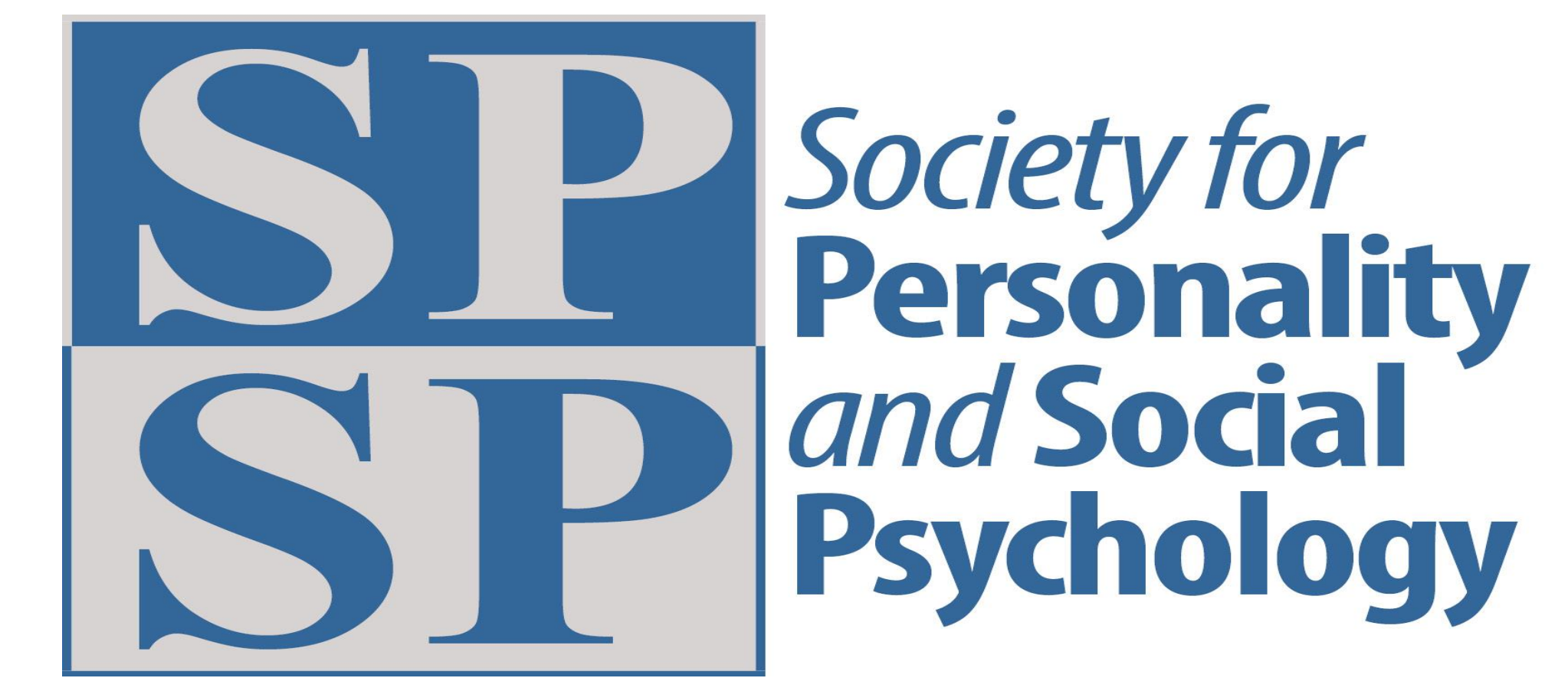




How do gender, race, and activism engagement influence perceptions of environmentalists?

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Background

Environmentalists are stereotyped negatively:

- Militant, eccentric, aggressive, unpleasant, and extreme

Consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), negative stereotypes may:

- Reduce engagement with environmentalists

The activist's dilemma (Feinberg et al., 2020) can also reduce support for environmentalists:

- Collective, public, and civic actions create benefits, but they also undermine support for the movement
- People resist social change because of negative stereotypes about activists
- People expect an environmentalist to be an activist

People also have expectations about who will be an environmentalist (i.e., a White women).

Methods

We conducted a 2 X 2 X 2 between-subjects experimental design where we manipulated the gender (female, male), race (White, Black), and activism of an environmentalist's profile.

- N = 522 Prolific participants (55.74% women, 74.90% White)

Table 1

Means of dependent variables across activism condition and p-values: Target activism led to more negative perceptions

Dependent variables	Means (SDs)		Main effect Activism p-values
	Environmentalists (E)	Environmental activists (EA)	
Positive Stereotypes (ratings)	5.47 (0.83)	4.91 (0.98)	< .001***
Social Distance	3.65 (1.59)	4.38 (1.73)	< .001***
Similarity with profile	3.58 (1.48)	3.19 (1.45)	.002**
Identifying with E	3.88 (1.68)	3.66 (1.71)	.148
Identifying with EA	2.72 (1.72)	2.66 (1.67)	.665
Pro-environmental behaviors	2.70 (0.68)	2.62 (0.61)	.190

Figure 1

Race effect on identifying with environmentalist

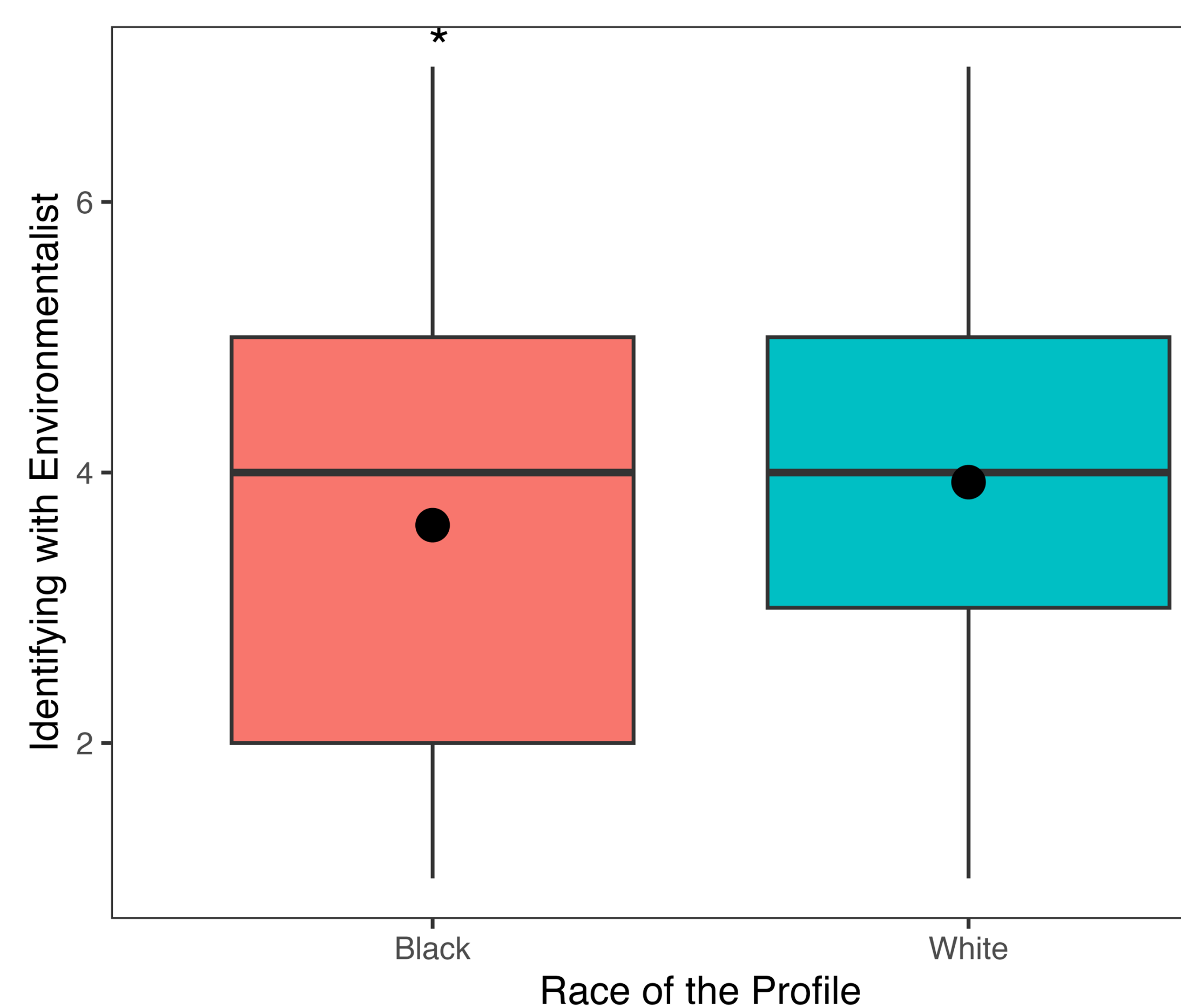
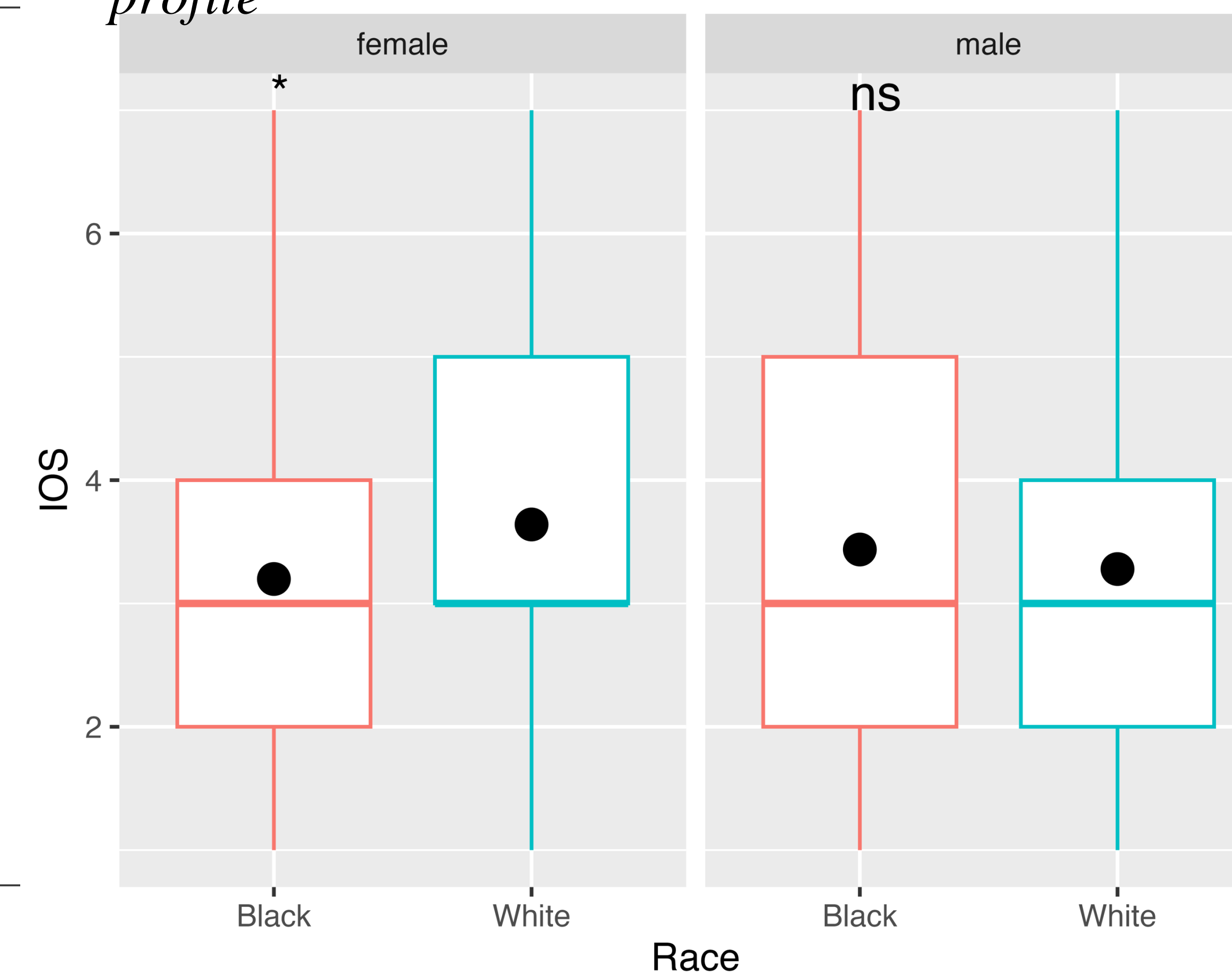


Figure 2

Gender and race interaction on similarity with profile



Profile Manipulation Examples

- **White environmentalist condition:** Carly/Connor is a young, White American college student. She/He has been interested in environmental issues, and can often be found picking up trash in her/his neighborhood, composting her/his waste food, and recycling whenever she/he can.
- **Black environmental activist condition:** Taneesha/Tyrone is a young, African American college student. She/He has been interested in environmental issues, and she/he recently joined a group that educates the campus about environmentalism and engages in protests to advocate for the environment.

Measures

- Stereotype ratings (“efficient”, “honest”, “bossy”, “selfish”)
- Similarity with the group (Aron et al., 1992)
- Identification with environmentalist and environmental activists
- Pro-environmental behaviors (Markle, 2013; “How often do you talk with others about their environmental behavior?”)
- Social distance (Crandall & Moriarty, 1995; “I would like this person to be a close personal friend”)
- Profile’s identification as an environmentalist and environmental activist

Results

- The activism engagement of environmentalists drove people’s negativity towards them.
- Participants were more likely to identify with a White environmentalist than a Black one, $F(1,497) = 4.357, p = 0.037$.
- Target gender mattered little, though participants felt most similar to the White female target, $F(1,507) = 5.296, p = 0.022$.

References

References Available Upon Request