

Lost in the Categorical Shuffle: Evidence for the Social Non-Prototypicality of Black Women

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The *white male norm hypothesis* (Zárate & Smith, 1990) posits that White men's race and gender go overlooked as a result of their prototypical social statuses. In contrast, the *intersectional invisibility hypothesis* (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) posits that people with membership in multiple subordinate social groups experience social invisibility as a result of their non-prototypical social statuses. The present research reconciles these contradictory theories and provides empirical support for the core assumption of the intersectional invisibility hypothesis—that intersectional targets are non-prototypical within their race and gender ingroups. In a speeded categorization task, participants were slower to associate Black women versus Black men with the category “Black” and slower to associate Black women versus White women with the category “woman.” We discuss the implications of this work for social categorization theory development and future intersectionality research.

Keywords: Black women, categorization, intersectionality, social prototypicality

“Ain’t I a woman? [Ain’t I Black?]”

—Sojourner Truth (1851)

Sojourner Truth's plea for social recognition has served as a catchphrase for contemporary writers, feminists, and laypeople alike. For decades, scholars from a number of disciplines have documented their firsthand experiences of *social invisibility* (Bell, 1992; Brown-Collins & Sussewell, 1986; Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; King, 1988), broadly defined as a struggle to be recognized, represented, heard, or understood relative to other members of society (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Such firsthand accounts provide both an illuminating qualitative perspective on invisibility and insight into its importance in the lives and welfare of members of a range of stigmatized groups. In addition, psychologists have recently expanded their theoretical (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) and empirical (Sesko & Biernat, 2010) interest in this phenomenon with an emphasis on perceptions of intersectional targets, individuals who belong to multiple stigmatized social groups. In the present research, we directly examined a fundamental mechanism implicated in this recent work—the ease with which people categorize others. Social categorization processes may be a fundamental antecedent of intersectional invisibility. That is, if intersectional

targets are perceived as non-prototypical within their constituent ingroups, they may vie with more prototypical ingroup members for social attention. Indeed, perceivers are less likely to remember the faces or conversational contributions of Black women compared to White women and Black men (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). This oversight is perpetrated even among well-intended egalitarian perceivers like minority advocacy groups, who devote proportionately fewer resources to double versus single-minority constituents (Strolovitch, 2007). Noticeably absent from these investigations is an empirical test of the potential processes that elicit invisibility in the first place, which was the objective of the present research. Much intersectionality theory and research has focused on Black women (Beale, 1970; Bond & Perry, 1970; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Reid, 1984; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000); we thus considered the specific case of Black female targets in the present work.

The *intersectional invisibility hypothesis* (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) posits that individuals who belong to multiple subordinate social groups experience social invisibility as a result of their non-prototypical social statuses. This hypothesis is based on the premise that American society is both androcentric (male-centered) and ethnocentric (White-centered). As a result, the term “Black” conjures the image of a Black *man* in people's minds (Bem, 1994; Eagly & Kite, 1987; Miller, Taylor, & Buck, 1991). In other words, a Black man is the prototype of the category “Black.” Similarly, the prototype of the category “woman” is a *White* woman (Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Sue, 1999).

Recent research involving Black female targets implicates the perceived social non-prototypicality of intersectional targets. For example, perceivers incurred distinctively high error rates when classifying Black female (vs. Black male, White female, and White male) photographs by gender (Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008). Furthermore, Sesko and Biernat (2010) reasoned that Black women's social non-prototypicality would result in a lack of individu-

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ation of or differentiation between Black women. Consistent with their hypothesis, perceivers were least able to discriminate between Black women's faces they had previously seen in the experiment versus faces not previously seen in comparison with White male, White female, and Black male faces. Participants were also least likely to remember the source of a statement in a group discussion when it was made by a Black woman. To our knowledge, however, the present experiment is the first direct empirical test of a core assumption of intersectionality research (Goff et al., 2008; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012)—that Black women are non-prototypical of both their race and gender ingroups.

We integrated theory and methods related to two lines of research on social categorization in the present work. One line of work provides evidence of a “White male norm” effect for between-groups comparisons. Specifically, Zárate and Smith (1990) proposed that because the White race and male gender are social “defaults” in America, women are more distinctive than men and Blacks are more distinctive than Whites. They presented participants with a social categorical label (“White,” “Black,” “man,” “woman”) followed by a photograph of a White or Black man or woman and predicted that people would identify women by gender more quickly than men (by pressing a computer key indicating a match between target and label) and Blacks by race more quickly than Whites. They found partial support for these hypotheses, but they did not examine effects at the intersection of race and gender, which is the focus of the present work. A subsequent investigation had participants verbally state the race or gender of White and Black male and female targets in response to categorical labels (i.e., “race” or “gender”; Stroessner, 1996). This methodology elicited partial support for the white male norm hypothesis such that participants were faster to identify Blacks versus Whites by race but were not faster to identify women versus men by gender. Of particular relevance to our hypotheses, participants were faster to indicate the race of Black men versus Black women; participants were slightly, but not significantly, faster to indicate the gender of White versus Black women.

A second line of research considers *within-category* response differences. Non-prototypical targets are less likely to be recognized as category members than prototypical targets (Posner & Keele, 1968, 1970) and are recalled later than prototypical targets in a free recall paradigm (Silvera, Krull, & Sassler, 2002). More generally, because prototypical category members have the most attributes in common with other category members and the least in common with other categories, people are faster at classifying prototypical versus non-prototypical exemplars as members of a category (Rosch & Mervis, 1975). These phenomena suggest that perceivers' failure to “see” or “hear” Black women (Sesko & Biernat, 2010) stems from perceptions of Black women as relatively non-prototypical. This perception of non-prototypicality should manifest in RTs to Black women compared to other social groups in a social classification task.

The present study was guided theoretically by research on the White male norm (Zárate & Smith, 1990) and intersectional prototypicality (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Livingston et al., 2012). In contrast to previously used procedures that presented participants with target photos of four racial/ethnic groups (White, Black, Asian, and Latino/a) and two gender groups (men and women) and asked them to verbally indicate ingroup membership

(Stroessner, 1996, Experiment 1), we used a task that made race and gender categorizations more directly comparable. In each task, we instructed participants to make dichotomous classification decisions based on race (Black or White) or gender (man or woman). In particular, participants saw a series of face photographs and were instructed to indicate as quickly and accurately as possible to which social category each target belonged. Each participant performed two separate categorization tasks in which they classified targets by race (“White” vs. “Black”) and by gender (“man” vs. “woman”) in succession with categorical dimension counterbalanced between participants. In contrast to previously used methodologies that have contrasted the relative salience of race versus gender *within* social target groups (Stroessner, 1996, Experiment 1), we examined the recognition of target groups as representatives of their constituent social ingroups. The dependent measure of interest was the latency with which participants categorized targets of each demographic into their appropriate social categories.

We hypothesized that perceptions of social prototypicality would be reflected in response times; however, different theoretical perspectives suggest different patterns of categorization speeds. The white male norm hypothesis (Zárate & Smith, 1990) proposes that White men's race and gender deflect attention because they are “default” social categories and Blacks and women attract attention because they deviate from the White male norm. By contrast, research on categorical prototypes (Rosch & Mervis, 1975; Rothbart & John, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) proposes that, when making decisions about category members, people respond more quickly to prototypical versus non-prototypical targets (e.g., Barsalou, 1992). As such, this perspective predicts the opposite pattern of response times than does the White male norm framework.

We proposed an integration of these divergent perspectives when considering the nature of the categorization decisions that people are asked to make; more specifically, as a function of between-groups and within-group decisions. When engaging participants in making between-groups distinctions, non-prototypical targets tend to attract attention (Zárate & Smith, 1990); however, once a target photograph is classified within a category (e.g., as a Black person or as a woman), people may respond more slowly to less prototypic members of that category. From this integration analysis, we predicted that participants would be faster to respond to women versus men by gender and to Blacks versus Whites by race because women and Blacks are distinctive deviants of the White male backdrop against which social targets are contrasted (Zárate & Smith, 1990). Thus, when making between-category decisions (i.e., target as “White” vs. “Black” or as “man” vs. “woman”), we expected these targets to be markedly salient. In contrast, we predicted that non-prototypical targets would be markedly nonsalient (i.e., responded to more slowly than prototypical targets) when participants made within-group categorical decisions (i.e., White/Black woman as “woman” vs. Black man/woman as “Black”). The intersectional invisibility hypothesis (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) suggests that Black women are non-prototypical members of the female gender (see also Goff et al., 2008) and Black racial ingroups (Bem, 1994). As such, we predicted that they would be classified as women more slowly than White women and as Black more slowly than Black men.

Thus, we anticipated a statistical interaction among categorization task (gender or race), target race, and target gender. Given that

Blacks and Whites operate within the same general social contexts and are subsequently exposed to the same racial prototype norms (see Devos & Banaji, 2005), we did not predict any effects of participant race. Because women and men are exposed to the same gender prototype norms (Kay et al., 2009), a similar logic would suggest no systematic differences in classification responses as a function of participant gender. However, previous findings are mixed. Two studies initially found that men and women categorized gender ingroup faces faster than gender outgroup faces (Zárate & Smith, 1990), but two subsequent experiments showed no moderating effects of participant gender (Stroessner, 1996). Thus, we explored participant gender effects in our analyses.

Method

Participants

Forty-three undergraduate students (16 women; 15 participants did not report gender; 58% non-Black; 36% did not report race/ethnicity; age range = 19–24 years) participated in exchange for course credit. Participants completed two separate tasks in which they categorized target photos of White men, White women, Black men, and Black women by gender and race. This study used a 2 (Target Race: White vs. Black) \times 2 (Target Gender: Man vs. Woman) \times 2 (Categorization Dimension: Gender vs. Race) \times 2 (Task Order: Gender First vs. Race First) mixed-model design in which Task Order was the sole between-subjects factor.

Procedure and Measures

Participants gave written consent before entering the laboratory and were then instructed that their task was to sort a series of face photographs into different categories. The stimulus set comprised eight photos each of White men, White women, Black men, and Black women. White target photos were acquired from the Radboud Faces Database (Langner et al., 2010); Black target photos were acquired from the Montreal Set of Facial Displays of Emotion (Beaupré & Hess, 2005) and Google Images (See Appendix).

A presample of 11 participants evaluated the photos for perceived race and gender, and only targets whose perceived ingroup memberships received unanimous consensus were used. Moreover, each demographic group was evaluated as equivalently attractive ($M_{\text{White men}} = 3.97$, $SD = 1.23$; $M_{\text{White women}} = 3.99$, $SD = 1.21$; $M_{\text{Black men}} = 3.99$, $SD = .73$; $M_{\text{Black women}} = 4.34$, $SD = .56$), $p = .237$. A separate panel of three coders, who were naïve to our hypotheses, was trained on the attributes associated with Afrocentricity, femininity, and babyfacedness. They perceived no intraracial differences in Afrocentricity ($M_{\text{White men}} = 1.46$, $SD = .29$; $M_{\text{White women}} = 1.67$, $SD = .59$; $M_{\text{Black men}} = 5.75$, $SD = 1.42$; $M_{\text{Black women}} = 5.33$, $SD = .92$), $F(1, 2) = 1.80$, $p = .312$, though as expected, Black targets were evaluated as more Afrocentric than White targets, $F(1, 2) = 88.77$, $p = .011$. They perceived no intragender differences in femininity ($M_{\text{White men}} = 3.13$, $SD = .82$; $M_{\text{White women}} = 5.13$, $SD = .45$; $M_{\text{Black men}} = 2.17$, $SD = .38$; $M_{\text{Black women}} = 4.67$, $SD = .73$), $F(1, 2) = 2.56$, $p = .251$, though as expected, female targets were evaluated as more phenotypically feminine than male targets, $F(1, 2) = 23.97$, $p = .039$. Coders perceived each demographic group as equivalently babyfaced ($M_{\text{White men}} = 3.63$, $SD = .45$; $M_{\text{White women}} =$

4.54, $SD = .40$; $M_{\text{Black men}} = 4.04$, $SD = .95$; $M_{\text{Black women}} = 4.43$, $SD = .25$), $p = .411$.

We adapted a method previously utilized in categorization research (Zárate & Smith, 1990). Participants were randomly assigned to their first categorization dimension. Half of the participants first categorized targets by race, as either “White” or “Black,” using the “E” and “I” computer keys. The other half first categorized targets by gender (“MAN” or “WOMAN”). After performing two practice trials, participants completed the main categorization tasks, which each included two blocks of 32 targets (eight from each demographic group) with photograph order fully randomized. After categorizing on the first dimension, participants completed the task on the other dimension so that all participants completed a total of 128 critical trials. Participants were instructed to make the categorizations as quickly as possible and were automatically forwarded to the next photo after either submitting a response or 750 milliseconds (ms) had elapsed, whichever came first. Thus, the longest possible response time was 750 ms.

The 750-ms cutoff was identified empirically based on examination of response distributions from pilot data using the same paradigm. Conceptually, our aim was to limit the influence of controlled, strategic responding (Jacoby, Kelley, & McElree, 1999). Importantly, as recommended by Ratcliff (1993), the response window for the main experiment was determined a priori. The percentage of response times exceeding the response window in the present study (1.0%) was comparable with that obtained in previous research on this topic (Stroessner, 1996, 1.4%; Zárate & Smith, 1990, < 1%). Participants were not given feedback on their responses nor an opportunity to correct for perceived error. These measures received approval from the host institution’s Internal Review Board.

Results

As predicted, preliminary analyses revealed no effects for participant race on error rates or response times. Moreover, consistent with Stroessner’s (1996) White male norm research, but inconsistent with Zárate and Smith’s (1990), participant gender did not moderate any effects for error rates or response times. Finally, there were no systematic effects as a function of Task Order. Thus, all three factors were excluded from the main analyses.

Responses were considered errors if the target was incorrectly classified by race or gender or if participants failed to respond within the response window. The average error rate was low, 3.1% overall (2.1% for misclassifications; 1.0% for exceeding the response window), and comparable with other studies using similar procedures (Goff et al., 2008; Zárate & Smith, 1990). A 2 (Target Race: White vs. Black) \times 2 (Target Gender: Man vs. Woman) \times 2 (Categorization Dimension: Gender vs. Race) repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) on error rates revealed a significant Target Race \times Target Gender interaction, $F(1, 42) = 8.74$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$. The error rate was distinctively high for Black women ($M = 4.8\%$, $SD = 1.50$) relative to White women ($M = 2.5\%$, $SD = 1.23$), Black men ($M = 2.5\%$, $SD = .98$), and White men ($M = 2.4\%$, $SD = .77$). This effect was not moderated by Categorization Dimension; the three-way interaction did not approach significance, $p = .810$.

To examine responses not confounded by errors, we examined mean response times to correct responses only in our primary

analyses. A 2 (Target Race: White vs. Black) × 2 (Target Gender: Man vs. Woman) × 2 (Categorization Dimension: Gender vs. Race) repeated-measures ANOVA revealed significant two-way interactions between Target Race and Target Gender, $F(1, 42) = 36.08, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .46$; Target Race and Categorization Dimension, $F(1, 42) = 6.73, p = .013, \eta_p^2 = .14$; and Target Gender and Categorization Dimension, $F(1, 42) = 10.48, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .20$. However, these effects were all qualified by the hypothesized three-way interaction, $F(1, 42) = 6.58, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .14$. The means and standard deviations for each condition are presented in Table 1. We examined the results for the gender and race categorization tasks separately to evaluate our specific predictions.

Gender Categorization Task

Consistent with previous research (Zárate & Smith, 1990), participants were faster to categorize women ($M = 544$ ms, $SD = 35.30$) than men ($M = 553$ ms, $SD = 37.93$) when classifying photographs by gender, $F(1, 42) = 6.64, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .14$. Furthermore, the Target Race × Target Gender interaction was marginally significant, $F(1, 42) = 3.54, p = .067, \eta_p^2 = .08$ (see Figure 1). Planned comparisons revealed that response times were slower for Black women ($M = 550$ ms, $SD = 35.48$) than White women ($M = 537$ ms, $SD = 33.91$), $F(1, 42) = 9.50, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .19$, but there was no difference in response times to Black men ($M = 554$ ms, $SD = 35.31$) and White men ($M = 552$ ms, $SD = 40.38$), $F < 1$. This pattern of results presents an important qualification to the White male norm effect (Zárate & Smith, 1990). When classification decisions were made about gender in the present experiment, the distinctiveness of being a woman produced faster categorization of women versus men *only when the targets were White*, $F(1, 42) = 10.05, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .19$. This distinctiveness was not observed for Black women relative to Black men, $F < 1$.

Race Categorization Task

When participants categorized photographs by race they were somewhat, but not significantly, faster to categorize Blacks than

Table 1
Response Times (in Milliseconds) to Categorize Photographs by Gender and Race as a Function of Target Race and Target Gender

Categorization	Mean	SD
Gender		
Black		
Women	550	35.48
Men	554	35.31
White		
Women	537	33.91
Men	552	40.38
Race		
Black		
Women	552	40.62
Men	530	35.70
White		
Women	541	38.95
Men	553	33.28

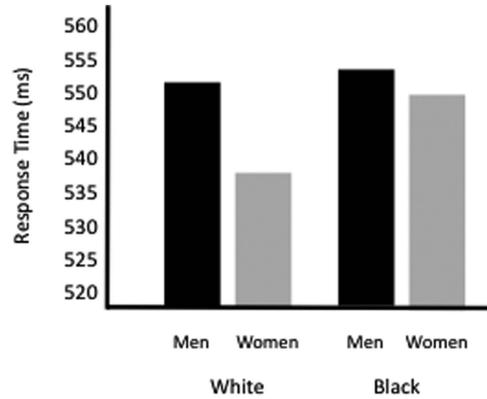


Figure 1. Response times (in milliseconds) to categorize photographs by gender as a function of Target Race and Target Gender.

Whites, $M_s = 540$ ($SD = 38.80$) versus 545 ms ($SD = 36.50$), $F(1, 45) = 2.21, p = .145$. However, as predicted, there was a significant Target Race × Target Gender interaction, $F(1, 42) = 32.19, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .43$ (see Figure 2). Participants were slower to categorize Black women ($M = 552$ ms, $SD = 40.62$) versus Black men ($M = 530$ ms, $SD = 35.70$) as “Black,” $F(1, 42) = 43.22, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .51$. By contrast, participants categorized White women ($M = 541$ ms, $SD = 38.95$) more quickly than White men ($M = 553$ ms, $SD = 33.28$) as “White,” $F(1, 42) = 5.79, p = .021, \eta_p^2 = .12$. Again, in support of the White male norm effect, Black male targets were categorized more quickly by race than White men, $F(1, 42) = 23.25, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .36$. However, the racial distinctiveness of Black women was not recognized in the same way. In fact, participants took longer to categorize Black women by race than White women, $F(1, 42) = 5.09, p = .029, \eta_p^2 = .11$.

Discussion

The present work contributes to findings on the white male norm hypothesis (Zárate & Smith, 1990) and extends the limited body of research on intersectional invisibility by testing a cognitive component of the phenomenon. The white male norm hypothesis (Zárate & Smith, 1990) posits that, for between-category

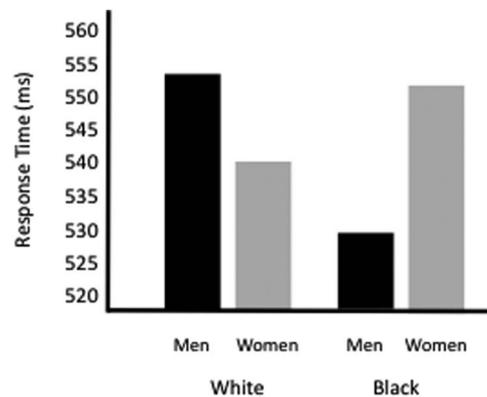


Figure 2. Response times (in milliseconds) to categorize photographs by race as a function of Target Race and Target Gender.

decisions (e.g., about whether a person is a woman vs. man or Black vs. White), people are quicker to respond to the more distinctive category than to the categorical default (i.e., faster to women vs. men; faster to Blacks vs. Whites). Although previous research on the white male norm hypothesis has produced mixed results (Stroessner, 1996; Zárate & Smith, 1990), our findings were generally consistent with the hypothesis. Specifically when participants made between-groups judgments (“woman” vs. “man,” “Black” vs. “White”), they responded more quickly to women versus men in the gender task and tended to respond more quickly to Blacks versus Whites in the race task. Consistent with previous work by Stroessner (1996), but unlike previous work by Zárate and Smith (1990), our effects were not moderated by participant gender. It is unclear whether the failure to find the facilitation of responses to gender ingroup members, which Zárate and Smith (1990) observed, in subsequent studies (Stroessner, 1996, and the present research) represents generational or other historical effects (e.g., the enduring salience of the 1960s-1980s Women’s Liberation Movement) or involves unexamined factors across studies. However, to the extent that gender identity salience affects categorization responses, as the work of Zárate and Smith (1990) might suggest, future research might experimentally vary the salience of participants’ gender or racial identities to help reconcile these inconsistent findings for participant gender across studies.

Our research also reveals important nuances to the white male norm hypothesis. In particular, consistent with the hypothesized effects of within-group prototypicality, participants were generally faster at classifying prototypical group members within the categories of women (i.e., White women faster than Black women) and Blacks (i.e., Black men faster than Black women). These results for within-group categorization responses illustrate the value of considering the intersection of race and gender in social categorization processes and offer direct evidence of the relative non-prototypicality of Black women with respect to their race and gender, which has been assumed but not directly tested in previous works (Goff et al., 2008; Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Thus, we do not conceive of the intersectional invisibility and White male norm hypotheses as oppositional. In fact, conjointly considering the roles of race and gender in social perception and cognition may provide insights into why studies that use different categorization tasks have yielded somewhat inconsistent support of the white male norm hypothesis (e.g., Stroessner, 1996; Zárate & Smith, 1990).

We, of course, are not suggesting that the response-time differences observed in our experiments reveal that Black women are literally invisible to perceivers. We do suggest that although the response latencies observed in the present work are small, they may be predictive of substantial social consequences (see Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009). The relatively slow recognition of Black women as Black or as women revealed in our findings offers insights into how and why Black women’s social experiences often make them feel invisible. In fact, our experiment provides the first quantification of a prolific qualitative literature that speaks precisely to the sentiment of feeling “less than” (Bell, 1992; Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981; King, 1988). For example, Black women’s relative non-prototypicality may account for the misremembering of their faces and misattribution of their statements (Sesko & Biernat, 2010).

Our findings may also help explain relatively beneficial consequences of intersectionality such as why Black women are less stringently held to proscriptive gender stereotypes compared to White women and Black men (Livingston et al., 2012). We show that Black women are perceived to be less female and less Black than their counterparts. These weak ingroup associations may, in turn, result in a weaker ascription of gender and race stereotypes to Black women. Consequently, they seem to evade active forms of discrimination that are directed at more prototypical members of their ingroups (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Future work will benefit from investigating how Black women’s relative non-prototypicality impacts them in applied domains like organizational policy. For example, because Black men are more accessible representatives of the Black race and White women are more prototypical of the female gender, organizational policies intended to help Blacks or women may be ill-suited to meet the particular needs of Black women. When recruiting female employees, organizational efforts may fail to consider Black women’s particular concerns and needs, instead emphasizing aspects of the position that appeal primarily to White women. Similarly, when recruiting Black employees, organizations may overlook Black-female affinity or professional groups when targeting Black talent pools.

Future research might also address the relatively slow RTs elicited by White male targets. As suggested by the White male norm perspective (Zárate & Smith, 1990), White men serve as the social standard against which others are contrasted. As such, participants were respectively fastest to respond to White women and Black men in the gender and race tasks because these individuals possess an “optimal” level of social distinctiveness (Galinsky, Hall, & Cuddy, 2013) but Black women’s double deviance from the White male norm caused participants to overlook them. In contrast, we believe that White men failed to garner attention because their double prototypicality lends them to be conceived as “raceless” (e.g., Graham, 1992) and “genderless” (e.g., Crawford & Marecek, 1989; Cundiff, 2012).

Future intersectionality research might examine further the consequences of the double prototypicality of White men. Although it may seem nonpressing or counterintuitive to consider the obstacles that privileged social groups encounter, we contend that demonstrating and communicating this level of understanding is imperative for engaging White men in efforts to increase diversity, inclusion, and understanding. Legitimizing the social concerns of majority group members will mitigate perceptions of racialized and gendered conversations as finger-pointing attempts and of diversity and inclusion initiatives as zero-sum resource competitions that they are currently losing (Norton & Sommers, 2011). In turn, White men may be more likely to “buy in” to such efforts, ensuring that the voices of non-prototypical targets do not fall on deaf ears. To our knowledge, our integrated theoretical framework provides the first experimental evidence for the impact of White men’s “hyper-prototypicality” on their cognitive accessibility.

Another implication of our framework is that if making decisions about particular intersectional identities were framed as a between-groups decision, such as about whether a target is a Black woman or a White man, people would respond faster to the distinctive intersectional identity of Black woman than the social

default category of White man. White men would not attract attention in our categorization tasks because they serve as the standard of social comparison (Hegarty & Pratto, 2001; Miller et al., 1991). Understanding the contextual factors that facilitate or inhibit attention to particular intersectional identities can thus conceptually inform future social categorizational research and advance theory on intersectional identity (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

Finally, future work might further explore whether and how our findings generalize to other intersectional targets. For instance, our findings may apply to intersectional targets whose joint identity does not have a well-developed subgroup prototype (e.g., gay Native American man) but not to those that are culturally recognized subtypes (e.g., White lesbian). Nevertheless, the present research complements other work that emphasizes the importance of going beyond the traditional focus on dichotomous categorization (e.g., race or gender) to consider multiple categorizations (Brewer, 2000; Cole, 2009; Shields, 2008). Focusing on intersectional targets will help elucidate the distinctive forms of oppression experienced by individuals with multiple subordinate identities (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), bringing us one step closer to providing an empirical answer to Truth's "Ain't I a woman?" plea.

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Appendix

Sample Target Photographs



Figure A1. White target photos were acquired from the Radboud Faces Database (Langner et al., 2010); Black target photos were acquired from the Montreal Set of Facial Displays of Emotion (Beaupré & Hess, 2005). The individuals whose face appears here gave consent for their likeness to be published in this article.