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Intersectional Oppression: Multiple Stigmatized Identities and Perceptions of Invisibility, Discrimination, and Stereotyping

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Participants (N = 602; having 0, 1, 2 or 3 stigmatized identities based on gender, race, sexual orientation, and social class) completed a survey on their feelings of invisibility and expectations of receiving unfair treatment (i.e., experiencing discrimination) and being stereotyped due to their group memberships. The results were consistent with the model of intersectional invisibility, with multiply-stigmatized individuals reporting feeling more invisible than individuals who had one or zero stigmatized identities. In addition, multiply-stigmatized individuals reported more unfair treatment and greater stereotype concerns than individuals with one stigmatized identity, with both reporting more unfair treatment/stereotype concerns than individuals without stigmatized identities. Thus, the present data suggest that multiply-stigmatized individuals are keenly aware of their invisibility and that invisibility represents a source of perceived discrimination and stereotyping for multiply-stigmatized individuals.

“The slums are the handiwork of a vicious system of the white society; Negroes live in them but do not make them any more than a prisoner makes a prison.”

M. L. King, Jr. 1968, p.181

In his 1967 address to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) described a prison-like system of oppression, sustained by White society, that Black Americans were forced to navigate in their daily lives. According to Dr. King, the conditions inside the invisible prison shaped the behaviors of Black Americans, confining them to a desperate space in which responses such as violence or despair were understandable, even

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as those behaviors were discouraged and reprimanded. The prison described by MLK strongly resembles the psychological burden of *stigmatization* that Crocker and Major (1989) defined over two decades later in their seminal paper. In this article, the authors turned psychologists' attention to how possessing a stigmatized (or culturally devalued) identity shapes the ways in which individuals understand, react to, and proactively construct their social environments (see also Goffman, 1963).¹ Much like a psychological prison, the threat of stigmatization confines individuals with culturally devalued identities, restricting their movements to low-threat spaces, raising their suspicions of people around them, and reducing their dignity and self-confidence (Crocker & Major, 1989). Crocker and Major's approach represented a shift in focus for psychologists studying stereotyping and prejudice, most of whom, at the time, exclusively examined how stereotypes are created, used, and maintained by the high-status group (Allport, 1954). In contrast, Crocker and Major proposed to study how cultural stigmatization fundamentally alters the psychology of members of oppressed groups.

MLK implored social scientists to focus on and to elucidate the conditions faced by Blacks in America. Later, Crocker and Major (1989) suggested that, in addition to Black Americans, non-Black racial minorities, women, older adults, sexual minorities, and individuals with a history of mental illness (among members of other oppressed groups), despite facing varying sources of stigmatization, are united by the task of navigating systems and structures that subjugate their personhood. Yet, both analyses stopped short of acknowledging the *intersectional* nature of social identities, which describes how the overlapping nature of identities influences lived experience (Cole, 2009; Sweetman, 2018; Warner, 2008; Warner & Shields, 2013). That is, a Black person is not only Black; that person also possesses gender, sexual orientation, and class identities, among many others, some of which may also be stigmatized and all of which modulate the experience of being Black in America (Warner, 2008).

The present research extends past work by investigating how people who identify with multiple stigmatized groups (*multiply-stigmatized* individuals; Remedios & Snyder, 2015a) perceive the discrimination they experience. Indeed, multiply-stigmatized individuals may be more likely than singly-stigmatized individuals to consider particular experiences to be discriminatory. Here, we focused on the experience of *invisibility*, or of being ignored, dismissed and underrepresented when compared to nonstigmatized and singly-stigmatized individuals (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). The model of *intersectional invisibility*, a theoretical approach to understanding the treatment of multiply-stigmatized individuals in

¹In 2014, Jennifer Crocker and Brenda Major were awarded the Scientific Impact Award by the Society for Experimental Social Psychology for their 1989 paper. The award "honors the author(s) of a specific article or chapter offering a theoretical, empirical, and/or methodological contribution that has proven highly influential over the last 25 years" (SESP, 2017).

an ethnocentric, androcentric and heterocentric society, asserts that *prototypical* members of stigmatized groups possess only one stigmatized identity. For example, prototypical people of color are men, and prototypical women are White (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). However, what has received less attention in the literature is whether invisibility represents a source of perceived discrimination for multiply-stigmatized individuals. Although varying negative and positive/neutral outcomes of intersectional invisibility (which we explain in more detail below) have been documented in research, we hypothesized that multiply-stigmatized individuals would perceive their own invisibility as disadvantageous (as opposed to advantageous). We developed this hypothesis given research showing that even those identity-related judgments that have so-called positive connotations (e.g., the “Asians-are-good-at-math” stereotype) invariably have a negative effect on stigmatized individuals. Such judgments have negative effects because they de-personalize targets of stereotypes and reduce them to generic members of a larger social group (Siy & Cheryan, 2012).

That individuals may belong to more than one stigmatized group is often overlooked in psychology because of the assumption that to isolate an identity, such as gender, as the variable of interest in quantitative research, one must hold other social identities, such as race, “constant” (Cole, 2009). Researchers may also be dissuaded from studying multiple sources of stigmatization because of the complexity of determining what multiple identities matter and how these identities matter (Remedios & Snyder, 2015a,b). However, studying stigma as a single-identity phenomenon neglects the complexity of social interactions in the real world, where people possess multiple stigmatized and non-stigmatized identities (Cole, 2009; Warner, 2008; Warner & Shields, 2013). As a result, intersectional hypotheses that recognize the stigmatized and privileged spaces that individuals simultaneously occupy better describe generalizable behaviors than do nonintersectional hypotheses because they are more likely to stand up to testing under complex conditions inherent in the real world (Remedios & Snyder, 2015b). Group-level disparities in which members of oppressed groups earn less income, access fewer employment opportunities and achieve fewer leadership roles than members of high-status groups can be traced, in part, to the effects of stigmatization (Major & O’Brien, 2005). Thus, it is critical that the empirical study of these life-altering disparities, the very work that MLK called on social scientists to conduct, represents the intersectionality of the real world.

Stigmatization and Perceived Discrimination

We sought to build on existing research examining the effects of stigmatization on perceived discrimination by testing whether felt invisibility represents a source of perceived discrimination for multiply-stigmatized people. Past research shows that discrimination results from the use of stereotypes to judge members of

certain groups. Individuals learn from a young age to associate certain traits—or *stereotypes*—with groups of people so that they can form efficient impressions of others that do not require much deliberation (Allport, 1954). Over time, stereotype use is integrated into general cognition and occurs fluidly and automatically (Blair & Banaji, 1996; Devine, 1989). Therefore, people are frequently unaware of the influences of stereotypes on their own behaviors and may act on stereotype-based information without knowing or believing that stereotypes shaped their actions (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). For example, in one study, male and female faculty members regarded a male applicant for a lab manager position as more competent and more deserving of a higher starting salary than an equally qualified female applicant (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).² Stereotypes sometimes accurately reflect group differences (e.g., women are believed to be more communal than men and, on average, do display more communality than men; Hall & Goh, 2017; Jussim, Crawford, & Rubinstein, 2015). Indeed, Hall and Goh (2017) argue that some degree of stereotype accuracy might be expected given that individuals are discerning social perceivers: research on interpersonal accuracy suggests that individuals derive accurate and meaningful information about others from minimal cues (e.g., facial features; Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). However, the authors also note that few psychologists would argue that all stereotypes are accurate (Hall & Goh, 2017). Moreover, regardless of any diagnostic value stereotypes may hold, research suggests that the effects of stereotypes on the stigmatized individuals they target tends to be negative, even when stereotypes are not explicitly espoused (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and when they have so-called positive connotations (Czopp, Kay, & Cheryan, 2015).

The subtle and automatic manner in which stereotyping occurs makes it difficult for individuals to determine if they have been treated in a particular way due to their identities, rendering judgments of discrimination inherently subjective (Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). Thus, when conditions are ambiguous and when discrimination is likely, but not necessarily explicit, the determination by stigmatized individuals that they have been mistreated due to their stigma is described as *perceived discrimination* (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Major, Kaiser, & McCoy, 2003). In the long-term, perceiving oneself as the target of discrimination is associated with negative emotions, less life satisfaction, and poor mental and physical health (Branscombe et al., 1999; Woods-Giscombé & Lobel, 2008). However, the consequences of inaccurately identifying discriminatory treatment as fair may be just as problematic: stigmatized individuals who internalize outcomes that are actually due to discrimination may believe that

²Stereotype-based judgments are not inevitable, and individual differences in personality predict the likelihood that nonstigmatized individuals will engage in stereotyping, as well as whether they will protest and resist structures of privilege (Stewart & Tran, 2018).

they are less capable than their nonstigmatized peers (Crocker & Major, 1989). Perceiving discrimination can therefore be self-protective: attributing failure to discrimination and discounting internal explanations can preserve one's sense of self-worth (Major et al., 2003). Targets who confront discrimination also feel empowered and proud that they acted in line with their true selves (Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Hill, 2006).

Effects of Multiple Stigmatization

Critically, we posited, in addition to the effects of stigmatization documented in past research and described above, that multiply-stigmatized people have different experiences than singly-stigmatized people and that these experiences hinge on the identity intersections at which they find themselves. We turned to the model of *intersectional invisibility* to better understand a potential unique effect of multiple stigmatization. According to this model, for example, individuals perceive women of color as less representative than men of color and White women of their respective racial and gender categories, leading to the formation of a *perceptual invisibility* to women of color. For example, individuals exhibit poorer memory for the contributions and faces of Black women than for White men, White women and Black men (Sesko & Biernat, 2010, 2018).

The implications of perceptual invisibility for members of multiply-stigmatized groups are mixed. For example, prototypicality biases social cognition by imposing additional, default social categories on our understanding of given social categories. Individuals asked about their knowledge of Black stereotypes in American society, for example, conjure stereotypes about Black *men* (and neglect to consider stereotypes about Black *women*) because, in the absence of explicit gender information, the default male category is used in the stereotyping process (Bodenhausen & Peery, 2009). Prototypicality biases also lead to impaired memory for the faces and behaviors of multiply-stigmatized versus singly-stigmatized targets (Sesko & Biernat, 2010).

In contrast, research also suggests that individuals apply stereotypes more intensely to judgments of prototypical category members than to judgments of nonprototypical category members. For example, research has shown that Black women evade some of the negative gender stereotypes that are often applied to White women in leadership (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012) and technological domains (Biernat & Sesko, 2013). Despite the mix of negative and positive (or neutral) consequences of being perceived as invisible, we hypothesized that the consequences of *felt* (as opposed to perceptual) invisibility would be negative for multiply-stigmatized individuals, as identity-related judgments cause targets to feel depersonalized even when those judgments have so-called positive connotations (e.g., stereotypes that "Asians are good at math; Siy & Cheryan, 2012).

Thus, the experience of felt invisibility is, potentially, a corridor in the stigma prison identified by MLK in which multiply-stigmatized people disproportionately find themselves. Therefore, as individuals identify with more stigmatized groups, they may be more likely to feel that they are constrained by a form of discrimination in which they are ignored, dismissed, and forgotten. Extending past work, the present research examined multiply-stigmatized individuals' ratings of their own invisibility and the relationships between felt invisibility and the outcomes of perceived discrimination and stereotype concerns. We examined both discrimination- and stereotype-based outcomes because they represent separate (yet related) components of stigmatization (Branscombe et al., 1999; Devine, 1989).

Method

Participants

Participants were 602 undergraduate students (60.1% women, 39.5% men, 1.5% missing)³ at a northeastern American university who completed a survey to determine their eligibility for Psychology experiments. Embedded into this survey were measures relevant to the present study. Administering this study as part of an eligibility/prescreen survey enabled us to recruit a large and diverse sample of participants. Of the participants, 61.8% identified as European American/White, 13% as East Asian, 6.1% as Hispanic/Latino, 5.5% as Multiracial, 5.3% as South Asian, 4.3% as African American/Black, 0.8% as Middle Eastern, and 0.2% as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Two percent of participants selected "none of the above" and 1% of participants did not answer the question. In addition, 84.4% of participants identified as heterosexual, 6.8% as bisexual, 4.5% as gay, and 2.2% as another identification (2.2% of participants did not answer this question). Lastly, 93.2% of participants were of upper/middle social class and 5.3% of participants were of lower social class. More information about how participants were categorized into social class groups is provided in the Measures section below.

³We recognize that the binary gender response options (male, female) provided to participants was restrictive in that participants who did not identify within this binary were not able to indicate their identification. This item was not constructed by the authors (because it was a standard item included on the eligibility survey, as was the race/ethnicity item, see Appendix); still, it is a clear limitation of this work.

Measures

Demographic variables. In addition to indicating their race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation from lists of options (see Appendix), participants completed a measure of social class that asked: “Please use the scale below to indicate where YOU feel YOU are on the social ladder. On the social ladder, the individuals with the fewest resources, education, and influence are on the bottom rung of the ladder and those with the most resources, education and influence are at the top of the ladder.” Participants were presented with an image of a ladder with 7 rungs, with the bottom rung labeled as 1 = *individuals with the fewest resources, education, and influence*, the middle rung labeled as 4 = *individuals with some resources, education, and influence*, and the top rung labeled as 7 = *individuals with the most resources, education, and influence*. Participants responded on a 7-point scale (adapted from Kraus, Côté, & Keltner, 2010).

Invisibility, discrimination, and stereotype concerns. Next, participants completed three items examining their experiences with invisibility, stereotyping, and discrimination. Due to restrictions on the lengths of measures included in this eligibility survey, we were limited to administering one item per measure. Each item referred to the identities relevant to this research to ensure that participants were reflecting on the pertinent social groups.⁴ Participants responded to the following items on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*): “I feel invisible because of my identities (race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, social class)” (*felt invisibility* item), “I receive unfair treatment in a variety of contexts (e.g., restaurants, stores, work, school) because of my identities (race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, social class)” (*perceived discrimination* item), and “I am concerned about being negatively stereotyped because of my identities (race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, social class)” (*stereotype concern* item).

Results

Coding Stigmatization

Coding scheme. Participants’ identification with race/ethnic, gender, sexual orientation and social class groups were recoded into a measure of the

⁴Age was included as a pertinent identity to be consistent with theoretical models suggesting that gender, race and age, as highly visible identities, are salient to perceivers during social interactions (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Given that our participants were undergraduates, however, the age range did not vary sufficiently to differentiate groups within that range. Thus, we did not consider age as a group when coding stigmatized versus nonstigmatized identities.

number of stigmatized identities that participants reported possessing. We coded racial/ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, and social class. In all cases, participants who did not select an identity (i.e., did not answer the question) did not receive a code. Similarly, participants who responded “none of the above” did not receive a code due to the ambiguity of this identification.

Participants were coded as having a stigmatized racial/ethnic identity if they identified with a listed group *other* than European American/White (including Multiracial but excluding, as stated above, the “none of the above” option, $N = 78$), and were coded as having a nonstigmatized racial/ethnic identity if they identified as European American/White ($N = 372$). Women ($N = 368$) were coded as stigmatized and men ($N = 238$) were coded as nonstigmatized. Participants were coded as having a stigmatized sexual orientation identity if they selected an option other than heterosexual (bisexual, gay, alternative identification; $N = 81$) and were coded as nonstigmatized if they identified as heterosexual ($N = 508$). Lastly, participants were coded as belonging to a stigmatized social class category if they ranked themselves below the middle rung of the social ladder, or participants who selected 1–3 on this item ($N = 32$). Participants who selected 4–7 on this item were coded as nonstigmatized.

Number of stigmatized identities. This coding scheme yielded our main predictor variable: number of stigmatized identities. In sum, 127 participants were coded as having zero stigmatized identities, 263 were coded as having 1 stigmatized identity, 158 were coded as having 2 stigmatized identities, 30 were coded as having 3 stigmatized identities, and 3 were coded as having 4 stigmatized identities. Given the low N in the latter category, we excluded participants with 4 stigmatized identities in all subsequent analyses.⁵

Invisibility, Discrimination, and Stereotyping

See Table 1 for correlations among the variables and Table 2 for means and standard deviations.

Felt invisibility. We conducted a one-way between-subjects ANOVA to examine the effect of number of stigmatized identities (0, 1, 2, or 3) on feelings of invisibility. The results revealed a significant effect, $F(3, 574) = 20.40, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.10$. We next examined the differences between conditions using Tukey’s post hoc tests, to which we applied Bonferroni corrections for multiple comparisons. As expected, we found that nonstigmatized participants (or participants with

⁵The pattern of results remained the same when we collapsed across participants who reported three and four stigmatized identities by including these individuals within the same category.

Table 1. Correlations among Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.
Felt invisibility	–	0.53*	0.47*
Perceived discrimination	–	–	0.54*
Stereotype concerns	–	–	–

Note. * $p < .001$.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	Number of stigmatized identities			
	0	1	2	3
Invisibility	1.67 (1.00)	2.10 (1.40)	2.72 (1.59)	3.40 (1.94)
Discrimination	1.80 (1.28)	2.66 (1.62)	3.35 (1.77)	3.90 (1.75)
Stereotyping	2.26 (1.55)	3.27 (1.86)	3.96 (1.88)	4.57 (1.83)

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

zero stigmatized identities) felt significantly less invisible than participants in all other groups: 1 stigma (mean difference = 0.43, $SE = 0.15$, 95% CI: [0.83, 0.04], $t(574) = 3.08$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.35$), 2 stigmas (mean difference = 1.05, $SE = 0.17$, 95% CI: [1.48, 0.61], $t(574) = 7.51$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.79$), 3 stigmas (mean difference = 1.73, $SE = 0.29$, 95% CI: [2.47, 0.99], $t(574) = 7.81$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.12$). Importantly, participants with 1 stigmatized identity also reported significantly less invisibility than participants with 2 (mean difference = 0.61, $SE = 0.14$, 95% CI: [0.98, 0.25], $t(574) = 5.25$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.41$) and 3 (mean difference = 1.30, $SE = 0.27$, $t(574) = 6.43$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.77$) stigmas. The difference between participants with 2 and 3 stigmatized identities was not significant ($p = .07$).

Perceived discrimination. An ANOVA on perceived discrimination indicated a significant effect, $F(3, 573) = 27.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.13$.⁶ Tukey's post hoc tests showed that participants with zero stigmatized identities perceived significantly less discrimination than all other participants: 1 stigma (mean difference = 0.87, $SE = 0.17$, 95% CI: [1.31, 0.42], $t(573) = 5.55$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.59$), 2

⁶One participant in the one stigma group did not have a perceived discrimination score due to missing data.

stigmas (mean difference = 1.55, $SE = 0.19$, 95% CI: [2.04, 1.06], $t(573) = 9.52$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.00$), 3 stigmas (mean difference = 2.10, $SE = 0.33$, 95% CI: [2.94, 1.27], $t(573) = 9.08$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.37$). Participants with 1 stigmatized identity also reported significantly less perceived discrimination than participants with 2 (mean difference = 0.68, $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI: [1.10, 0.27], $t(573) = 5.44$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.41$) and 3 (mean difference = 1.24, $SE = 0.31$, 95% CI: [2.03, 0.44], $t(573) = 6.00$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.74$) stigmatized identities. Participants with 2 and 3 stigmas did not differ significantly in their responses ($p = .31$).

Stereotype concerns. An ANOVA on stereotype concerns indicated a significant effect, $F(3, 574) = 26.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.12$. Tukey's post hoc tests revealed that participants with zero stigmatized identities reported significantly fewer stereotype concerns than all other participants: participants with 1 stigma (mean difference = 1.01, $SE = 0.20$, 95% CI: [1.51, 0.51], $t(574) = 5.90$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.58$), with 2 stigmas (mean difference = 1.70, 95% CI: [2.25, 1.14], $t(547) = 9.53$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.00$), with 3 stigmas (mean difference = 2.31, 95% CI: [3.25, 1.37], $t(547) = 9.52$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.36$). Furthermore, participants with 1 stigmatized identity were significantly less concerned about being stereotyped than participants with 2 (mean difference = 0.67, 95% CI: [1.15, 0.22], $t(547) = 5.05$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.37$) and 3 (mean difference = 1.30, 95% CI: [2.19, 0.40], $t(547) = 6.08$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.70$) stigmatized identities. Again, the difference between participants with 2 and 3 stigmatized identities was not significant ($p = .32$).

Mediation

Next, we investigated whether felt invisibility was significantly correlated with perceived discrimination, and whether this correlation could statistically account for why perceived discrimination increased as the number of participants' stigmatized identities increased. We tested model 4 in PROCESS with 5,000 bootstrapped resamples (Hayes, 2013). We entered number of stigmatized identities (0, 1, 2, or 3) as the predictor variable, felt invisibility (standardized) as the mediator, and perceived discrimination as the dependent variable. Reflecting the results of the previously reported ANOVAs, number of stigmatized identities was significantly related to felt invisibility, $b = 0.37$, $t(575) = 7.81$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI: [0.28, 0.47]. The relationship between felt invisibility and perceived discrimination was also significant in the dependent variable model, $b = 0.81$, $t(575) = 13.14$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI: [0.69, 0.58]. Lastly, the conditional indirect effect was significant, $b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.21, 0.41], as was the Sobel test, $Z = 6.70$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.05$.

We examined a similar model in which the stereotype concerns variable was entered as the dependent variable. Once again, number of stigmatized identities

was significantly related to felt invisibility, $b = 0.50$, $t(575) = 5.77$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI: [0.33, 0.67]. Felt invisibility was significantly related to stereotype concerns in the dependent variable model, $b = 0.79$, $t(575) = 11.00$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI: [0.65, 0.93]. Again, the conditional indirect effect was significant, $b = 0.29$, $SE = 0.29$, 95% CI: [0.21, 0.40], as was the Sobel test, $Z = 6.33$, $p < .001$, $SE = 0.05$.

General Discussion

When MLK (1968) described the invisible prison that White Americans constructed to contain Black Americans, in many ways he described the construct of stigmatization that social scientists have since answered the call to study. Although a sizeable body of work has been devoted to understanding how one perceives discrimination in the context of a single stigmatized identity (Branscombe et al., 1999), less research has examined sources of perceived discrimination and stereotyping for individuals with multiple stigmatized identities.

The results of the present study revealed that participants who identified with multiple stigmatized groups were more likely than other participants to feel invisible due to their social identities. Moreover, feeling invisible related to greater perceived unfair/discriminatory treatment and to greater concerns about being stereotyped. Our findings therefore suggest that multiply-stigmatized individuals are sensitive to the idea that others ignore and dismiss their perspectives and, often, their personhood (Biernat & Sesko, 2013; Sesko & Biernat, 2018), and that their identities play a role in this mistreatment (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). The present research extends literature on intersectional invisibility, which has previously focused on perceptions of multiply-stigmatized targets (Biernat & Sesko, 2013; Livingston et al., 2012; Plant, Goplen, & Kunstman, 2011; Sesko & Biernat, 2018; Sesko & Biernat, 2010) by providing ratings by multiply-stigmatized targets, themselves (see also Sweetman, 2018). The present findings suggest that understanding felt invisibility may be important for comprehending meta-perceptual outcomes for multiply-stigmatized individuals; for example, for understanding how stereotype concerns shape how multiply-stigmatized targets anticipate being judged in cross-group interactions (see Shelton, 2003).

Although our research is framed by the model of intersectional invisibility, our findings are also consistent with the *double jeopardy* hypothesis, which predicts that the negative outcomes of belonging to stigmatized groups are cumulative (Beale, 1979). For example, double jeopardy posits that the amount of discrimination experienced by women of color is equivalent to the sum of discrimination experienced by men of color and White women (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). Similarly, the somewhat linear nature of our data suggest that perceptions of discrimination increase as the number of stigmatized identities held by

a person increases. However, by specifying that multiply-stigmatized individuals experience a different form of stigma—invisibility—than singly-stigmatized individuals, we aim to move beyond the notion that the effects of stigma can be reduced to the “sum of their parts.” Moreover, we observed that participants with three stigmas did not report greater invisibility, discrimination, or stereotype concerns than participants with two stigmas, suggesting a potential “tipping point” for stigmatization. This interpretation is preliminary, however, until future work can replicate this finding. The role of identity type is also unclear in our data; in other words, we cannot determine whether participants who identify, for example, with stigmatized gender, race and class groups differ from participants who identify with stigmatized race, class, and sexual orientation groups. We discuss this limitation further in the Limitations and Future Directions section below.

Diversity and Leadership

Although the theme of this section of the special issue is “diversity and leadership,” our data do not speak directly to the effects of stigma on who attains and thrives in leadership positions. However, examining the perspectives of stigmatized individuals, broadly, is critical to understanding group-level disparities in leadership attainment. Stigmatization affects individuals via the mechanism of discrimination when individuals encounter outright expectations that they will fail (Major & O’Brien, 2005). For example, women who enact the agentic behaviors expected of, and appreciated in, male leaders, are disliked for deviating from their feminine role (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Stigmatization also affects individuals via the mechanism of identity threat by teaching members of stigmatized groups, through experience, to anticipate further discrimination, disrespect, and doubt from others (Major & O’Brien, 2005). Indeed, women who expect to be stereotyped as poor at math disengage from quantitative fields in order to avoid this threatening situation (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002). Thus, identity threat functions as a psychological response or adaptation to actual experiences of discrimination; when stigmatized individuals are discriminated against in the present, they learn to anticipate more discrimination in the future and may be less likely to pursue leadership positions (Major & O’Brien, 2005). Moreover, more recent work shows that a person’s multiple stigmatized identities shape whether that person is perceived by others as a good leader (Rosette, Koval, Ma, & Livingston, 2015; Wilson, Remedios, & Rule, 2017). Critically, the present study suggests that multiply-stigmatized individuals may anticipate being overlooked for leadership roles; they may have also had experiences in which they tried to take the lead, however, their ideas were misattributed to others (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Future research is needed to test these claims.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are limitations of this research that are important to consider. In focusing on how the number of stigmatized identities that an individual holds affects how that individual perceives discrimination, we collapsed across very different identities within social categories (such as gay and bisexual within sexual orientation), as well as across categories (such as across race and gender). As a result, we glossed over important distinctions in experiences of invisibility, discrimination, and stereotyping with which members of different groups contend. This approach misses rich variability in experience (Remedios & Snyder, 2015b). For example, much of the research on how systems of privilege render multiply-stigmatized individuals socially invisible to perceivers focuses specifically on perceptions of Black women (e.g., Biernat & Sesko, 2013; Livingston et al., 2012; Plant et al., 2011; Sesko & Biernat, 2018; Sesko & Biernat, 2010). However, Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) intended the model of intersectional invisibility to apply more broadly to individuals pushed to the margins in androcentric, ethnocentric and heterocentric societies, including women of a variety of races and also sexual minorities. Future research is needed that highlights the nuanced experience of specific multiply-stigmatized groups.

Similarly, although our guiding theoretical framework of intersectional invisibility is an intersectional approach, the present method in which we rely on number of identities to predict stigmatizing experiences falls short of being truly intersectional. Intersectional approaches to studying identity recognize the ways in which identity-contingent experiences are shaped by the multiple groups to which individuals belong (Cole, 2009; Warner & Shields, 2013). Thus, intersectionality moves beyond identities as additive and captures how qualitatively new experiences emerge from the combination of particular identities (Remedios & Snyder, 2015b). The current study represents an initial step toward understanding the stigmatization of multiply-stigmatized individuals; however, more intersectional research on stigma is needed. In particular, more research involving larger samples of individuals who identify with three or more stigmatized groups is needed, as is more research involving a variety of designs, including experimental work. In addition, more work situated in cultures outside of the United States is needed in order to understand cultural influences on multiple stigmatization (e.g., Yogeewaran, Verkuyten, Osborne, & Sibley, 2018).

Conclusion

MLK called on social scientists to document the systemic privilege of White life in America. He expressed how Black Americans' understanding of their social standing changes when they recognize that they are embedded within a system that illegitimately privileges White identity and experience (MLK, 1968). The confines

of this psychological prison can be likened to the construct of stigmatization. Here, we examined how multiple sources of stigmatization constrain individuals' expectations for how they will be treated by others. We showed that multiply-stigmatized individuals expect, in particular, to be rendered invisible by their identity intersections, expectations that mirror the ways in which society regards members of multiple oppressed groups (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). We also observed that invisibility—being overlooked, ignored and dismissed—is perceived by multiply-stigmatized targets as a source of discrimination and stereotyping. In sum, studying stigmatized perspectives is necessary to move beyond investigations of dominant and/or privileged perspectives and to observe a more complete portrait of discrimination and privilege in America.

Appendix

Demographic Item Wording

Participants were able to select only one option in the items below.

What is your race/ethnicity?

European American/White

East Asian

South Asian

Hispanic/Latino

African American/Black

Middle Eastern

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Multiracial

None of the above

What is your gender?

Male

Female

Please select the option that best describes your sexual orientation.

Heterosexual

Bisexual

Homosexual

Another identification

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