

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN RACIAL META-STEREOTYPES AND STEREOTYPES

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Stereotypes often guide interracial interactions—both the stereotypes we hold about others, and the stereotypes we believe others hold about us (i.e., meta-stereotypes). In Black–White interactions, the stereotype that Whites are prejudiced is one of the most salient, but does this stereotype vary by gender? White women tend to express more positive racial attitudes than White men, and stereotypes of Whites overlap more with stereotypes about men than with stereotypes about women. Thus, we hypothesized that both prejudice-related meta-stereotypes and stereotypes differ by gender. In Study 1, Whites reported that White men are seen as more prejudiced than White women. Studies 2a and 2b measured Blacks’ perspectives, finding that Blacks also reported that White men are seen as more prejudiced than White women. Together, these findings highlight the importance of considering gender to develop a more nuanced understanding of race-related stereotypes, meta-stereotypes, and interracial interactions.

Keywords: gender, stereotypes, meta-stereotypes, interracial interaction, intersectionality

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One common stereotype about White people is that they are prejudiced (e.g., Frantz, Cuddy, Burnett, Ray, & Hart, 2004; Niemann, Jennings, Rozelle, Baxter, & Sullivan, 1994). This stereotype shapes cross-race interactions—Whites often experience anxiety about confirming this stereotype while Blacks have concerns about being the target of prejudice from their White partner (Trawalter, Richeson, & Shelton, 2009).

Indeed, both stereotypes and meta-stereotypes (stereotypes we believe others hold about us) shape interracial interactions. However, research to date has yet to examine whether meta-stereotypes vary by gender, despite evidence that gender plays a role in interracial contexts (e.g., Babbitt, 2013; Toosi, Babbitt, Ambady, & Sommers, 2012). Other work shows that target gender affects racial perceptions (Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Sesko & Biernat, 2010) and that the category “Black” overlaps substantially with “male” (Johnson, Freeman, & Pauker, 2012). However, this work has yet to be extended to meta-stereotypes. Here we examine the intersection of race and gender in stereotypes and meta-stereotypes about Whites. We first discuss Whites’ concerns in interracial settings, then outline related concerns for Blacks, and finally explore how target gender predicts intergroup stereotypes and meta-stereotypes.

WHITES’ INTERRACIAL INTERACTION CONCERNS

Research on meta-stereotypes among White Canadians shows that awareness of stereotypes about one’s own racial group, combined with the prospect of evaluation by the racial out-group, predicts more negative interaction experiences (Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000; Vorauer, Main, & O’Connell, 1998). Research on prejudice concerns among White Americans supports these findings—Whites who were told to avoid appearing prejudiced experienced more anxiety in an interracial interaction than those told to view the interaction as a positive opportunity (Trawalter & Richeson, 2006). Importantly, Whites who received no particular instruction behaved similarly to those told to focus on avoiding prejudice—suggesting that concern about confirming prejudice-related stereotypes was salient by default. Other work showed when the “White racist” stereotype was activated, White men sat farther away from Black interaction partners (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008). Additionally, these anxiety-provoking experiences may lead to avoidance of interracial encounters altogether (Finchilescu, 2005).

BLACKS’ INTERRACIAL INTERACTION CONCERNS

Expectations of prejudice from White interaction partners also predict more negative interaction experiences for ethnic minorities (Shelton, Richeson, & Salvatore, 2005). Racial attitudes predict interaction quality: Blacks with less positive attitudes toward Whites were more cognitively taxed after interacting with a White partner (Richeson, Trawalter, & Shelton, 2005). Among ethnic minorities, more

negative racial attitudes predicted less positive interactions with Whites, and this relationship between attitudes and interaction enjoyment was mediated by participants' expectations of prejudice from Whites (Shelton & Richeson, 2006).

RACE AND GENDER META-STEREOTYPES

We take an intersectional approach to investigate whether these race-based perceptions also vary by gender. Men are usually seen as the prototypical exemplars of their respective racial groups (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). In other words, when people think about a racial group, they tend to think primarily about the men of that group, with stereotypes often reflecting beliefs about men more than women (Eagly & Kite, 1987; Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008).

This is also true of stereotypes about Whites (Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001)—men are stereotyped as cold and insensitive, while women are stereotyped as warm and nurturing (Rosette, Koval, Ma, & Livingston, 2016). In a study of stereotype content, ethnically diverse participants who generated traits associated with White men and women included "racist" as a stereotype for White men, but not for White women (Niemann et al., 1994). This suggests that not only may stereotypes of "White" be more strongly associated with men, but gender roles portraying women as warm could counteract some White stereotypes.

These gender differences in racial stereotypes may also reflect actual differences in attitudes among White women (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). For example, White women report more positive racial attitudes and more internal motivation to avoid prejudice than White men (Eagly, Diekmann, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Koenig, 2004; Johnson & Marini, 1998; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994). Gender also affects participants' emotional and nonverbal responses in dyadic interracial interactions (Babbitt, 2012, 2013; Toosi et al., 2012).

THE CURRENT RESEARCH

The extant research leaves two main questions unanswered. First, is the meta-stereotype that Whites are prejudiced stronger for White men than for White women? Given that "racist" seems to be a less salient stereotype of White women, and that White women report more positive racial attitudes, it is possible that Whites believe that Blacks see White women as less prejudiced than White men. Second, do Blacks' stereotypes of White women and White men also differ, and do they match Whites' perceptions?

This research also presented an opportunity to study meta-stereotypes with White Americans for the first time. Most previous meta-stereotype studies examine how White Canadians believe they are seen by First Nations people (Vorauer et al., 2000, 1998) or by Black Canadians (MacInnis & Hodson, 2013). This article will specifically examine White Americans' beliefs about how they are seen by Black Americans—a context where perceptions and experiences may differ.

Study 1 examines Whites' meta-stereotypes, taking an intersectional approach by considering gender in conjunction with race (Babbitt, 2013; Cole, 2009). We hypothesized that Whites would expect Blacks to view White women as less prejudiced than White men or White people. We also measured ratings of warmth and advantage (e.g., wealth and education). Because gender roles for women include warmth, we hypothesized that Whites would expect Blacks to see White women as warmer than White men or White people. We did not expect the advantaged meta-stereotype to vary because both White men and women are privileged due to their race (McIntosh, 1988), and we believed that White women and men would be seen as having access to similar levels of education and wealth.

Furthermore, because the meta-stereotypes we examined involved Whites' perceptions of how Blacks perceive Whites, and because Black perspectives are often overlooked in the interracial interaction literature (Shelton, 2000; Swim & Stangor, 1998), we were interested in examining Blacks' own views of Whites. Studies 2a and 2b examine whether Blacks also view White women and White men differently and whether Whites' meta-stereotypes are accurate.

STUDY 1: WHITES' META-STEREOTYPES

METHOD

Participants were 178 White Americans (102 women; age range 18–79, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.51$, $SD = 12.89$),¹ recruited through Mechanical Turk (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).² Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions and provided their perceptions of Blacks' stereotypes of *White women*, *White men*, or *White people* (target conditions are italicized throughout for clarity). Participants were asked: "How well do the following traits describe what a Black person might expect *White [women, men, people]* to be like?" Participants rated traits related to prejudice (unfair, close-minded, unfeeling, insensitive, and prejudiced against Blacks, $\alpha = .89$), advantage (well-educated, privileged, and wealthy, $\alpha = .86$), and warmth (sociable, likeable, and friendly, $\alpha = .68$) on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all descriptive*, 7 = *perfectly descriptive*). To reduce suspicions about the study, these traits were interspersed with filler traits (arrogant, materialistic, phony, quiet, shallow, spiritual, superstitious).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were no effects of participant gender in the following analyses.³ As predicted, there were differences by target condition in the prejudice-related meta-stereotype, $F(2, 175) = 18.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$. Planned contrasts showed that

1. Three non-White participants were excluded from the original sample ($N = 181$).

2. For Studies 1, 2a, and 2b, an *a priori* analysis using G-Power showed that 160 participants were necessary to reach power levels of .80 at an estimated effect size of $f = .25$ ($\eta^2 = .059$).

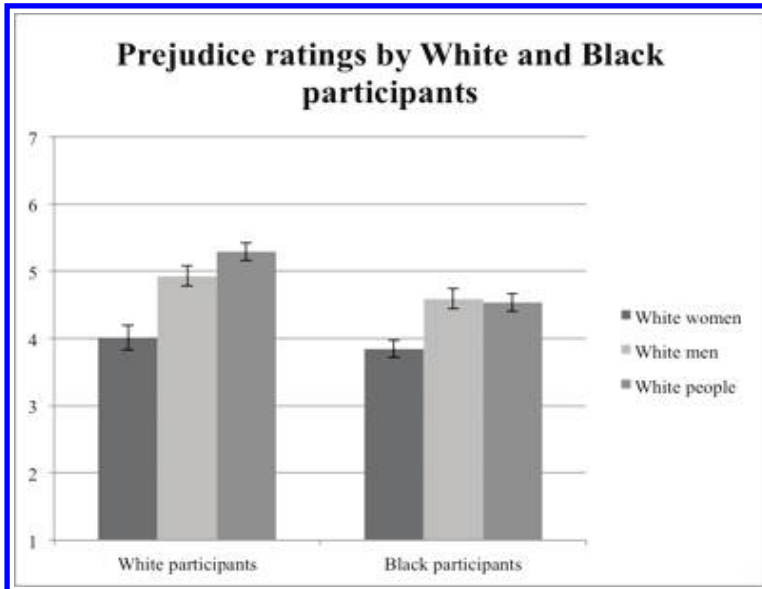


FIGURE 1. White and Black participants' ratings of prejudice, by target gender. Error bars indicate standard error.

participants reported that *White women* ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.36$) were seen as less prejudiced than both *White men* ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(73) = 4.54$, $p < .001$, $r = .47$, 95% CI [.32, .60], and *White people* ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 1.03$), $t(73) = 6.44$, $p < .001$, $r = .60$, 95% CI [.47, .70] (see Figure 1).

Contrary to our predictions, there were differences by target condition for the advantage-related meta-stereotype, $F(2, 175) = 4.11$, $p = .018$, $\eta_p^2 = .045$. Planned contrasts showed that participants reported that *White women* ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.35$) were seen as marginally less advantaged than *White men* ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.08$), $t(175) = 1.84$, $p = .067$, $r = .14$, 95% CI [-.04, .32], and significantly less advantaged than *White people* ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 1.19$), $t(175) = 2.82$, $p = .005$, $r = .21$, 95% CI [.03, .37].

Although the warmth-related meta-stereotype did not significantly differ by condition, *White women* were rated as marginally warmer ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.17$) than *White men* ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.69$) and *White people* ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.86$), $F(2, 175) = 2.25$, $p = .11$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$. See Table 1 for correlations among all ratings.

These results show that gender does matter in Whites' meta-stereotypes: White participants reported that *White women* were seen as less prejudiced than *White men* or *White people*. *White women* were also seen as marginally less advantaged than *White men* and significantly less advantaged than *White people*. Thus, these differences illustrate one way in which the intersection of gender and race affects

3. Using the strictest definition of meta-stereotypes—stereotypes about one's own racial and gender subgroup—we compared White women's ratings of *White women* with White men's ratings of *White men*. White men's meta-stereotypes of prejudice ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.23$) were significantly higher than White women's meta-stereotypes ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.50$), $t(48) = 2.45$, $p = .018$. There were no differences for warmth or advantage ($ps > .14$).

TABLE 1. Bivariate Correlations Between Ratings

All participants			
	Advantage	Warmth	
Prejudice	0.45***	-0.37***	
Advantage	—	0.09	
White participants' meta-stereotypes (Study 1)			
	Advantage	Warmth	
Prejudice	0.59***	-0.32***	
Advantage	—	-0.01	
Black participants' group stereotypes (Study 2a)			
	Advantage	Warmth	
Prejudice	0.29***	-0.24**	
Advantage	—	0.33***	
Black participants' personal stereotypes (Study 2b)			
	Advantage	Warmth	Competence
Prejudice	0.47***	-0.47***	-0.34***
Advantage	—	-0.02	0.17*
Warmth		—	0.62***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

an important aspect of interracial relations—stereotype expectations. However, these results reflect only one half of the stereotype story—the White perspective. Study 2a investigated Blacks' perceptions of the same traits.

STUDY 2A: BLACKS' STEREOTYPES

Although past work has examined racial stereotypes of White women and men, that work has not measured Blacks' perceptions directly. For example, one study measured which traits participants thought applied to White women and men, but not the *extent* to which participants endorsed those stereotypes (Niemann et al., 1994). Other studies examined attitudes toward *either* White women or White men, but not both (Conley, Rabinowitz, & Rabow, 2010; Landrine, 1985). A community-based survey did find that Blacks rated White women as easier to get along with than White men (Timberlake & Estes, 2007). Here we measure whether stereotypes Blacks have about Whites might also differ by gender. We predicted that Blacks would report that White women are seen as less prejudiced and warmer than White men, but would rate the two groups equivalently on advantage-related traits, as both White women and men benefit from their race (McIntosh, 1988).

METHOD

Participants were 173 Black Americans (73 women; age range: 18–61; $M_{\text{age}} = 30.84$, $SD = 7.99$)⁴ recruited through Mechanical Turk. Methods were identical to Study 1. Participants were randomly assigned to rate one of three targets (*White women*, *White men*, or *White people*) and were asked: “How well do the following traits describe what a Black person might expect *White* [*women*, *men*, *people*] to be like?” We asked what another Black person might believe, rather than what participants themselves believed, to temper social desirability concerns (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Traits were combined into the three composites from Study 1: advantage-related (well-educated, privileged, and wealthy, $\alpha = .77$), prejudice-related (unfair, close-minded, unfeeling, insensitive, and prejudiced against Blacks, $\alpha = .89$), and warmth-related (sociable, likeable, and friendly, $\alpha = .71$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were no effects of participant gender in the following analyses. Among Blacks, there were differences by condition in prejudice-related stereotypes, $F(2, 170) = 4.46$, $p = .013$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Planned contrasts showed that participants reported that *White women* ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.33$) were seen as marginally less prejudiced than *White men* ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.70$), $t(170) = 1.81$, $p = .072$, $r = .14$, 95% CI [-.04, .31], and significantly less prejudiced than *White people* ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.27$), $t(170) = 2.96$, $p = .004$, $r = .22$, 95% CI [.03, .39].

There were no condition differences in perceptions of advantage-related stereotypes (all F s < 1, all p s > .5). However, ratings of warmth differed by condition, $F(2, 169) = 5.99$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .066$. *White men* ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.42$) were perceived as less warm than *White women* ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(169) = 3.44$, $p < .001$, $r = .26$, 95% CI [.09, .42], and *White people* ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.00$), $t(169) = 2.18$, $p = .031$, $r = .17$, 95% CI [-.01, .35]; there was no difference in the ratings of *White women* and *White people*, $t(169) = 1.35$, $p = .18$ (see Table 1 for correlations).

STUDY 2B: BLACKS' PERSONAL STEREOTYPES

Study 2a could be interpreted as measuring stereotypes about other Black people rather than stereotypes that Blacks have about Whites. Therefore, Study 2b asked Black participants to report their personal beliefs about White women and men. Perceived competence was also measured to test whether there was a trade-off between warmth and competence ratings (Fiske et al., 2002).

4. Five biracial participants were excluded from the original sample ($N = 178$).

METHOD

Participants were 169 Black Americans (89 women; age range: 20–69; $M_{\text{age}} = 33.36$, $SD = 9.45$)⁵ recruited through Mechanical Turk. Methods were similar to the previous studies but participants were instead asked: “For each of the following traits, please indicate how well that trait describes what you expect *White* [*women, men, people*] to be like.” Traits were combined into the same three composites: advantage-related ($\alpha = .62$), prejudice-related ($\alpha = .90$), and warmth-related ($\alpha = .80$). Three additional terms were included to form a competence composite (competent, intelligent, skillful; $\alpha = .77$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were no effects of participant gender in the following analyses. As predicted, the prejudice-related stereotypes differed by condition, $F(2, 166) = 5.74$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Planned contrasts revealed that *White women* ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.56$) were seen as less prejudiced than *White men* ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.48$), $t(166) = 3.37$, $p < .001$, $r = .30$, 95% CI [.16, .43], and as marginally less prejudiced than *White people* ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.60$), $t(166) = 1.92$, $p = .056$, $r = .18$, 95% CI [.03, .32]. Ratings of *White men* and *White people* did not differ, $t(166) = 1.38$, $p = .17$.

As in Study 2a, perceptions of advantage did not differ, $F(2, 166) = 1.54$, $p = .22$. However, unlike Study 2a, there were also no differences in warmth ratings, $F(2, 166) = 1.38$, $p = .25$, perhaps suggesting that while Black participants were aware that women are stereotyped as warmer, they had not experienced this gender difference in warmth. The new composite for competence traits also showed no condition effect, $F(2, 166) = 1.33$, $p = .27$, and competence ratings were actually positively correlated with warmth ratings, suggesting no compensatory stereotyping. See Table 1 for correlations.

Taken together, Studies 2a and 2b show that Blacks view White women as less prejudiced than White men and White people. However, the overall mean rating that Blacks provided for White women was around the scale midpoint—indicating that although “prejudiced” may be a less salient stereotype of White women, it is still seen as at least somewhat descriptive.

COMPARISON TO WHITES’ META-STEREOTYPES

To judge the accuracy of Whites’ meta-stereotypes, the three datasets were combined,⁶ and the trait composites were analyzed with a 2 (Participant Race: White or Black) \times 3 (Target: *White women, White men, or White people*) ANOVA.

5. Eight biracial participants were excluded from the original sample ($N = 177$).

6. With a combined N of 520 participants, we achieved a power level of $> .99$, at an effect size of $f = .30$ ($\eta_p^2 = .081$).

There was a significant main effect of target condition for the prejudice composite, $F(2, 514) = 22.70, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .081$. Planned contrasts showed that *White women* ($M = 3.90, SD = 1.42$) were rated as less prejudiced than *White men* ($M = 4.70, SD = 1.44$), $t(514) = 5.21, p < .001, r = .27, 95\% CI [.19, .35]$, or *White people* ($M = 4.79, SD = 1.34$), $t(514) = 6.28, p < .001, r = .32, 95\% CI [.24, .40]$ (see Figure 1). There was a main effect of participant race, $F(1, 514) = 10.67, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .040$, such that Whites reported that White targets were seen as more prejudiced ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.28$) than did Blacks ($M = 4.31, SD = 1.53$), but no interaction between target condition and participant race, $F(2, 514) = 1.88, p = .15$. There was also a marginal main effect of condition for the advantaged composite, $F(2, 514) = 3.01, p = .050, \eta_p^2 = .012$. Planned contrasts showed that *White women* ($M = 4.96, SD = 1.31$) were rated as significantly less advantaged than *White people* ($M = 5.22, SD = 1.22$), $t(514) = 2.42, p = .016, r = .13, 95\% CI [.04, .21]$, but not *White men* ($M = 5.12, SD = 1.31$), $t(514) = 1.53, p = .13$. There was a main effect of participant race, $F(1, 514) = 13.02, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .048$: Whites reported that Whites were seen as more advantaged ($M = 5.38, SD = 1.24$) than did Blacks ($M = 4.96, SD = 1.28$). There was no interaction between target condition and participant race, $F(2, 514) = 2.06, p = .13$.

Additionally, there was a significant main effect of condition for the warmth composite, $F(2, 514) = 5.05, p = .007, \eta_p^2 = .019$. Planned contrasts showed that *White women* ($M = 4.42, SD = 1.27$) were rated as significantly warmer than *White men* ($M = 3.97, SD = 1.13$), $t(514) = 3.18, p = .002, r = .20, 95\% CI [.12, .28]$, but not different from *White people* ($M = 4.25, SD = 1.04$), $t(514) = 1.56, p = .12$. A main effect of participant race, $F(1, 514) = 12.55, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .047$, emerged such that Whites reported that Whites were seen as less warm ($M = 3.97, SD = 0.94$) than did Blacks ($M = 4.35, SD = 1.25$). There was no interaction between target condition and participant race, $F(2, 514) = 1.39, p = .25$.

These results show that Whites' meta-stereotypes were consistently more negative than Blacks' ratings: Whites expected that Blacks would perceive them as more prejudiced, more advantaged, and less warm than was actually the case. This discrepancy may indicate intergroup pluralistic ignorance (Shelton & Richeson, 2005) and is worth continued study. Furthermore, these analyses also demonstrated consensus between White and Black participants in perceptions of stereotypes about White women relative to White men and White people.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Three studies provide the first evidence for the role of gender in an important aspect of interracial relations—the content and accuracy of meta-stereotypes and stereotypes. In Study 1, Whites reported that Black people view White women as less prejudiced than White men or White people. Blacks in Studies 2a and 2b reported that White women are seen as less prejudiced than White men or White people. Furthermore, Blacks reported that White women are seen as warmer than White men or White people; responses from Whites showed similar patterns. In terms of advantage, whereas Whites seemed to expect that Blacks would see White women

as having less advantage than White men or White people, Blacks gave similar ratings to all groups of Whites (though their ratings did not differ significantly from Whites' ratings in the combined analyses). This suggests that although White women and men are not perceived differently in terms of advantages like wealth and education, they are perceived differently—and expect to be perceived differently—in the interpersonal domain.

In addition to providing much-needed data on Blacks' perspectives (Shelton, 2000), the current research also extends our knowledge regarding the accuracy of intergroup perceptions. One qualitative study showed that Blacks' meta-stereotypes are generally accurate (Torres & Charles, 2004), and here, we show that Whites' meta-stereotypes are largely accurate as well. Therefore, knowing that initial stereotypes can impact the course of interracial interactions, and that men may avoid interracial encounters to a greater extent than women (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Kamans, Gordijn, Oldenhuis, & Otten, 2009), we show gender does, in fact, play a role in Whites' meta-stereotypes and in Blacks' perceptions of stereotypes, identifying one contributor to interracial interaction expectations.

Future work should examine the relationship between meta-stereotypes and interest in cross-group contact (Shelton & Richeson, 2005)—in addition to exploring how meta-stereotypes shape actual social behavior. For instance, some evidence indicates that when White women's gender identity is made salient, they have more positive expectations for interactions with Black women (Babbitt, 2012).

Perhaps most importantly, gender differences in interracial contexts have implications for workplaces, schools, and other institutions—for example, Black employees may expect to or actually have better experiences with White female colleagues than with White male colleagues. White female leaders may also be better received in ethnically diverse settings than in majority-White settings; data from the Pew Research Center (2008) show that Blacks are more likely than Whites to expect female leaders to better represent their interests than male leaders, whereas Whites are more likely than Blacks to think male and female leaders would represent their concerns equally well. Moreover, other research shows that whereas ethnic diversity is typically associated with lower economic growth in countries with male leaders, having a female leader counteracted that effect and was associated with increased GDP (Perkins, Phillips, & Pearce, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, our work illustrates one potential source of the variability seen within interracial contexts: *gender*. By demonstrating that both race and gender predict ratings of prejudice—a fundamentally important variable in interracial contexts—these studies highlight the value of considering the intersection of race and gender in interracial perceptions, expectations, and interactions (Babbitt, 2013; Toosi et al., 2012). Future efforts to consider the influence of multiple identities can lead to a more thorough understanding of social interactions, with implications from the individual to the societal level.

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