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Translating Oppression: Understanding How Sexual Minority Status is Associated With White Men's Racial Attitudes

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The present study comprised 3 interrelated purposes. First, the authors examined differences between White heterosexual ($n = 97$) and sexual minority (e.g., gay, bisexual, and queer; $n = 83$) men on various racial attitudes and empathy. Second, they examined whether highlighting oppressed identity status with an experimental prime could influence racial empathy. Third, the authors investigated whether sexual orientation disclosure and experiences with heterosexist discrimination among sexual minority men were associated with racial attitudes directly and indirectly through racial empathy. Key findings included: (a) sexual minority participants demonstrated more positive racial attitudes and empathy than heterosexual men; (b) there was no effect of prime on racial empathy; and (c) sexual orientation disclosure and experiences with heterosexism were associated significantly with positive racial attitudes indirectly through racial empathy. Implications for diversity education and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: White privilege, White guilt, heterosexism, racial empathy, racial colorblindness

Being White in North America proffers a host of privileges on the basis of race (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; Feagin, 2014; McIntosh, 1988; Monture, 2009). As a result, White individuals have higher employment rates, career advancement potential, and wage earnings than members of other racial groups (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000; Kochhar, Fry, & Taylor, 2011). White men, in particular, fare best in both economic (Feagin & O'Brien, 2003; Flood & Pease, 2005; McIntosh, 1988; Williams, 2010) and political spheres (Cool, 2011). Notably, White individuals tend to ignore the privileges that Whiteness bestows and espouse color-blind racial ideology (i.e., denial of societal racism) and meritocratic sentiments (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Hurtado & Stewart, 1997; Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). This perception is unfortunate because White individuals, especially White men, have power and influence that could change the current state of racial inequality and create a more just society (Feagin & O'Brien, 2003).

Drawing on theories of intersectionality (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989), scholarship suggests that Whiteness can be understood best when contextualized vis-à-vis membership in other social identity groups (Croteau, 1999; Croteau, Talbot, Lance, & Evans, 2002; Stevens, 2004) and the extent to which these groups are sources of privilege or oppression (Cole, 2009; Spanierman, Beard, & Todd, 2012). To this end, the present investigation takes an intersectional approach to examine how sexual minority status and experiences with heterosexism are associated with racial attitudes and racial empathy among a powerful and privileged social group: White men. Examining these associations has the potential to inform how psychologists work with White men to promote the development of White racial allies and ultimately to enhance societal equity.

Whiteness and Sexual Orientation

Although research initially examined White racial identity development (e.g., Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1990) and sexual orientation development (e.g., Cass, 1984; Fassinger & Miller, 1997) separately, scholars more recently have called for empirical investigation of intersecting identities on various social attitudes (Cole, 2009; Crisp, 2014; Flood & Pease, 2005; Scott & Robinson, 2001). Although a preponderance of the psychological study of Whiteness has not yet addressed intersecting identities, recent scholarship on the intersections of Whiteness and social class (Fine & Weis, 1998; Megivern, 2005; Spanierman, Garriott, & Clark, 2013), and Whiteness and gender (Alcoff, 1998; Barron, Struckman-Johnson, Quevillon, & Banka, 2008; Feagin & O'Brien, 2003; Ferber, 1998; Frankenberg, 1993; Greenwood & Christian, 2008; Herek, 1986; McIntosh, 1988; Scott & Robinson, 2001; Spanierman et al., 2012) portends an emerging trend in this domain. For example, research on men and masculinity has highlighted how the intersection of Whiteness and sexual minority status may be associated with more positive racial attitudes (Levant & Richmond, 2007; Wade &

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Brittan-Powell, 2001). In their review of research on masculinity ideologies, Levant and Richmond (2007) highlighted that White gay men are less likely than White heterosexual men to endorse traditional masculine ideology. And, notably, research has shown that traditional masculine ideology is linked to greater sexism and heterosexism (Barron et al., 2008; Herek, 1986), and less positive racial attitudes (Wade & Brittan-Powell, 2001).

Most relevant to the current investigation, several qualitative studies among White gay and lesbian individuals have addressed how intersecting oppressed and privileged identities may be related to one's racial attitudes. For instance, in an autoethnographic account, Croteau (1999) discussed how deep personal exploration of his gay (i.e., oppressed) identity was instrumental in developing an understanding of his White racial identity and concomitant White privilege. Understanding his experiences with oppression opened "a small window in understanding other types of oppression" (Croteau, 1999, p. 31). Similarly, among a diverse sample of 18 graduate students, Croteau et al. (2002) found that some White gay men highlighted how being oppressed on the basis of their sexual orientation enhanced their sensitivity toward other oppressed groups. For example, one White gay man described how being teased early in life for being gay made him more sensitive to the experiences of marginalized peoples more generally. Other lesbian, gay, and bisexual participants reported that their own experiences with heterosexism improved their abilities to form interpersonal relationships with people of color. For some, acknowledging White privilege in the context of their oppressed identity was a necessary condition for forming meaningful relationships with people of color. These findings, coupled with the above-mentioned work in men and masculinity research, suggest that White sexual minority men might have more positive racial attitudes than White heterosexual men. For the current investigation, we use the term *sexual minority* to encompass the diversity of sexual orientation identifications other than heterosexuality (Savin-Williams, 2001).

Contrasting scholarship suggests that White gay men may be no more cognizant of their privileged identities than White heterosexual men. For example, in one qualitative investigation among 11 self-identified, racially diverse, gay male college students, Stevens (2004) found that White sexual minority participants were attuned to times when they "passed" as heterosexual but rarely considered their racial privilege (Stevens, 2004, p. 191). Additionally, conceptual and anecdotal writings have underscored the pervasiveness of racist socialization among White sexual minorities (Boykin, 1996; Han, 2007). Supporting this notion, research suggests that White gay and lesbian individuals perpetrate racism in queer communities (Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne, & Marin, 2001; Kumashiro, 1999; Stevens, 2004). For instance, qualitative research has shown that gay men of color sometimes feel rejected (Stevens, 2004) or objectified (Kumashiro, 1999) by the gay community because they are not White. Supporting this notion of exclusion by the White gay community, Han (2007) noted the comment by one gay man of color at a forum on race in the gay community:

> After all, being a gay man of color is to experience the unnerving feeling of being invited to a potluck while being told not to bring anything since nobody would be interested in what you bring, and then not being offered any food since you didn't bring anything anyway (Han, 2007, p. 52).

In sum, it is unclear whether sexual minority men have more positive racial attitudes than White heterosexual men. In response to the call for intersectional research on social identity groups, the present investigation seeks to contribute to this debate and to understand further how White men's experiences with heterosexism might be linked to positive racial attitudes.

Racial Attitudes, Racial Empathy, and Unique Challenges of Sexual Minority Status

In referring to White individuals' racial attitudes, we focus on three constructs that tap different aspects of racial attitudes. First, we examined *color-blind racial ideology*, which refers to distortion, denial, and minimization of race and racism (Neville et al., 2000) and the "dominant racial ideology or worldview that serves to justify and explain away racial inequalities in [a post-civil rights era]" (Neville et al., 2013, p. 458). Second, we examined *White guilt*, which refers to White individuals' sense of remorse and responsibility for the existence of racism and White privilege. Third, we assessed *willingness to confront White privilege* to understand ally-related behavioral intentions. Prior research has shown the interrelatedness of these constructs, and at the same time indicated their uniqueness (e.g., Pinterits, Poteat, & Spanierman, 2009; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004).

We also investigated racial empathy because it is an important feature of positive intergroup relations (Batson et al., 1997) and may precede the development of White allies (Goodman, 2011; Reason & Davis, 2005). Empathy has been conceptualized as both a cognitive and affective understanding of what someone else is experiencing (Davis, 1983; Levenson & Ruef, 1992). Prior research on empathy in a multicultural context often has used general measures of empathy rather than more specific measures of racial empathy (e.g., Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Greenwood & Christian, 2008; Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003; Yoon, Moulton, Jeremie-Brink, & Hansen, 2012). To extend prior research, in the present investigation we employed a racially and culturally based measure of empathy. Specifically, we examined ethnocultural empathy, which refers to individuals' ability to discuss, be emotionally attuned to, and understand the lived experiences of racially and culturally diverse populations (Wang et al., 2003). With our focus on racial attitudes in the present study, we refer to this form of empathy as *racial empathy*. Specifically, we examine two dimensions of racial empathy (i.e., feeling and perspective taking) to tap both affective and cognitive components.

Notably, previous research has shown that minor suggestion can influence empathy levels and perceptions of others (Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995; Preis & Kroener-Herwig, 2012; Soble, Spanierman, & Liao, 2011; Valentino, 1999). For example, Soble et al. (2011) found that a video documenting systemic racism led to increases in White empathy among White university students. Moreover, Finlay and Stephan (2000) demonstrated that White participants primed to experience empathy for an African American individual tended to report more positive racial attitudes for African Americans generally. Notably, previous research with empathy primes focused on priming an empathic response linked directly to the target group. Extending this approach, we were

interested in assessing whether priming White participants using content about *their own oppression* (e.g., heterosexism) would translate to empathy for people of color, ultimately leading to more positive racial attitudes. Indeed, qualitative literature suggests that empathy for persons from marginalized groups increases when one faces discrimination oneself (Croteau et al., 2002) suggesting that priming White individuals with their own oppression could lead to higher levels of racial empathy.

To examine further the link between one's own oppression (e.g., heterosexism) and racial attitudes, we focused on two unique challenges associated with sexual minority status: experiences with heterosexism and sexual identity disclosure. While experiences with heterosexism represent an obvious form of oppression, the decision to conceal or disclose one's sexual orientation to others amid pervasive heterosexist sentiment is more subtle (Croteau et al., 2002; Jones, 2009). Those who have disclosed their sexual orientation to others might be more likely to have experienced discrimination in various contexts (e.g., workplace and school) than those who have concealed their sexual minority status. Notably, Swank and Fahs (2013) found that greater experiences with heterosexism and greater levels of outness were linked to higher levels of social activism. Given that empathy also has been shown to precede social activism, in conjunction with research highlighting that experiences with oppression may be associated with empathy for diverse groups (e.g., Croteau et al., 2002), we explored the links between unique challenges of sexual minority status and racial attitudes directly and indirectly through racial empathy.

The Present Investigation

To address the call for research examining the association between intersecting oppressed and privileged identities, we employed several interrelated approaches to examine the possibility of a translational effect such that one form of oppression might be associated with empathy and positive attitudes regarding other forms of oppression. First, we sought to determine how White heterosexual and sexual minority men compare on various dimensions of racial attitudes and racial empathy. Second, we sought to ascertain whether priming sexual minority participants with heterosexist discrimination would influence these outcome variables. Drawing from intersectional research demonstrating a positive association between an oppressed identity among White individuals and positive racial attitudes (Croteau, 1999; Croteau et al., 2002; Greenwood & Christian, 2008; Spanierman et al., 2012; Spanierman, Poteat, Beer, & Armstrong, 2006), we hypothesized that sexual minority men would demonstrate more positive racial attitudes than heterosexual men. Moreover, we hypothesized a significant interaction such that sexual minority men primed with a heterosexist vignette would demonstrate higher levels of racial empathy than heterosexual men and sexual minority men in other conditions.

Third, among sexual minority participants only, we examined the associations between unique challenges of sexual minority status (i.e., experiences with heterosexism and outness level) and racial attitudes. On the basis of prior qualitative findings (Croteau, 1999; Croteau et al., 2002), we expected that greater experiences with heterosexism would be associated with positive racial attitudes. Moreover, as research has highlighted that experiences with heterosexism and higher outness levels are associated with higher levels of social activism (Swank & Fahs, 2013), we predicted that these variables would be associated with positive racial attitudes, which may precede social justice efforts (Goodman, 2011; Reason & Davis, 2005). Drawing from Croteau and colleagues' (1999, 2002) qualitative findings, we hypothesized that experiences with heterosexism and outness would be linked with racial attitudes directly and indirectly through racial empathy. That is, greater levels of experiences with heterosexism and outness would be positively associated with racial empathy, which in turn would be associated with positive racial attitudes. Understanding whether racial empathy is a mechanism through which experiences with heterosexism are linked to positive racial attitudes is a necessary precursor to devising strategies for developing racial allies among White sexual minority men and addressing oppression in complex, multicultural societies.

Method

Participants

Participants were 97 self-identified White heterosexual men and 83 self-identified White sexual minority participants of diverse sexual orientations (51 gay, 15 bisexual, 3 questioning, 5 queer, and 9 other) in Canada. All participants self-identified as male, except for four sexual minority participants who identified as gender fluid, gender neutral, gender queer, or dandy-femme presentation. We included these four participants in subsequent analyses because they responded to a call for male participants. As such, our use of the term *men* includes them. Most were undergraduate students ($n = 159$, 88%). The average age for heterosexual and sexual minority participants was 20.28 years ($SD = 2.28$) and 25.95 years ($SD = 11.93$), respectively.

Measures

Demographic questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire requested information about age and year in school. Participants responded to various items to define themselves in relation to race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Color-blind racial ideology. We used the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000), a 20-item questionnaire that assesses denial, distortion, and minimization of race and racism. Responses are indicated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate higher levels of color-blind racial attitudes. Although three subscales constitute this measure—unawareness of racial privilege, unawareness of institutional discrimination, and unawareness of blatant racial issues—numerous studies have utilized the total scale score (e.g., Neville, Spanierman, & Doan, 2006; Soble et al., 2011). For parsimony we used the total scale score in all analyses. In previous research, internal consistency estimates for the total scale score have ranged from $\alpha = .86–.91$ (Chao, Wei, Good, & Flores, 2011; Gushue & Constantine, 2007). For the current investigation, internal consistency estimates were $\alpha = .85$ for heterosexual and $\alpha = .91$ for sexual minority participants. A literature review revealed no studies using the CoBRAS among Canadian samples. Thus, in the present study, we modified the wording to fit the Canadian context. For example, the item

"Racism is a major problem in the U.S." was changed to "Racism is a major problem in Canada."

White guilt. We used a 5-item subscale from the Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites scale (PCRW; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004) to examine White guilt. The subscale is scored on a 6-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores reflect greater experiences of White guilt (e.g., "Sometimes I feel guilty about being White" and "Being White makes me feel personally responsible for racism"). Previous research has demonstrated adequate internal consistency estimates among White U.S. university students (α = .73–.81; Case, 2007; Spanierman, Todd, & Anderson, 2009). For the current investigation, internal consistency scores for heterosexual participants were α = .79 and for sexual minority participants α = .85. To our knowledge, this scale has not yet been used among Canadian samples.

Willingness to confront White privilege. We used the confronting White privilege subscale from the White Privilege Attitudes Scale (WPAS; Pinterits et al., 2009) to assess participants' behavioral intentions toward challenging White privilege. Responses are indicated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores reflect higher levels of willingness to confront White privilege. This subscale consists of 12 items including, "I intend to work toward dismantling White privilege" and "I look forward to creating a more racially equitable society." Previous research reported internal consistency estimates among U.S. university students (α = .95; Pinterits et al., 2009). For the current study, internal consistency scores were α = .90 for heterosexual participants and α = .93 for sexual minority participants. To our knowledge, this measure has not yet been used in Canada.

Racial empathy. To assess participants' empathy for racially and culturally diverse populations, we utilized the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003). To tap both affective and cognitive dimensions of empathy we focused on two subscales (i.e., empathic feeling and expression and empathic perspective taking; Wang et al., 2003). Empathic feeling and expression refers to an emotional connection with people from marginalized racial and cultural groups. It consists of 15 items (e.g., "I get disturbed when other people experience misfortunes due to their racial or ethnic background"). Henceforth, we refer to this subscale as *empathic feeling*. Empathic perspective taking refers to cognitive understanding of the experiences of people from marginalized racial and cultural groups (Wang et al., 2003). It consists of seven items (e.g., "It is difficult for me to put myself in the shoes of someone who is racially and/or ethnically different from me"). Items are presented on a 6-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree that it describes me*) to 6 (*strongly agree that it describes me*); higher scores indicate higher levels of racial empathy. Previous research has reported Cronbach's alphas ranging from .79 (empathic perspective taking) to .90 (empathic feeling). For the current study, internal consistency scores for empathic feeling were α = .88 (heterosexual) and α = .86 (sexual minority); for empathic perspective taking, α = .65 (heterosexual) and α = .74 (sexual minority). A literature review revealed no studies among Canadian samples. Due to the low alpha level among heterosexual participants, empathic perspective taking was excluded from analyses among heterosexual men; we did, however, use the scale in the second analysis among only sexual minority participants.

Unique challenges faced by sexual minorities. To assess the unique challenges related to sexual minority status, we employed two measures. Although originally developed for lesbians, the Heterosexist Harassment, Rejection, and Discrimination Scale (HHRDS; Szymanski, 2006, 2009) has been applied to gay men by substituting the word *gay* for *lesbian* on all scale items (e.g., Szymanski, 2009). In the current study, the 14-item questionnaire assessed the degree of heterosexism that sexual minority participants perceived they had faced during the past year (e.g., "In the past year, how many times have you been treated unfairly by your family because you are gay?"). Items are presented on a 6-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (*the event has never happened*) to 6 (*the event happened almost all the time* [more than 70% of the time]). Higher scores indicate greater experiences with heterosexist harassment, rejection, and discrimination. Previous research has demonstrated internal consistency estimates among U.S. (α = .91; Szymanski, 2006) and Canadian (α = .91; St. Pierre & Senn, 2010) samples. In the current study, α = .86.

We used the 11-item Outness Inventory (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000) to assess the degree to which participants had disclosed their sexual orientation to various groups (e.g., family, friends, and colleagues). Items are presented on a 7-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (*person definitely does NOT know about your sexual orientation status*) to 7 (*person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is OPENLY talked about*). Higher scores reflect higher outness levels. Because the *out to religion* subscale (i.e., Items 8 and 9) did not seem relevant to this sample (i.e., approximately one third of participants were missing data) this subscale was excluded from all analyses. In prior research, coefficient alphas ranged from .87 (Balsam & Mohr, 2007) to .91 (Balsam, Beauchaine, Rothblum, & Solomon, 2008). St. Pierre and Senn (2010) found a Cronbach's alpha of .95 among a Canadian sample. In the present study, for the modified 9-item scale, α = .88.

Procedures

Initial recruitment efforts focused on a research-intensive, Canadian university through various means (e.g., listservs through various campus organizations and posters on campus bulletin boards). Advertisements noted that we were seeking White heterosexual and sexual minority men to take a social attitudes survey. To enhance recruitment of sexual minority participants, we included other Canadian universities and sexual-minority-affirming community organizations (e.g., Pride Calgary).[1] We e-mailed 34 LGBT organizations across Canada and asked that they post a link to the survey on their listservs or in newsletters. Some encouraged us to post a link directly on their Facebook page. Additionally, we contacted nearly 30 Canadian universities to promote the study. Specifically, we contacted their IRB, requesting

[1] To ascertain potentially biasing effects resulting from sampling procedures, we reran all analyses excluding sexual minority participants recruited from outside undergraduate programs (N = 18). We did not find any differences with regard to significance or effect sizes. In light of these findings and for the purposes of retaining statistical power, we used the full sample in all analyses.

approval for recruitment. In most cases, the authors' home institution's IRB approval sufficed, but in four cases we obtained IRB approval from the recruitment site.

Participants followed a link to the online survey and completed the demographic questionnaire. Subsequently, both heterosexual and sexual minority participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. Those assigned to Condition A (i.e., the homophobic attack condition) were asked to read a brief article that depicted a homophobic attack targeting a sexual minority male named Chris (see Appendix). Participants assigned to Condition B (i.e., the unexplained attack condition) were asked to read an article similar to the first except that homophobia was not explicitly stated as the motivation for the violent act. Participants in both conditions responded to several questions to ascertain whether they comprehended the article content: (a) "What is Chris's area of study?" (Answer: Art History); (b) "What motivated the people that attacked Chris?" (Answer: "Homophobia" for the homophobic attack condition or "Unknown" for the unexplained attack condition); and (c) "Where was Chris directly before he was attacked?" (Answer: Social function). Next, participants in both conditions responded to a personal-relevance item designed for this study: "How personally relevant are the events depicted in this article to you?" This item was presented on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all relevant*) to 7 (*very relevant*). Participants assigned to Condition C (i.e., the control condition) did not read an article. Finally, participants completed the scales in the following order: racial colorblindness, racial empathy, White guilt, confronting White privilege, experiences with heterosexism, and levels of outness. Only sexual minority participants completed the latter two scales (i.e., heterosexism and outness). Participants were entered in a drawing to win one of three $50 gift cards as compensation.

Preliminary Data Screening and Data Analysis

Prior to data analysis we addressed missing data and assumptions of normality. To handle missing data, we made pairwise deletions for participants with less than 80% data available for each scale. For participants with greater than 80% of data available, we used available item analysis, appropriate among samples with low levels of missing data (see Parent, 2013). For heterosexual participants: three (3%) participants were missing data on both empathy scales, four (4%) from White guilt, and two (2%) from confronting White privilege. For sexual minority participants, two (2%) participants were missing data from the experiences with heterosexism scale and five (6%) were missing from the outness scale. Using SPSS, we assessed the normality of each scale separately for each group. Criteria for normality were based on Shapiro-Wilks' p values greater than .05 (Razali & Wah, 2011; Shapiro & Wilk, 1965), visual inspections of histograms and Q-Q plots, as well as skewness and kurtosis Z scores (i.e., $-1.96 \leq Z \leq +1.96$; Doane & Seward, 2011). For heterosexual men, all scales except White guilt demonstrated normality based on these criteria; White guilt was positively skewed indicating generally low endorsement on this scale. For sexual minority men, empathic feeling, White guilt, confronting White privilege and heterosexist discrimination did not meet normality criteria. Empathic feeling and confronting White privilege were negatively skewed indicating generally high endorsement; heterosexist discrimination was positively skewed indicating generally low endorsement; finally, the distribution for White guilt was more diffuse, though responses were clustered near the center. We attempted various transformations (e.g., square root and log10; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) but were unable to establish normality of data; thus, we used raw data.

Results

Preliminary Tests

Manipulation check. We examined whether it was apparent to participants that the individual depicted in the homophobic attack article was targeted because of his sexual orientation. All participants except for one, who self-identified as queer, answered the multiple-choice question correctly (i.e., "homophobia"). Moreover, in the unexplained attack article, all but one participant, who self-identified as heterosexual, correctly answered the multiple-choice question (i.e., "unknown"). Both participants were excluded from further analyses.

Personal relevance items. We conducted a two-tailed t test to ascertain the degree to which participants reported the article to be personally relevant. Our results showed that sexual minority participants ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 1.45$) rated the homophobic attack article as significantly more personally relevant than did heterosexual participants ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.93$), $t(62) = 4.82$, $p < .001$. No significant differences were identified between sexual minority ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.85$) and heterosexual ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.73$) participants who read the unexplained attack article, $t(53) = .54$, $p > .05$.

Testing for Main Effects and Interactions of Sexual Orientation and Priming Condition

We first conducted preliminary analyses to examine intercorrelations and descriptive statistics among study variables (see Tables 1 and 2, respectively). Next, to test for group differences we used a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with sexual orientation and priming condition as independent variables and racial attitudes (i.e., racial colorblindness, White guilt, and confronting White privilege) and empathic feeling as dependent variables. We did not examine empathic perspective taking in this analysis because of the low Cronbach's alpha among heterosexual men. Results indicated a significant main effect for sexual orientation, Wilks's lambda = .78, $F(4, 167) = 11.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$. We did not find any effects of priming condition, Wilks's = .96, $F(8, 334) = .90$, $p = .52$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, or interaction between sexual orientation and condition, Wilks's = .94, $F(8, 334) = .94$, $p = .20$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

To assess which variables differentiated heterosexual and sexual minority men we conducted a Roy-Bargmann stepdown analysis. Following methodologists' recommendations, outcome variables are ranked on theoretical importance. An ANOVA is first performed with the variable deemed most theoretically important serving as the outcome variable (Finch, 2007; Tabachnik & Fidel, 2013). Subsequently, a series of ANCOVAs are computed whereby the previous outcome variables serve as the covariates and the next variable of theoretical importance serves as the outcome variable, and so on until there are no variables left. We placed most theoretical importance on empathic feeling because research suggested empathy as important to intergroup relations and a precursor to ally development. We ranked confronting White privilege last because individuals would need to demonstrate awareness of racism (i.e., low racial colorblindness) and associated emotions that motivate action (e.g., White guilt) before

Table 1
Intercorrelations Among Relevant Study Variables for Heterosexual and Sexual Minority Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CoBRAS	1	−.58**	−.73**	−.49**	.08	−.13	−.19
2. White guilt	−.42**	1	.48**	.21	−.16	.24*	.15
3. Confronting White privilege	−.53**	.37**	1	.64**	.14	.25*	.38**
4. Empathic feeling	−.31**	.18	.64**	1	.37**	.29*	.32**
5. Empathic perspective taking	.05	−.14	.24*	.48**	1	.09	.17
6. Heterosexist discrimination	—	—	—	—	—	1	.24*
7. Outness	—	—	—	—	—	—	1

Note. Correlations for heterosexual participants ($N = 93$) are presented below the diagonal, whereas correlations for sexual minority participants ($N = 83$) are above. CoBRAS = Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale; White guilt is a subscale from the Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites scale; confronting White privilege is a subscale from the White Privilege Attitudes Scale; empathic feeling and empathic perspective taking are subscales from the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy; heterosexist discrimination reflects scores on the Heterosexist Harassment, Rejection, and Discrimination Scale; and, outness reflects scores on the Outness Inventory. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

they would exhibit willingness to confront White privilege. Thus, we entered racial colorblindness, White guilt, and confronting White privilege as the second, third, and fourth variables, respectively. We found that empathic feeling and racial colorblindness significantly distinguished heterosexual and sexual minority men whereby sexual minority men were higher on empathic feeling and lower on racial colorblindness (i.e., greater awareness of racism); White guilt and confronting White privilege did not differentiate these two groups (see Table 3).

Table 2
MANOVA Means and Standard Deviations Separated by Sexual Orientation and Condition

	Homophobic attack condition		Unknown attack condition		Control condition	
Scale	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
CoBRAS (full sample)	3.13	.87	2.86	.96	3.19	.86
Heterosexual	3.41	.73	3.44	.89	3.48	.71
Sexual minority	2.79	.93	2.58	.88	2.55	.80
White guilt (full sample)	2.22	1.16	2.61	1.28	2.57	1.22
Heterosexual	1.84	.85	2.16	1.21	2.24	1.11
Sexual minority	2.70	1.32	2.82	1.27	3.26	1.20
Confronting White privilege (full sample)	3.46	1.11	3.76	1.25	3.31	1.03
Heterosexual	3.04	.94	3.25	1.29	2.95	.80
Sexual minority	3.99	1.09	4.01	1.17	4.07	1.08
Empathic feeling (full sample)	4.49	.87	4.67	.84	4.36	.71
Heterosexual	4.09	.85	4.40	.92	4.23	.72
Sexual minority	5.00	.58	4.81	.78	4.65	.61

Note. $N = 176$ (53% heterosexual; 47% sexual minority). MANOVA = multivariate analysis of variance; CoBRAS = Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale; White guilt is a subscale from the Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites scale; confronting White privilege is a subscale from the White Privilege Attitudes Scale; empathic feeling is a subscale from the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy. We excluded empathic perspective taking due to low Cronbach's alpha among heterosexual participants.

Examining the Association of Unique Challenges of Sexual Minority Status and Racial Attitudes Directly and Indirectly Through Racial Empathy

We conducted three multiple mediation analyses, one for each racial attitude scale, to examine whether unique challenges faced by sexual minorities were associated with racial attitudes directly and indirectly through racial empathy. Thus, we conducted analyses among sexual minority men only. Experiences with heterosexism and outness levels served as the independent variables, and the two racial empathy scales (i.e., empathic feeling and empathic perspective taking) served as the mediators. One of the three racial attitude measures was entered as the dependent variable (i.e., racial colorblindness, White guilt, or confronting White privilege). See Figure 1 for a graphical depiction of our conceptual model.

We used the SPSS PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013) to conduct multiple regressions using 5,000 bootstrapped samples for each analysis. The PROCESS macro allows for multiple IVs and multiple mediators and tests the indirect effects for each IV/mediator combination. For each analysis, a 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of the mediating variable on each racial attitude that

Table 3
Roy-Bargmann Stepdown Analysis Following Significant MANOVA Result of Sexual Orientation on Racial Attitudes

Order of entry	Dependent variable	Stepdown *F*	*df*	Error *df*	*p*	η_p^2
1	Empathic feeling	30.93	1	175	<.001	.15
2	Racial colorblindness	19.80	1	174	<.001	.10
4	White guilt	1.55	1	172	.22	.01
5	Confronting White privilege	.57	1	171	.45	.003

Note. $N = 176$ (53% heterosexual; 47% sexual minority). MANOVA = multivariate analysis of variance. Empathic feeling is a subscale from the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy. Racial Colorblindness = Color-Blind Racial Attitudes scale; White guilt is a subscale from the Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites Scale; Confronting White privilege is a subscale from the White Privilege Attitudes Scale.

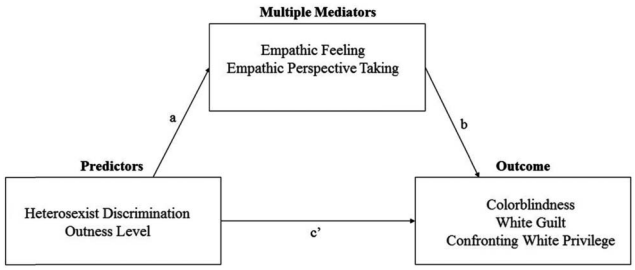

Figure 1. Hypothesized multiple mediation model.

does not contain zero suggests evidence of mediation (see Table 4). Because empathic perspective taking did not mediate any of the associations we discuss mediation only in terms of empathic feeling. Importantly, because our data are not longitudinal, we cannot make directional claims about mediated associations.

In all cases, we found a significant association between experiences with heterosexism and empathic feeling (Path *a*) whereas the association between outness and empathic feeling (also Path *a*) was trending on significance ($p = .05$). Additionally, we found a significant association between empathic feeling and racial colorblindness (Path *b*). Bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect on racial colorblindness through empathic feeling (the product of Path *a* and Path *b* [$a * b$]) did not contain zero for experiences with heterosexism or outness level implying that there was a significant indirect association for each unique challenge. Next, we did not find a significant association between empathic feeling and White guilt (Path *b*). Moreover, bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect on White guilt through empathic feeling ($a * b$) contained zero for experiences with heterosexism and outness level implying no significant indirect associations. Third, we found a significant association between empathic feeling and confronting White privilege (Path *b*). Bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect on confronting White privilege through empathic feeling ($a * b$) did not contain zero for experiences with heterosexism and outness level indicating a significant indirect association.

Alternative Mediation Models

We ran alternative theoretically plausible mediation models whereby the mediators in the previous analyses (i.e., racial empathy variables) were entered as outcome variables and the outcome variables (i.e., racial attitude variables) served as mediators. Hypothetically, it is possible that experiences with heterosexism and outness could be associated with empathic feeling and empathic perspective taking indirectly through racial colorblindness, White guilt, and confronting White privilege. Bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effect on empathic feeling through White guilt ($a * b$: effect = −.06, *SE*(boot) = .05) did not contain zero for experiences with heterosexism, CI [−.21, −.002], implying a significant indirect association. Moreover, the indirect effect on empathic feeling through confronting White privilege ($a * b$: effect = .08, *SE*(boot) = .03) did not contain zero for outness, CI [.03, .16], implying a significant indirect association. Additionally, the bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect association between heterosexist discrimination and empathic perspective taking ($a * b$: effect = −.13, *SE*(boot) = .10) did not contain zero for White guilt, CI [−.41, −.001]. Notably, for both alternative models, when White guilt was being assessed as a mediator, the direction of the effect was the opposite of what was expected; that is, in this alternative model, an increase in White guilt was associated with a decrease in empathic feeling and empathic perspective taking.

Discussion

The current investigation employed several interrelated approaches to extend previous qualitative research on the intersection of sexual orientation and Whiteness in relation to racial attitudes (Croteau, 1999; Croteau et al., 2002; Jones, 2009; Stevens, 2004). Notably, we found significant differences between White heterosexual and sexual minority participants on various racial attitude and empathy measures. However, we found no support for effects of an experimental prime (i.e., brief news article of homophobic attack) on racial attitudes or empathy. Finally, among sexual minority men, we identified indirect associations between unique challenges (e.g., experiences with heterosexism and outness levels) and racial attitudes through a measure of racial empathy. Below, we elaborate on the findings as they pertain to our research questions.

Racial Attitude Differences Between White Heterosexual and Sexual Minority Men

Our first research question examined potential differences between White heterosexual and sexual minority participants on various racial attitude measures. We found that sexual minority participants demonstrated lower levels of colorblindness and higher levels of racially based empathic feeling but did not demonstrate significantly higher levels of White guilt or willingness to confront White privilege. This extends qualitative research highlighting that sexual minority status may be associated with positive racial attitudes and empathy among White individuals (Croteau, 1999; Croteau et al., 2002). Results also support extant quantitative research demonstrating the association between intersecting privileged and oppressed identities and racial attitudes (e.g., Spanierman et al., 2012; Spanierman et al., 2006). Our findings conflict, however, with research suggesting that White sexual minorities' racial attitudes would be similar to their heterosexual counterparts (Boykin, 1996; Han, 2007). Regardless, intersectional research, broadly speaking, has noted that an oppressed identity status among White individuals may be associated with positive racial attitudes (e.g., Croteau et al., 2002; Levant & Richmond, 2007; Wade & Brittan-Powell, 2001). Our findings advance the notion that when racial attitude differences between social identity groups are revealed, it is likely that those with an oppressed identity status will demonstrate more positive racial attitudes.

The Role of Racial Empathic Feeling

We found that greater experiences with heterosexism were associated with higher levels of empathic feeling but not empathic perspective taking, which in turn were associated with lower racial colorblindness. This finding supports Croteau and colleagues' qualitative findings (Croteau et al., 2002), who suggest that experiences with heterosexism may be associated with more racial empathy and positive racial attitudes. Based on these findings and

Table 4
Bias-Corrected Bootstrap Models Testing Mediating Role of Empathic Feeling/Empathic Perspective Taking on the Relationship Between Experiences With Heterosexism/Outness and Racial Attitudes

	B	*SE* B	*t*	*p*
Path *a* (applies to all three models): IV → Mediator (M)				
M = Empathic feeling (M_1)				
Constant	3.82	.29	13.19	.00
Experiences with heterosexism (X_1)	.35	.14	2.54	.01
Outness (X_2)	.10	.05	1.97	.05
M = Empathic perspective taking (M_2)				
Constant	3.38	.44	7.64	.00
Experiences with heterosexism (X_1)	.08	.21	.39	.70
Outness (X_2)	.09	.08	1.11	.27
	B	*SE* B	*t*	*p*
Mediation Model 1: Color-Blind Racial Attitudes (CoBRAS) as DV				
Paths *b* and *c'*: IV and M → DV				
Constant	4.76	.64	7.43	.00
Empathic feeling (Path b_1)	−.63	.14	−4.41	.00
Empathic perspective taking (Path b_2)	.30	.09	3.18	.002
Experiences with heterosexism (Path c'_1)	−.05	.17	−.30	.77
Outness (Path c'_2)	−.03	.06	−.47	.64
	Effect	*SE* (boot)	LLCI	ULCI
Indirect effects on CoBRAS				
M = Empathic feeling				
Experiences with heterosexism	−.22	.10	−.47	−.06
Outness	−.06	.04	−.16	−.01
M = Empathic perspective taking				
Experiences with heterosexism	.02	.08	−.13	.20
Outness	.03	.02	−.01	.08
	B	*SE* B	*t*	*p*
Mediation Model 2: White guilt as DV				
Paths *b* and *c'*: IV and M → DV				
Constant	2.24	1.00	2.25	.03
Empathic feeling (Path b_1)	.28	.22	1.27	.21
Empathic perspective taking (Path b_2)	−.45	.15	−3.13	.003
Experiences with heterosexism (Path c'_1)	.48	.26	1.84	.07
Outness (Path c'_2)	.07	.10	.68	.50
	Effect	*SE* (boot)	LLCI	ULCI
Indirect effects on White guilt				
M = Empathic feeling				
Experiences with heterosexism	.10	.09	−.04	.32
Outness	.03	.03	−.01	.11
M = Empathic perspective taking				
Experiences with heterosexism	−.04	.11	−.27	.19
Outness	−.04	.04	−.13	.02
	B	*SE* B	*t*	*p*
Mediation Model 3: Confronting White privilege as DV				
Paths *b* and *c'*: IV and *M* → DV				
Constant	−.73	.74	−.99	.33
Empathic feeling (Path b_1)	.96	.16	5.84	.00
Empathic perspective taking (Path b_2)	−.18	.11	−1.70	.09
Experiences with heterosexism (Path c'_1)	.06	.19	.34	.74
Outness (Path c'_2)	.16	.07	2.16	.03

(*table continues*)

Table 4 (*continued*)

	Effect	*SE* (boot)	LLCI	ULCI
Indirect effects on confronting White privilege				
M = Empathic feeling				
Experiences with heterosexism	.33	.12	.13	.59
Outness	.10	.05	.01	.20
M = Empathic perspective taking				
Experiences with heterosexism	−.01	.05	−.16	.06
Outness	−.02	.02	−.07	.005

Note. $N = 77$. The coefficients for predicting the mediators (empathic feeling and empathic perspective taking) were identical in each mediation model. However, because of missing data, the coefficients were slightly different (e.g., $B = .09$ instead of .08) from one model to the next, though the direction and significance level of each coefficient was unaltered. For brevity and readability, we have only included one set of coefficients.

findings that racial empathy may be a precursor to social justice ally development (Goodman, 2011; Reason & Davis, 2005), it is possible that experiences with heterosexism among White gay men may lead to more racial empathy, which in turn may lead to more positive racial attitudes. Because of the cross-sectional nature of this study, we are unable to make causal determinations.

Similarly, we found that outness level and racial attitudes were significantly associated indirectly through empathic feeling for two outcome measures (i.e., racial colorblindness and confronting White privilege). Specifically, higher outness levels were associated with greater empathic feeling, which in turn was associated with more positive racial attitudes. One possible reason for this is that outness level may be associated with having experienced more discrimination. Indeed, in the present study outness level and experiences with heterosexist discrimination in the past year were significantly and positively correlated ($r = .24$, $p = .03$). Another possible explanation of these findings is that outness level may be positively associated with socially supportive and affirming environments (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996) and negatively associated with psychological distress (Meyer, 2003). Thus, perhaps feeling emancipated from the burden inherent in concealing one's identity (i.e., cognitive and emotional load) may precede the wherewithal necessary to reflect upon the oppression of other groups. Indeed, ample research has shown that factors that impede cognitive resources engender more stereotypical processing of other people (e.g., Bodenhausen, 1990; Harris & Perkins, 1995).

We also tested two theoretically plausible alternative multiple mediation models, namely that heterosexist discrimination and outness are associated with two types of racial empathy indirectly through all three racial attitude measures (i.e., racial colorblindness, White guilt, and confronting White privilege). Notably, we found that heterosexist discrimination was associated negatively with both empathy scales indirectly through White guilt. Specifically, heterosexist discrimination was associated positively with White guilt (i.e., greater experiences with heterosexism were linked to greater levels of White guilt), which in turn was negatively associated with racial empathy. We also found that outness level was associated positively with empathic feeling indirectly through confronting White privilege (i.e., greater disclosure was linked to greater levels of confronting privilege, which in turn was associated with greater racial empathy). To our knowledge, no research has examined or explained this particular set of associations and, therefore, we believe qualitative investigation would be well-suited for clarification in this regard. Moreover, longitudinal research designs are warranted to establish causal links.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While the current study advances the literature, it is important to consider its limitations. First, although we sought to recruit self-identified heterosexual and gay White men, participants represented a greater variety of sexual orientations. Future research should examine within-group differences among sexual minority participants because experiences with discrimination might differ depending on whether one identifies as bisexual or gay, for example (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). Second, self-report measures are limited in how much information they provide about observable behaviors (Baumeister, Vohs, & Funder, 2007). Future research should assess actual ally behaviors, rather than relying solely on self-report racial attitude measures. Third, because we randomized sexual minority and heterosexual participants in this study to three conditions, sample sizes in two of six groups were small (e.g., $N = 19$), ultimately decreasing the power of our analysis of priming effects and increasing the probability we made Type II errors.

Future research also should investigate further the link between priming and positive racial attitude change. Research has shown that a brief video stimulus highlighting racism may increase positive racial attitudes among White individuals (Soble et al., 2011). Thus, it is possible that priming oppression through a video news report, as opposed to a newspaper article, for example, may have increased the manipulation strength of the prime used in our investigation. One possibility for the absence of a priming effect in the current investigation is that we primed vicarious experiences with heterosexism (i.e., a news article). Perhaps the prime would have been more impactful had we requested that participants recall experiences of actual heterosexism they themselves have faced. Thus, we recommend future research with different priming stimuli. Researchers also might assess longer-term effects of primes on racial attitude changes (e.g., priming participants on multiple occasions over time). Further, because Greenwood and Christian (2008) found that priming both an oppressed and privileged identity (as opposed to just an oppressed identity) was associated with more positive racial attitudes among White women, future research might employ experimental stimuli that prime White sexual minority men's privileged and oppressed statuses concurrently.

Implications for Psychologists and Diversity Initiatives

Our findings highlight the association between intersecting social identities and racial attitudes, suggesting a possible translational effect from one form of oppression to another. Understanding that unique challenges faced by those with sexual minority

status are associated with positive racial attitudes indirectly through racial empathy (i.e., empathic feeling) could inform how psychologists implement various diversity initiatives aimed at ally development among White individuals.

Because our findings indicated that racial empathic feeling (i.e., affective), but not racial empathic perspective taking (i.e., cognitive), significantly and indirectly linked the association between unique experiences of oppressed status and positive racial attitudes, psychologists should tease apart these various dimensions of racial empathy in outreach and training. However, as resistance and defensiveness are common reactions by White individuals learning about racial injustice (Levine-Rasky, 2000), strategies aimed at overcoming these barriers (e.g., journaling; Mio & Barker-Hackett, 2003) may be employed to facilitate empathic processing.

Finally, scholars have suggested that strategies aimed at bridging the personal experiences of White heterosexual students with those of other oppressed groups could be effective for ally development (Broido, 2000; Reason, Roosa Millar, & Scales, 2005; Spanierman et al., 2012). Indeed, based on our findings regarding the role of racial feeling among sexual minority participants, psychologists might facilitate the exploration of White heterosexual students' oppressed statuses (e.g., religious identity and social class status) or past experiences with bullying, for example, to help foster more positive racial attitudes. Our investigation suggests that racial empathy may be a crucial component of social justice ally development among White sexual minority men.

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Appendix

Priming Articles Presented to Participants

Italicized segments signify parts of articles that differ from one another.

Condition A: Homophobic Attack

On March 24 at a campus event, six individuals assaulted Chris Johnson, an Art History major, *after he was seen dancing with another male student at* a campus social function. Johnson was punched, kicked, and put in a headlock before managing to escape from his six attackers, who were not university students. *Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. According to Johnson, many openly queer individuals on campus are targeted with verbal and physical attacks.*

All students should be able to go to classes and social events without fearing for their safety. The university must take action now and show that *hate* crimes will not be tolerated on campus. Also, the university needs to start offering *better* resources (e.g., support groups) *that are currently lacking for queer students.*

Condition B: Unexplained Attack

On March 24 at a campus event, six individuals assaulted Chris Johnson, an Art History major, *while he was walking home from* a campus social function. Johnson was punched, kicked, and put in a headlock before managing to escape from his six attackers, who were not university students. *Motivation for the attack is unknown*.

All students should be able to go to classes and social events without fearing for their safety. The university must take action now and show that *violent* crimes will not be tolerated on campus. Also, the university needs to start offering resources (e.g., support groups) *for victims of violence as well as have campus security patrol campus grounds more regularly.*

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