

An Investigation into the Controversy Surrounding Affirmative Action: A Comparative Analysis of Ethnically Delineated Perspectives and Their Convergence with the General Discourse on Reddit

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ABSTRACT

- In order to combat systemic discrimination and inequality, many policies and initiatives -- which would come to be known as Affirmative Action -- were put into place to ensure members of underrepresented communities have the opportunity to education and employment. In recent times, these policies have been a major point of contention, with opinions varying by ethnic groups within the general population.
- Our study explores how the opinions surrounding Affirmative Action differ between Asian, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous Communities, as well as how these respective sentiments compare to the general sentiment as gauged by Reddit activity
- We leveraged the Reddit API to scrape data from Reddit, and used technologies such as NLTK, TextBlob, WordCloud, and Latent Dirichlet Allocation to perform a sentiment analysis and visualize the results
- Our findings revealed a diverse array of sentiment polarities, with Asian groups having the greatest negative sentiment of 25.2% and Black and Indigenous Groups having the lowest negative with 22.4%

INTRODUCTION

- Race-based affirmative action is the subject of discussions that can have strong social and economic consequences for which social media platforms such as Reddit can be common ground for people to express their opinions
- Reddit offers a unique lens to gauge the public sentiment because of its wide array of subreddits catering to specific topics, especially ethnic community subreddits
- By analyzing Reddit activity from various ethnic groups as well as from general purpose subreddits, we hope to gain a holistic yet nuanced understanding of how the public views the discussion of affirmative action, which may shine light on how to go about handling the underlying issue moving forward

RESEARCH QUESTION

Do Disparities in Views Surrounding Affirmative Action Emerge Among Diverse Ethnic Cohorts, and How Do These Align with the Broader Reddit Community Discourse on the Subject?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Race-based affirmative action for higher education: Impact assessment (Santos, 2022) says this in college admissions seems to be a common practice that has evolved with changes in policies, rather than being solely influenced by specific historical or political circumstances.

Ethnic Differences in Predictors of Support for Municipal Affirmative Action Contracting (Klineberg, 2003) suggest that a person's ethnic identity is connected to their support for affirmative action, and it can both explain and influence this relationship among certain groups.

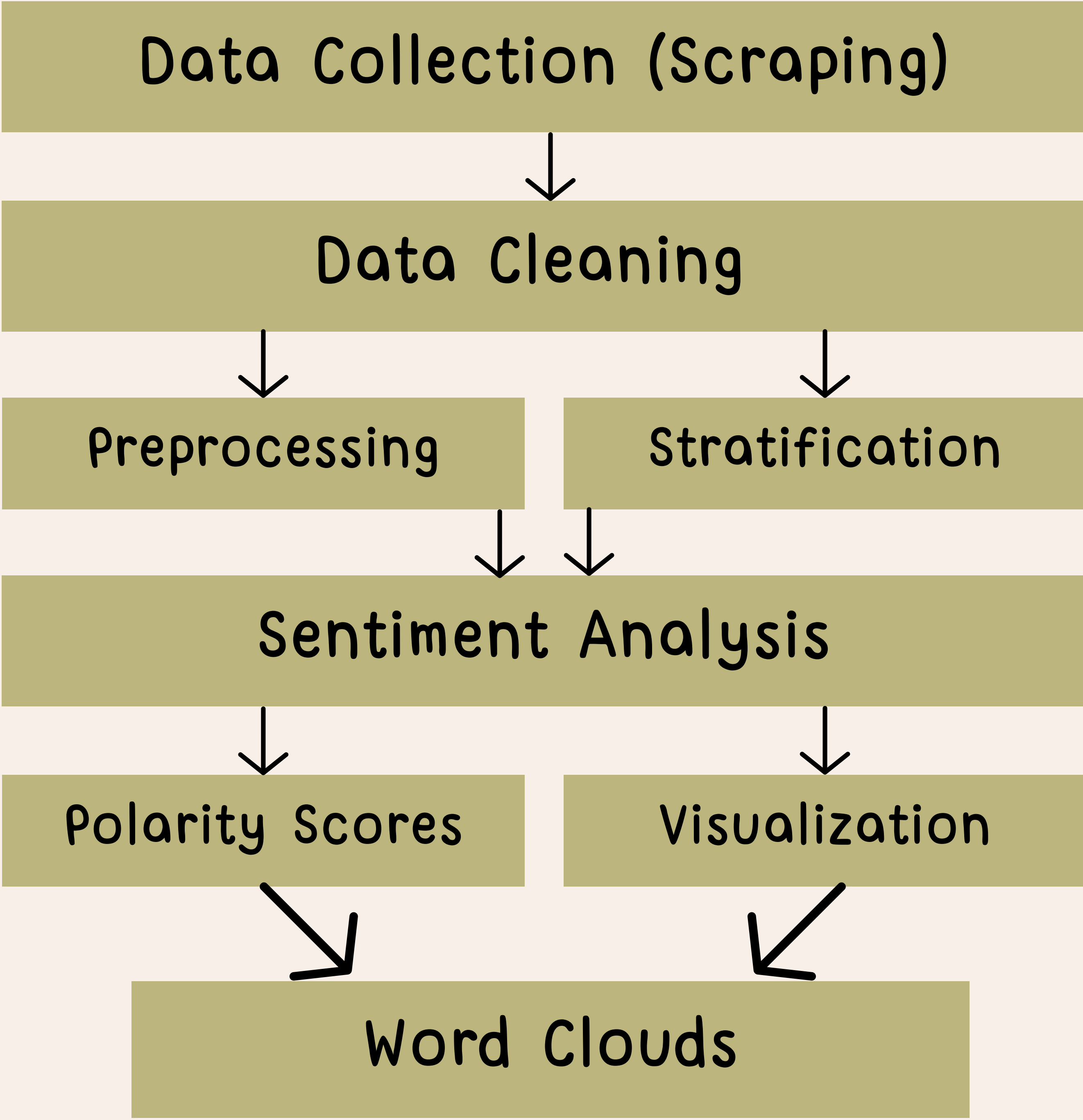
Belief in a Just World and Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action (Wilkins, 2014) indicates when universities or countries incorporate measures to support underrepresented groups as part of their strategies to address various issues, affirmative action becomes a tool to achieve a range of organizational and national objectives suggesting positive sentiments of Reddit users.

The Mere Mention of Asians in Affirmative Action (Lee, 2019) suggests among Asians, support for affirmative action differs significantly by immigrant generation: first-generation Asians express the weakest support.

RESULTS



METHODOLOGY



CONCLUSION

- Our sentiment analysis indicates that the sentiment toward Affirmative Action varies slightly between ethnic groups and tends to agree with the general sentiment.
- What might be more interesting to note is that neutral sentiments toward Affirmative Action approaches 50% across most ethnic groups, as well as in the general discourse. This may mean that many users engaging in threads regarding Affirmative Action do not hold a firm stance or do not share their genuine opinions on Reddit.
- In the future, we would like to take larger samples across more platforms to try to ensure the most authentic representations of the public sentiment

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