Invisible at the Intersection: The Influence of Prototypical Beliefs on Group Identification in Black Women

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Shira Levy

Mentor: Dr. Lisa Chalik, Psychology

Abstract

Black women, being non-prototypical of both their social groups (WOMAN and BLACK), experience a unique form of discrimination referred to as psychological invisibility. We aimed to understand how prototypical beliefs impact Black women's identification with their gendered and racial ingroups. 251 Black and white female participants completed a speeded categorization prototypicality task, which measured the strength of their belief that femininity is associated with whiteness. We also measured their implicit identification with WOMAN using the Brief Implicit Association Test, along with their explicit identification with WOMAN, BLACK/WHITE, and BLACK WOMAN/WHITE WOMAN. We found that along all the explicit identification measures, Black women reported significantly stronger identification than white women. We also saw that among Black women who had a high implicit identification with WOMAN and reflected strong prototypical beliefs, there was a trend towards explicitly suppressing their Black identity and over-emphasizing their white identity. These findings reflect the way prototypical beliefs about whiteness being associated with femininity impact Black women and reveal one of the ways psychological invisibility contributes to a Black woman's self conception.

Introduction

Categorization is a cognitive process that works to attain maximum information with minimal cognitive effort (Rosch, 1988). It allows us to infer that multiple members of one category have the same 'hidden' properties (Gelman & Markman, 1983; Murphy & Medin, 1985). For example, knowing a bat is a mammal allows us to infer that it feeds its offspring, even

though we have never witnessed such an event. Categorization is also used to organize the social world (Kinzler, Shutts & Correll, 2010), but can sometimes lead to stereotypes about social groups (Bar-Tal, 1996). From assuming what a woman wearing a hijab will believe or how she will behave (Birnbaum et al., 2010; Unkelbach et al., 2010), to identifying a face as ‘male’ (Ross, 1980), children and adults are adept at associating people with a category and attributing the characteristics of said category to that person.

Built into the concept of categorization is the idea of prototypes, which refers to a member of a group that is most representative of items inside the category and least representative of items outside the category (Rosch, 1988). Prototypes, being most representative of the group, embody the stereotypes associated with each social group (Brewer, Dull & Lui, 1981). Thus, within social categories, prototypical members set the stereotypes that come to be imposed on non-prototypical members of those groups. For example, the prototypical member of the ‘Black’ social group is often thought to be a Black man, which results in Black women being perceived as more “masculine” (self-reliant, assertive, strong) and less “feminine” (emotional, passive, dependent) than White women (Landrine, 1985; Lei, Leshin & Rhodes, 2020; Robinson, 1983; West, 1995). In addition to prescribing stereotypes for group members, prototypes represent who is a constituent of a given group. White women are often thought to be the prototypical members of the category ‘female,’ resulting in White female faces being identified as female faster and with more accuracy than Black female faces (Johnson, Freeman & Pauker, 2012; Lei, Leshin & Rhodes, 2020). This effect has been tested using a speeded categorization task, where subjects are asked to categorize pictures of Black and White men and women as either MALE or FEMALE. The delay in identifying Black women as female relative to White

women represents the strength of the participant's beliefs about femininity being prototypically White. This speeded categorization task highlights implicit beliefs about who is, and who is not, a constituent of a given social group. The delayed response in categorizing Black female faces as female suggests that Black women are non-prototypical of the female social group and are slower to be recognized as constituents of their social group. Thus, the non-prototypical standing of Black women in their racial and gendered social groups results in a sort of invisibility characterized by a relatively greater association with masculine stereotypes than White women and recognition of group membership as 'female' often being delayed or denied.

The non-prototypical standing of Black women in their racial and gendered ingroups along with the resulting invisibility has been termed 'intersectional invisibility' or psychological invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). This invisibility is summed up in the title of a Black Women's studies anthology *But Some of Us Are Brave; All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men* (Hull, Bell-Scott & Smith, 1982). The invisibility of Black women spans historical, legal, and cultural domains, and offers a scientific framework for the claim made by Black feminists that the Women's movement represents White women and the Civil Rights movement represents Black men (Bell, 1992; Collins, 1996; Crenshaw, 1989; King, 1988; Mirza, 2003; Smith and Stewart 1983), each to the exclusion of Black women.

The intersectional invisibility of Black women in history can best be described by the 'librarians dilemma', imagined by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008). A librarian needs to place a single copy of a book on Black women's history in her library. She must choose between placing the book in the African-American Studies section, where those seeking Women's Studies material will miss it, or in the Women's Studies section, where those seeking African-American

Studies material will miss it. Either way, the ethnocentric and androcentric organization of American libraries will result in one group of readers missing the book entirely (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). The overlapping minority identities of Black women result in their group membership being overlooked and their narratives underrepresented. As Black women's stories can be attributed to two social groups, but stand as non-prototypical of both, they have been left out or ignored. This exclusion could be resultant of both Women's studies and African-American writers each assuming the other will cover the narratives of Black women, while neither of them do. Alternatively, it is a symptom of each imagining Black women's stories as non-representative of their category and thus less essential to their cause. Either way, the non-prototypical standing of Black women's intersecting identities results in their historical narratives being rendered invisible.

Intersectional invisibility has had serious consequences for Black women throughout history, both in the legal world and in modern culture. Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality, which aimed to bring attention to the way systems of oppression reinforce one another, making the experience of an individual with multiple marginalized identities (Black, female) distinct from those with a single marginalized identity (Black, male; White, female). In the conception of intersectional theory, Crenshaw identified a case of Black women who were limited to sueing their employer for discrimination on the basis of either race or gender, but could not make a claim on the basis of that intersection. As a result of this limitation, Black women could not prove discrimination, because their employers had hired and promoted women, but only White women. The court's conclusion suggested that either Black women could not be discriminated against as 'Black women' or that they did not deserve protection when such

discrimination occured (Crenshaw, 1989). This case reinforces the fact that Black women can only be seen when they are grouped with White women or Black men, neither of which necessarily reflect the distinct experiences of Black women. Another case refused to certify Black females as class representatives in a race and sex discrimination lawsuit due to a concern that Black women do not adequately represent White female employees. Again, this desicion suggests that an offense can only constitute sex discrimination if all females are impacted by it, which puts the experience of White females as central to the concept of gender discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectional theory in these legal disputes brings to light the marginalization of Black women's experience and the parallel centrality of White women and Black men.

In the cultural domain, writers and thinkers have highlighted the way Black women are rendered invisible in mainstream media and social justice movements. The #SayHerName campaign highlights the way Black women are invisible in mainstream media and the #BlackLivesMatter movement by bringing attention to Black women who were killed by police violence. Work done by the African American Policy Forum identified the absence of any complete list of Black women's lives lost at the hands of police or any data on gender based police violence (Crenshaw et al., 2015). In light of the media's exclusionary focus on cases of Black men and police violence, a comprehensive catalogue of police violence against Black women is virtually impossible to create, making accountability scarce. Even though a total number is impossible to estimate, a list of as many as 70 Black women who were killed in three years at the hands of police was compiled to offer context for the #SayHerName campaign (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Additionally, while New York City records show that stop and frisk policies equally impact Black men and women, media and research have focused specifically on

how racial profiling impacts Black men (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Thus, media, and by extension social movements, contribute to the invisibility of Black women by underreporting and underrepresenting their experiences.

Psychology research has investigated the psychological invisibility of Black women as a unqiue form of discrimination experienced as a result of Black women's non-prototypical status in their racial and gender groups. In a study investigating memory of speech contributions by Black women, participants were shown a conversation among eight individuals (two Black women, two Black men, two White women, and two White men) and afterward were asked to match each statement from the conversation with the person who had said it. They found that Black women's contributions were significantly more likely to be misattributed relative to Black men and White women (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). This paradigm is a stunning demonstration of the psychological invisibility that has been apparent in cultural domains; it stands as empirical evidence for the cultural trend of Black women's invisibility.

What are the psychological consequences of being an invisible member of a category? From the perspective of Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel, 1982), the invisibility that Black women experience could result in their group identification being undermined. According to SIT, a person's identification with a group is informed by two criteria: their own knowledge that they belong to that social group and the emotional value or significance for them of having that group membership (Tajfel, 1982). Given this framework, the belief that femininity is White comes in tension with knowledge of Black women's group membership and value attributed to that membership. Thus, the belief in femininity being prototypically White could potentially undermine a Black woman's identification with the group WOMAN.

An alternative possibility, however, is that marginalized members of social groups tend to double down on their group membership, which would lead Black women to *over*-identify with the group WOMAN as a result of their non-prototypical standing. For example, racial minority LGBT individuals reported stronger LGBT social identification compared to White LGBT individuals (Lei & Richeson, 2017). One expression of this overemphasis on group membership from a marginalized group member is the tendency for non-prototypical members of a group to conform to ingroup norms more than prototypical members (Noel, Wann & Branscombe, 1995). Low status group members also report being subject to greater group influence and are more loyal to the ingroup (Jetten, Hornsey & Adarves-Yorno, 2006). In line with these findings, the marginalization of Black women as non-prototypical in the group WOMAN could result in a heightened identification with the group.

Prior research has documented evidence for Black women's non-prototypicality and examined the resulting invisibility as a unique form of discrimination. The current research aims to understand how non-prototypicality and relative invisibility influences Black women's identification with their social groups. Specifically, does a belief about Blackness being prototypically male and femininity being prototypically White influence the way Black women identify with the female social group compared to White women? We hypothesize that a belief that the prototypical woman is White will predict identification with WOMAN among Black women, and we test three potential patterns by which this relationship might play out. One possibility is that stronger beliefs about White female prototypicality in Black women predict less identification with the group WOMAN, given that the SIT framework of group identification suggests that non-prototypical standing in a group undermines group identification in the

individual. Another possibility is that beliefs in White female prototypicality predict greater identification with the group WOMAN among Black women, given that previous research has shown marginalized members of a social group report greater group identification. Finally, a third possibility is that beliefs in White female prototypicality among Black women predict less identification with the group WOMAN, but greater identification with the group BLACK WOMAN, which could be a distinct social group constructed as a result of the unique intersectional experience of Black women.

To examine the relationship between the belief that the prototypical woman is White and identification with the group WOMAN among Black women, we conducted two studies. In each, we measured prototypical beliefs as well as implicit and explicit forms of group identification. To measure beliefs about prototypicality, we gave participants a speeded categorization task where they identified female and male faces that were either Black or White as MALE or FEMALE. To measure implicit group identification with WOMAN, we used the Brief Implicit Association Test (BIAT; Sriram & Greenwald, 2009), testing for whether participants' self-concept is more closely associated with MAN or WOMAN. We measured explicit group identification using a subset of the Collective Self Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). In Study 1, we test the relationship between prototypicality beliefs and group identification among Black women, as compared to a sample of White women. In Study 2, we replicate the findings from Study 1 and extend them by testing one potential consequence of prototypicality beliefs being linked to group identification for Black women's self-image.

Methods

Participants

Taking into account participant attrition, we aimed to have 100 women of each race in our sample. The final sample consisted of 251 women (126 Black, 125 White). All participants were recruited on Amazon's MechanicalTurk.

Procedure

Participants first completed a prototypicality task and the BIAT, in counterbalanced order. After, they completed explicit measures of group identification.

Prototypicality task. To test prototypicality beliefs, we used a task developed by Lei and colleagues (Lei et al., 2020), which measures the association between femininity and Whiteness versus femininity and Blackness. In this speeded categorization task, participants are presented with pictures on a screen of faces of Black and White men and women, and are asked to categorize each face as 'male' or 'female' by clicking associated letters on the keyboard. In this task, the relative delay or inaccuracy in identifying Black women as 'female,' compared to White women, reflects the strength of the participant's belief that femininity is prototypically White.

BIAT. The Brief Implicit Associations Task (Sriram & Greenwald, 2009) measured how closely the participant's self-concept is associated with 'male' or 'female.' Participants were presented with pictures of Black and White male and female faces as well as words that have to do with the self (me, myself) or the other (you, them). In half the trials participants were told to associate pictures of female faces with words that have to do with the self, and in the other half of the trials they were instructed to associate pictures of male faces with words that have to do

with the self. The relative strength of their association with self and female faces compared to male faces reflects their implicit association with their gender.

Explicit measures. We used the membership and identity subsections of the collective self esteem scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) to measure explicit identification with the category WOMAN, as well as with racial and intersectional categories (BLACK and BLACK WOMAN for Black participants, WHITE and WHITE WOMAN for White participants). We included a total of eight items for each social category, which participants responded to on a seven point likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The membership subsection focuses on how good or worthy an individual is as a member of their social group--for example, "I am a worthy member of the BLACK community." The identity subsection assesses how important a social group membership is to an individual's self-concept--for example, "Being a WOMAN is an important reflection of who I am." Each subset consisted of four questions. Participants responded to a total of 24 questions, which consisted of the two subsets for each of the three relevant social categories.

Subjects who responded in under 300ms and over 1000ms to more than 25% of the prototypicality trials were excluded from statistical analyses. We also excluded subjects who got fewer than 15 prototypicality trials correct. We excluded two outlying subjects who had a prototypicality score that was greater than 1000. Implicit and explicit scores were standardized and implicit scores were split into high and low identification with FEMALE. We also split prototypicality scores into high and low beliefs that femininity is associated with whiteness.

Results

We first subtracted participants' reaction times for Black female faces on the speeded categorization task from their reaction times for white female faces. This yielded a prototypicality score for each participant, where higher scores indicate a stronger representation of whiteness as prototypical of femininity. We also standardized participants' implicit and explicit scores for their identification as female so that the two could be directly compared. There was no correlation between implicit and explicit identification, $p = .472$.

In order to test whether participants' representations of femininity as white predicted their identification with the categories of interest, we ran a series of linear regression models with Prototypicality score as a continuous predictor and Race as a between-subjects factor. We found no relation between participants' prototypicality beliefs or race and their implicit identification with WOMAN, *p*s > .672.When performing this analysis on participants' explicit identification with WOMAN, however, we found a main effect of race, $F(1, 196) = 12.72$, $p < .001$, suggesting that Black women explicitly identify as female more strongly than White women. Furthermore, when testing participants' explicit identification with their race (BLACK/WHITE, see Figure 1) and with the intersection of race and gender (BLACK WOMAN/WHITE WOMAN, see Figure 2), we found main effects of race (*p*s < .001), suggesting that Black women identify with BLACK and BLACK WOMAN more strongly than white women do with WHITE and WHITE WOMAN. We also found main effects of prototypicality score (*p*s = 0.022 and .006, respectively), suggesting that those with stronger beliefs about femininity being prototypically white are less likely to explicitly identify with their race. Although these analyses found no interaction between prototypicality beliefs and race, exploratory analyses revealed that these

effects were driven by Black women (Black women's identification with BLACK: $F(1, 112) = 5.55$, $p = .020$; White women's identification with WHITE: $p = .245$; Black women's identification with BLACK WOMAN: $F(1, 112) = 9.22$, $p = .003$; White women's identification with WHITE WOMAN: $p = .430$).

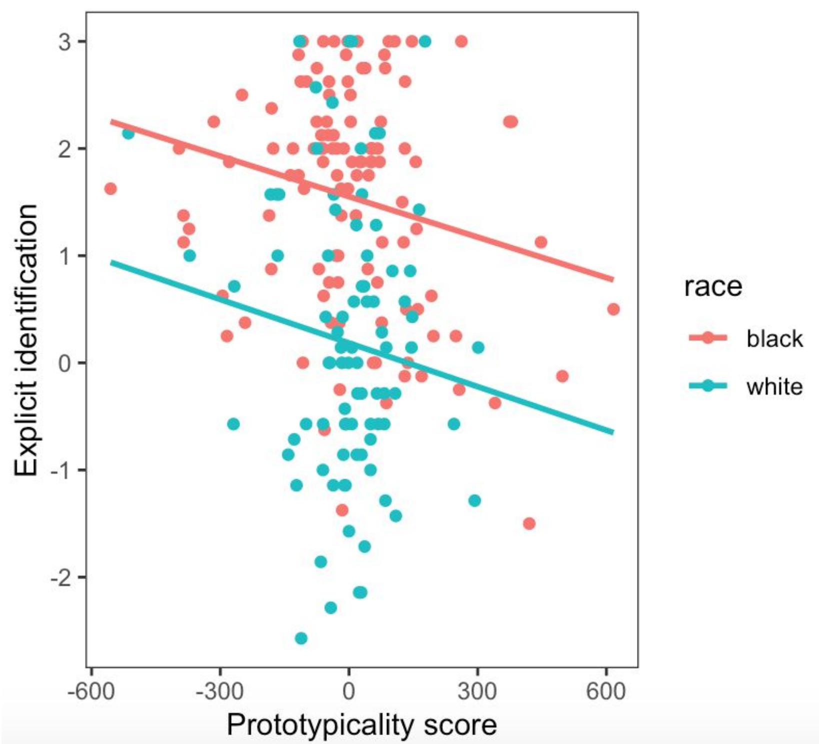

Figure 1. Participants' explicit identification with their race, depending on prototypicality score.

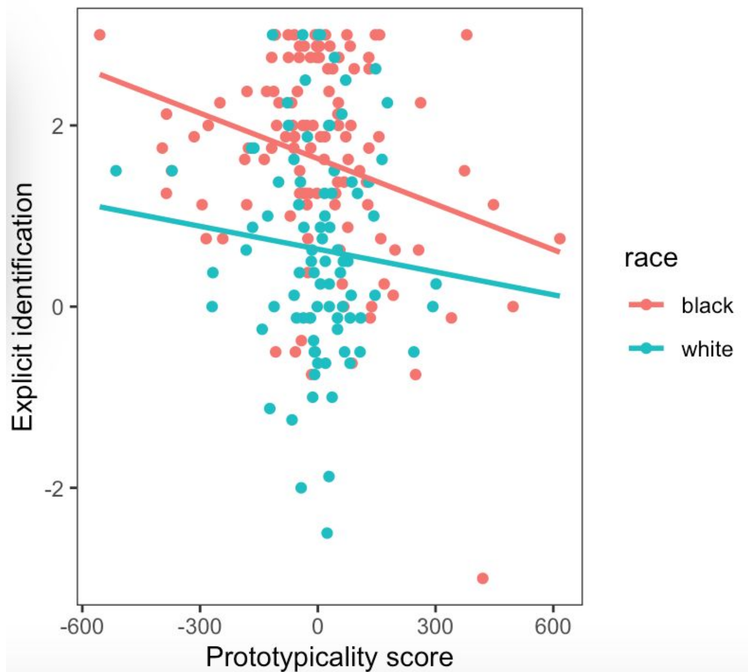

Figure 2. Participants' explicit identification with the intersection of race and gender, depending on prototypicality score.

For exploratory purposes, we also chose to test whether participants' implicit identification with WOMAN, along with their prototypicality scores, predicted their explicit identification with their racial and gender categories. We ran a multilevel model on participants' explicit identification scores with implicit identification and prototypicality score as continuous predictors, category type as a within-subjects factor, and race as a between-subjects factor. We found a three way interaction between prototypicality score, race, and implicit identification ($F(1, 192) = 3.60$, $p = 0.059$). Follow-up testing revealed that primarily among Black women, for

those who scored highly on implicit identification with female, prototypicality scores predicted an increase in identification with WOMAN, but a decrease in identification with BLACK (see Figure 3).

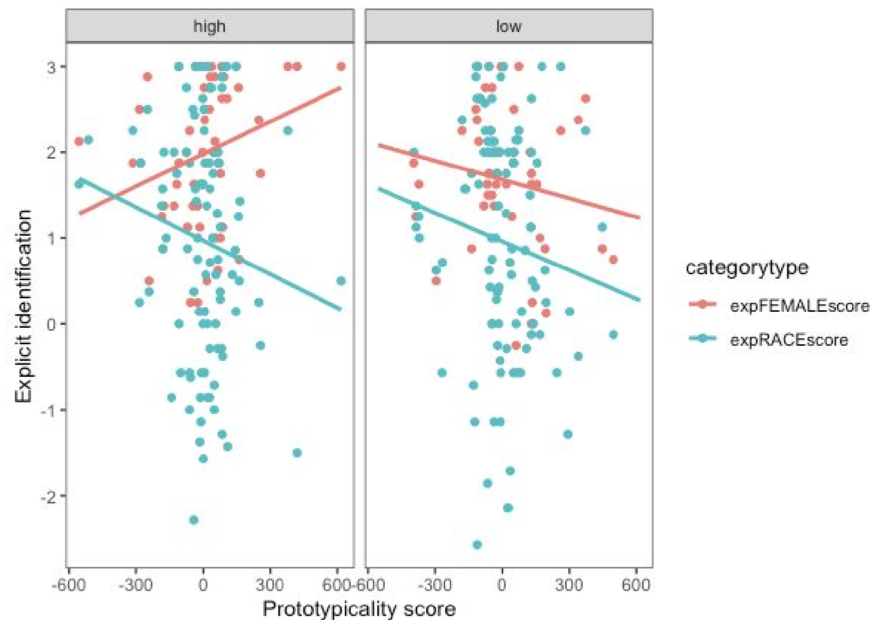

Figure 3. Effects of prototypicality score and race on explicit identification with FEMALE with implicit identification as FEMALE as a predictor

Discussion

In the present work, we tested the role that prototypical beliefs about femininity being associated with whiteness play in Black women's identification with their racial and gendered ingroups. While we found no effect of prototypical beliefs or race on participant's implicit identification with WOMAN, we found that Black women explicitly identify as WOMAN

significantly more than white women do. This effect was also true for explicit identification with race (BLACK/WHITE) and the intersection of race and gender (BLACK WOMAN/WHITE WOMAN). These findings support the theory that marginalized members of a social group tend to double down on their group membership. Thus, Black women, who are marginalized as both women in the BLACK category and Black in the WOMAN category, are likely to present with stronger explicit identification of both those social groups compared to white women.

We also found a main effect of prototypicality score, specifically driven by Black women, which indicates that a stronger belief about femininity being prototypically white results in a decreased likelihood for Black women to explicitly identify as BLACK. In exploratory analyses we found that among Black women who scored highly on implicit identification with WOMAN, higher prototypicality scores predicted an increase in explicit identification with WOMAN, and a decrease in identification with BLACK. This means that among Black women who have a high implicit identification with WOMAN, the greater their belief that femininity is associated with whiteness, the more likely they are to distance themselves from Blackness and overemphasize their femininity.

These findings overall reflect how psychological invisibility as a unique form of oppression influences Black women's identification with their gendered and racial social categories. Where prototypical beliefs create tension between a Black woman's gendered and racial categories (Blackness being masculine and femininity being white), the trends of our data suggest that Black women for whom femininity is an important part of their self-concept will overemphasize their femininity and suppress their Blackness. Essentially, this protects their feminine identity from the masculinizing challenge Blackness poses to it. It is interesting to note

that we did not find an overall suppression of both social group identities on account of being non-prototypical of each. Rather, we found Black women to suppress only the BLACK identity. The choice to suppress only one of the two social groups of which Black women are non-prototypical could be understood as a sort of discriminatory price to pay to conform to the WOMAN social group.

Another explanation of this three-way interaction could be that shying away from the Black identity acts as a corrective strategy in response to a sensitivity to the masculine stereotypes Blackness is sometimes associated with. It could be serving as a reaction to the masculine stereotypes associated with prototypes of Blackness (men), which come to be imposed on those who are non-prototypical of that social group (Black women). In this case, Black women are subject to masculine stereotypes because Blackness is generally thought to be prototypically male (Johnson, Freeman & Pauker, 2012; Lei, Leshin & Rhodes, 2020). The variation in identification based on strength of prototypical beliefs might serve as a sort of correction: Black women who are increasingly aware of the way masculine stereotypes are imposed on them on account of their Blackness feel more inclined to correct for that perception by highlighting their femininity and downplaying their Blackness.

Lastly, these findings serve as a representation of how marginalization impacts the individual. While the many ways psychological invisibility is imposed have been studied and explored, the matter of its influence on the non-prototypical individual is just beginning to be understood. The current findings suggest that psychological invisibility changes how individuals identify with their respective social groups, and in the case of Black women leads them to suppress their Black identity and overemphasize their femininity.

Future Research:

Beauty Standards as a Future Dependent Variable

To further explore the impact of psychological invisibility on the identification of Black women, future research can investigate the nature of the feminine identification that is being overemphasized among Black women with strong prototypical beliefs and high implicit identification with WOMAN. Specifically, future research can examine if that identification is with what would be considered ‘white’ femininity or ‘Black’ femininity?

Feminist literature suggests that a divide in beauty standards began in the Black Power movement where the slogan “Black is beautiful” was popularized (Patton, 2006). Collins (2004) and Shaw (2006) talk about the way that the white beauty standard used Black bodies as the ‘other’ which sits opposite whiteness. Alice Walker, in her book *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1984), quotes Bernice Reagon, who said it best:

> “I come out of a tradition where those things are valued; where you talk about a woman with big legs and big hips and black skin. I come out of a black community where it was all right to have hips and to be heavy. You didn’t feel that people didn’t like you. The values that [imply] you must be skinny come from another culture...Those are not the values that I was given by the women who served as my models. I refuse to be judged by the values of another culture. I am a black woman, and I will stand as best I can in that imagery.”

This quote highlights the division between Black and white beauty standards, specifically the way white beauty is associated with thinness, while Black beauty deviates from that standard.

Black women experience obesity at much higher rates than White Women (Felgal, Carroll, Kit & Ogden, 2012), are less likely than White women to engage in disordered eating (Crago, Shisslak & Estes, 1995), and report being happy with their body at significantly higher rates than White women (20/20 broadcast 1998). About 82% of Black women are overweight and more than half (58.5%) are obese. Additionally, Essence Magazine features articles on health

and beauty and rarely discusses dieting (Brown, 2010). In interviews with young Black girls, they reported a projected self image or personal style being more important than body weight in terms of beauty (Parker et al., 1995). These findings suggest that Black women have a different relationship with weight and beauty than White women.

Research done in the 1990s proved that there are racially distinct beauty standards between Black and White women. Allan, Mayo and Michel (1993) investigated White and Black women's values concerning body size and interviewed participants using the Body Size Values Tool (1979). Black women rated the 'ideal weight for self' as heavier than White women. However, higher social status, professional Black women mirrored White women more closely. This might indicate that greater identification with whiteness will result in conforming to the White beauty standard among Black women. This study indicates that Black women are more likely to idealize larger or heavier bodies in women.

When researchers asked women to discuss their personal weight feelings, Black women were consistently less concerned with weight than White women. In an interview, Black women made fewer comments about the relationship between health and body size than White women, and described family members advising them not to lose too much weight (Allan et al., 1993). When asked to report their own attractiveness and attractiveness to their significant other, being attractive was negatively associated with their BMI, while being attractive to their significant other was independent of their BMI (Pickett & Peters 2017). This reinforces the idea that Black women do not believe Black men prefer smaller women. Middle aged Black women described putting padding on their hips or thighs so they would not be thought of as manly (Appleford, 2016). In an open ended question asking women to discuss their weight, White women

emphasized good shape and being fit as the perfect body, while Black women emphasized hips, shapeliness, and femininity. No Black woman discussed dress size, only shape (Allan et al., 1993). Black women do not describe thinness as an feminine ideal, and do not describe societal expectations as overly valuing thinness.

A study looking at racial distinctions in women's motivations for dieting found a shift in cultural attitudes and body ideals (Appleford, 2016). A questionnaire asking about attitudes and practices around dieting, body image, and exercise found that young participants sought an exaggerated hourglass figure represented by celebrities like Jennifer Lopez and Kim Kardashian, while Black middle aged women preferred a fuller shape. The exaggerated hourglass figure, referred to as 'slim thick', is increasingly popular among both White and Black girls. Appleford argues that Black and White body ideals are blending because of racially ambiguous celebrities like Jennifer Lopez and Kim Kardashian who blur the lines between the two distinct beauty standards. Younger Black women reported dieting to achieve the 'slim thick' ideal, while middle aged Black women dieted for health reasons and not appearance (Appleford, 2016). The 'slim thick' phenomenon suggests that age matters when discussing beauty standards, and racially distinct beauty standards may be converging among White and Black teenagers.

A meta-analysis sought to understand if the gap in body dissatisfaction between Black and White women was shrinking (Roberts, Feingold & Johnson, 2006). Taking into account the year each study was published, the age of participants, and publication bias (studies that found no difference in body dissatisfaction may not have been published), they found that Black women are significantly more satisfied with their bodies than White women. This satisfaction was true about weight and more global features. This difference in body satisfaction was found

to be largest in the college aged years and disappears around age 40. While beauty standards are changing and racial differences may be converging, the role weight plays in beauty is still significantly different between Black and White women.

A study done by Makkar and Strube (1995) aimed to understand the factors that influence Black women's adherence to a White beauty standard. They asked participants to look at a picture that represented a White or Black standard of beauty and then rate their own attractiveness. They measured body self esteem as well as Black identification as moderators for self perception of attractiveness. After seeing White models, women with high African self-consciousness rated their own attractiveness higher and the attractiveness of the model lower relative to women with low African self-consciousness. They found that women who do not embrace their own ethnic identity are more susceptible to comparison to white standards of beauty, resulting in lower self acceptance. Meanwhile, women with high Black identity are less susceptible to damaging comparisons to unrealistic standards of White beauty. They also found that in the body esteem subscales, weight concern was the least important to Black women, which is consistent with previous research that Black women relate weight and beauty differently than White women. This study suggests that identification with Blackness moderates susceptibility to White beauty standards.

In light of Makkar and Strube's (1995) findings that identification with BLACK moderates susceptibility to white beauty standards, investigating Black women's relationship with weight as a dependent variable in a study about prototypical beliefs can reveal how prototypical beliefs, which cause variation in identification with BLACK, can impact the sort of beauty standards a Black woman strives for. Among the group of women represented in the

current study's findings who hold strong implicit beliefs about their own femininity, who have strong beliefs about femininity being prototypical, who explicitly emphasize their feminine identity, and who under express their racial identity, weight will be a greater concern than among the women who more heavily emphasize their racial identity. This finding would shed light on the nature of the over-identification with femininity that goes hand in hand with the suppression of racial identity. Specifically, it would address a question regarding this research that still remains: are Black women overemphasizing an identification with white femininity, which is complimented by their suppression of their Black identity, or are they identifying with a Black femininity, which would complicate their suppression of their Black identity? In either case, understanding the nature of overemphasized feminine identity, would shed light on the effect of prototypical beliefs on the non-prototypical individual.

Collective Action as a Dependent Variable:

Another area for future research could investigate how the variation in group identification translates into likelihood to engage in collective action on behalf of said social group. Specifically, does the effect of suppressing the Black identity and over emphasizing their female identity predict a greater likelihood to engage in collective action on behalf of the female social group and a decreased likelihood to engage in collective action on behalf of the Black social group? Collective action is traditionally defined as any action that aims to improve the status, power, or influence of an entire group, rather than that of one or a few individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Along these lines, collective action refers to actions of a disadvantaged group that aim to change their standing or to the actions of an advantaged group that aim to end injustice (like protests against the American military occupation of Iraq). Because sociologists

and psychologists take for granted that disadvantaged groups exist in every society, questions of what predicts or motivates collective action become extremely pertinent when trying to understand historical social movements as well as the current (American) political landscape. Studying how prototypical beliefs impact likelihood to engage in collective action would shed light on a very practical effect that prototypical beliefs have on group membership. Looking at the likelihood to engage in collective action is another way of investigating how the experience of psychological invisibility impacts the non-prototypical individual.

Social identity theory puts forward that a person's membership in and identification with social groups is essential to understanding their attitudes and behaviors. This claim suggests that identification with social groups and categories is what facilitates the link between the individual and society. Furthermore, social identity theory addresses the responses of low status group members to perceived inequality and suggests three strategies available to individuals pursuing a positive social identity: individual mobility, social creativity, and social change (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social change refers to collective action, or an attempt to change the status quo for the entire group. Research gathers around three constructs that predict an individual's engagement in collective action: the subjective experience of injustice, perceived group efficacy, and identification with the ingroup. (It's worth pointing out here that the literature uses identification to mean the content of a social identity OR the strength of the association with a social category. For the sake of this paper I will use identification to refer to the degree of association with a given group, the content of the identification will be specified.) While studies have found each of these constructs to be associated with predicting collective action (Gordijn, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus, & Dumont, 2006; Hornsey et al., 2006; Kelly, 1993; Smith and Oritz, 2002), how they interact

with each other informs their precise relationship with predicting collective action. SIMCA, a model put forward by van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) suggests that social identity directly predicts collective action and also indirectly influences collective action by underlying both perceived injustice and group efficacy. According to this model, identification is the central predictor of collective action and can be used to examine or predict collective action tendencies in people.

The subjective experience of injustice is a predictor of collective action among disadvantaged and advantaged group members. Early work on collective action looked at objective status variables like wealth and health inequalities and identified the relative deprivation theory, which focuses on the subjective experience of unjust disadvantage based on ideas derived from social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954). Relative deprivation theory states that only when individuals perceive their situation as relatively deprived will they experience anger and resentment and seek to improve their lot (Crosby, 1976). H. J. Smith and Oritz (2002), in a meta-analysis, found evidence that collective action happens when the deprivation is seen as group-based, unjust, and affective (as opposed to cognitive). This understanding resonates with the vision of group-based emotions: when group-based inequality or deprivation is perceived as unjust, group-based emotions like anger will motivate collective action (Mackie & Smith, 2002). One study introduced participants to a legislative proposal that could be viewed as unfair to one group and beneficial to another. They varied the participant's identification with the victim or the perpetrator in the situation and found that identification with the victim led to greater appraisals of unfairness, or injustice, which in turn lead to anger that predicted collective action (Gordijn,

Yzerbyt, Wigboldus & Dumont, 2006). These findings support the theoretical suggestion that perceived injustice is a predictor of collective action among low status group members.

Likelihood to engage in collective action is also associated with an individual's perception of group efficacy. This explanation developed because researchers claimed that a subjective sense of injustice is not sufficient to predict collective action, as social inequality and discrimination exists in all soceities. Thus, resource mobilization theory, an alternative to relative deprivation theory, instead proposes that collective action only happens when individuals believe they have resources to mount an effective challenge to inequality or injustice (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). This theory explains that people abstain from collective action because they do not expect material or social rewards. Rather, they may perceive their group to be too weak, or they do not have sufficient opportunities and networks to join social movements. Klanderman's (1984) work indicates that individual motives for collective action can be measured by people's subjective expectation of whether collective action would be effective in achieving its goal, making efficacy a key explanation for collective action. A subjective experience of perceived group efficacy gives people a sense of collective strength, which leads them to believe they can change the destiny of their group (Drury & Reicher, 2005). Hornsey et al. (2006) found that among attendees at a rally, intentions about future collective action engagement were informed by perceived effectiveness of the rally. This supports the idea that perceived group efficacy is key to predicting collective action.

Social identification as a predictor of collective action borrows from social identity theory, which suggests that people seek out and benefit from positive social identities associated with their group memberships. Social identity also puts forward three socio-structural variables

that affect how people manage their identity concerns. The first of these variables is permeability of group boundaries. When group boundaries are seen as impermeable, the low status group members are forced to engage in social competition in the form of collective action. The second variable is when members of the low status group perceive the intergroup status differential to be illegitimate and unstable they are more likely to identify with their group and engage in collective action to change it (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Lastly, another version of social identity theory pointed out that a strongly developed and politicized sense of identification with a social movement is a better predictor of collective action than identification with a disadvantaged group, because politicized identity focuses on the political struggle for power with authorities in the public domain (Simon et al., 1998). Along the lines of gender, this theory maintains that identifying as a feminist would make someone more likely to participate in collective action than identifying as a woman, because 'feminist' is politicized and oreinted around a political struggle for power. Caroline Kelly (1993) suggests, and empirically supports, that collective action is predicted by group identification because identifying strongly with an ingroup leads to a process called 'self-stereotyping', where an individual learns the norms of the ingroup and assigns a cognitive representation of these norms to themselves. As their social identity becomes more salient to them, their behavior becomes more normative. Ultimately, strong group identification brings the social world into focus by promoting and awareness of 'us' and 'them' and facilitates collective action by promoting shared perceptions within the ingroup about desirability and possibility of social change. One study manipulated the participants' identification with the victim or the perpetrator of an unjust act and found that when similarities to the victim were salient the situation was significantly more likely to be appraised as unfair.

Additionally, they found that identification and categorization was the only reliable predictor of collective action, meaning higher identification among victims and lower identification among perpetrators contributed to a stronger willingness to engage in collective action on behalf of the victim group (Gordijn, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus, & Dumont, 2006). These studies resoundingly support the role of social identification in predicting collective action.

The literature is mixed about the relationship between perceived injustice and group efficacy, but one model suggests that social identity underlies both constructs and directly predicts collective action. Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) put forward a model to understand collective action referred to as SIMCA. In this model, social identity is central to predicting collective action because it allows for group-based perceptions and emotions that are shared with fellow group members. Social identity also influences the way group members appraise and feel about a particular situation or social structure, which includes perceived injustice and group efficacy. Social identity underlies perceived injustice by offering a basis for the group-based experience of injustice: it offers a buffer or support to group members against the negative consequences of their low status (Postmes & Branscombe, 2002), and promotes emotions that prepare them to engage in collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2004). Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) also cite Drury and Reicher (2005) to suggest that social identity underlies feelings of group efficacy because a stronger sense of identity empowers otherwise relatively powerless individuals. Thus, social identity has a direct impact on collective action, as well as indirectly affecting it by informing perceptions of injustice and group efficacy.

Using the SIMCA model of understanding collective action, it is reasonable to predict that those who suppress a social identity would be less likely to engage in collective action on

behalf of that group identity. Our current study found that, as the belief that Blackness is prototypically male and femininity is prototypically white grows stronger among highly implicitly female-identified Black women, these women become more likely to explicitly suppress their Black identity. In line with the SIMCA model of collective action, we can hypothesize that women who suppress their Black identity will be relatively less likely to engage in collective action compared to women who do not suppress their Black identity.

Conclusion

Investigating femininity through an intersectional lense demands an awareness of the way racial identities carry gendered stereotypes. The current research explores femininity and Blackness, aiming to understand how the tension of those two identities and the resulting invisibility impact the individual. Our findings reveal a trend that Black women whose feminine identity is an important part of their self conception, and who carry beliefs about femininity being prototypically white, are likely to suppress their Black identity and overemphasize their feminine identity. The current research is an important step in understanding how being the subject of a unique form of discriminiation impacts the individual - but more than that, it is an attempt to humanize and bring into focus a group that is historically, politically, and culturally invisible. While work has been done to uncover and investigate types of discrimination, how it is imposed, and the different forms it can take, we are not promoting visibility until we understand the impact it has on the individual. In this way, we bring light to the experience and personal narrative of the minority group instead of only further investigating the behaviors and beliefs of the majority group. While giving a name to unique forms of discrimination is an essential first

step, only future research looking at the spiritual and social experience of the non-prototypical individual will continue to outline the impression that is left on Black women by ethnocentric and androcentric beliefs.

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