


# Do Unto Others as Others Have Done Unto You? Perceiving Sexism Influences Women's Evaluations of Stigmatized Racial Groups

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## Abstract

The present research examines how making discrimination salient influences stigmatized group members' evaluations of other stigmatized groups. Specifically, three studies examine how salient sexism affects women's attitudes toward racial minorities. White women primed with sexism expressed more pro-White (relative to Black and Latino) self-report (Studies 1 and 3) and automatic (Study 2) intergroup bias, compared with White women who were not primed with sexism. Furthermore, group affirmation reduced the pro-White/antiminority bias White women expressed after exposure to sexism (Study 3), suggesting the mediating role of social identity threat. Overall, the results suggest that making discrimination salient triggers social identity threat, rather than a sense of common disadvantage, among stigmatized group members, leading to the derogation of other stigmatized groups. Implications for relations among members of different stigmatized groups are discussed.

## Keywords

intergroup processes, discrimination, sexism, social identity, stigma, prejudice/stereotyping

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A marked tendency exists for victims of prejudice to turn on other groups (or occasionally their own group) with feelings of hostility and hate . . . But at the same time, some victims of prejudice tend to sympathize with (or identify with) other unfortunates and in this way become less susceptible to bias, whatever their own frustrations may be. (Allport & Kramer, 1946)

Here we are at the end of the primary season, and the effects of racism and sexism on the campaign have resulted in a split within the Democratic Party that will not be easy to heal before election day. (Ferraro, 2008)

The sexism that women perceived to be directed toward Hilary Clinton during the Democratic Primary battle threatened to undermine the Party's electoral chances in the 2008 Presidential Election. Indeed, a number of women, including the late Geraldine Ferraro, were quite critical of Obama, the first African American nominee for the Presidency, even going so far as to attribute Obama's electoral success to his race rather than his capabilities (Farber, 2008). These women's reluctance to support Obama—the split that Ferraro refers to

in the epigraph—may have been, at least in part, a response to the sexism they perceived to be directed at the first viable female candidate for the same office. In other words, rather than construing discrimination as a potentially common experience with racial minorities, perceived gender discrimination may have led some White women to engage in racial outgroup derogation. The purpose of the present research is to consider this possibility.

Social scientists have long been interested in the consequences of perceiving one's self and sociocultural group as devalued and disadvantaged. Perceived discrimination is a threat to the self that results in people feeling rejected on the basis of group membership (Smart Richman & Leary, 2009). Discrimination may be perceived at a personal level in which

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individuals perceive themselves to personally experience discrimination or at a group level in which individuals perceive their group as a whole to be the target of discrimination (e.g., Crosby, 1982; Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam, & Lalonde, 1990). Indeed, research consistently finds a discrepancy between the degree to which stigmatized group members report that they experience personal discrimination and the degree to which they report that their group experiences discrimination (Crosby, 1982; Taylor et al., 1990). Group discrimination may also be perceived as an acute threat experienced in a particular situation or as a pervasive, chronic threat (e.g., Major & O'Brien, 2005; Smart Richman & Leary, 2009). While all forms of perceived discrimination may be construed as threats to the self, these distinctions in how discrimination is perceived have important implications for psychological well-being. For example, perceiving pervasive sexism has been linked to less positive self-esteem and affect than perceiving isolated incidences of sexism (Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003).

In addition to having negative effects on stigmatized individuals' mental and physical health (e.g., Allport, 1954; Major & O'Brien, 2005; Sellers & Shelton, 2003), perceiving pervasive discrimination can also affect more basic cognitive processing. For example, research examining women's responses to perceived discrimination has found that women who hold expectations of being discriminated against or for whom sexism is made salient are more likely to be vigilant for cues that threaten their social (i.e., gender) identity (Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2006). The present research seeks to extend research in this tradition, but rather than exploring intraindividual consequences of perceiving group-based, pervasive discrimination, we consider its potential effects on intergroup outcomes—namely, evaluations of other stigmatized social groups.

The focus on intergroup relations among stigmatized groups, or intraminority intergroup relations, allows the present research to test the intriguing competing hypotheses first suggested by Allport and Kramer (1946) in the epigraph. That is, do victims of prejudice turn on other stigmatized groups with increased intergroup bias or do victims of prejudice sympathize with (or identify with) other stigmatized groups? We test these competing predictions that stem from the current literature on social identity threat (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999) and the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Specifically, we examine the effect of perceiving one's group as a target of pervasive sexism on White women's attitudes toward stigmatized racial groups.

### Perceived Discrimination as a Trigger of Social Identity Threat

How might perceiving pervasive discrimination against one's group affect relations among members of different disadvantaged groups? One possibility is that perceived discrimination (e.g.,

sexism) will lead members of the targeted group (i.e., women) to defend the self by expressing more negative attitudes toward other disadvantaged groups (e.g., Blacks). Indeed, social identity theory and self-enhancement theory posit that individuals derive self-esteem from group memberships and attempt to enhance their esteem by perceiving their own group—the ingroup—more positively compared with groups to which they do not belong—outgroups (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Consistent with this theoretical work, considerable research has found that perceiving threats to one's ingroup (i.e., social identity threats) can lead people to derogate outgroups, even those not directly responsible for the threat (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999; Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003). Social identity threat can, of course, come in many forms (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Drawing on the theoretical work of Branscombe et al. (1999), the present research explores perceived discrimination as a threat to the value of one's group membership and its effects on intergroup outcomes (e.g., evaluations of outgroup members), rather than the intrapersonal outcomes (e.g., academic performance, vigilance) that are often explored (e.g., Steele & Aronson, 1995).

How might individuals respond to the social identity threat of perceived discrimination? Individuals under social identity threat may seek to reestablish positive group esteem by evaluating one's own group more positively relative to other groups (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This may be accomplished via preference or positivity toward the ingroup or by derogating outgroups. For example, Leach et al. (2003) manipulated threat to the value of Dutch students' national identity via a reminder of the Netherlands' loss to Brazil in a World Cup match. Participants then expressed their feelings of *schadenfreude* (i.e., malicious pleasure in another's misfortunes) toward Germany's loss in the World Cup. Indeed, despite the fact that the social identity threat stemmed from the ingroup's loss to Brazil, participants who had been primed with social identity threat expressed more *schadenfreude* toward the German team, compared with participants whose national identities were not under social identity threat (Leach et al., 2003).

Cadinu and Reggiori (2002) also examined the implications of threats to the value of one's group membership on intergroup outcomes by manipulating feedback regarding how positively (or negatively) participants' ingroup (clinical psychologists) was viewed by medical doctors (a higher status outgroup). Participants then rated medical doctors and social workers (a lower status outgroup) along several traits relevant to professional aptitude. Participants who received negative feedback about their group's value rated social workers, but not medical doctors, more negatively. This effect was not evident in the no-feedback control or positive-feedback conditions. Thus, this provides initial evidence that individuals may derogate another low-status

group in response to threatening ingroup-relevant feedback (at least, for professional groups). To the extent that perceived discrimination is construed as a form of social identity threat, the results of both Cadinu and Reggiori (2002) and Leach et al. (2003) suggest that perceived discrimination may indeed yield the expression of more negative feelings and attitudes toward other disadvantaged groups.

### **Perceived Discrimination as a Trigger of a Common Ingroup Identity**

Although the extant research on social identity threat overwhelmingly supports the idea that perceived discrimination is likely to result in the derogation of members of other stigmatized groups, there is also theory and empirical evidence to predict just the opposite—that perceived discrimination will result in the expression of more *positive* attitudes toward other disadvantaged groups. Exposure to group-based discrimination may lead members of stigmatized groups to perceive themselves as possessing a common (in)group identity of “disadvantaged” that they share with other low-status groups (e.g., Galanis & Jones, 1986; Richeson & Craig, 2011; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003). Research suggests that the extent to which others are incorporated into our sense of self predicts the degree to which we treat them like the self (DeHart, Longua, & Smith, 2011). Furthermore, the activation of this type of common ingroup identity has been shown to result in more positive attitudes toward members of former outgroups than when a common ingroup identity has not been activated (Cunningham, 2005; Gaertner et al., 1993; Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994). For example, students from a multiethnic high school who identified with the superordinate group, “American,” and also identified with their ethnic subgroup identity (e.g., Black) expressed less bias toward other ethnic groups, compared with students who only identified with their ethnic subgroup identity (Gaertner et al., 1994).

Studies examining whether perceived discrimination against the ingroup triggers a common “disadvantaged” identity have also found support. For instance, Galanis and Jones (1986) found that Black participants for whom a connection between anti-Black discrimination and mental illness was made salient expressed more tolerance of a mentally ill target compared with those for whom neither anti-Black discrimination nor its potential to trigger mental illness was made salient. In addition, analyzing data from a large-scale, national survey of Latinos, Sanchez (2008) found that the more Latinos perceived discrimination against Latinos to be a problem in the United States, the more they perceived a sense of commonality with Blacks. Similarly, Schmitt, Spears, and Branscombe (2003) found that perceptions of discrimination

due to international students’ nationalities positively predict their identification with a common “international-student” identity. Taken together, this previous research has found that making ingroup disadvantage salient can lead to greater feelings of commonality with, and/or less intergroup bias toward, other stigmatized groups.

The present research considers whether making discrimination against women salient leads White women to express relatively more positive evaluations of members of other stigmatized groups or, rather, relatively more negative evaluations of members of other stigmatized groups. In other words, if salient sexism leads women to perceive greater commonality with members of other disadvantaged groups—presumably because they all face discrimination—then it should result in more positive attitudes expressed toward other stigmatized groups rather than the more negative attitudes predicted by social identity threat theory. The purpose of the present work is to consider these competing possibilities.

### **The Present Research**

The present research examines how perceiving discrimination influences women’s attitudes toward stigmatized racial minority groups. In three studies, we manipulated the salience of pervasive sexism in the United States in samples of White women who then completed measures of their self-report (Studies 1 and 3) and automatically activated (Study 2) evaluations of stigmatized racial groups. If perceiving sexism triggers a social identity threat, then women should express more pro-ingroup/anti-outgroup intergroup bias compared with women for whom pervasive sexism is not made salient. However, if perceiving sexism triggers a common ingroup identity (i.e., as a “disadvantaged group member”), then women should express less pro-ingroup/anti-outgroup intergroup bias as other stigmatized groups are brought into the self, compared with women for whom pervasive sexism is not made salient. Furthermore, in Study 3, we examined whether affirming an unrelated group identity (i.e., a university identity) could attenuate the effect of perceived sexism on intergroup bias.

### **Study 1**

The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate how making pervasive sexism salient influences women’s attitudes toward racial minorities (Blacks and Latinos), relative to their feelings toward Whites. If making pervasive sexism salient triggers social identity threat, then women should express more pro-White/antiminority attitudes, compared with women for whom sexism was not made salient. If making pervasive sexism salient instead promotes a common categorization as “disadvantaged,” then women should express less pro-White/antiminority attitudes, compared with women for whom sexism was not made salient.

## Method

**Participants.** A total of 39 White women ( $M_{age} = 19.92$ ,  $SD_{age} = 2.00$ ) participated in exchange for partial course credit or US\$8.

## Materials and Measures

**Perceived-sexism manipulation.** We adapted the article manipulation developed by Major and colleagues (Major, Kaiser, O'Brien, & McCoy, 2007; McCoy & Major, 2003) to prime thoughts about pervasive prejudice. Specifically, participants read three articles. The first two articles did not refer to gender or sexism (i.e., one article outlined a lawsuit against McDonald's and the other was an opinion article about plagiarism). In the pervasive-sexism condition, the third article described an alleged research study outlining the social and economic consequences of sexism in the United States. Specifically, in the pervasive sexism manipulation article, the alleged research study reported pervasive sexism experienced by female alumni and current undergraduates in the form of income disparities, men's attitudes, sexual harassment, and derogatory remarks. The pervasive sexism manipulation was adapted very closely from the manipulation in Study 2 of Major et al. (2007). Previous studies using this manipulation have found that the manipulation leads to more depressed affect and perceived threat (McCoy & Major, 2003; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003), especially among individuals who hold meritocracy beliefs (Major et al., 2007). Importantly, this manipulation has been found to lower collective self-esteem and increase perceptions of sexism. Specifically, participants who have received this manipulation are more likely to report that women are viewed more negatively by others (e.g., Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003), and that sexism is pervasive (e.g., Eliezer, Major, & Mendes, 2010). In the control condition, the third article described an alleged study examining left-handedness and brain function (and did not refer to gender or sexism). To confirm that participants read and understood the article and were persuaded by it, we asked several open-ended, short-answer questions after the article (e.g., "What was the purpose of this article?" "How well do the statistics support the claims made in this article?"). We examined these open-ended responses and coded whether participants mentioned either "sexism," "discrimination against women," or "disadvantages faced by women" in their responses to the question asking them to describe the purpose of the article. Furthermore, participants reported how persuasive they found the article to be ("How persuasive is this article?") on a 6-point scale anchored by 1 = *not persuasive* to 6 = *very persuasive*. We coded responses below the midpoint (3 or below) of the 6-point scale to indicate that participants were not persuaded by the manipulation. We use these exclusion criteria for all reported studies.

**Self-report racial attitudes.** To assess participants' self-report racial attitudes, participants indicated how warmly/

positively they felt about different racial groups (the groups were labeled *Blacks/African Americans*, *Hispanics/Latinos*, and *Whites/European Americans*) with a sliding scale anchored by 1 = *most negative* and 100 = *most positive*. These kinds of feeling thermometer scales have been used by many social scientists to assess intergroup attitudes (e.g., Bobo, 1988; Bobo & Zubrinsky, 1996; Livingston, 2002; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Sears, 1988). The name of a racial group appeared onscreen with an instruction for participants to move a slider left or right to indicate their warmth/positivity toward each group. The slider always initially appeared at the midpoint (50) of the scale. Thus, the separate thermometer scores range from 1 to 100 with higher numbers indicating more positive/warm feelings. Because participants' ratings of positivity toward Blacks and Latinos were highly correlated ( $r = .77$ ), we created an averaged racial minority feeling thermometer rating.

In addition to examining thermometer ratings for White and racial minority groups separately (e.g., Bobo & Zubrinsky, 1996), we also created a relative pro-White, antiracial minority bias score by subtracting the feeling thermometer rating of racial minorities from the feeling thermometer rating of Whites. This relative difference measure has previously been used to control for individual differences in the use of the scale (e.g., Sears & Henry, 2003; Sears, Van Laar, Carrillo, & Kosterman, 1997). That is, computing a difference score allows us to assess individuals' level intergroup bias (i.e., antiminority/pro-White bias; Sears & Henry, 2003). A score of 0 on this relative measure indicates that an individual reported feeling equally warmly/positively toward racial minorities and Whites. Furthermore, positive scores on the difference score measure indicate greater pro-White feelings, whereas negative scores indicate greater pro-racial minority feelings. In the interest of clarity, we report the results of both the separate thermometer rating items and the intergroup bias difference score.

**Procedure.** Participants came into the lab individually and were met by a White female experimenter who informed them that the goal of the study was to examine reading and memory skills. After providing consent, participants completed an unrelated writing task, read the three newspaper articles that contained the pervasive sexism or control article, responded to several questions regarding the persuasiveness of each article, and finally completed the feeling thermometer attitude measures. Participants were probed for suspicion regarding the hypotheses before being thanked and debriefed.

## Results and Discussion

**Pervasive sexism manipulation check.** All participants in the sexism condition correctly identified that the purpose of the article was to educate the reader about sexism, discrimination against women, and/or the disadvantaged status of women



relative to men. Unsurprisingly, no control-condition participants (who had read about brain function) referred to gender or discrimination in any way in their description of the purpose of the article. Furthermore, on the 6-point persuasiveness scale item, one participant found the sexism article to be unpersuasive and was removed from analyses.

**Intergroup bias.** One participant with extreme thermometer scores was removed from analyses. Thus, the final sample included 37 participants (19 pervasive sexism, 18 control). To test whether a manipulation of salient pervasive sexism leads White women to express more intergroup bias, that is, more negative attitudes toward racial minority groups (Blacks and Latinos), compared with attitudes toward their racial ingroup (Whites), we conducted a *t*-test on the pro-White/antiracial minority intergroup bias difference score measure. Consistent with the results of Cadinu and Reggiori (2002), participants primed with pervasive sexism reported more pro-White/antiracial minority bias ( $M = 14.05$ ,  $SD = 14.02$ ) compared with participants who were not primed with pervasive sexism ( $M = 4.92$ ,  $SD = 8.75$ ),  $t(35) = 2.36$ ,  $p = .024$ ,  $d = 0.78$ .

We also examined the thermometer ratings for Whites and racial minorities separately. Results revealed that participants primed with pervasive sexism reported significantly less warmth toward racial minorities ( $M = 63.68$ ,  $SD = 16.22$ ) compared with participants who were not primed with pervasive sexism ( $M = 76.64$ ,  $SD = 13.59$ ),  $t(35) = 2.63$ ,  $p = .013$ ,  $d = 0.86$ . Participants' ratings of warmth toward Whites, however, did not reliably differ by sexism-salience condition (control:  $M = 81.56$ ,  $SD = 13.86$ ; sexism salient:  $M = 77.74$ ,  $SD = 12.10$ ),  $t(35) = 0.89$ ,  $p = .377$ . Taken together, the present findings are consistent with the predictions of the social identity threat perspective; making sexism salient led White women to express more intergroup bias (driven, in this case, by increased antiminority sentiment) than that expressed by White women for whom sexism was not salient.

## Study 2

In Study 1, we found initial support for the hypothesis that instead of promoting commonalities with other disadvantaged groups, perceived sexism serves as a social identity threat to (White) women, resulting in more intergroup racial bias. The primary purpose of Study 2 was to explore whether perceived sexism influences individuals' more automatic evaluations of stigmatized outgroups, in addition to the more deliberative evaluations examined in Study 1. Although the results of the previous study are consistent with the idea that perceived pervasive, group discrimination results in greater intergroup bias due to social identity threat, it is also possible that perceived group discrimination simply reduces individuals' self-presentation concerns, making them appear more biased on self-report attitude measures. In addition, previous research has demonstrated an automatic increase in implicit

self-esteem after social identity threat, an effect that is not apparent on explicit measures (Rudman, Dohn, & Fairchild, 2007). Thus, it is possible that automatic measures of intergroup bias may diverge from self-report measures in terms of the component of bias most responsible for intergroup bias (whether pro-White or antiminority associations drive the effect). Therefore, Study 2 investigated how perceiving sexism affects White women's automatic evaluations of racial ingroup (i.e., White) and outgroup (Black, Latino) members. Based on the results of Study 1, we predicted that White women who were primed with pervasive sexism would express relatively more automatic intergroup racial bias than White women who were not primed with pervasive sexism.

## Method

**Participants.** A total of 44 White women ( $M_{\text{age}} = 18.52$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 0.67$ ) from an introductory psychology course participated in exchange for partial course credit.

## Materials and Measures

**Perceived-sexism manipulation.** Perceived sexism was manipulated according to the same procedures described in Study 1. Again, we asked participants to report on the content of the message of each article and how persuasive they found the message to be.

**Automatically activated racial evaluations.** To assess participants' automatically activated racial evaluations, participants completed an affective priming task modeled after the paradigm created by Fazio and colleagues (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995). Participants were asked to press separate keys as quickly and accurately as possible to categorize a series of valenced target words (as positive or negative) that appeared onscreen. A trial began with a fixation cross that appeared for 1,000 ms. Next, a prime that was either a racial label ("Black," "White," or "Latino") or a control word (e.g., "table," "lamp") appeared for 125 ms, followed by a 25 ms blank screen, and then by the positive (e.g., "excellent") or negative (e.g., "terrible") target word, which was left onscreen until participants responded with their valence judgment. After the response was recorded, a blank screen was presented for 500 ms followed by the fixation cross of the next trial. If participants categorized a target word incorrectly, a red "X" appeared to indicate their error and remained until participants pressed the correct button. Each racial prime was paired with 18 positive and 18 negative words. Control primes were paired with 12 positive and 12 negative words. Participants completed 126 trials, split into three blocks of 42 trials, with a break between each block. The order in which participants saw each prime-target word pairing within each block was randomized.

**Procedure.** Participants came into the lab individually and were met by a White female experimenter who informed them that the goal of the study was to examine reading and memory skills. After providing consent, participants read the

three newspaper articles that contained the sexism or control article, responded to several questions regarding the persuasiveness of each article, and then completed the affective priming task. Finally, participants were probed for suspicion regarding the hypotheses before being thanked and debriefed.

## Results and Discussion

**Pervasive sexism manipulation check.** One participant was removed from analyses due to disbelief of the sexism article, resulting in a sample with 43 participants (21 pervasive sexism, 22 control). The remaining participants in the pervasive-sexism condition correctly identified the purpose of the article (e.g., “to show that sexism is still prominent in society”) and found the message persuasive. Again, participants in the control condition did not mention sexism or gender when explaining the purpose of the article.

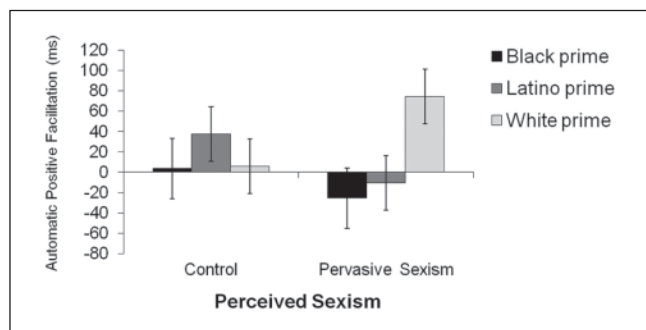
**Automatically activated intergroup bias.** To examine participants’ automatically activated racial evaluations, we first removed incorrect responses and reaction times that were 2.5 standard deviations greater than the sample mean (6.4% of observations). Due to a positive skew, analyses were conducted on log-transformed reaction times; however, for ease of interpretation, untransformed reaction times are reported in the text and figure.

Positive facilitation scores assessing the extent to which the different racial primes led to greater ease of categorization (i.e., facilitation) of positive compared with negative words were created as in previous research (e.g., Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 2001). First, average reaction times were calculated for all eight pairings of primes (“Black,” “White,” “Latino,” Control) with valences (positive, negative). Next, positivity scores were calculated by subtracting the mean reaction times required to categorize the positive target words following each racial prime from the mean reaction times required to categorize the positive target words following the control primes, and negativity scores were calculated by subtracting the mean reaction times required to categorize the negative target words following each racial prime from the mean reaction times required to categorize the negative target words following the control primes. The negativity scores were then subtracted from the positivity scores to obtain an index of the overall *positive facilitation* of each racial prime—that is, the extent to which a prime facilitated the categorization of positive targets more than negative targets. Thus, a positive facilitation score of 0 indicates that participants are equally quick to respond to positive words and negative words following a racial prime. Furthermore, a positive facilitation score that is *greater* than 0 indicates that participants were faster to respond to positive words following a racial prime, than negative words. Conversely, a positive facilitation score that is *less* than 0 indicates that participants were faster to respond to negative words following a racial prime, than positive words.

These positive facilitation scores were then subjected to a 2 (perceived sexism: pervasive sexism, control)  $\times$  3 (racial prime: Black, White, Latino) mixed-model ANOVA. Results revealed a significant main effect of racial prime,  $F(2, 82) = 7.78$ ,  $MSE = 0.002$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .13$ . Contrasts examining simple effects among levels of the within-subjects variable revealed that across the experimental conditions, White primes were associated with greater positive facilitation than Black primes,  $F(1, 41) = 14.13$ ,  $MSE = 0.004$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .21$ . Similarly, White primes were associated with more positive facilitation than Latino primes,  $F(1, 41) = 5.21$ ,  $MSE = 0.004$ ,  $p = .028$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ . That is, across experimental conditions, participants associated more positivity (vs. negativity) with White primes ( $M = 41$ ,  $SD = 130$ ), compared with Black ( $M = -9$ ,  $SD = 140$ ) and Latino ( $M = 14$ ,  $SD = 128$ ) primes.

Importantly, and consistent with predictions, this main effect was qualified by a significant Racial prime  $\times$  Perceived sexism interaction,  $F(2, 82) = 9.57$ ,  $MSE = 0.002$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .16$ . We examined this interaction by conducting simple-effects analyses using the pooled error term and Bonferroni correction. That is, we examined how different racial primes facilitated positive (relative to negative) words within each experimental condition. As shown in Figure 1, White primes ( $M = 78$ ,  $SD = 115$ ) were associated with more positive facilitation, compared with Black primes ( $M = -23$ ,  $SD = 149$ ),  $t(41) = 4.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.96$ , and Latino primes ( $M = -11$ ,  $SD = 108$ ),  $t(41) = 4.97$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.86$ , in the pervasive-sexism condition, but not in the control condition ( $ps > .799$ ). Indeed, examining the simple effect of experimental condition on each facilitation score separately revealed that participants in the sexism-salient condition expressed greater pro-White bias, compared with participants in the control condition,  $t(41) = 2.01$ ,  $p = .051$ ,  $d = 0.61$ . The simple effects of condition on the positive facilitation scores of Latino primes,  $t(41) = -1.44$ ,  $p = .156$ , and Black primes,  $t(41) = -0.83$ ,  $p = .411$ , were not significant. These simple-effects analyses indicate that the Racial prime  $\times$  Perceived sexism interaction was primarily driven by greater positive facilitation of White primes in the pervasive-sexism condition, compared with the control condition. In other words, White women who were primed with pervasive sexism revealed greater pro-White sentiment compared with White women who were not primed with pervasive sexism (see Figure 1).

Nevertheless, the present study revealed that White women primed with pervasive sexism expressed more automatic intergroup racial bias in this case due to greater pro-White (consistent with research on automatic self-defense; Rudman et al., 2007), rather than antiminority, associations, compared with White women who did not read about sexism. Together with the results of Study 1, these findings provide compelling evidence that perceived sexism is likely to lead women to express greater bias toward other stigmatized groups.



**Figure 1.** Automatic positive facilitation by racial prime and perceived-sexism condition

Note: Error bars represent standard errors of the mean.

### Study 3

The findings of Studies 1 and 2 suggest that women are more likely to respond to salient pervasive sexism as a social identity threat (e.g., Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Cadinu & Reggiori, 2002) than as a common experience that they have with other stigmatized groups. Consequently, making pervasive sexism salient leads White women to express more intergroup racial bias. Drawing on Branscombe et al.'s (1999) social identity threat theory (that was built on Tajfel & Turner's, 1979, social identity theory), it seems reasonable to infer that our results, thus far, are due to participants' efforts to seek favorable comparisons between the ingroup and the stigmatized outgroups, in an effort to reestablish positive esteem following the collective threat (e.g., Cadinu & Reggiori, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). If social identity threat is indeed the mediator of the effect of perceived sexism on intergroup bias found in Studies 1 and 2, then affirming the collective self should attenuate the effect. Specifically, research on self-affirmation theory (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988) has shown that the negative effects of self- or group-relevant threats can be reduced, if not eliminated, by affirming the self in a nonthreatened domain (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997; Sherman, Kinias, Major, Kim, & Prenovost, 2007). For instance, athletes who completed a group affirmation (i.e., affirmed an important team value) expressed less of a group-serving bias than athletes who did not complete a group affirmation (Sherman et al., 2007).

Drawing on this work, Study 3 sought to examine the role of social identity threat in engendering the expression of intergroup bias after being primed with pervasive sexism. Specifically, we aimed to reduce participants' motivation to engage in defensive responding to perceived sexism by first affirming a different, unrelated group identity. If, as we suggest, perceived sexism is experienced as a social identity threat, then affirming individuals' collective self should reduce the extent to which they engage in defensive responding—that is, their expression of ingroup-enhancing and/or outgroup-derogating racial attitudes. Thus, we expected participants who are not affirmed to replicate the

patterns of results revealed in Studies 1 and 2 in which White women primed with pervasive sexism express more intergroup bias (pro-White and/or antiracial minority sentiment) than White women who are not primed with sexism. Affirmed participants, however, are not expected to reveal this pattern; instead, White women who are primed with pervasive sexism but also affirmed should evaluate racial minorities as favorably as White women who are not primed with sexism.

### Method

**Participants.** A total of 56 White women ( $M_{\text{age}} = 18.75$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 0.88$ ) participated in exchange for partial course credit. All participants were Northwestern University undergraduates enrolled in an introductory psychology class.

### Materials and Measures

**Group affirmation manipulation.** Group affirmation was manipulated using a similar article manipulation as was used in Studies 1 and 2 to manipulate perceived sexism. All participants first read a neutral article about a lawsuit against McDonald's. Then, all participants read a second article that outlined one university's fund-raising success benefiting homeless youth. In the *affirmed* condition, participants read about the recent success of the Northwestern University Dance Marathon, a popular campus fund-raising event. In the *not affirmed* condition, participants read about the (alleged) recent success of the University of Sydney Volunteer's Association Telethon, similarly described as a popular campus fund-raising event. Thus, participants in the affirmed condition received information about the successes and good deeds of their ingroup (i.e., Northwestern students), whereas participants in the not affirmed condition received information about the successes and good deeds of a group with which participants had no affiliation (i.e., University of Sydney students). After the affirmation manipulation, as a manipulation check, all participants were asked to indicate how they felt about their own university (i.e., Northwestern University) on a 7-point scale anchored by 1 = *poorly* and 7 = *very positively*.

**Perceived-sexism manipulation.** Participants read a third article that provided the perceived-sexism manipulation. The pervasive sexism and control articles were nearly identical to those used in Studies 1 and 2.<sup>1</sup> Following the article, participants answered the same questions as were asked in Studies 1 and 2 regarding the purpose and persuasiveness of the article.

**Self-report racial attitudes.** Similar to Study 1, participants indicated how warmly/positively they felt about different racial groups (the groups were labeled *Blacks/African Americans*, *Hispanics/Latinos*, and *Whites/European Americans*) with a sliding scale anchored by 1 = *extremely negative* and 100 = *extremely positive*. These thermometer scores range from 1 to 100 with higher numbers indicating more positive/warm feelings toward each respective group. Similar to Study 1, participants' ratings of positivity toward Blacks and

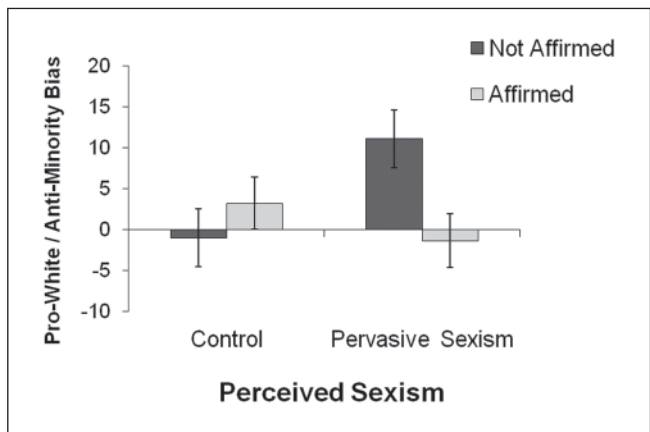
Latinos were highly correlated ( $r = .86$ ). Thus, we again created an averaged racial minority feeling thermometer rating. In addition, similar to Study 1, we created an intergroup racial bias score by subtracting the averaged feeling thermometer rating of racial minorities from the feeling thermometer rating of Whites. Positive scores on this relative difference score indicate greater pro-White feelings, whereas negative scores indicate greater pro-racial minority feelings. Again, in the interest of clarifying the specific pattern of results, we report the results of both the separate thermometer rating items and the intergroup racial bias measure (i.e., the pro-White/antiminority difference score).

**Procedure.** Participants came into the lab individually and were met by a White female experimenter who informed them that the goal of the study was to examine reading and memory skills. After providing informed consent, participants read the three newspaper articles that contained the group affirmation and perceived-sexism manipulations. Participants always read a neutral article first, followed by either the group affirmation or the no-affirmation article, and then either the sexism or control article. Participants responded to several questions regarding the purpose and persuasiveness of each article. In addition, after reading the group affirmation or no-affirmation article, participants rated how positively they felt about their own university (i.e., Northwestern University). After reading all three of the articles and completing the persuasiveness ratings and affirmation manipulation check, participants completed the thermometer ratings. Last, participants were probed for suspicion regarding the hypotheses before being thanked and debriefed.

## Results

**Pervasive sexism manipulation check.** Three participants were removed from analyses due to disbelief of the sexism article (identified from scores of 3 or less on the 6-point persuasiveness scale item), resulting in a sample with 53 participants (12 pervasive sexism, not affirmed; 12 control, not affirmed; 14 pervasive sexism, affirmed; 15 control, affirmed). The remainder of participants correctly identified the message of the pervasive sexism manipulation article and reported being persuaded by the article.

**Affirmation manipulation check.** To check that the group affirmation manipulation produced the intended effect, we conducted a 2 (perceived sexism: pervasive sexism, control)  $\times$  2 (group affirmation: affirmed, not affirmed) between-subjects ANOVA on participants' self-reported feelings about their university. As expected, participants exposed to positive information about Northwestern students ( $M = 6.17$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ) felt more positively about their university than participants exposed to positive information about University of Sydney students ( $M = 5.25$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ),  $F(1, 49) = 10.58$ ,  $MSE = 1.08$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $\eta^2 = .16$ . In addition, an unanticipated



**Figure 2.** Pro-White, antiracial minority bias by group affirmation and perceived-sexism conditions

Note: Error bars represent standard errors of the mean.

main effect of sexism also emerged,  $F(1, 49) = 5.39$ ,  $MSE = 1.08$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ . Participants who would subsequently be primed with pervasive sexism (in the next article) reported more positive feelings toward Northwestern ( $M = 6.08$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) than participants who would not be primed with pervasive sexism ( $M = 5.44$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ). Given that this unexpected difference actually works counter to the prediction, any support for our prediction is not easily attributable to this effect. Furthermore, the interaction between affirmation condition and pervasive sexism was not statistically significant,  $F(1, 49) = 0.349$ ,  $MSE = 1.08$ ,  $p = .558$ .

**Intergroup bias.** The primary aim of the present study is to examine whether affirming the collective self attenuates the effect of perceived sexism on the expression of intergroup racial bias (i.e., pro-White/antiracial minority bias) revealed in Studies 1 and 2. Consequently, we conducted a 2 (pervasive sexism: sexism, control)  $\times$  2 (group affirmation: affirmed, not affirmed) between-subjects ANOVA on participants' intergroup bias difference scores. Results revealed a significant perceived sexism  $\times$  group affirmation interaction,  $F(1, 49) = 6.12$ ,  $MSE = 149.74$ ,  $p = .017$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ . We explored the interaction with simple-effects analyses using the pooled error term and Bonferroni correction. Replicating the previous two studies, perceived sexism was associated with greater intergroup racial bias among participants who did not receive the group affirmation,  $F(1, 49) = 5.89$ ,  $MSE = 149.74$ ,  $p = .019$ ,  $\eta^2 = .12$ . As depicted in Figure 2, that is, among participants who did *not* have their Northwestern identity affirmed, individuals who were primed with pervasive sexism expressed more intergroup racial bias than participants who were not primed. Consistent with predictions, however, among participants whose Northwestern identity was affirmed, sexism salience did not influence the amount of intergroup racial bias participants expressed,  $F(1, 49) = 1.02$ ,  $MSE = 149.74$ ,  $p = .317$ .



Follow-up analyses examining the separate components of the intergroup bias difference scores revealed that while the pattern of means was in the expected direction, no significant effects of either sexism salience, affirmation condition, or their interaction on the separate White and minority thermometer ratings emerged ( $ps > .400$ ). That is, the pattern of means revealed that within the no-affirmation condition, participants for whom sexism was made salient tended to express more positivity toward Whites as well as less positivity toward minorities, compared with participants in the control condition, although the separate effects were not significant.<sup>2</sup> These nonsignificant effects on the separate thermometer-rating scores suggest that consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), individuals in the sexism-salience condition who were not affirmed sought to achieve positive distinctiveness through the *relative* favoring of the ingroup over the outgroup. That is, the significant expression of intergroup racial bias by participants in the sexism salient, not affirmed condition, was due to the expression of *both* relatively more positive feelings toward Whites *and* relatively more negative feelings toward ethnic/racial minorities.

## Discussion

The present results offer compelling support for the hypothesis that perceived pervasive sexism is experienced as a social identity threat that, in turn, yields efforts to bolster the ingroup via intergroup bias. White women who were exposed to pervasive sexism expressed more intergroup racial bias than White women who were not exposed, unless they also had another aspect of their collective identity affirmed. The present results suggest that women's greater expression of pro-ingroup/anti-outgroup bias in response to sexism may serve a self-enhancement motive (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). Consequently, satiating White women's enhancement motive by boosting collective esteem for an unrelated group (i.e., Northwestern students) reduced the expression of racial intergroup bias in response to salient sexism.

In addition to offering clear evidence for the role of social identity threat in shaping the more biased intergroup evaluations found in the present work in response to perceived group discrimination, the present study also provides novel evidence that affirming one group identity can protect against the effects of experiencing a threat regarding a different, unrelated social identity—a phenomenon that has been documented in work examining the effects of affirming personal identity (e.g., Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988). That is, unlike previous work exploring group affirmation, our manipulation of group affirmation affirmed (or not) a social identity that was not threatened later in the experiment. Consistent with research on self-affirmation at the personal level (Steele, 1988), affirming an aspect of the collective self that is not related to the threatened aspect is nevertheless still able to buffer against the effects of the threat.

## General Discussion

The present work sought to explore the effects of perceiving group discrimination on the attitudes that members of one stigmatized group (i.e., women) express regarding other stigmatized groups—namely racial minorities (i.e., Blacks, Latinos). Results revealed that on both self-report (Studies 1 and 3) and more automatic (Study 2) measures, White women who were primed with pervasive sexism expressed more intergroup racial bias (more pro-White and/or anti-Black and anti-Latino bias), compared with White women who were not exposed to sexism. Study 3 revealed, furthermore, that reducing group enhancement motives via a group affirmation manipulation eliminated the effect of perceived sexism on White women's expression of intergroup bias. Although which component of intergroup bias was primarily responsible for the effect differed across studies (i.e., antiminority feelings in Study 1, pro-White associations in Study 2, and a mixture of pro-White/antiminority feelings in Study 3), taken together the studies provide consistent evidence compatible with social identity theory. That is, Tajfel and Turner (1979) postulate that positive distinctiveness can be achieved through outgroup derogation (as is evidenced in Study 1), ingroup favoritism (as is evidenced in Study 2), or a mix of both (as is evidenced in Study 3). Thus, together, the results offer compelling evidence that perceiving pervasive group discrimination can cause members of one stigmatized group to express greater intergroup bias against other stigmatized groups by favoring the ingroup and/or derogating the other stigmatized groups. Ironically, the present studies suggest that perceiving pervasive group discrimination may, in some instances, lead the victims of such discrimination to become the perpetrators of discrimination themselves.

## Intraminority Intergroup Relations

These studies begin to explore the intriguing issue of how perceived discrimination against one's own stigmatized group shapes attitudes toward other stigmatized groups. This issue is of theoretical import, we believe, because much of the previous research that has examined the effects of group threats has studied relations between groups of equally high status or those between one low-status and one high-status group (e.g., Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Leach et al., 2003; Tropp, 2003; however, for notable exceptions, see Cadinu & Reggiori, 2002; Craig & Richeson, 2012; Levin, Sinclair, Sidanius, & Van Laar, 2005; Richeson & Craig, 2011; Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008; White & Langer, 1999). Although it is certainly possible that the theories and models that have been developed based on investigations of these groups will also govern relations between members of two or more stigmatized groups, it is also possible that relations among members of stigmatized groups could be governed by new, relatively unexplored intergroup dynamics.

Most notably, the common experiences that define stigmatization across groups—social devaluation, prejudice, discrimination—could shape interactions between stigmatized groups in ways that fundamentally differ from relations among members of nonstigmatized groups.

Indeed, the present work examined how perceived group discrimination, which could be construed as a social identity threat and/or as a basis for common categorization, affects evaluations of other stigmatized groups. Despite previous research suggesting that perceived discrimination might result in processes consistent with the common ingroup identity model (Galanis & Jones, 1986; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003), the results of the present studies were quite consistent with the tenets of Branscombe et al.'s (1999) social identity threat approach; exposure to discrimination was associated with greater intergroup bias. That is, like previous research with groups of equal status, the present studies suggest that sexism, similar to other forms of group devaluation, is likely to be experienced as a social identity threat that results in striving for positive distinction, resulting in less relative positivity toward members of other low-status outgroups. In other words, much like members of nonstigmatized groups, members of stigmatized groups seem to respond to social identity threats with greater pro-ingroup/anti-outgroup bias, even when those outgroups are also socially devalued.

Although the present research generated support for the social identity threat hypothesis regarding perceived discrimination, before completely rejecting the predictions of the common ingroup identity model, future research should explore these effects in other stigmatized groups (e.g., Craig & Richeson, 2012). The present work may have unintentionally stacked the deck against the common ingroup identity model by examining White women's evaluations of stigmatized groups with whom they are not often categorized under a common umbrella group (i.e., racial minorities). Moreover, it is possible that fostering a common "disadvantaged" identity in the present research may have been difficult due to perceived differences between sexism and racial bias. For instance, the presumed perpetrators of sexism (men) are not necessarily the same as the presumed perpetrators of racism (Whites). Consequently, women may not assume that their goal of protecting against gender prejudice is necessarily aligned with the goals of the other stigmatized groups (e.g., protecting against racism). Women may even perceive Black and Latino men (i.e., the prototypical racial group members) as perpetrators of sexism. Taken together, these perceptions provide little foundation for the emergence of a spontaneous common categorization. Thus, although the present research does not provide evidence for a spontaneously activated common categorization among women and racial minorities, linking these groups in a more explicit manner may result in such a common categorization and, as a result, more positive intergroup evaluations (for a further discussion of predictions surrounding intraminority intergroup relations, see Craig & Richeson, 2012; Richeson & Craig, 2011).

## Limitations

Although the findings of these studies are both consistent and compelling, it is important to acknowledge a facet of the methodology that may limit their generalizability. Specifically, the present studies considered the effects of only one manner in which discrimination can be perceived; that is, we operationalized perceived sexism as an unambiguous, pervasive, and group-level phenomenon. We employed this operationalization because it is a proven method for making the value threat associated with stigmatized status salient (e.g., Major et al., 2007; McCoy & Major, 2003; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003), while also allowing for the possibility that group members will spontaneously perceive common identity with members of other societal groups that face chronic discrimination. Nevertheless, given that individuals are more likely to acknowledge unambiguous and group-level discrimination (e.g., Crosby, 1982; Taylor et al., 1990), it is possible that our results could be due, at least in part, to our choice to make this particular type of discrimination salient. That is, the women in our studies may have been especially likely to feel threatened by and react against this type of blatant group-level discrimination. Indeed, it is unclear whether perceiving personal discrimination, especially if it is more subtle and ambiguous than the sexism described in the articles used in the present work, would engender similar results (e.g., Murphy, Richeson, Shelton, Rheinschmidt, & Bergsieker, 2011; Operario & Fiske, 2001). It is also important to point out that the present research examined the effects of making *chronic*, pervasive sexism salient on evaluations of stigmatized outgroups. It is possible, therefore, that the perception of an acute instance of sexism may yield results that differ from the patterns found here. For example, acute instances of discrimination may be less distressing than pervasive discrimination (e.g., Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003), perhaps leading to less compensatory intergroup bias or, even, to more sympathetic reactions to members of other stigmatized groups. Future research should, therefore, consider the varieties of ways in which discrimination can be experienced or perceived and how such forms of discrimination may shape the attitudes that members of one stigmatized group express toward other stigmatized groups.

## Implications

The present research offers a number of implications for our understanding of intergroup relations, in general, and relations among members of different stigmatized groups, in particular. The present work furthers research exploring how threat to one social identity may be mitigated by affirmation of an unrelated social identity. While most group affirmation research utilizes manipulations affirming the value of an identity under threat (e.g., Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2009; Glasford, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009; Sherman

et al., 2007), the present work affirmed a nonthreatened identity. As individuals are members of many different social groups, this suggests exciting possibilities for the utility and robustness of group affirmation as an avenue to positive group esteem and, perhaps by extension, positive intergroup relations. Specifically, the present research suggests that social identity threat may be assuaged by affirming any of the many group identities that individuals may possess.

The present findings also imply that expecting members of different stigmatized groups to join forces in the fight for equality, presumably due to a sense of shared experiences as members of disadvantaged groups, may be unrealistic in some cases. Indeed, proponents of same-sex marriage have found little support among (straight) Black Americans, despite analogies to Black Americans' struggle for civil rights. The present findings suggest that appeals that include the legacy of racial discrimination may not be sufficient to encourage increased support for such policies among members of racial minority groups. Future research is needed to investigate what types of appeals and conditions are likely to trigger such a common ingroup identity and its resultant benefits for intergroup relations among members of different low-status, stigmatized groups.

## Concluding Thoughts

The present research provides an initial look into how perceived discrimination affects intergroup relations among members of different low-status, stigmatized groups. In an increasingly diverse world, such intraminority intergroup interactions are becoming more prevalent and have heretofore been an underserved area of psychological inquiry. Much remains to be learned about whether and how the unique experiences of membership in such disadvantaged groups may affect "minority-minority" relations in ways that differ from "majority-minority" relations and, thus, challenge our current understanding of intergroup relations more broadly.

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## Authors' Note

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## Notes

1. We made one small change in the pervasive sexism article, compared with the article used in Study 2; instead of reading about income disparities between men and women, the article cited disparities in political representation. The control article was identical to the control article used in Study 2.
2. In the interest of clarity, we include the separate means by condition below. Thermometer ratings of Whites within the *not affirmed* condition (control:  $M = 76.42$ ,  $SD = 19.08$ ; pervasive sexism:  $M = 81.00$ ,  $SD = 15.26$ ). Thermometer ratings of Whites within the affirmed condition (control:  $M = 77.00$ ,  $SD = 17.84$ ; pervasive sexism:  $M = 73.29$ ,  $SD = 19.50$ ). Thermometer ratings of racial minorities within the *not affirmed* condition (control:  $M = 77.46$ ,  $SD = 18.80$ ; pervasive sexism:  $M = 69.92$ ,  $SD = 19.66$ ). Thermometer ratings of racial minorities within the affirmed condition (control:  $M = 73.80$ ,  $SD = 19.94$ ; pervasive sexism:  $M = 74.68$ ,  $SD = 12.65$ ).

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