this just like, "When I'm paying attention to it…" I don't know where I'm really going with this other than to highlight that some of the work… What I think is interesting is that some of the analyses just look actually at the real changes, right? I could make up that, "Oh, this group is getting bigger," but it's also true. And that's gonna feel more true in some places than others, right? This is not uniform across the country that these demographics are shifting. And so, I just wonder if you could talk a little bit about the double-edged sword of actually increasing diversity in people's communities.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Yeah. So, the anticipated demographic change effect, I think part of the reason why that is so consistent is because it's activating this threat without any opportunity to actually get to know people. You're just encountering information about something that may or may not happen in the next 30 years. Whereas if you go and you look at the data on what happens when people live in diverse spaces, it's a bit more mixed. So, some of that work, and oftentimes it's correlational, so they just kind of measure people's attitudes and then also measure how diverse their local environment is, so there's a number of questions about causality, and directionality, and things like that, but that work tends to find a mix of effects.

So, sometimes people who live in more diverse spaces have more tolerant attitudes, sometimes they have more negative attitudes, and sometimes it's just not related. And so, we think that part of that process of why there's much more consistent effects of just anticipating changes and how anticipating changes can elicit threat a little bit more consistently is because of that opportunity for contact. And so, if people are living in spaces where they actually have the opportunity to get to know folks who might belong to a different group, then that tends to be associated with more positive attitudes. But if you're just reading an article about demographic change, there's no opportunity for mitigating any sort of biases.

I could also point out, so the earliest work we did on this was looking at white Americans' attitudes, but in subsequent follow-up work we also examined how members of different racial minority groups who were not part of the group that we presented as growing, so for example Black and Asian Americans were presented with information about Hispanic population growth, and they showed those similar shifts towards conservative support. So, it really does… That's where when I mentioned it earlier about being not so much about white Americans' reactions, but about being part of a group that you don't think is growing. It seems to be a bit broader.

Andy Luttrell:
So, some other group is getting more power is the feeling, it seems.

Maureen Craig:
Or you assume that they're getting more power.

Andy Luttrell:
Right, right. Yeah. Right. Because that's not explicitly communicated but that's what people are inferring.

Maureen Craig:
Inferring.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah. I was wondering, so it's sort of curious that the anticipated demographic changes are getting people to in the moment express more conservative attitudes and more hostile outgroup attitudes, which could almost seem like it could kick off a self-fulfilling prophecy sort of mechanism where like then, as this becomes the reality, and this growth and change does happen, you're actually cutting off the opportunity for contact because people are saying like, "I've sort of predetermined that I'm not gonna like this other group."

But what's kind of interesting is that those prompts jump ahead many years, right? Whereas the reality of these shifts is that they're slow, right? So, I'm thinking of the frog in boiling water example. It's like in the moment… Yeah, maybe that's not the rosiest metaphor. But as it's gradual, you go like, "Oh, I kind of slowly get to know more and more people, and there's no…" That threat, it doesn't happen so sharply, right? As opposed to like, "Oh my God. You're telling me that as far as I'm concerned, very soon things are radically gonna change in this country." I don't know, so I'm throwing that out there as a possible difference between the work that's just looking at day by day, the real diversity in one place versus another, as opposed to these kinds of prompts that might feel more threatening because they accelerate time so quickly.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. And there is work where they found that white participants anticipating going to either a more diverse or a less diverse area, so that's the manipulation, and what they measured was back to infrastructure, kind of how participants would set up their little social world, and how they would set up which school would you go to, which workplace, and stuff like that. And people would structure their environments to be a little bit more separated if they were anticipating that it was a more diverse place compared to a less diverse place.

So, the tricky part is if people have the opportunity to structure their environments to sort of anticipate that they might be uncomfortable and try to get away from that discomfort, that's a very… You know, makes sense why somebody would be interested in not being uncomfortable. So, if they have the opportunity to do that, that's when it gets tricky, because that precludes any possibility of having the positive contact that can help mitigate some of those threat reactions.

Andy Luttrell:
Which is kind of like that self-fulfilling prophecy notion, right? And because that is similarly… It's like a sharp shift in demographics, right? Oh, things are gonna change very quickly. That kind of prompts this feeling of threat, and so I buffer against it in this way that protects against any opportunity I might have to actually prove myself wrong. As opposed to if this is not a salient thing, people may not naturally leap to these kind of self-protective or threat-protective behaviors, and they just sort of go with the flow, and maybe some of the nice things about getting to know people who are not like yourself take over. If it happens gradually.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah, and one of the cool ideas in this general space is Michael Zárate has some work on the idea of cultural inertia, which is… It's basically people are comfortable with what they know, and so this is related to this idea where what you would expect is somebody who's in a place that is diversifying, then the thing that they're comfortable with is sort of that rate of change. So, changing that should be less comfortable for them. And so, it's kind of a cool idea because then you could look at people who are in places that are already more diverse. They should show less concern for the issue.

So, anyway, just wanted to give a shoutout to that because I think it's a neat idea.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah. No, I agree. So, I also wanted to talk about the kind of other thread that I see in the stuff that you do, which is about how different groups advocate for social change sort of broadly speaking, and what that means, and who's doing the advocating, so it makes plenty of sense that people will advocate for things that directly affect them. That's not too surprising. We also see plenty of instances where people in privileged or powerful positions opt to advocate on behalf of minoritized groups, as well, out of a feeling of moral goodness, but you've taken a perspective on something that I don't know that people often think about, which is like between stigmatized groups is there a sense that people are apt to advocate for issues that may not directly affect themselves, but are broadly reflective of social fairness?

And so, I'm just teeing you up to kind of go off on why you say you look to the world to think about things. Is this a sort of similar thing, that there was an incident that you go, well, gosh, why don't know we know more about this?

Maureen Craig:
Actually, so this was one of the ones where it wasn't, so this was actually looking at our field and seeing that gap that you were mentioning, where we have all this work in intergroup relations looking at how members of the majority group relate to members of the minority group, and

typically in intergroup relations that's looking at attitudes between Black and white Americans historically, but there really wasn't much, in psychology at least, looking at how members of different racial minority groups or other sorts of minoritized or stigmatized groups relate to one another. And I wonder if part of that might have come from again that question about, "Well, we have so many identities." There's so many possibilities of contact. Because, and we actually looked at this recently in a survey, if you think about people, there's so many different identities that it's pretty likely that there's at least one that you could draw on that you think might be a little bit devalued in society. And actually, when we asked people in a recent survey, "Can you think of any identities you have that face discrimination?" We just sort of left it at… They could have said no, but 96% of people could think of one, right?

And so, for that, that's actually kind of huge, because if you can think of an identity that faces discrimination, then there's the possibility that you could connect that experience with that of somebody else. And if 96% of people tend to have these experiences, then that's so much potential for commonality. But then the other thing that's interesting is that the experience of discrimination is… Yes, it's a potential point of common experience, but being discriminated against is threatening, right? And we know that threats kind of sometimes lead people to separate from others, and potentially derogate others as a way to restore that feeling of feeling good.

It's kind of an interesting question of when people are thinking about their own experiences, when do they take that and see connections and want to work with others who might have a different but potentially similar form of discrimination, and when does it just not really make that leap, right? When is it just this is an outgroup and I'm gonna sort of separate from them?

Andy Luttrell:
So, the idea being that yeah, it could go either way.

Maureen Craig:
And it does.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah, so what matters? What are the things that prompt people to go like, "Oh, I completely get what is happening here. This is wrong. I understand this for myself, and so in solidarity I'll fight hand in hand." As opposed to people going like, "Listen. You do you. Not my problem. I've got my own things to worry about. I don't need to waste my time on this thing that doesn't affect me."

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Yeah. So, the sort of big picture thing that seems to shift around whether or not people see that as a common thing is just anything that's gonna shift people's beliefs that the experience is similar. And so, some of that might be if the form of discrimination is in the same domain. So, if it's all racial discrimination, oftentimes that translates a little bit easier than if a white woman is thinking about sexism. That doesn't really translate as easily to attitudes towards racial minorities, for example.

Other work that we've been doing recently has looked at different forms of discrimination. It's kind of tapping into a similar idea where if people are thinking about institutional biases and

structural biases, they're thinking at that really broad level of policies that negatively affect groups. That seems to be a little bit easier to translate into seeing commonality with other minority groups compared to thinking about interpersonal expressions of prejudice, like somebody expressing negative attitudes and stereotypes. Which makes sense if you think about how the specific stereotypes of different groups might be very different. So, it's just a little bit harder to make that connection, so that's sort of the big picture, is any way of framing discrimination that people can make that connection a little bit easier.

Andy Luttrell:
It seems like this idea of fighting racial bias can translate more easily, like it's easier to see that commonality between different specific racial groups, right? That's what you're saying. And so, when that happens, does it happen primarily through a sort of simple empathy, just like a genuine, like, "Oh, I get it. Let's do this. I understand what you're going through easily, so I sort of use my personal experiences to understand that this is wrong." Versus the more cynical take is that that's ultimately self-serving, possibly, if people think like, "Oh, if we can make inroads here, the world thinks of racial discrimination in this monolithic way, and so that's probably gonna have some kickback to just discrimination broadly." So, I don't remember what all you've tapped into to see why this is happening, but do you get a sense of whether it's more one way or the other?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Yeah. It totally could… I could imagine that for different people either is possible. I mean, that makes sense. The measures that we've looked at to serve as mediators tend to be things like what's somebody's response to the question of how similarly do you view this group. Do you think you have common experiences? But in recent work we've also included items like agreement with a statement like, "Groups should work together. Groups need each other." That kind of idea. And so, it could be both. And it could be maybe one for certain people and one for other people, but we haven't necessarily separated it out so cleanly just yet.

Andy Luttrell:
We're doing some work on messages that appeal to self we're calling, tentatively, self-oriented versus other-oriented appeals. This started with some work we were doing in the pandemic on health messaging, if like… Do I tell you it's a good idea to stay at home because it's gonna keep you safe or because it's gonna prevent this virus from spreading to vulnerable populations? And so, we're doing this meta-analysis now and seeing all these different ways in which that difference is relevant, right? It's the same, I'm making the same pitch, but I'm either making this about protecting yourself or about protecting other people. And it just occurred to me that it could apply here, too. Ultimately, what's more compelling? Fighting for social justice because ultimately, maybe not now but eventually, this will help my group? Versus it's just the right thing to do and I understand. I have an easier road into understanding why it's the right thing to do.

Maureen Craig:
And from your work, which one is more effective?

Andy Luttrell:
So, we'll see what the results of this meta-analysis are. That's kind of the question we're asking. There's a glimmer of a sense that it's that other-oriented altruistic approach that's more effective.

What our work shows, though, is that that's moderated, right? Some people, when they're morally motivated for whatever reason, that's the message that's more compelling. But people who go, "Health is not a question of morality, so keep me safe and I don't care about the other people," and so it seems like probably the answer is both and would be in the case of what you're looking at, too.

But open call for what is it that moves the needle because of selfish motivations and what is it that's moving the needle because of the sort of compassionate "I feel what you're going through" motivation.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Well, and I think from my approach, I get the sense, and this is more of just a hunch than any reason from looking through the literature, but it does make sense to me that it's potentially easier to get people supportive of things to the extent that they think it's useful for them, right? So, that seems like just an easier ask than, "Here's this thing that may not benefit you but it's the right thing to do." Yeah, and to the extent that people agree with that message, it's like great, that works wonderfully. It just seems a little easier to find the things that people can make their connections themselves. Because then you don't need to have all this messaging. You just let people work in their self-interest.

Andy Luttrell:
Well, I wonder in your case if it's like if it was very clear that the public thinks of anti-Black bias as categorically different than anti-Hispanic bias. Would it still be like… I get that the inroads we make on anti-Black racism will do nothing for anti-Hispanic prejudice, and yet I still am willing to do it because ultimately what I'm motivated by is just this empathic response. I get it. And so, I can easily swap it. As opposed to when you ask people, they go, "Oh, the world out there, like our country, sees these both as the same thing, and so when I fight for anti-racism," forgetting what's anti and what's not, "Am I gonna make inroads for my group or not?"

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Well, and there is something about the context that you're in seeing things as similar that does facilitate seeing that commonality. And so, there's a lot of cool work in I think it's political science where they look at the construction of these bigger identities, so they call them pan-ethnic identities. It's basically like Asian American is an example of a pan-ethnic identity where it's kind of lumping together a bunch of very different nationalities into one allegedly cohesive group in the U.S., in the context of the U.S., right? And the same thing with Hispanic American, right? That's lumping together a lot of different groups.

And so, one of the findings from this literature is that when people come to places that all of a sudden now you're in the U.S., and sort of being Asian American, or being Hispanic American, that's a meaningful category. It connects you with other people in that category that previously you might not have seen a lot of commonality with. Just having that available label in the environment can lead people to see commonalities.

Andy Luttrell:
Interesting. Another way to approach the question is if we think about allyship and whether it's the same thing or a different thing. So, what's your sense from surveying this work on how allyship is or isn't the same as solidarity between stigmatized groups? And does it say anything about whether social advocacy is primarily selfish or primarily authentic, let's say?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. I mean, that's a great question, and I think the unsatisfying answer is we don't know.

Andy Luttrell:
So, we're just trading unsatisfying answers between the two.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. That's what this is, right? That's the podcast.

Andy Luttrell:
Yep. I should call it Unsatisfying Answers.

Maureen Craig:
New title. Yeah, so I suspect, and so we wrote a recent sort of theory or review paper with this idea that there are these separate ways that you can connect with other people depending on which identity you're using to make that connection. So, you can identify as part of the privileged group and see that system as unjust, and you want to change things because of that view, right? Or the same person could connect a form of discrimination that they face with the discrimination that they now are wanting to help support reducing, right? And both of those could happen in the same person, and I think the tricky thing is in our field is we haven't necessarily been thinking of it that way. We've been thinking about allyship as, "Okay. Well, if a white person does something on racial justice, that means it's an allyship thing." Which, it could be, right? They could be doing that due to an identification with their racial identity and sort of connecting that privilege acknowledgement. All these processes could be happening.

Or they could be connecting their experiences as a woman, or a gay person, or any other number of identities, and actually connecting that way, and we don't necessarily have a lot of evidence about the process. And I think it could lead to different... Having the different processes happen could shift around how people are thinking about social change and could impact how people try to work together in these coalitions.

So, trying to follow up on that now, but there's not a lot of good evidence that I can give you yet.

Andy Luttrell:
So, it seems like typically allyship and solidarity are defined by whether the identity that's salient to me in the moment is a privileged one or a stigmatized one, right?

Maureen Craig:
So, that's how I would argue we should think about it. What happens in the field is that people sort of take the category and use that to make inferences about which process is happening.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah, so that's what I was wondering, is like it seems also confounded by why we're fighting. Allyship, more of like a moral duty to dismantle injustice, and solidarity, more out of like an empathic response to helping someone in a similar situation as oneself. Yeah, so I think I was coming upon that confound too. And I wasn't sure how to resolve it, right? But it seems like we need to untether these two ideas and come up with two different naming schemes for them, right? The who are you and why are you doing this.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Yeah. I think some of it could be measuring sort of the emotions that are activated when people are responding, like are they feeling more sympathy, which would suggest one pathway? Are they feeling more guilt, which would suggest a different pathway? That's one way you could get at it. You could also ask people, right? We could go back to the social categorization, like how are you thinking about yourself? What is contributing? And just sort of get that.

But right now, it's a bit more of a here is this person whose categories I know, and then they are responding a certain way to racial injustice, or some other form of injustice, and then they're kind of filling in the process. So, somebody's suggesting we should do things to reduce racial inequality, and this person is a white person saying it, so it must be allyship. So, that's the part that I'd love to really tease apart, the middle bit. Is it because there's all this stuff about guilt and privilege acknowledgement? Or are they connecting some other way?

Andy Luttrell:
Well, you'll let us know what the answer to that is next time on Unsatisfying Answers.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Have me back in three years.

Andy Luttrell:
So, that's kind of a nice segue here, is all of this is self-categorization, or like how am I thinking about myself. Do I see myself as overlapping with the group that is facing some injustice? But I wanted to at least a little bit talk about this newer work that you have about whether outsiders looking in think in a clumpy way or a less clumpy way, if I'm just to keep going with my really evocative language here.

Maureen Craig:
Oh, I love it. Clumpy.

Andy Luttrell:
Frogs in boiling water, clumpyness, so when people think about these sort of coalitions, or notions of solidarity, what are they seeing when they… I guess maybe to set the stage, what are the two possible ways they could approach that perception, and then what do you find they tend to do in terms of how they categorize different groups together or not?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah, so you're mentioning a recent paper, thank you, that we have trying to understand people's assumptions about different racial groups' political attitudes, and so one easy heuristic that people could use is that if they're thinking about racial group members' attitudes on policies, they could just say, "Okay. Well, it might be that white Americans have one view on the policy and racial minorities as a clump have another view." And that would be sort of consistent with some of this terminology that gets thrown around in media, like majority-minority. That's a category, a dichotomy that people tend to use. Or people could make a little bit more nuanced predictions based on the specific racial groups that they're thinking about.

And so, for that, then maybe they use specific racial stereotypes to make inferences about what types of policies that that group would support. And so, what we tend to find is that people are a little bit more nuanced than the just white versus racial minority idea, and so what that looks like is on certain issues relating to economics, and issues that are seen as changing status, people tend to use stereotypes about group status to make inferences about who's likely to support the issues. And so, for that it's assumptions that Black and Hispanic Americans are supportive of sort of reducing the status hierarchy, sort of increasing availability of low-income housing, welfare, things like that, whereas the other two groups, white and Asian Americans, are expected to be more similar to one another and more on the support for the current hierarchy side of things.

And it flips if you're thinking about policies relevant to more cultural issues. And for that, it switches based on cultural stereotypes and the groups that are expected to work together are Asian Americans and Hispanics, so on things like increasing immigration, making English the official language, stuff like that, and in contrast Black and white Americans are expected to work together on those types of issues. So, it's really… It's just kind of the match between existing racial stereotypes and the extent to which a policy is seen as being relevant to those stereotypes.

Andy Luttrell:
Yeah, and it's useful, the contrast is helpful. The overall majority-minority, it's like a possible way that it could have fallen out, that people just go, "Oh, all of these things are social issues, and so preferences are gonna fall out along the lines of who's in the majority and who's in the minority." Or it could be hyper specific, but it seems like people are again leaning on some amount of grouping together based on like, "Oh, all of these folks are motivated by the same things. Not every minority group is, but it seems like there's at least some cluster of them that do." And so, how right are people?

Maureen Craig:
Oh, yeah. If you look at actual attitudes, it doesn't look like that. So, the analyses we did of public polling data suggest that there are group differences in terms of support for these types of issues, but it doesn't follow that pattern. The pattern it follows tends to be more of a on average, white people tend to be a little bit more conservative on issues generally, Black Americans are at the other end of support, and then the other two groups are kind of right in the middle. So, it's a pattern, but it's not what people expect based on stereotypes.

Andy Luttrell:
Is there a possibility, so you only tested this with racial identity groups, but in principle, if the idea is like this notion of cultural assimilation and status are omnipresent in all of the kinds of social groups that we think about, does it make sense that people would do this clumping? I don't know why I always refer to this as clumping. It's just to me, it is exactly what I mean when we're talking about when data fall out into different factors. It's just clumpyness. They just seem clumpy. Do you think that the public perception would follow a similar kind of thing or is there something particular about the way that we think about these specific groups? White, Asian, Hispanic, and Black as salient social labels in the U.S.?

Maureen Craig:
Yeah, so we started by looking at racial groups for a couple of reasons. One, the initial sort of theory thinking about groups in terms of how stereotypically foreign to American on one dimension, and high and low status on the other dimension, that's Linda Zou and Sapna Cheryan's work. That specifically was in the context of racial hierarchies, so we're like, "Okay. We probably play it safe there. Stick pretty close."

And then the other thing that's interesting about race groups in the U.S. that is useful for this kind of set of studies is that because there's at least four large racial groups in the U.S., it allows for a lot more of an examination of which types of coalitions are happening, where if you think about other categories, there tend to be fewer well-represented groups. And so, it makes it a little bit harder to test for some of the different coalitional patterns. But theoretically, I agree that it totally could sort of travel to a different domain. So, if you think of sort of cultural foreignness to the other end, which… Cultural Americanness for lack of a better word, that in its essence is just proximity to the prototype, the sort of cultural prototype, and that doesn't have to be just racial group sort of thinking. It could be any sort of prototype.

Andy Luttrell:
So, we talked a little bit about that stuff that you're doing on the kind of breaking apart allyship solidarity. As we wrap up, what are the other sorts of things that are on your mind these days as things are moving ahead? What could we expect going forward?

Maureen Craig:
Oh, gosh. That's a great question. Yeah, so I'll just talk about one that we're about to submit, because it's on mind. Yeah, so one of the recent directions that we've been going is trying to understand what types of information about inequality are most motivating for people to want to do something about it, right? And here, it's sort of less about the identity of the person encountering the information and more about the quality of the information, like what pieces of information do people see as most unjust, and problematic, and what leads to that?

And so, one of the papers that came out recently on this found that focusing on disadvantages in economic inequality, so as an example, if you sort of break down income groups in the U.S., there's a 15-year gap in life expectancy of the richest and the poorest Americans. And that right there is just a disparity, and you can frame that equally correctly by saying that poorer Americans live 15 fewer years, or instead you could focus on rich people living 15 more years, right? And so, the framing that focuses on the disadvantaged group, like poor people living fewer years, people tend

to see that as more unjust, and because of that they tend to be more supportive of redistributive policies and taking action against economic inequality. And so, that's one example of part of the message that can shift around how upset people are about an issue.

And then the paper we're working on right now is looking at the type of domain that there's a disparity in. So, what I just used as an example is a pretty good health-related example. It's people literally living longer or shorter lives. But you could also talk about inequality as occurring in lifetime earnings, right? How much money you make and other sorts of economic domains. And so, in the most recent paper we're about to submit, we're testing these different domains where we give people information about a disparity in either the health domain, the economic domain, or a sort of belonging domain, feeling like you belong in a given context, sort of discipline in schools would be an example of a low belonging disparity, and what we tend to find is that the health information is most motivating, and it seems to be driven by seeing that issue as more of a morally sacred issue, right?

It seems like a bigger deal for people to be living shorter lives than having less money. And because it's that sort of moral connection, that translates to more support for taking action.

Andy Luttrell:
That speaks right to my heart as someone who studies moral rhetoric.

Maureen Craig:
I thought you might like that.

Andy Luttrell:
Well, very cool. I'll look forward to hopefully seeing that as soon as possible. And thanks for taking the time to walk through all this stuff. This was very cool.

Maureen Craig:
Yeah. Thank you so much for having me.

Andy Luttrell:
Alrighty, thank you so much to Mo Craig for sharing her work. For more about her lab and the work they're doing, you can check out the episode webpage for links—both to the lab website and to individual studies we talked about.

For all that and more, OpinionSciencePodcast.com is the thing to type into your web browser. Be sure to also hit the Enter key to actually go there. You'll find transcripts for this episode and past episodes, links to fun and exciting things, ways to help the show, and heck, pictures of the people who've been guests. Hit the "subscribe" button wherever you happen to be—it's a button, right?— to make sure you don't miss any episodes. And tell the whole dang world how much you like Opinion Science by leaving a review online.

Okay, that's all for now. See you back in a couple weeks for more Opinion Science. Buh bye.