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Impact of Identity Invalidation for Black Multiracial People: The Importance of Race of Perpetrator

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Abstract

Multiracial people report repeated experiences of racial identity invalidation, in which their racial identity is rejected by others. The current study examined whether the race of the perpetrator of these invalidating experiences matters in determining the impact of invalidation. A sample of 221 Black Multiracial people was recruited to take an online survey investigating their experiences of identity invalidation, levels of cultural homelessness, and challenges with racial identity. Participants reported that Black people invalidated their racial identity the most and they were most hurt by invalidation perpetrated by Black people. Lastly, those whose experiences of identity invalidation were mostly perpetrated by Black people, as opposed to other racial groups, were more likely to exhibit racial homelessness and challenges with racial identity. Results highlight the importance of racial identity affirmation by the Black community for Black Multiracial individuals.

Keywords: Biracial; Multiracial; Racial Identity; Identity Invalidation; Racial Homelessness

Impact of Identity Invalidation for Black Multiracial People:

The Importance of Race of Perpetrator

The Multiracial group constitutes one of the fastest growing racial groups in America (McCubbin, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Approximately 7.3% of the Black community—over three million people—identifies as two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Of all Multiracial groups, the largest is composed of individuals who identify as Black and White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). With the rapid growth of this group and its increased prevalence amongst the Black community, in particular, it has become increasingly important for research to focus on building a healthy identity for Black Multiracial individuals.

One of the most significant impediments to a healthy racial identity for Multiracial individuals is racial identity invalidation, which occurs when others deny a Multiracial person's racial identity (Gillem & Thompson, 2004; Nadal, Sriken, Davidoff, Wong, & McLean, 2013; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2004; Shih & Sanchez, 2005). It is one of the most harmful forms of discrimination that Multiracial people experience (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2004). Research has linked invalidation to anxiety, depression, compromised self-esteem, poorer well-being, and even suicidal ideation and attempts (Campbell & Troyer, 2007; Coleman & Carter, 2007; Lou, Lalonde, & Wilson, 2011; Townsend, Markus & Bergsieker, 2009). Although largely unaddressed by previous research, the race of the perpetrator of racial identity invalidation may have important implications for how the invalidation experience is interpreted and internalized by the Multiracial individual (Cheng & Klugman, 2010; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Miville, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005). Specifically, racial identity invalidation perpetrated by a racial in-group member may invoke more negative outcomes, signifying not only the rejection of an

individual's identity, but the loss of a racial community (Hall, 2004; Lou et al., 2011; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). For Multiracial individuals of Black ancestry, the predominant Monoracial in-group is found within the Black community, and invalidation by Black people may, thus, be particularly harmful (Cheng & Klugman, 2010; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Khanna, 2010; Wright, Olyedemi, Gaines, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to examine whether Black Multiracial people are differentially affected by invalidation perpetrated by Black people. Specifically, this study will examine whether Black Multiracial people report being hurt most by invalidation from Black people, and whether those racially invalidated by Black people are more likely to exhibit feelings of racial homelessness and challenges with racial identity.

Identity Models and Multiracial Identity

In the past, racial identity models focused on Black people have been thought to be equally valid for Black Multiracial individuals (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003), but while some aspects of these models may be useful for Black Multiracial individuals, they also possess limitations. Cross's model of psychological nigrescence describes hierarchical stages of identity that lead to an integrated and more developed racial identity as the endpoint (Cross, 1978). Cross discusses encounter experiences as being central for provoking the racial identity development process; "encounter experiences"—jarring racial experiences that cause Black people to develop a new perception of the pervasiveness of race in their lives—has relevance to Multiracial individuals, and indeed, invalidating experiences often serve as a type of encounter experience for Multiracial individuals (Franco, Katz, & O'Brien, 2015). However, Multiracial identity theorists (Rockquemore, Brunisma, & Delgado, 2009), along with some Black identity theorists (e.g., Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997) have since rejected the idea of stages

of racial identity. When Cross (1978) argues that a Black person has not truly “become Black” until the later stages of his model, it is clear that this model may run the risk of invalidating an individual’s identity: if they have not achieved a certain stage, then their racial identity may be assumed to be incorrect or underdeveloped. Instead, Biracial identity theorists reject the notion that identity has an endpoint, or that one identity option is superior to another, and emphasize the fluidity of identity across the lifespan (Rockquemore et al., 2009). In support of this, research has shown that Multiracial individuals are more likely to change their identity than they are to maintain the same identity over time (Doyle & Kao, 2007).

Sellers et al. (1997) provides a widely used model of Black identity that includes salience (significance of racial identity at a moment in time), racial centrality (importance of race to overall identity), ideology (how one thinks Black people should behave) and regard (evaluative meaning which one places on one’s race). This model is aligned with Multiracial identity models as it allows for spectrums of identity, and also posits that identity is fluid and differentially salient depending on the situation (Rockquemore et al., 2009; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Sellers et al., 1997). However, this model still has limitations when applied to Black Multiracial individuals as it leaves their non-Black identity unaddressed. Furthermore, Black racial identity models do not account for the experience of growing up in a Monoracist society, in which Multiracial identities are considered illegitimate, and the resulting interactional identity invalidation that occurs because of these rigid societal conceptions of race. In contrast, experiences of invalidation have been central within existing frameworks of Multiracial identity (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Shih & Sanchez, 2009).

The Black Community as Black Multiracial People's Racial Home

Finding a racial home is critical for helping ethnic minorities deal with issues of discrimination and develop a positive sense of self (Binning, Unzueta, Huo, & Molina, 2009; Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003). However, for Multiracial people, finding a racial home is particularly difficult, as they lie outside of traditional racial groupings, leaving them susceptible to discriminatory experiences (Collins, 2000; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011; Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Further, the Multiracial group is small and dispersed, making it difficult for Multiracial individuals to find others with their distinct racial background (Shih & Sanchez, 2005; Shih & Sanchez, 2009). One way that Multiracial people may attempt to find a racial community is by racially identifying with a Monoracial group (Cheng & Klugman, 2010; Miville et al., 2005). For Multiracial individuals of Black ancestry, this racial group is most often the Black community (Cheng & Klugman, 2010; Hall, 2004; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Miville et al., 2005; Wright et al., 2014).

Critical race theorists have argued that Blackness carries a unique stigma in the U.S., and thus, Blackness is particularly salient to one's sense of identity (Rockquemore & Brunσμα, 2001; Herman, 2010). Because of the one-drop rule, Multiracial people have historically been identified by their lowest status group, and thus, Black Multiracial individuals of various racial compositions may feel compelled to identify as Black and seek out the Black community (Rockquemore et al., 2009; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). In support of this, Wright et al. (2014) found that Black/White Multiracial individuals asked to categorize themselves as Black or White most often chose Black.

There is also support within the Black community for the one-drop rule, as Multiracial Black individuals face pressure from the Black community to choose a Black identity, or else

their racial allegiances may be called into question (Gillem & Thompson, 2004; Khanna, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002). Further research has shown that Black Multiracial individuals are likely to be perceived as Black, regardless of their other racial ancestry (Herman, 2010; Peery & Bodehnhausen, 2008). Because of common racialized experiences, including patterns of identity invalidation and ways of relating to the Black community, Black Multiracial individuals were thought to be a meaningful combination of Multiracial compositions to investigate for the present study. Within the current study, “Black Multiracial” is used to describe individuals who personally identify as Multiracial, and also report some degree of Black ancestry.

For Black Multiracial individuals, racial identity invalidation by Black people is significant because it may bar Multiracial individuals from finding a racial home within one of their only potential communities (Harris & Khanna, 2010; Miville et al., 2005). Indeed, research has found that reports of identity invalidation by members of the Black community are prevalent for Black Multiracial people (Hall, 2004; Nadal et al., 2011; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Snyder, 2012). Because a Multiracial identity may be perceived as a betrayal of the Black community, Multiracial identity provokes identity rejection (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002; Thorton, 2009). In identifying as mixed, Multiracial people are accused of being disillusioned with their Blackness and thinking themselves better than Blacks (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Thorton, 2009). Furthermore, privileges related to being more light skinned may garner resentment towards Multiracial individuals and subsequent identity invalidation (Nishimura, 2004; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). For example, Multiracial women report that Black women are envious of the advantage that Multiracial phenotype gives them with Black men, and Black women retaliate by calling their Blackness into question (Rockquemore, 2002).

When Multiracial individuals identify as Black, they still may be subject to identity rejection. In Root's (1998) qualitative study of identity construction, she found that Black/White Multiracial people reported having to go through demeaning processes of racial authenticity testing to be accepted into Black groups. This "hazing" process often required "submission of the self" to avoid cruel rejection (p. 243). Multiracial individuals had to prove their authenticity by conforming to exaggerated stereotypes about one of their racial groups. These repeated experiences of identity rejection lead Multiracial people to feel as if they do not belong amidst the Black community, and subsequently, they may disengage from that community (Harris & Khanna, 2010), as invalidation leads Multiracial people to withdraw from those who invalidate them (Remedios & Chasteen, 2013), ultimately leaving Black Multiracial individuals racially homeless.

Racial homelessness is derived from the construct of cultural homelessness. A "cultural home" is defined as belonging, consistency, and acceptance within a community. Achieving a cultural home allows for social support, meaning in identity, continuity, and emotional attachment (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). A culturally homeless individual may identify with multiple groups but experience rejection from all of them. Individuals feel not at home when some aspect of them is rejected, one of the most notable being their racial identity (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Cultural homelessness is comprised of distinct subdomains, including struggle to determine cultural group membership, defined as feelings of alienation by multiple groups, and lack of group membership and attachment, defined as withdrawal from identification with any group.

The authors of the cultural homelessness scale indicated that it can flexibly apply to different social groups, and argued that race is a designated cultural identifier, as individuals of

similar races share common experiences. Thus, the current study uses the term racial homelessness to mark the usage of the cultural homelessness framework specifically for racial groups. In its original conceptualization, cultural homelessness was posited to apply strongly to Multiracial individuals, who experience conflicting racial norms and marginalized status within multiple groups (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Furthermore, Vivero and Jenkins (1999) theorized that Multiracial individuals' pressure to identify with certain groups and the lack of acknowledgement of their multiple identities may promote cultural homelessness. However, a limitation of the cultural homelessness framework, thus far, is that it has not addressed how rejection by certain groups may be more significant than rejection by others. Thus, this study will expand upon the theory of cultural homelessness by examining whether Black people's invalidation is more significant than other racial groups for influencing Multiracial people's racial identity and feelings of racial belonging.

Rejection from the Black community may not only engender feelings of racial homelessness, but also racial identity challenges. Current theories on racial identity emphasize the importance of the Multiracial person's ecology for contributing to a healthy sense of identity (Chesley & Wagner, 2001; Jackman, Wagner, & Johnson, 2001; Rockquemore et al., 2009). Socialization by peers and family members may influence how Multiracial people experience their racial identity (Edwards, 2008; Rockquemore et al., 2009; Snyder, 2012), and consequently, experiences of identity rejection by others can lead to challenges in the development of a healthy racial identity. Affirmation of identity from Black individuals may carry more weight for Multiracial individuals if they are seeking to find a home amongst Black people, or else because they may share similarities with Black individuals in terms of discriminatory experiences and Black people may help them cope with experiences of discrimination (Harris & Khanna, 2010;

Khanna, 2004). Thus, it may be particularly important for Multiracial people to feel that the Black community validates them in their identity choice, and invalidation at the hands of Black people may be more likely to provoke racial identity challenges.

Challenges with racial identity and cultural homelessness are both important constructs to investigate because of their consequences for mental health and self-esteem. Specifically, challenges with racial identity has been found to relate negatively to satisfaction with life and social connectedness, and positively, but slightly, to depression and self-esteem (Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011). Specific forms of racial identity challenges, such as feelings of conflict between composite racial group norms, have been found to relate to distress and negative affect (Jackson, Yoo, Guevarra & Harrington, 2012). Cultural homelessness has been found to relate to feeling less belonging within a racial group and decreased self-esteem (Hoersting and Jenkins, 2011; Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011).

Current Study

The aim of the current study was to achieve a better understanding of how the racial group of perpetrators of invalidation may inform the impact of invalidation on Multiracial people. Research questions addressed in the current study were 1) Which racial group invalidates Black Multiracial people the most? 2) Are Multiracial people differentially impacted by invalidation when it is perpetrated by Black people as opposed to other races? The first research question is exploratory, as it has yet to be addressed by previous research. Hypotheses for the second research question were that Multiracial people will be most hurt by invalidation perpetrated by Black people, and individuals most invalidated by Black people will experience higher levels of racial identity challenges and racial homelessness than those invalidated by other racial groups.

Method

Procedure

Measures employed for the current study were initially administered for a study that aimed to construct a measure of racial identity invalidation. Thus, a number of surveys, including the ones listed below, were administered through the Qualtrics website, an online survey platform through which measures are administered. The initial page displayed the informed consent. Afterwards, participants were presented with the measures listed below.

Recruitment. To recruit participants, the researcher sent emails to personal contacts who are adults of various Multiracial denominations. The study was also advertised through online groups catering to Multiracial individuals, including SWIRL and MAViN. An email was sent out to all Multiracial-identifying individuals at a large mid-eastern university using the university registrar database. As an incentive to participate, participants were offered the option of being entered into a raffle for one of two \$25 gift cards.

Participants. Black Multiracial people were extracted from a larger data pool of Multiracial individuals engaging in a study that aimed to develop a measure of identity invalidation. For the present study, participants included 221 Black Multiracial individuals. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 61 with mean age being 27.45 ($SD = 9.53$). Approximately 35% of participants reported their family income as greater than \$80,000 per year, while 25% earned between \$40 to 79,000 and 40% averaged a family income below \$40,000. Most (71%) reported being “completely heterosexual”, while a few (3%) reported being “completely gay” and the remainder (27%) rated themselves as somewhere between the poles. Approximately 10% of the sample finished high school, while 25% finished some college, 9% finished an associate’s degree, 29% finished a bachelor’s degree, 20% finished a master’s degree, and 3% finished a

doctoral degree. There were 15 different racial backgrounds reported, with the most common being Black/White (53.4%), Black/Asian (11.3%), Black/White/Native American (9.5%), and Black/Hispanic (4.3%). For a list of racial backgrounds of participants, see Table 1.

Measures

Rates of identity invalidation and hurt from invalidation. To assess which racial group invalidated participants' racial identity the most, participants were asked "Which racial group denies your racial identity the most?" To assess whether Multiracial people were hurt more when racial identity invalidation was perpetrated by particular groups, participants were asked "I am hurt most by the denial of my racial identity by:" Answer options for both questions included: Black or African American, White, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, Biracial/Multiracial, Other, or None.

Challenges with racial identity. The 5-item challenges with racial identity subscale of the Multiracial Challenges and Resiliencies scale was used to assess lack of comfort with racial identity, and lack of belongingness with any racial group (Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011). A sample item is "I feel the need to prove my racial identity to others." Items were measured on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A score is calculated by averaging all items, with high scores indicating challenges with racial identity. The alpha coefficient for this scale for a Multiracial sample was .68 (Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011). This scale was originally tested with a Multiracial sample and was related positively to depression and degree of frequency and stress associated with racist encounters, and negatively to social connectedness (Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011). Reliability value for the present study was .71.

Racial homelessness. Two subscales from the 14-item Cultural Homelessness scale (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011) were chosen for the present study: (a) Lack of ethnic/cultural group

membership and attachment (5 items; e.g., “I feel that I don’t belong to any ethnic or cultural group”), and (b) Lack of a cultural home (8 items; e.g., “I am a racial minority everywhere I go”). The authors of the scale indicated that “culture” can be replaced by a number of different social identifiers, and for the present study, “culture” was replaced by “race.” Items were measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Alpha rates of .71 and .84 were reported for a Multiracial sample (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011). The construct was developed originally to apply to Multiracial individuals’ experiences (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Using a sample composed of approximately 25% Multiracial participants, cultural homelessness negatively related to affirmation, belonging, and self-esteem (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011). Reliability values for the current study were .83 for lack of attachment to any one racial group and .84 for lack of cultural home.

Results

Rates of identity invalidation perpetrated by different racial groups. As shown in Figure 1, participants reported that Black people ($N = 101$; 45.7%) invalidated their racial identity the most, followed by White people ($N = 59$; 26.7%), Biracial/Multiracial people ($N = 21$; 9.5%), Asian people ($N = 8$; 3.6%), Hispanic/Latino people ($N = 8$; 3.6%), and American/Indian or Alaska Native people ($N = 2$; .9%). A significant amount of participants ($N = 22$; 10.0%) reported that no racial group invalidated their racial identity the most. No participants indicated that Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander people invalidated their identity the most. Chi square tests indicated that certain racial groups were more likely to perpetrate invalidation most $\chi^2(6) = 245.85, p < .001$. Follow-up analyses indicated that participants reported that Black people perpetrated invalidation more than White people $\chi^2(1) = 11.03, p < .01$, Multiracial people $\chi^2(1) = 52.46, p < .001$, or Asian people $\chi^2(1) = 79.35, p < .001$.

Hurt from identity invalidation by race of perpetrator. As shown in in Figure 2, participants reported that they were hurt most when Black people ($N = 120$; 54.3%) invalidated their racial identity, followed by White people ($N = 37$; 16.7%), Asian people ($N = 8$; 3.6%), Biracial/Multiracial people ($N = 7$; 3.2%), American Indian or Alaskan Native people ($N=5$; 2.3%), and Hispanic people ($N = 4$; 1.8%). A number of participants indicated that they were not hurt by invalidation perpetrated by any group ($N = 40$; 18.1%). No participants indicated that they were hurt most by invalidation perpetrated by Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Chi square tests indicated that participants were hurt most when invalidation was perpetrated by a particular racial group, $\chi^2(6) = 334.03, p < .001$. Follow-up analyses indicated that more participants reported that invalidation by Black people hurt most as opposed to when perpetrated by White people $\chi^2(1) = 43.88, p < .001$, Asian people $\chi^2(1) = 98.00, p < .001$, or Multiracial people $\chi^2(1) = 100.54, p < .001$.

Racial group homelessness. To determine whether Black Multiracial individuals who experienced racial identity invalidation from Black people experienced higher rates of racial homelessness than those experiencing invalidation from other groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Participants were grouped depending on which racial group invalidated their racial identity the most (Black or non-Black). Participants most invalidated by Black people ($M = 2.65$; $SD = .54$) did not exhibit higher rates of lack of racial home than those invalidated by other racial groups ($M = 2.61$; $SD = .53$), $t(197) = -.54, p > .05$. Participants most invalidated by Black people ($M = 2.57$; $SD = .74$) exhibited higher rates of lack of attachment to any racial group than those invalidated by other racial groups ($M = 2.30$; $SD = .68$), $t(197) = -2.70, p < .01$. Results are presented in Table 2.

Challenges with racial identity. To determine whether Black Multiracial individuals who experienced racial identity invalidation from Black people experienced higher rates of challenges with racial identity than those experiencing invalidation from other groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Participants were grouped depending on which racial group invalidated them the most (Black or non-Black). Participants most invalidated by Black people ($M = 3.17$; $SD = 1.10$) exhibited higher rates of challenges with racial identity than those invalidated by other racial groups ($M = 2.85$; $SD = 1.15$), $t(197) = -2.02$, $p < .05$. Results are presented in Table 2.

Discussion

While there has been a significant amount of research addressing Multiracial people's experience of identity invalidation, no research has investigated how characteristics of the perpetrator of invalidation may be influential in elucidating the impact of invalidation. Our research investigated whether invalidation by Black people may be particularly hazardous for Black Multiracial people. Findings indicated that racial identity invalidation by Black people, as opposed to other racial groups, may hurt more and relate to challenges with racial identity and feelings of cultural homelessness.

Black Multiracial people reported that Black people were most likely to invalidate their racial identity and that they were most hurt by identity invalidation perpetrated by Black people. Black people may be more attuned to race, in general (Bracey, Bamaca, & Uman~a-Taylor, 2004), and thus may be more likely to directly comment on a Multiracial person's race. This interpretation is in line with past research that has found that discrimination by White people takes the form of general negativity, while discrimination from Black people takes the form of identity invalidation (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002). Black people also may have more of a

stake in a Multiracial person's racial identity, as a Multiracial person's decision to forego a Black identity may have implications for resource allocation for the Black community (Gillem & Thompson, 2004). Alternatively, because findings indicated that Black Multiracial people are most hurt by invalidation by Black people, it may be that invalidation by Black people carries more weight and is most likely to be remembered. Also, a common Black racial ancestry of the sample may indicate increased exposure to Black people, as opposed to other racial groups, and explain the preponderance of Black invalidation.

Additionally, Black Multiracial individuals most invalidated by Black people exhibited lack of attachment to any racial group, whereby they may not identify with any group. Perhaps, as Multiracial individuals attempt to identify with the Black community and feel excluded, they defensively detach from the community to preserve self-worth. But because individuals with higher rates of lack of racial attachment report difficulties in identifying not only with the Black community, but with any group (e.g., every group is an out-group, Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011), this might suggest that if the Black community rejects Multiracial people, they are rendered racially homeless. This is in line with past research that suggests that because of the one-drop rule, Black Multiracial people may be restricted to finding a home within the Black community (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). However, it is important to note that the lack of directionality cannot be assessed. Past research suggests that Black people may expect Black Multiracial people to affiliate themselves with the Black community and it may also be possible that Black Multiracial people who are unattached to any racial group may provoke a negative reaction from Black people, and retaliatory identity rejection (Thorton, 2009).

However, Black Multiracial people invalidated by Black people did not exhibit higher rates of lack of cultural home, defined as feelings of rejection by all groups. While lack of racial

group membership and attachment is more directly related to how one racially identifies, and thus better corresponds with identity rejection experiences, lack of cultural home more so relates to feelings of rejection by multiple communities, and perhaps may be better explained by the cumulative experiences of invalidation by multiple racial groups rather than increased invalidation at the hands of one group.

Multiracial people invalidated by Black people displayed higher rates of challenges with racial identity. Ecological models of racial identity emphasize the importance of support and validation for others in the racial identity development process (Chesley & Wagner, 2001; Rockquemore et al., 2009; Snyder, 2012). It may be particularly important for this support to come from other racial/ethnic minorities who may have a shared experience of discrimination, and thus may promote positive coping with discriminatory experiences, and subsequently, a more healthy racial identity.

While historically, the Black community has been the assumed racial home for Multiracial people (Thorton, 2009), the current research suggests that Multiracial people also experience rejection at the hands of Black people, and that they are particularly vulnerable to this rejection. In withdrawing from racial groups, as a result of this identity-based rejection, Multiracial people may be more vulnerable to discriminatory experiences, as racial communities may serve protective functions for minorities dealing with racial stress (Binning et al., 2009; Sellers, et al., 2003; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Research has found that both the withdrawal from racial communities and challenges with racial identity that identity invalidation provokes may compromise Multiracial people's well-being, self-esteem, and overall mental health (Jackson et al., 2012; Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011; Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011).

The current study raises a new direction for future research. Although the data did not allow for an examination of whether lack of attachment to any racial group mediates the relationship between invalidation by Black people and racial identity challenges, this is a plausible explanation for our findings and should be addressed by future research. Qualitative research might work to better unpack Black Multiracial people's experiences within the Black community and the degree to which they feel culturally homeless and factors that might contribute to these feelings. Furthermore, qualitative focus groups with members of the Black community discussing their perceptions of Black Multiracial people and the degree to which they accept them within the Black community might be helpful to corroborate the present findings. Also, as researchers attempt to further explain experiences of Black Multiracial people within the Black community, it may be important to examine how other demographic factors, such as age, gender, or class, might intersect with race in influencing Black Multiracial individual's experiences of invalidation and cultural homelessness within the Black community. Furthermore, the current study did not assess the type of invalidation experienced by the Multiracial person; different types of invalidation, such as imposition of a Black identity, or rejection of a Multiracial identity, may differentially impact outcomes and future research might better attend to nuances of the invalidating experiences.

It may also be fruitful to examine how race of invalidator matters for Black people. Black people report being subjected to accusations of "acting White" (Tyson, Darity & Castellino, 2005); because Black people may have even fewer options for racial communities than Black Multiracial people, they may be subject to heightened racial homelessness and racial identity challenges as a result of invalidation perpetrated by other Black people.

The current study had a number of limitations. One item measures were used to assess rates of invalidation perpetrated by different racial groups and hurt as a result of invalidation. Further, because the study was correlational, directionality cannot be assessed. The study is not generalizable to all Black Multiracial individuals because of characteristics of the sample, which was highly educated, relatively wealthy, and made up of mostly young adults. Strategic recruitment of Multiracial groups from Multiracial online groups may also have led to individuals with a stronger sense of identity participating in the study.

Moreover, although the study focused on Black Multiracial people because of common racialized experiences related to being perceived as Black and possessing Black heritage, differential outcomes related to possessing particular Black Multiracial backgrounds may be masked. Black/White Multiracial people tend to be overrepresented in research (Edwards & Pedrotti, 2008), and were in the present study as well. While Charmaraman, Woo, Quash, and Erkut (2014) argue that combining groups is permissible when uncovering trends related to a common experience, nuances related to possessing particular racial backgrounds are lost. More research is needed to determine how Black Multiracial people's experiences converge and diverge depending on their particular racial composition.

Finally, based on past research, the current study proposed that the Black community is the proposed racial home for Black Multiracial individuals, without asking this question of participants explicitly. Whether the Black community is indeed, the preferred racial home for participants in the current study is not captured by measures in the current study. Thus, it is possible that other factors might explain increased vulnerability to invalidation perpetrated by Black people.

The finding that Black Multiracial people are generally more vulnerable to identity invalidation perpetrated by Black people has important implications for psychologists seeking to promote healthy racial identity for Black Multiracial people. Psychologists should not assume a Black identity or membership amongst Black Multiracial individuals and should allow for self-definition of their Black Multiracial clients. It may be particularly meaningful for Black psychologists to evince acceptance of a Multiracial person's identity exploration process, and to tolerate whatever identity they may choose. By acting as advocates and educators for the acceptance of a Multiracial person's self-identity, psychologists may help Black Multiracial people develop identity-affirming networks within the Black community.

Furthermore, the current findings suggest that in devising interventions for Black Multiracial people to be less impacted by racial identity development, and to subsequently develop a healthy sense of identity, it may be important for Black Multiracial people to feel affirmed by Black people. Black Multiracial counselors, alongside culturally competent Black practitioners, may provide a corrective experience—a new, more adaptive emotional experience that “corrects” past negative encounters—in facilitating such an intervention (Summers & Barber, 2010). It would be important to address ways that Black Multiracial people can find a community and a sense of belonging within such an intervention, and to explore how invalidating experiences might detract from such a community and to find ways to circumvent this impediment.

While past research has illustrated the harmfulness of invalidation (e.g., Coleman & Carter, 2007; Lou et al., 2011; Townsend et al., 2009), the current study adds specificity to the invalidation literature by providing evidence that invalidation can be experienced as more harmful when perpetrated by a particular racial group. Our findings may help promote a deeper

understanding of invalidation and of the development of a healthy racial identity for Black Multiracial people. Specifically, it may be important for Multiracial people to seek out affirming racial places among Black people, and for Black people to accept Multiracial people as members of the community in order to promote a healthy racial identity and sense of belonging for Black Multiracial individuals.

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Table 1

Racial Backgrounds

Racial Background	Percentage of sample (N)
Black/White	53% (118)
Black/Asian	11% (25)
Black/White/Native American	10% (21)
Black/Hispanic	4.1% (9)
Black/Asian/Hispanic/White	3% (7)
Black/Asian/White	2% (5)
Black Multiracial (Unspecified heritage)	8% (17)
Other Black Multiracial	9% (19)

Table 2

Independent Sample T-test Outcomes by Race of Invalidator

	Race of Invalidator						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	Black Invalidation			Non-Black Invalidation					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n			
Lack of racial home	2.65	.54	101	2.61	.53	98	-.19, .11	-.54	197
Lack of attachment	2.57	.74	101	2.30	.68	98	-.47, -.07	2.70**	197
Challenges with racial identity	3.17	1.10	101	2.85	1.15	98	-.64, -.01	-2.02*	197

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

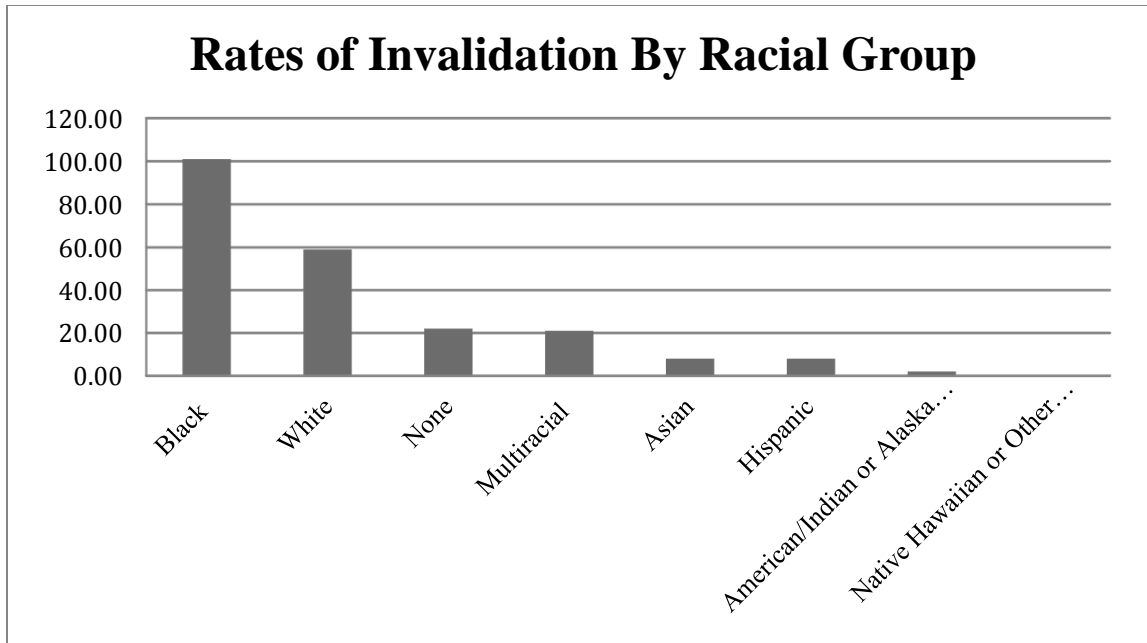


Figure 1. Rates of identity invalidation by racial group.

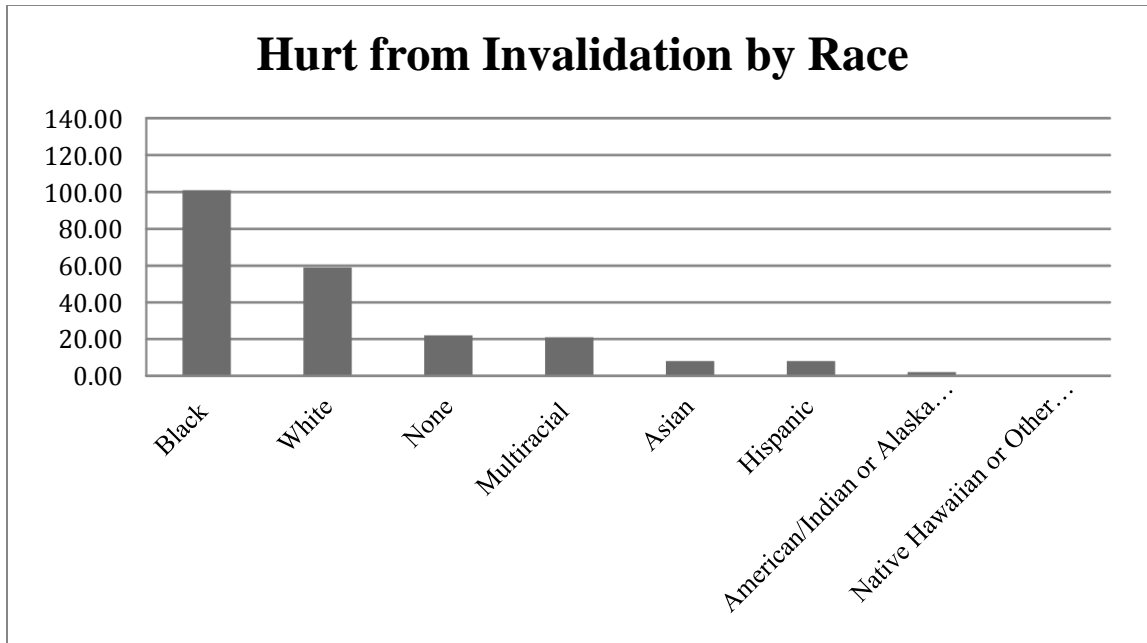


Figure 2. Hurt from invalidation by race of invalidator.