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Objectives: This research investigated whether Black people experience social identity threat when anticipating an interaction with a Black–White biracial person. ***Method:*** In both studies, we led Black participants to believe that they would have a discussion with either a Black, Black–White biracial, or White interaction partner. Participants then reported the degree to which they considered their partner a racial ingroup member, their perceptions of their partner's prejudice, their perceived similarity to their partner, and measures of social identity threat that focused on how they expected to be perceived and treated during the interaction. ***Results:*** Participants considered the Black and Black–White biracial partners as racial ingroup members and the White partner as a racial outgroup member. Participants perceived the Black and Black–White biracial partner as being less prejudiced than the White partner. In addition, participants expected to be perceived and treated more positively by both the Black and Black–White biracial partner than by the White partner. Notably, no significant differences existed between the Black and the Black–White biracial partner on any of these dependent variables. Mediational analyses revealed that participants' perceptions of their partner's prejudice and their perceived similarity to their partner independently mediate the effect of the race of the interaction partner on how they expected to be perceived and treated by their partner. ***Conclusions:*** These findings suggest that Black people consider Black–White biracial people to be racial ingroup members and therefore do not anticipate experiencing social identity threat when interacting with a Black–White biracial person.

Public Significance Statement
As the number of people identifying as members of more than one racial group (i.e., biracials or multiracials) in the United States continues to increase, it is essential to understand how people perceive and expect to be perceived by them. The present research findings suggest that Black people consider Black–White biracial people to be racial ingroup members and therefore do not anticipate being the target of social identity threat. These results have implications on interactions between Blacks and Black–White biracials.

Keywords: social identity threat, Black–White biracial targets, group membership, metaperceptions, metastereotypes

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People's distinctions between ingroup and outgroup members can profoundly impact intergroup dynamics, especially along racial lines (Butz & Plant, 2006). For instance, people perceive racial ingroup members more positively than racial outgroup members (Doise et al., 1972; Hewstone, 1990) and, likewise, expect to be perceived more positively (i.e., metaperceptions) and less stereotypically (i.e., metastereotypes) by racial ingroup members than by racial outgroup members (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Mallett et al., 2008; Milless et al., 2022; Vorauer, 2006; Wout et al., 2010). Due to these different perceptions and metaperceptions, people typically find interracial interactions more challenging and stressful than intraracial interactions (Shelton et al., 2006; Vorauer et al., 1998), which in turn decreases their desire to engage in interracial interactions or form friendships across racial lines (Green et al., 2021; Mallett & Wilson, 2010; Plant et al., 2008; Shelton & Richeson, 2005).

While research has demonstrated how ingroup–outgroup distinctions can impact people's concerns during interracial interactions, little is known about the dynamics surrounding interactions between monoracial and multiracial individuals. Given that Black–White biracial people are one of the largest multiracial groups in America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021), the present research focuses on Black people's concerns when anticipating an interaction with Black–White biracial people (henceforth labeled as biracial people). From a strictly biological perspective, it would be logical for Black people to consider biracial people to be half-Black and half-White (i.e., equally ingroup and outgroup members), but there is a growing consensus that Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members (Barnett & Wout, 2016; Chen et al., 2019; Chen & Ratliff, 2015; Franco et al., 2019; Gaither et al., 2016; Ho et al., 2017; R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019). Despite the research demonstrating that Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members, to date, there is limited research on the interaction dynamics between Black and biracial people. The present research aimed to begin filling this gap in the literature using a social identity threat approach to examine the perceptions and metaperceptions that Black people have when anticipating an interaction with a biracial person.

Social Identity Threat in Interracial Interactions

In American society, race is one of the core dimensions of dividing others into ingroup and outgroup members (Richeson & Sommers, 2016; Saperstein & Penner, 2012). As a result of these ingroup–outgroup distinctions, interactions between individuals from different racial groups are often fraught with challenges that do not exist between individuals of the same racial group (Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Trawalter & Richeson, 2008; Trawalter et al., 2009; Vorauer et al., 1998). A primary reason that interracial interactions are more challenging than intraracial interactions is that individuals are more likely to experience *social identity threat*—concerns about being perceived and/or treated negatively based on one of their social identities (Davies et al., 2005; Frey & Tropp, 2006; Murphy et al., 2007; Shelton et al., 2006; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele et al., 2002; Wout et al., 2009, 2010). Social identity threat is an anticipatory set of concerns that are triggered by the perceived likelihood of being stereotyped or devalued in a given context (Murphy & Taylor, 2012; Steele et al., 2002; Wout et al., 2009).

Researchers typically characterize social identity threat as consisting of two distinct concerns: (a) concerns about being perceived negatively or stereotypically and (b) concerns about being mistreated or devalued (Green et al., 2021, 2025 Murphy et al., 2007; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Wout et al., 2010) because of one's group identity. In terms of how they expect to be perceived, people are more concerned about being perceived negatively (i.e., metaperceptions) and more stereotypically (i.e., metastereotypes) by outgroup members than by ingroup members (Judd et al., 2005). For Black people, these metaperception and metastereotype concerns can lead them to expect that White people (compared with Black people) will perceive them as less competent and warm (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Wout et al., 2010) and as having more stereotypically Black traits and characteristics (Sigelman & Tuch, 1997).

In terms of how people expect to be treated, which we label as anticipated interaction challenges, people are more concerned about being devalued or mistreated by outgroup members than ingroup members (Murphy et al., 2007; Steele et al., 2002), with Black people being more concerned about being mistreated or devalued by White people than by other Black people (Green et al., 2021; Milless et al., 2022; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Wout et al., 2009). Given that Black people seek to be respected in interracial interactions (Bergsieker et al., 2010), these anticipated interaction challenges should be more salient when they interact with White people than with other Black people. Collectively, Black people's social identity threat concerns about being perceived or treated negatively can lead them to avoid interactions or forming friendships with White people (Richeson & Shelton, 2007; Shelton et al., 2006).

For Black people, social identity threat largely stems from historical and present-day experiences of discrimination, devaluation, marginalization, dehumanization, and negative stereotyping (Crocker et al., 1998; Murphy & Taylor, 2012). As a group, Black people experience discrimination in almost every aspect of American society, such as housing (Williams & Collins, 2001), education (Hamilton & Darity, 2017), wealth (Darity et al., 2022; Paul et al., 2022), health and health care (Richardson & Norris, 2010), and policing (Pryor et al., 2020; M. R. Smith et al., 2017). For instance, 52% of Black people report experiencing racial microaggressions (Bleich et al., 2019)—"brief, commonplace, and daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental slights and indignities"—in various aspects of their social life (Sue et al., 2007). Similarly, Black Americans more accurately perceive more Black–White wealth inequality than White Americans (Kraus et al., 2019). Thus, while social identity threat is focused on the anticipation of stereotyping or devaluation, it is firmly based on Black people's lived experiences.

Because of the cognitive, psychological, and physiological costs associated with social identity threat (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2003; Johns et al., 2008; Murphy et al., 2007; Schmader & Johns, 2003; Steele & Aronson, 1995), members of stigmatized social groups are vigilant to contextual cues that signal they are likely to be perceived negatively (Cheryan et al., 2009; Green et al., 2021; Major & O'Brien, 2005; Murphy et al., 2007; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Wout et al., 2009). Arguably, one of the most informative cues that modulate people's experience of identity threat or identity safety is the social identity of the individuals in their immediate context (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003; Wout et al., 2009), with people being more concerned about being perceived negatively by outgroup members compared with ingroup members. For instance, Wout et al. (2009) found that Black test

takers were more concerned about being negatively stereotyped by a White evaluator than by a Black evaluator, which resulted in poorer test performance when the evaluator was White. These findings suggest that people are more likely to experience social identity threat in the presence of outgroup members (vs. ingroup members) because they assume that outgroup members are more likely to be prejudiced against them and, hence, would be more likely to stereotype them negatively.

Biracial People as Racial Ingroup Members

While ingroup/outgroup distinctions can serve as a cue of identity threat or safety, it is unclear whether people experience social identity threat concerns when the boundaries between racial groups are less defined, such as when interacting with someone from multiple racial backgrounds. For example, Black people could conceivably consider an individual with a Black parent and a White parent as either a racial ingroup member or a racial outgroup member. Their determination of biracial people's ingroup status is important because it should impact whether they experience social identity threat when interacting with a biracial person. Specifically, if Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members, then they should be unlikely to experience social identity threat when anticipating an interaction with a biracial person. By contrast, if Black people consider biracial people to be racial outgroup members, then they should be more likely to experience social identity threat when anticipating an interaction with a biracial (vs. Black) person.

How both Black and White Americans racially categorize biracial people has been primarily dictated by legal and social policies shaped by the principle of hypodescent. Derived during slavery and perpetuated during Jim Crow segregation, hypodescent asserts that society should racially categorize a person with parents from different racial backgrounds as a member of their lower status parent's race (Banks & Eberhardt, 1998; Davis, 1991; Nevins & Harris, 1967). Thus, American society should deem a person with a Black and a White parent to be Black. In its most extreme form, hypodescent required that anyone with even a drop of Black blood should be categorized as Black. During slavery, hypodescent created clear demarcations between White and Black people and helped enslavers increase their slave population. After the abolishment of slavery in America, hypodescent served to delegitimize and criminalize miscegenation and to reaffirm biracial people's lower status position in society (Davis, 1991).

While White people created the principle of hypodescent to subjugate Black people, some scholars have argued that it also resulted in Black Americans adopting the principle of hypodescent as a means of inclusion, whereby Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members (Davis, 1991). Supporting this reasoning, a growing body of research suggests that Black people have incorporated biracial people into their racial ingroup (Albuja et al., 2023; Barnett & Wout, 2016; Chen & Ratliff, 2015; Franco et al., 2019; Gaither et al., 2016; Ho et al., 2017; Oliver et al., 2023; R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019). For instance, Ho et al. (2017) found that Black people endorse hypodescent to the same degree as White people. However, unlike White people, Black people's endorsement of hypodescent was associated with a motivation to create equity and fairness, especially for Black people who felt a sense of shared fate with biracial people.

Indirect evidence suggesting that Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members also comes from the findings of Chen and Ratliff (2015, Experiment 3) that, unlike White participants, Black participants did not implicitly transfer negative attitudes from a Black person onto a novel Black or biracial person. Because people are more likely to transfer outgroup members' attitudes than ingroup members' attitudes, these authors argue that these results suggest that Black people consider biracial people as racial ingroup members. Providing additional indirect evidence, Barnett and Wout (2016) found that Black people experienced more shame when reading about either a Black or biracial person who engaged in illegal behavior (i.e., selling drugs) than when reading about a White person who engaged in the same behavior. Notably, Black participants experienced the same degree of shame regardless of whether a Black or a biracial person engaged in the negative behavior. Because people experience more vicarious shame from the behavior of ingroup members than outgroup members (Cohen & Garcia, 2005), the finding that Black participants experienced more shame when either the Black or the biracial target (compared with the White target) engaged in the negative behavior suggests that Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members.

In a more direct test of the implications associated with Black people's perception of a biracial person's racial group membership, R. E. Smith and Wout (2019, Study 1) had Black participants receive rejection feedback from either a Black, Black–White biracial, or White interaction partner. They found that participants were less likely to make attributions to prejudice when either a Black or a biracial person rejected them compared with when a White person rejected them. As with Barnett and Wout (2016), R. E. Smith and Wout (2019) found that participants' prejudice attributions when rejected by the Black and biracial partners did not differ.

The Present Research

In the present studies, we use an experimental approach to explore whether Black participants experience social identity threat when anticipating an interaction with a Black, biracial, or White person. By experimentally manipulating the race of the interaction partner, we can directly explore the causal effect of the partner's race on participants' social identity threat concerns. We assessed social identity threat by measuring participants' metaperceptions (Studies 1 and 2), Black metastereotypes (Study 2), and anticipated interaction challenges (Study 2). Because social identity threat is driven by people's anticipation of being stereotyped or devalued, the present studies focus on people's threat concerns prior to the interaction. While these preinteraction concerns cannot provide direct evidence of how the interaction would go, these concerns can influence how people approach the interaction and can lead people to want to avoid the interactions (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2006; Plant, 2004) and could potentially shape what is discussed and people's willingness to disclose.

Based on the growing body of research showing that Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members, we contend that Black people will not experience identity threat when anticipating an interaction with either a Black or a biracial person. Specifically, we hypothesize that participants will expect to be perceived more positively (as measured by metaperceptions, metastereotypes, and metadehumanization) by a Black or biracial partner than by a White partner. Similarly, we hypothesize that they will expect to be treated

more positively (as measured by anticipated interaction challenges) by both the Black and biracial interaction partner compared with the White partner. Furthermore, we hypothesize that participants will perceive both the Black and biracial partners as being less prejudiced than the White partner. Based on research highlighting the adverse effects of perceived prejudice in intergroup interactions (Milless et al., 2022; Shelton et al., 2005; Tropp, 2003), we also hypothesize that participants' perceptions of their partner's prejudice will mediate the effect of the partner's race on participants' experience of social identity threat. Study 2 also explores participants' perceived similarity with the partner as another possible mediator.

Study 1

In Study 1, we explored the downstream consequences of group membership by examining Black participants' perceptions of a Black, biracial, or White interaction partner's level of prejudice and how they expect to be perceived (i.e., metaperceptions) by their interaction partner. Since Black people consider Black and biracial people to be racial ingroup members, we predicted that participants would perceive the Black and biracial partner as being less prejudiced than the White partner. Similarly, we predicted that participants would expect to be perceived more positively by the Black and biracial partners than by the White partner. Finally, we predicted that participants' perceived prejudice level of their partner would mediate the effect of the partner's race on how participants expected to be perceived by their partner.

Method

Participants and Design

We recruited 213 Black people via Prolific to participate in this online study. Nine participants who identified as being members of multiple racial groups were excluded. The gender of the targets was matched to the gender of the participants, so we excluded two participants who did not identify as either female or male. Finally, we excluded 14 people who failed the manipulation check (i.e., misidentifying their partner's race). This left us with a final sample of 188 participants (58.5% females, $M_{age} = 37.39$, $SD = 12.54$). Sensitivity analyses conducted in R using the "pwr" package (Champley, 2020) indicated that this sample provided 80% power to detect a minimum effect size of Cohen's $d = 0.26$ for condition effects and $\eta^2 = .017$ for analysis of variance (ANOVA) main effects.

Measures

Racial Group Membership. To test whether Black people consider the biracial partner to be a racial ingroup member, we modified a categorization measure developed by Ho et al. (2011) and asked participants to answer the question: "To what degree do you consider your partner to be a part of your racial group?" (1 = *completely outgroup*, 5 = *equally ingroup/equally outgroup*, 10 = *completely ingroup*). Research has demonstrated that this single-item measure captures people's perceived racial group membership as effectively as multi-item measures (R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019). We selected this measure because it enabled us to test whether the degree to which participants considered the target group to be part of their racial ingroup significantly differs from the midpoint of the scale (i.e., equally ingroup/equally outgroup; see Ho et al., 2011,

2017, for other examples of this analytic approach). Using this approach, we characterized ingroup status as being when the mean of the target group is significantly higher than the scale's midpoint and outgroup status as being when the target group's mean is significantly lower than the midpoint.

Perceptions of Partner Prejudice. After reviewing their partner's profile, participants completed a series of items about their impression of their partner. Embedded within these items were three items that assessed the degree to which participants assumed that their partner was prejudiced, biased, and racist (e.g., "I think that this person is prejudiced") on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). We averaged participants' responses to these items to create a measure of perceived prejudice ($\alpha = .87$).

Metaperceptions. In Study 1, we used participants' meta-perceptions as our operationalization of social identity threat. Using the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002), we assessed how participants expected their partner would perceive them on the dimensions of warmth and competence. Specifically, participants indicated the degree to which they believed their partner would assume that they had the following traits: *competent*, *intelligent*, *warm*, and *friendly* (e.g., "My partner will assume that I am friendly") on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). A factor analysis with a Varimax rotation revealed a single-factor model (3.33 eigenvalue, 83.34% of the variance). Based on these results, we averaged participants' responses to these traits to create a global metaperception measure ($\alpha = .93$).

Procedure

After consenting, participants read that the purpose of the study was to understand the dynamics of online interactions and that they would be randomly assigned to interact with another person via webcam. Participants then completed a profile about themselves that they would ostensibly send to their online partner. The profile included demographic information such as their first name, gender, race, and occupation or year in school. They then received a similar profile from their supposed interaction partner.

We randomly assigned participants to receive the profile of a person who self-identified as either Black, biracial, or White. Participants received information regarding their partner's first name (either "Kevin" or "Rachel"), gender (matched based on the gender of the participant), race (listed as "Black," "White," or "half-Black and half-White"), their occupation (sales rep), and hobbies (watching TV, exercising, surfing the internet). Participants then reported their responses to the dependent measures. After completing those measures, they received an error message stating that their connection to their partner was lost and that the study was over. Finally, participants received a debriefing form and were compensated for their participation.

Results

Racial Group Membership

To determine whether participants considered the biracial partner to be a racial ingroup member, we adopted an analytical approach from Ho et al. (2011), in which we conducted separate one-sample t tests to investigate whether the degree to which participants considered their partner to be a member of their racial ingroup differed

from the scale's midpoint. While the scale ranged from 1 to 10, we inadvertently labeled the midpoint (equally ingroup/equally outgroup) at 5 instead of the correct midpoint of 5.5. As a result of this error, we used the more conservative approach and compared the condition means with the actual scale midpoint (5.5) instead of the labeled midpoint (5). Regardless of which midpoint we used, the results were the same. The means for both the Black ($M = 9.14$, $SE = 0.19$) and biracial ($M = 7.13$, $SE = 0.29$) partners were significantly higher than 5.5, $t(70) = 18.05$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.24$, and $t(54) = 5.68$, $p < .001$, $d = .765$, respectively. By contrast, the mean for the White partner ($M = 2.35$, $SE = 0.30$) was significantly lower than 5.5, $t(61) = -10.61$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.35$, and the more conservative midpoint of 5, $t(61) = -8.93$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.13$. Consistent with previous research (Ho et al., 2017; Oliver et al., 2023; R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019), these findings suggest that Black people consider both Black and biracial people to be racial ingroup members.

Next, we explored differences in participants' perception of the partner's racial group memberships. Planned contrasts revealed that participants considered both the Black and biracial partners to be more a part of their racial ingroup than the White partner, $t(185) = 19.25$, $p < .001$, $d = 3.35$, and $t(185) = 12.70$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.35$, respectively. Furthermore, participants considered the Black partner to be more a part of their racial ingroup than the biracial partner, $t(185) = 5.53$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.99$.

Perceptions of Partner Prejudice

We hypothesized that participants would perceive both the Black and the biracial partners as significantly less prejudiced than the White partner. A one-way ANOVA revealed that the partner's race significantly affected participants' perceptions of their partner's prejudice, $F(2, 185) = 13.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .131$. Consistent with our hypotheses, planned contrasts revealed that participants perceived both the Black ($M = 2.26$, $SE = 0.15$) and the biracial ($M = 2.43$, $SE = 0.19$) partners as being less prejudiced than the White partner ($M = 3.47$, $SE = 0.20$), $t(185) = 4.99$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.86$ and $t(185) = 4.03$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.70$, respectively. Importantly, participants' perceptions of the Black and biracial partner's prejudice did not significantly differ, $t(185) = 0.67$, $p = .51$, $d = 0.13$ (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Mean Perceptions of Partner Prejudice as a Function of the Partner's Race
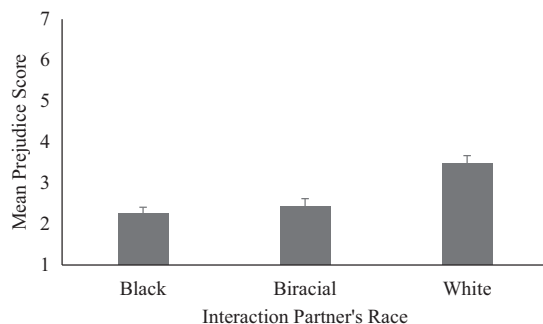
Note. Study 1, mean perceptions of partner's prejudice scores. Higher values indicate more perceived prejudice of their interaction partner.

Metaperceptions

Our primary dependent variable in Study 1 was how participants thought their partner would perceive them (i.e., metaperceptions). A one-way ANOVA revealed an effect of the partner's race on participants' metaperceptions, $F(2, 185) = 7.31$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .073$. Consistent with our hypotheses, planned contrasts revealed that participants expected to be perceived more positively by both the Black ($M = 2.24$, $SE = 0.13$) and biracial ($M = 2.47$, $SE = 0.16$) partners than by the White partner ($M = 3.01$, $SE = 0.16$), $t(185) = 3.76$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.61$ and $t(185) = 2.49$, $p = .01$, $d = 0.44$, respectively. As with the prejudice measure, participants did not significantly differ in how they expected to be perceived by the Black and biracial partners, $t(185) = 1.07$, $p = .29$, $d = 0.19$ (see Figure 2).
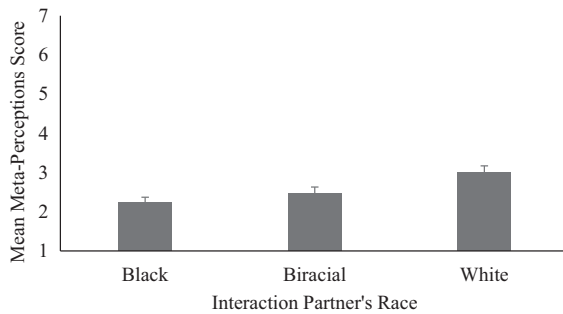
Mediation Analyses

Finally, we tested whether participants' perceptions of their partner's prejudice mediated the effect of the race of the interaction partner on participants' metaperceptions using PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes, 2017) with 95% confidence intervals and 10,000 bootstrap resamples. Given that there was no difference between the Black and biracial partners on partner prejudice or metaperceptions (and participants considered both partners to be racial ingroup members), we combined these conditions for the following analyses and labeled it "Ingroup," whereas the White partner condition was labeled "Outgroup." Therefore, we entered group membership (0 = Outgroup; 1 = Ingroup) as the predictor (X), perceptions of partner prejudice as the mediator (M), and metaperceptions as the outcome variable (Y).

In this mediational analysis, participants thought the White partner was more prejudiced than the Black/biracial partner, which, in turn, was associated with more negative metaperceptions (indirect effect: $b = 0.38$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [0.19, 0.61]). By contrast, the direct effect was not significant, $b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.18$, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.65] (see Figure 3). These findings suggest that participants thought that the White partner (vs. the Black/biracial partner) would perceive them more negatively because they perceived the White partner to be more prejudiced (see Supplemental Material for the Black/White and the biracial/White comparisons).

Discussion

Study 1 provided initial evidence that Black people experience less social identity threat, as measured by metaperceptions of warmth and competence, from Black and biracial people than White people. Consistent with previous research (Ho et al., 2017; Oliver et al., 2023; R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019), these results suggest that participants considered both the Black and the biracial partners to be racial ingroup members. This was further supported as indicated by the mean ingroup rating for both the Black and biracial partners, which were significantly higher than the midpoint of the scale. Participants also perceived the Black and the biracial partners as less prejudiced than the White partner. Similarly, participants thought the Black and biracial partners would perceive them as warmer and more competent than the White partner. Importantly, their perceptions of the Black and biracial partners' prejudice and how they expected to be perceived by those partners were not significantly different. Coupled with the results showing that participants

Figure 2

Mean Metaperceptions as a Function of the Partner's Race

Note. Study 1, mean metaperception score of the interaction partner by the partner's race. Higher scores indicate more negative metaperceptions of the partner.

considered both the Black and the biracial partner to be racial ingroup members, these findings suggest that participants perceived both partners to be sufficiently a part of their racial ingroup for them to conclude that it is unlikely that they will be the targets of social identity threat. Finally, mediation analyses showed that participants' perception of their partner's prejudice mediated the effect of the partner's race on how they thought their partner would perceive them.

Study 2

In Study 2, we aimed to further examine Black participants' social identity threat concerns prior to an interaction with a Black, biracial, or White interaction partner. As with Study 1, we reasoned that participants' social identity threat concerns would be heightened when anticipating an interaction with a racial outgroup member (i.e., White interaction partner) but would be minimized when anticipating an interaction with a racial ingroup member (i.e., Black and biracial interaction partner). Importantly, we assert that racial ingroup status, not the degree of ingroup status, is the key determinant of social identity threat. Thus, while participants may perceive the Black

partner as more a part of their racial ingroup than the biracial partner, they should elicit the same degree of identity safety. In Study 2, we operationalized identity threat as participants reporting decreased warmth and competence metaperception expectations, increased Black metastereotype expectations, increased dehumanization metaperceptions, and increased race-related anticipated interaction challenges. If it is ingroup/outgroup status, and not the degree of ingroup/outgroup status, that triggers social identity threat, then the Black and biracial interaction partners should elicit comparable lower levels of social identity threat. By contrast, if the free of ingroup/outgroup status matters, participants should report higher levels of social identity threat with the biracial partner than the Black partner.

As in Study 1, we again explored participants' perceptions of the partner's prejudice as a potential mediator of the partner's race on the social identity threat variables. While the results of Study 1 and previous research (Green et al., 2025; Milless et al., 2022) have highlighted perceptions of the partner's prejudice as an important mediator of social identity threat, we do not suggest that it is the only potential mediator. Another possible mediator relevant to anticipated interactions with biracial people is their degree of perceived similarity. Specifically, it is possible that participants' perceived similarity with the partner may create a sense of shared reality (Hardin & Conley, 2001; Magee & Hardin, 2010), which may reduce social identity threat between similarly stigmatized racial groups (Cortland et al., 2017). Therefore, we also tested an exploratory parallel mediation model wherein the perceived prejudice of the partner and perceived similarity between the participant and the partner served as independent mediators.

The preregistration, data, syntax, and additional online material for Study 2 are publicly available on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/2cf4j/?view_only=87d8018385624ee885c5ef81de c37ad3.

Method

Participants

We recruited 314 self-identified monoracial Black Americans via Prolific to participate in an online study. We excluded 18

Figure 3

Prejudice Perceptions Mediate the Relationship Between Group Membership and Metaperceptions
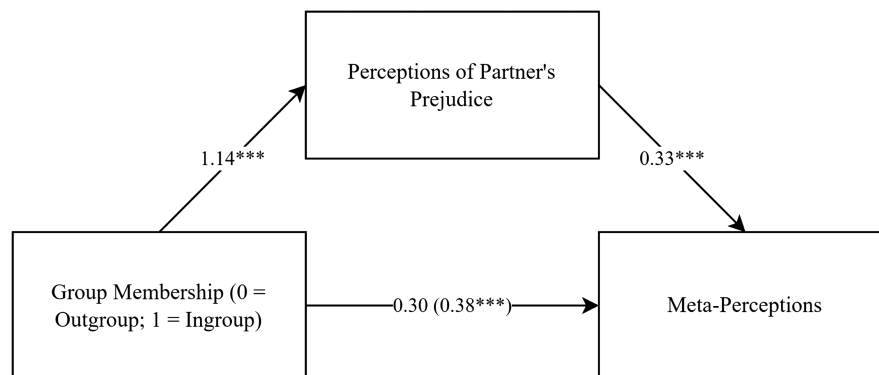
Note. In Study 1, the relationship between group membership and metaperceptions was fully mediated by perceptions of partner's prejudice. Beta weights are standardized coefficients and () = indirect effects.
*** *p* < .001.

participants who either failed or skipped the manipulation check (i.e., misidentifying the race of their partner) and eight participants who self-identified racially as Black but ethnically as multiracial. This left us with a final sample of 288 participants (65.3% female, M_{age} = 38.86, SD = 12.84). When including all 315 participants, none of the reported results changed. Sensitivity analyses conducted in R using the "pwr" package (Champley, 2020) indicated that this sample provided 80% power to detect a minimum effect size of Cohen's d = 0.22 for condition effects and η^2 = .012 for ANOVA main effects. Participants were compensated $2.50 (an average compensation rate of $10.87/hr) for their participation in the study.

Preregistered Primary Measures

Perceptions of Partner Prejudice. We used the same perceptions of partner prejudice measure from Study 1 (α = .82).

Metaperceptions. This measure consisted of the same four warmth and competence metaperception items from Study 1 along with the addition of two items: trustworthy and smart (α = .92).

Black Metastereotypes. In Study 2, we also measured participants' perception of the likelihood that their partner would view them through the lens of Black stereotypes. Specifically, participants reported how likely they thought their interaction partner would perceive them based on the commonly held Black stereotypes: "lazy," "aggressive," "poor," "angry," and "well-spoken" (reverse coded) (e.g., How likely is it that your partner will assume that you are lazy?) on a 7-point scale (1 = *exceptionally unlikely*, 7 = *exceptionally unlikely*). We averaged participants' responses to these items to create a Black metastereotype measure (α = .86).

Race-Based Anticipated Interaction Challenges. We also assessed the challenges that participants anticipated facing during the interaction as a result of their race. Specifically, participants reported their agreement with the following three items from Green et al. (2025): "My interaction partner will likely disrespect me because of my race," "My interaction partner will likely not want to talk to me because of my race," and "My interaction partner will likely discriminate against me because of my race." Participants responded to these items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). We averaged these items to create a race-based anticipated interaction challenges measure, with higher scores indicating greater anticipated challenges and concerns regarding the interaction (α = .96).

Preregistered Exploratory Measures

Perceived Racial Group Membership. To make the scale easier for participants to understand, we modified the perceived group membership measure from Study 1 so that the scale ranged from 0 (*completely outgroup*) to 10 (*completely ingroup*), with 5 (*equally ingroup/equally outgroup*) labeled as the scale's midpoint.

Perceived Similarity. This scale measured the degree to which participants perceived similarity between themselves and their interaction partner by asking them the following three questions: "How much do you feel that you and your partner have in common?" "How similar do you think you and your partner are to each other?" "How much are you and your partner alike?" Participants responded to these questions on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*; α = .92).

Dehumanization Metaperceptions. Participants also completed a four-item measure that assessed participants' perception of the likelihood that their partner would dehumanize them. These immaturity-based dehumanization items were adapted from Petsko and Kteily (2023) and included the following items: "immature," "irresponsible," "irrational," and "illogical" (e.g., What is the likelihood that your partner will assume that you are immature?). Participants responded to these items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*; α = .87).

Procedure

The procedures for Study 2 were similar to those of Study 1, with the only notable difference being that participants also completed an additional set of preregistered primary measures: Black metastereotypes and race-based anticipated interaction challenges and an additional set of preregistered exploratory measures: perceived racial group membership, perceived similarity, and dehumanization metaperception expectations. After consenting, participants read that the purpose of the study was to examine people's first impressions during online interactions. They then read that they would have an opportunity to form an impression of another person, followed by a 5-min online interaction with that person. Next, participants completed a profile about themselves that the researchers would ostensibly send to their online partner. The profile included demographic information such as the first letter of their first name, their gender, their race, and their favorite hobbies.

Participants then received a profile from their supposed interaction partner, which mirrored the information that they sent to their partner. Specifically, participants received information on their partner's first name (either "Kevin" or "Rachel," which were matched based on the gender of the participant), gender (also matched based on the gender of the participant), race (listed as "Black," "White," or "Black–White biracial"), and hobbies ("I like watching TV, listening to music, reading, and traveling"). Participants were then asked to record the information in their partner's profile to assist the researchers in keeping track of the partner pairings. In actuality, this was done to ensure that participants paid sufficient attention to the manipulation (i.e., the race of the interaction partner).

After recording the information in their partner's profile, participants completed the dependent variables. As with Study 1, participants then received a message stating that the program had accidentally disconnected them from their partner and that the study was over. Participants then received a debriefing form and were compensated for participating.

Results

Results of the Preregistered Primary Measures

Perceptions of Partner Prejudice. Consistent with Study 1 and our hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of the race of the interaction partner on participants' perceptions of their interaction partner's prejudice, $F(2, 285)$ = 18.55, $p < .001$, η^2 = .12. Replicating Study 1, participants perceived both the Black (M = 2.47, SE = 0.12) and the biracial (M = 2.25, SE = 0.12) partners as being less prejudiced than the White interaction partner (M = 3.29, SE = 0.14), $t(285)$ = 4.70, $p > .001$, d = 0.67 and $t(285)$ = 5.74, $p < .001$, d = 0.85, respectively. Replicating Study 1,

participants did not differ in their perceptions of the Black and biracial partner's prejudice, $t(285) = 1.22$, $p = .22$, $d = 0.06$.

Metaperceptions of Warmth and Competence. Consistent with our hypotheses and replicating Study 1, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of the race of the interaction partner on the participants' metaperceptions of their partner, $F(2, 285) = 13.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$. Consistent with our hypotheses, participants perceived both the Black ($M = 5.53$, $SE = 0.11$) and the biracial ($M = 5.44$, $SE = 0.10$) partners as viewing them more positively than the White interaction partner ($M = 4.76$, $SE = 0.13$), $t(285) = 4.79$, $p > .001$, $d = 0.66$ and $t(285) = 4.12$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.60$, respectively. Consistent with our hypotheses, participants did not differ in their metaperceptions of the Black and biracial partners, $t(285) = 0.54$, $p = .59$, $d = 0.07$.

Black Metastereotypes. Another one-way ANOVA on Black metastereotypes revealed an effect of the partner's race, $F(2, 285) = 12.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$. Consistent with our hypotheses, participants perceived both the Black ($M = 2.37$, $SE = 0.11$) and the biracial ($M = 2.33$, $SE = 0.11$) partners as viewing them less stereotypically than the White interaction partner ($M = 3.13$, $SE = 0.15$), $t(285) = 4.39$, $p > .001$, $d = 0.63$ and $t(285) = 4.46$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.66$, respectively. As we hypothesized, participants did not differ in their metaperceptions of the Black and biracial partner, $t(285) = 0.20$, $p = .84$, $d = 0.03$.

Race-Based Anticipated Interaction Challenges. Supporting our hypotheses, the results of a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of the interaction partner's race on the challenges participants anticipated facing during the interaction, $F(2, 285) = 58.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .29$. Participants anticipated having fewer race-related interaction challenges with both the Black ($M = 1.66$, $SE = 0.10$) and the biracial ($M = 1.63$, $SE = 0.09$) partners than the White interaction partner ($M = 3.21$, $SE = 0.15$), $t(285) = 9.43$, $p > .001$, $d = 1.35$ and $t(285) = 9.35$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.38$, respectively. As with perceived prejudice, metaperceptions, and metastereotypes, participants did not differ in their race-related interaction concerns with the Black and biracial partner, $t(285) = 0.20$, $p = .84$, $d = 0.03$.

Results of the Preregistered Exploratory Measures

Metadehumanization. Consistent with our exploratory preregistered hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA on the degree to which participants thought their partner would dehumanize them showed an effect of the race of the partner, $F(2, 285) = 10.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Supporting our hypotheses, planned contrasts revealed that participants expected to be dehumanized less by the Black ($M = 2.08$, $SE = 0.12$) and the biracial ($M = 2.18$, $SE = 0.13$) partners than the White interaction partner ($M = 2.85$, $SE = 0.13$), $t(285) = 4.29$, $p > .001$, $d = 0.61$ and $t(285) = 3.67$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.54$, respectively. Participants did not differ in their metadehumanization expectations between the Black and biracial partners, $t(285) = 0.51$, $p = .61$, $d = 0.07$.

Perceived Racial Group Membership. As in Study 1, we conducted midpoint analyses to test whether the degree to which participants considered their interaction partner to be a racial ingroup member differed from the scale's midpoint. Consistent with our preregistered exploratory hypotheses, participants considered both the Black partner ($M = 9.04$, $SE = 0.17$), $t(103) = 24.90$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.44$, and the biracial partner ($M = 7.41$, $SE = 0.22$), $t(91) = 11.04$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.15$, to be more a part of their racial ingroup than the midpoint of the scale. Also consistent with our preregistered

exploratory hypotheses, participants considered the White partner ($M = 1.66$, $SE = 0.28$) to be less a part of their racial ingroup than the midpoint of the scale, $t(92) = -11.93$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.24$. These results suggest that Black people considered Black and biracial people to be a part of their racial ingroup, although they did consider the Black interaction partner to be significantly more a part of their ingroup than the biracial target, $t(285) = 5.24$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.75$.

We also explored condition-level differences in perceived racial group memberships. Planned contrasts revealed that participants considered both the Black and biracial partners to be more a part of their racial ingroup than the White partner, $t(285) = 23.79$, $p < .001$, $d = 3.41$ and $t(285) = 18.01$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.66$, respectively. As with Study 1, participants considered the Black partner to be more a part of their racial ingroup than the biracial partner, $t(285) = 5.24$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.75$.

Perceived Similarity. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of the race of the interaction partner on participants' perceptions of their interaction partner's prejudice toward them, $F(2, 285) = 31.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$. Consistent with our preregistered exploratory hypotheses, participants perceived both the Black ($M = 5.35$, $SE = 0.10$) and the biracial ($M = 5.01$, $SE = 0.12$) partners as being more similar to themselves than the White interaction partner ($M = 4.04$, $SE = 0.14$), $t(285) = 7.71$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.10$ and $t(285) = 5.57$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.82$, respectively. Moreover, in line with our hypotheses, participants viewed the Black partner as more similar to themselves than the biracial partner, $t(285) = 1.98$, $p = .05$, $d = 0.28$.

Mediational Analyses. Next, we conducted separate parallel mediations to test whether participants' perceptions of their partner's prejudice and similarity uniquely mediated the effect of race of the interaction partner on participants' metaperceptions, metastereotypes, interaction challenges, and metadehumanization using PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes, 2017) with 95% confidence intervals with 10,000 bootstrap resamples. As with Study 1, we combined the Black and biracial partner conditions (labeled as "Ingroup" = 1) and compared them with the White partner condition (labeled as "Outgroup" = 0), with perceptions of partner prejudice (M1) and similarity (M2) as parallel mediators of metaperceptions, Black metastereotypes, metadehumanization, and anticipated interaction challenges as separate outcome variables (Y). This approach is consistent with our theoretical framework operationalizing group membership status as either "in" or "out" in the context of experiencing identity threat during an anticipated online interaction and was justified by the fact that the Black and biracial interaction partners did not differ significantly on any of the outcome variables in the following mediation models.

As predicted in our preregistered exploratory hypotheses, participants' perception of their partner's prejudice (indirect effect: $b = 0.23$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI 0.12, 0.37]) and similarity (indirect effect: $b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [0.28, 0.61]) uniquely mediated the effect of the partner's race on participants' metaperceptions. The direct effect was no longer significant ($b = 0.04$, $SE = 0.13$, $p = .77$, 95% CI [−0.23, 0.30]; see Figure 4 for a full mediation model). Similarly, prejudice and similarity uniquely mediated the effect of the partner's race on participants' Black metastereotypes (prejudice indirect effect: $b = -0.48$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI [−0.69, −0.30]; similarity indirect effect: $b = -0.24$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [−0.38, −0.10]), while the direct effect was not significant ($b = -0.07$, $SE = 0.14$, $p = .63$, 95% CI [−0.34, 0.21]; see Figure 5 for a full mediation

Figure 4

Prejudice Perceptions and Similarity are Parallel Mediators of the Relationship Between Group Membership and Metaperceptions
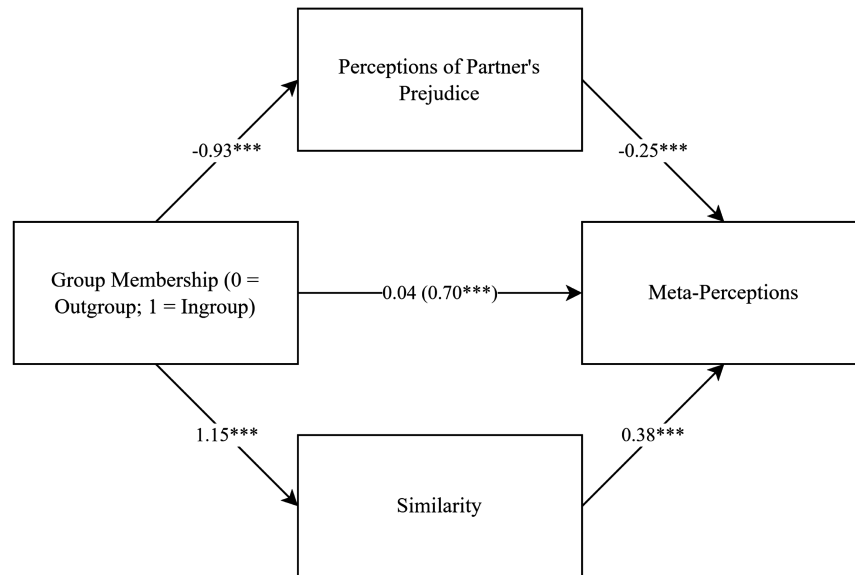
Note. In Study 2, the relationship between group membership and metaperceptions was fully mediated by perceptions of the partner's prejudice, direct effect ($p = .82$). Beta weights are standardized coefficients and () = total effect.
*** $p < .001$.

model). However, participants' anticipated interaction challenges were only partially mediated (direct effect: $b = -1.09$, $SE = 0.15$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-1.38, -0.80]; see Figure 6 for a full mediation model) by perceptions of their partner's prejudice (indirect effect:

$b = -0.32$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.50, -0.18]) and similarity (indirect effect: $b = -0.15$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.30, -0.01]), although still consistent with our preregistered exploratory hypotheses. Finally, participants' perception of their partner's

Figure 5

Prejudice Perceptions and Similarity are Parallel Mediators of the Relationship Between Group Membership and Black Metastereotypes

Note. In Study 2, the relationship between group membership and metastereotypes was fully mediated by perceptions of the partner's prejudice, direct effect ($p = .65$). Beta weights are standardized coefficients and () = total effect.
*** $p < .001$.

Figure 6

Prejudice Perceptions and Similarity are Parallel Mediators of the Relationship Between Group Membership and Interaction Challenges

Note.   In Study 2, the relationship between group membership and interaction challenges was partially mediated by perceptions of the partner's prejudice, direct effect ($p < .001$). Beta weights are standardized coefficients and () = total effect.
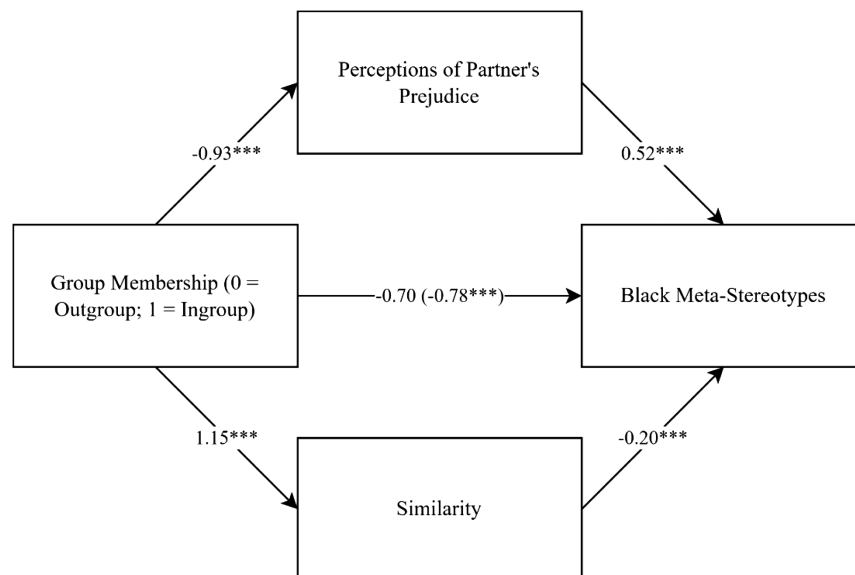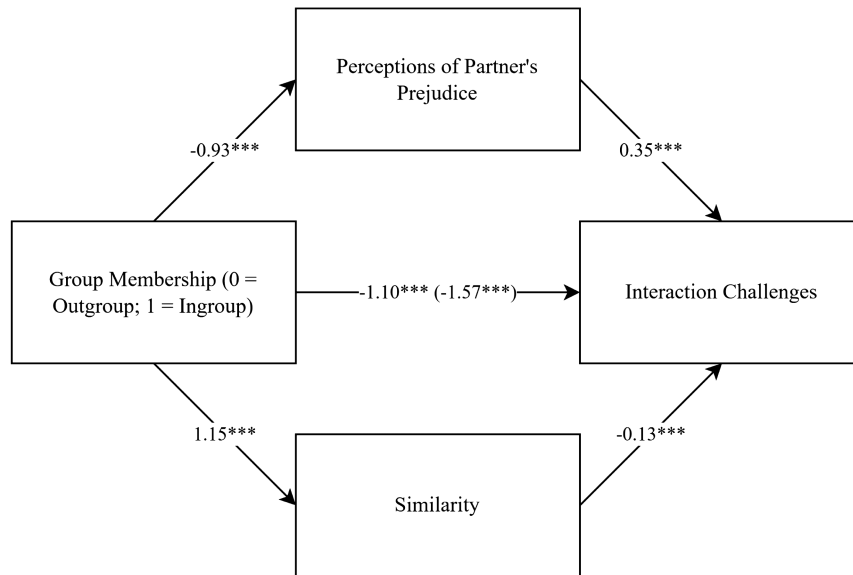*** $p < .001$.

prejudice (indirect effect: $b = -0.49$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI [−0.70, −0.32]) and similarity (indirect effect: $b = -0.18$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [−0.32, −0.05]) uniquely mediated the effect of the partner's race on participants' metadehumanization. The direct effect was no longer significant ($b = 0.04$, $SE = 0.14$, $p = .76$, 95% CI [−0.33, 0.24]; see Figure 7 for a full mediation model; for all dependent variable correlations, see Table 1).

Discussion

In Study 2, we sought to replicate and extend the findings of Study 1. Replicating Study 1, participants considered both the Black and biracial partners to be racial ingroup members and the White interaction partner as a racial outgroup member. In addition, participants perceived the Black and biracial partners as less prejudiced than the White partner and expected to be perceived more positively (i.e., metaperceptions) by the Black and biracial partners than the White partner. Extending the findings of Study 1, participants in Study 2 expected to be perceived less in line with Black stereotypes by the Black and biracial partners compared with the White partner, expected to be dehumanized less by the Black and biracial partner than the White partner, and anticipated fewer race-based interaction challenges with the Black and biracial partner than with the White partner. Notably, participants with a biracial partner did not differ from participants with a Black partner on any of these identity threat-dependent variables, suggesting that Black people consider biracial people to be sufficiently a part of their racial ingroup for them to assume that they are safe from social identity threat. Moreover, an exploratory mediational analysis suggests that

the effect of the partner's race on metaperceptions, metastereotypes, and interaction challenges was driven independently by participants' perceptions of the partner's prejudice and their perceptions of similarity to their partner.

General Discussion

While there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that Black people consider biracial people as a part of their racial ingroup, there is a dearth of research investigating the downstream consequences of biracial people's ingroup status on interaction dynamics between Black and biracial people (R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019). Using a social identity threat approach, the present research extends the biracial literature by exploring the downstream psychological effects of Black people considering a biracial interaction partner as a racial ingroup member. Across two studies, we tested whether ingroup status impacted Black people's experiences of social identity threat when anticipating an interaction with a Black, biracial, or White person. We also explored whether participants' perceptions of their partner's prejudice and similarity mediated the effect of the partner's race on participants' experiences of social identity threat.

Our primary contention was that perceived group status (ingroup vs. outgroup) triggers social identity threat. Therefore, if Black people consider biracial people to be racial outgroup members, social identity threat should be heightened. However, if they consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members, social identity threat should be minimized. The midpoint tests for both studies revealed that participants considered the Black and biracial partners to be racial

Figure 7

Prejudice Perceptions and Similarity Are Parallel Mediators of the Relationship Between Group Membership and Interaction Challenges
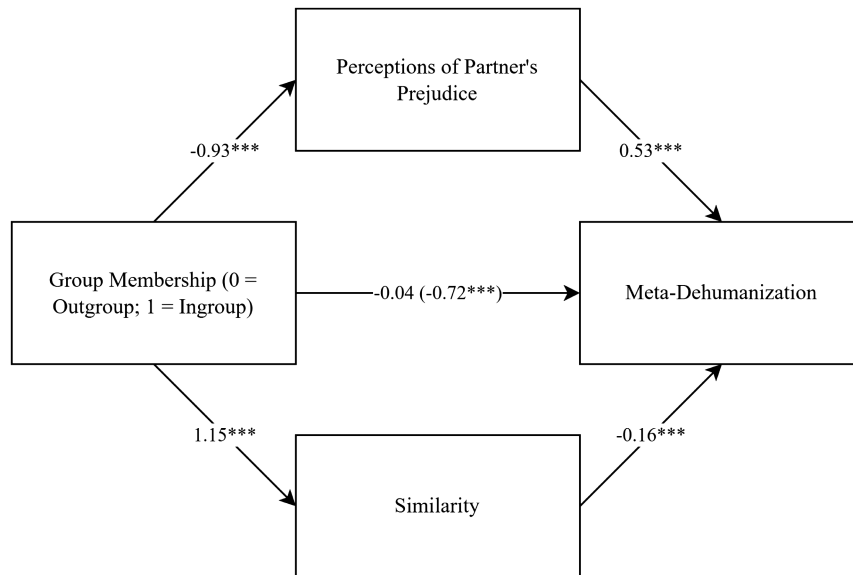
Note. In Study 2, the relationship between group membership and metadehumanization was fully mediated by perceptions of the partner's prejudice, direct effect ($p < .001$). Beta weights standardized coefficients and () = total effect.
*** $p < .001$.

ingroup members and the White partner to be a racial outgroup member. The results of these midpoint tests are in line with the principle of hypodescent and with research showing that Black people consider biracial people to be racial ingroup members (Barnett & Wout, 2016; Chen & Ratliff, 2015; Franco et al., 2019; Gaither et al., 2016; Ho et al., 2017; Oliver et al., 2023; R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019). Consistent with this ingroup–outgroup distinction, participants in both studies perceived the Black and biracial partners as less prejudiced than the White partner.

Similarly, participants expected that they would be perceived more positively (Studies 1 and 2), less stereotypically (Study 2), and as more human (Study 2) by the Black and the biracial partner than by the White partner. Furthermore, participants anticipated fewer challenges interacting with the Black and biracial partners than the White partner (Study 2). It is important to note that participants

did not differ in their perceived partner prejudice, metaperceptions, metastereotypes, dehumanization metaperceptions, or interaction challenges with the Black and the biracial partner. Additionally, participants perceived that they had more similarity to the Black partner than the biracial partner and more similarity with the biracial partner than the White partner.

Finally, mediation analyses in both studies demonstrated that Black people's perception of their partner's prejudice mediated the effect of group membership on their metaperceptions. Study 2 extended this finding by revealing that prejudice and similarity both uniquely mediated the effect of group membership on metaperceptions, metastereotypes, and their anticipated interaction challenges. The results of Studies 1 and 2 taken together suggest that Black people experience relative identity safety when anticipating an interaction with a Black or biracial person compared with a White person.

Table 1

Pearson's R Correlation Coefficients for Bivariate Correlations Between the Continuous Variables in Study 2

Correlation (r)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Prejudice	—						
2. Metaperceptions	.43***	—					
3. Black metastereotypes	.62***	−.68***	—				
4. Interaction challenges	.51***	.42***	.52***	—			
5. Metadehumanization	.60***	−.59**	.82***	.48***	—		
6. Group membership	−.34***	.32***	−.30***	−.47***	−.30***	—	
7. Similarity	−.36***	.53***	−.41***	−.40***	.36***	.51***	—

** $p < .01$.   *** $p < .001$.

Implications

The present research highlights the potential implications of Black people's adoption of the principle of hypodescent. Specifically, Black people reported lower levels of social identity threat when anticipating an interaction with a Black or a biracial partner compared with a White partner. Notably, on all measures of social identity threat (metaperceptions, metastereotypes, metadehumanization, and anticipated interaction challenges), participants' level of threat did not differ between the Black and biracial partners. We contend that participants had the same psychological response to the Black and biracial partners because they considered both of them to be racial ingroup members. In the present research, we operationalized the interaction partner as being an ingroup member based on whether participants' ratings on the group membership measure were significantly higher than the scale midpoint (see Ho et al., 2011, for another example of this approach). Using this metric for ingroup status, participants rated the Black and the biracial partners as racial ingroup members. While the Black and biracial partners had group membership means significantly higher than the scale midpoint, comparisons between the means for these partners showed that participants considered the Black partner to be more ingroup than the biracial partner. Despite the differing degree of ingroup status of the Black and biracial partners, none of the dependent variables differed significantly between participants in these conditions. While not definitive, these results suggest that Black people's assessment of their partner's racial group status (racial ingroup vs. racial outgroup) was more likely to trigger stereotype threat than the degree to which they considered the partner to be a racial ingroup member. In other words, social identity threat may be more of an on/off process than a continuous process.

If social identity threat is an on/off process, then once participants determined that the Black and biracial partners were racial ingroup members, they were able to assume that it was unlikely that the partner would be prejudiced toward, them, subsequently reducing the perceived likelihood that they would be negatively stereotyped or devalued (i.e., identity safety). By contrast, once the participants determined that the White partner was a racial outgroup member, they had an increased awareness (based on historical and contemporary racism) that there was a greater likelihood that the White partner would be prejudiced toward them. Because of this awareness, participants expected to be perceived more negatively and stereotypically and anticipated more challenging interactions with the White partner (i.e., identity threat). To our knowledge, this is the first set of studies to explore social identity threat when the boundaries of social groups are malleable and thus provides a unique test of whether social identity threat is dichotomous or continuous process.

The present research is also, to our knowledge, one of the few experimental studies to explore the concerns that Black people have when anticipating interacting with biracial people (also see R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019). The findings that participants perceived and expected to be perceived similarly by the Black and biracial partners provide initial evidence that the dynamics between these groups are likely more positive than dynamics between Black and White people. Furthermore, the results from Study 2 show that participants anticipate fewer challenges when expecting to interact with a Black or biracial interaction partner compared with a White partner, which indicates that interpersonal interactions between Black and Black–White biracial people are likely to be positive.

Participants' perception of their partner's prejudice and similarity mediated the effect of the partner's race on these dependent variables, suggesting that participants' perception that biracial people are less prejudiced and more similar to them reduced their concerns about being stereotyped and mistreated, thus eliciting identity safety.

The present findings are also consistent with a Parker et al. (2015) survey that found that 58% of Black–White biracial adults reported feeling very accepted by Black people, with another 35% reporting feeling somewhat accepted by Black people. Only 7% reported not feeling accepted by Black people. By contrast, only 25% of participants reported feeling very accepted by White people, with 57% feeling somewhat supported by White people and 17% reporting feeling not at all supported by White people. Similarly, participants reported having more contact with their Black relatives (69%) than their White relatives (21%). Of those same participants, 51% reported that all or most of their close friends are Black, but only 18% reported that all or most of their close friends are White (Parker et al., 2015). Research also suggests that Black–White biracial adolescents are more likely to have a Black best friend than a White best friend (Doyle & Kao, 2007). While not conclusive, the present research suggests that interactions between Black and biracial people are likely less threatening than interactions between White and biracial people. Additional research is needed to fully understand the dynamics between members of these groups.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the present research suggests that ingroup/outgroup distinctions can have a meaningful impact on Black people's perceptions and anticipated interactions with Black–White biracial people, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged. In the present research, we provided participants with limited information regarding their interaction partners. They thus likely relied on their prototypical representations of interaction partners' racial group to assess the potential level of social identity threat. Individuating information, such as how a person racially self-identifies, their attire, and their friendship networks, has been shown to impact how people perceive and categorize biracial people (Cooley et al., 2017; Freeman et al., 2011; R. E. Smith & Wout, 2019). The dual-process model of person perception (Freeman & Ambady, 2011) suggests that social cues, like individuating information, can shift how people racially categorize and respond to biracial people. Supporting this model, R. E. Smith and Wout (2019) found that Black people made greater attributions to prejudice when rejected by a biracial person who racially self-identified as White compared with one who racially self-identified as Black or as biracial. Importantly, the degree to which participants considered the biracial person a racial ingroup member mediated their attributions. Extrapolating from that research, individuating information about a biracial interaction partner may shift that partner's racial ingroup status, thereby heightening Black people's social identity threat concerns. Additional research is needed to understand whether individuating information about a biracial person can influence whether Black people experience social identity threat.

Another limitation is that the present research only focuses on how monoracial Black people are expected to be perceived and treated by a biracial person, but it does not explore how biracial

people are expected to be perceived and treated by monoracial Black or White people. While the present research suggests that interactions between Black and biracial people are likely to be smooth, other research suggested that they also experience greater feelings of exclusion, lack of belonging, and lower psychological well-being (Albuja et al., 2019; Cheng & Klugman, 2016; Gaither, 2015; Gaskins, 1999; Kerwin et al., 1993). Their experiences of identity threat are likely impacted by their level and type of contact with both Black and White people. Additional research is needed to fully understand the interaction dynamics between Black, White, and biracial people.

Though the present research adds to our understanding of how Black people perceive Black–White biracial people, research suggests that these findings might not be generalizable to how other racial minority groups perceive minority-White biracials. For instance, Chen et al. (2019) found that perceived discrimination against one's ingroup led Asian Americans, but not Black people, to question a biracial target's identity preference and loyalty to their racial group. This perceived lack of loyalty led Asian Americans to be more likely to consider Asian White biracials as outgroup members. These results highlight the importance of considering historical and societal factors when assessing how racial minorities perceive minority-White biracials. Although Asian Americans have experienced high levels of discrimination in the United States, they have not been subject to social and political policies, such as hypodescent, designed by White people to ensure that anyone with Black ancestry is Black (Davis, 1991). Additionally, Asian Americans, like White people, are considered to be of higher status than Black people (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Therefore, Asian Americans may be more suspicious than Black people about whether biracials would strive to associate with Whites. Researchers should continue to explore the factors that influence how racial minorities perceive minority-White biracials.

Another limitation of the present research is that it focused only on anticipated interactions. We opted to focus on anticipated interactions because social identity threat theory is designed to explain an anticipatory process (Steele et al., 2002). In any given context, people cannot definitively determine whether they will be negatively stereotyped or devalued; therefore, they must use contextual factors, such as ingroup/outgroup status, to determine the likelihood of being the target of stereotyping or devaluation (Wout et al., 2009). There are potential physical and psychological costs of failing to prepare for the potential threat of being stereotyped or devalued or of preparing for a threat that is unlikely to materialize. Thus, the anticipatory process, as outlined by social identity threat, can inform people of how to effectively navigate the social context. In addition, previous research has highlighted the importance of anticipatory factors in impacting whether people avoid or engage in interracial interactions (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2006; Plant, 2004). Thus, while the present research cannot speak to people's experiences during an interaction, it does highlight the factors that can set the stage for potentially positive and constructive interactions between Black and biracial people.

Conclusion

As the number of multiracial people in the United States continues to increase, researchers need to better understand whether monoracial people consider them to be racial ingroup members and how these considerations impact how they perceive and expect to be perceived by multiracial people. The present research expands upon existing research exploring these issues. Indeed, our findings meaningfully contribute to the literature on monoracial–multiracial interactions by highlighting that Black people do not experience social identity threat when interacting with Black–White biracial people because of their relative ingroup membership status.

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