

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN IN-GROUP DISCRIMINATION, POLITICAL STRESS,
POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT, AND ACTIVE COPING AMONG ETHNIC MINORITY
POPULATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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The extant literature suggests that the current political climate serves as a salient source of stress for individuals from racial/ethnic minority populations through hostile attitudes and discriminatory policies (Williams & Medlock, 2017). Further, some research supports political involvement as an active coping strategy, whereby emerging adults who perceive political injustice may engage in political activity to decrease inequality. Thus, using a moderated mediation model with race/ethnicity as a moderating variable, the current study sought to examine the associations between perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, political involvement, and active coping. The current study sampled 107 college students at a southern university. Although no association was found between political involvement and active coping, results provided support for political stress as a mediator; however this was only for racial/ethnic minority participants between the perceived in-group discrimination-political involvement association that also found conditional effects for race. Implication for the current study are discussed.

KEY WORDS: Political involvement, Discrimination, Stress, Racial/ethnic groups

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Alongside the rise of the current administration, dormant hostile attitudes toward racial/ethnic minority groups, immigrants, and Muslim individuals have come to the forefront (Williams & Medlock, 2017). These unfavorable or discriminatory attitudes within communities, policies, and the media may be deleterious to the psychological (e.g. depression, anxiety, fear for safety) and physical (e.g. heart disease, mortality rates) health of racial/ethnic minority groups within the United States (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017; Lee, Muennig, Kawachi, & Hatzenbuehler, 2015; Leitner, Hehman, Ayduk, & Mendoza-Denton, 2016; Padela & Heisler, 2010; Richman & Jonassaint, 2008). Research suggests that stress, in moderation, may occur as a result of environmental threats and serve to motivate an individual to work to counteract that threat and increase adaptive behavioral change (Ayers, Sandier, West, & Roosa, 1996; Clarke, 2006; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016). For racial/ethnic minority populations in the United States, and particularly emerging adults, policy and governmental change may give rise to psychological distress (APA, 2018; Williams & Medlock, 2017). Attempts to combat this distress may take the form of active coping through political involvement (Szymanski, 2012). Thus, this study aims to assess the associations between perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, political involvement and active coping among racial/ethnic emerging adults.

A survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA; 2017a) revealed that 57% of respondents characterize the current political climate as a significant source of stress. A greater amount of racial/ethnic minority groups (69% Black, 57%

Asian, 56% Hispanic), compared to White respondents (42%), found the outcome of the recent presidential election to be a significant source of stress (APA, 2017). Further, a survey conducted by the APA in 2017, using an ethnically and racially diverse sample, revealed that 51% of respondents reported that the current state of the nation motivated them to volunteer and support efforts they value. The findings of this survey noted that 59% of respondents reported they had taken some form of action within the past year on issues they found concerning (APA, 2017b).

Marginalized populations who perceived the current political climate as threatening to their in-group may feel motivated to counteract the stressful feedback they receive from the political environment and, as a result, work to combat inequity (Moore, Hope, Eisman, & Zimmerman, 2016; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). This may be particularly true for emerging adults who have a shorter-lived experience with discrimination. Particularly, recent surveys show that millennials/emerging adults (ages 22-39) and Generation Z (ages 15-21) populations experience the highest average stress in America (5.7 and 5.3 respectively) when compared to older Baby Boomers and older adults (4.1 and 3.3 respectively; APA, 2018). In addition, millennials/emerging adults experience the highest level of stress (5.6 out of 10) than any other generation when thinking about the current state of the nation (APA, 2018). These statistics imply that emerging adults, who are perhaps more personally affected by the hostile political rhetoric, are a population of interest in assessing the effects of the current political climate.

Racial/ethnic minority emerging adults may be motivated by a perceived hostile political climate to change their environment and levels of distress through behavioral

change such as political involvement and active coping strategies. However, contrary to some of the aforementioned statistics on respondent political motivation, some research on the effects of stress on levels of political involvement suggests that higher levels of stress are associated with lower levels of political involvement (French, Smith, Guck, Alford, & Hibbing, 2011; French et al., 2014). Of note, these researchers proposed that this negative association may be accounted for by “trait” stress, or reactivity to stress, with participants potentially avoiding all stressful situations. These studies did not, however, assess for differences in racial/ethnic groups, nor did they examine the unique emerging adult population whose experience with politics is newly developing and who may have had a different and shorter history of discrimination. In particular, among racial/ethnic minority youth, there has been support for a positive relationship between discrimination stress and active coping strategies (e.g., problem solving; Edwards, & Romero, 2008). For the emerging adult population, political involvement may serve as a coping strategy through which the deleterious effects of stress as a result of perceptions of in-group discrimination may be mitigated. By examining the associations between perceived in-group discrimination, psychological distress, political involvement, and active coping among racial/ethnic minority groups, the current study may provide evidence for the use of political involvement as an active coping skill to help reduce the amount of political stress experienced by racial/ethnic minority populations, as well as a means of promoting activities that may lead to decreased racial/ethnic inequality.

Social Identity Theory: Perceived In-Group Discrimination as a Meaningful Stressor

Perceived in-group discrimination serves as a salient stressor for racial/ethnic minority groups (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Goosby, Cheadle, & Mitchell, 2018; Paradies et al., 2015). In regard to the current study, perceptions of discrimination were assessed by the individual's perception that the political system in America is set up in a manner that is discriminatory toward their racial/ethnic group. The current political climate is suggested to have uncovered hostile attitudes toward racial/ethnic minority populations and immigrants following the most recent presidential election (Williams & Medlock, 2017), which may serve to increase racial/ethnic minority populations' experiences and perceptions of discriminatory behaviors. Further research has suggested that these hostile attitudes, via community prejudice/discrimination and anti-immigration policies, are associated with deleterious physical and psychological consequences (e.g., mortality rates, heart disease, mental illness; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2015; Leitner et al., 2016). As a result of these hostile attitudes, individuals within racial/ethnic minority populations may seek to combat the prejudice and discrimination they experience by actively seeking to change a system that enables and maintains this cycle of oppression.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) can provide insight into why racial/ethnic minority populations may seek to become politically involved in order to mitigate the experiences of psychological distress from the political climate. The theory has three associated assumptions in regard to social identity and the categorization of social groups. These assumptions are that individuals aim to maintain a positive self-

concept, groups may have positive or negative perceptions from both in-group and outgroup members, and one's own group is compared to other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Thus, Social Identity Theory postulates that individuals seek to develop and maintain a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) that develops through positive comparisons between in- and out-groups. However, when one is unsatisfied with their in-group, and if possible, the individual will either seek new membership in a more positively viewed group or attempt to increase the relative standing of their in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Recent political changes, including leadership and policy changes, may result in heightened awareness of inequity between groups for racial/ethnic minority individuals and immigrants. Additionally, this awareness may be particularly robust for individuals who report higher levels of perceived in-group discrimination. Exposure to hostile and discriminatory messages may result in an increase in psychological distress due to the realization of racial/ethnic group inequality and lower perceived standing of one's in-group. As a result, and based on Social Identity Theory, this belief of in-group inequality and discrimination may motivate individuals to take active steps to increase their groups relative standing, thus decreasing psychological distress (e.g., Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Clarke, 2006; Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Westfall, Van Boven, Chambers, & Judd, 2015; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016). Engaging in political activity may be an active coping strategy used by racial/ethnic minority emerging adults to decrease racial inequality and reduce psychological distress.

Political Involvement as a Coping Strategy and Means of Decreasing Inequality

The current study defines political involvement as an individual's active participation within the political climate (e.g., contacting political officials, attending rallies, donating to causes/candidates they agree with, etc.). Within a discriminatory political system, marginalized groups and groups with less political power are at a disadvantage, as their voices often go unheard and concerns unaddressed (Young, 2002). However, with greater tension, hostility and political divide, marginalized groups may be more inclined to attempt to change the system (Moore et al., 2016; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003), becoming more politically involved as a result. This may be particularly true for racial/ethnic minority emerging adults, who are new consumers of political information, and thus newly exposed to harmful attitudes and policies. Although previous research suggests that millennials/emerging adults are the least likely to become involved in politics, this literature does not take into account factors such as in-group discrimination that may serve as a motivator for becoming politically involved (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Mayer, 2011).

In fact, voter turnout in 2018 appeared to have reached an all-time high with 49.30% of eligible voters, compared to the 2014 midterm election which had 36.7% of eligible voters (Stewart, 2018; Voter Turnout, n.d.). Of particular interest, the millennial/emerging adult vote showed a considerable increase in the 2016 primary (from 18.4 million votes in 2008 to 34 million votes in 2016; Fry, 2017). This increase in voter turnout among emerging adults may have been in response to recent political changes. Previous research has assessed the potential moderating effect that active coping strategies have on the association between activism (i.e., political involvement) and

recent racial events (i.e., perceived in-group discrimination; Szymanski, 2012). Specifically, Szymanski (2012) found that those with higher levels of race-related stress were more likely to be a part of activist groups. Further, individuals who used more active coping strategies engaged in more political activism (Szymanski, 2012). Within the current study, active coping is defined as making active behavioral or cognitive changes in order to combat or eliminate a stressor.

As a result of stress brought on by the changing political system, racial/ethnic minority individuals may seek to mitigate these symptoms through the use of coping strategies. For individuals who perceive the political climate as a controllable stressor, researchers suggest that an active approach to coping with stress is most adaptive wherein problem-focused strategies (e.g., behavior changes, cognitive reappraisals) are used in order to combat or eliminate the associated stressor (Ayers et al., 1996; Clarke, 2006; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016). For example, individuals who perceive the political climate to be changeable, perhaps racial/ethnic minority emerging adults who have a less long-standing history with discrimination, may choose to change the system via voting, protesting, running for offices, or investing in organizations that benefit causes they are passionate about. As a result of previous research on coping and activism (Ayers et al., 1996; Clarke, 2006; Szymanski, 2012; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016), political involvement may in turn be associated with active coping strategies among racial/ethnic minority emerging adults.

The Current Study

We used a moderated mediation model to test two of the following hypotheses:

1a) political stress would serve as a mediator of the association between perceived in-

group discrimination and political involvement. 1b) race/ethnicity would serve as a moderator of the association between perceived in-group discrimination and political stress, such that for racial/ethnic minority emerging adults relative to White individuals, perceived in-group discrimination would be associated with higher levels of political stress. 1c) race would serve as a moderator of the association between political stress and political involvement, such that for racial/ethnic minority emerging adults relative to White individuals, political stress would be associated with higher levels of political involvement (see Figure 1). 2) to assess political involvement as a form of active coping, political involvement was hypothesized to be positively association with active coping.

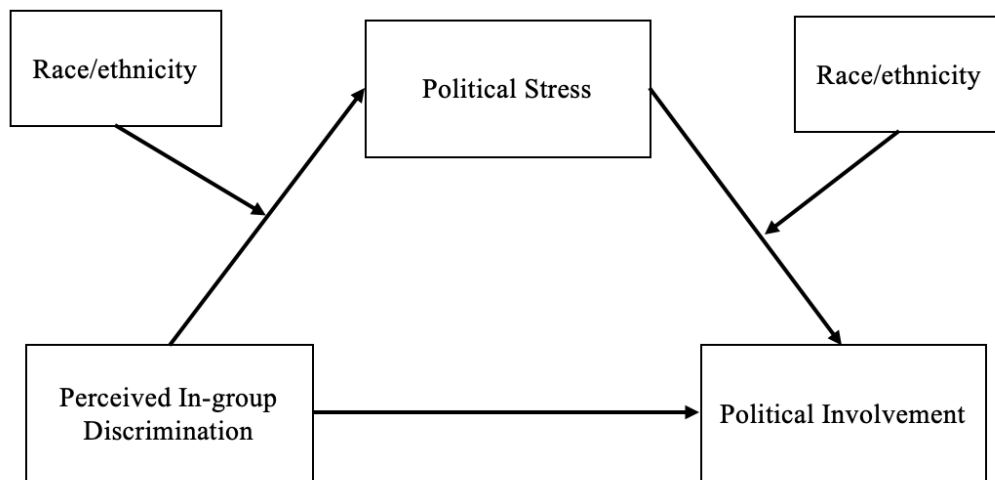


Figure 1. This figure illustrates the conceptual moderated mediation model of the relationship between perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, race/ethnicity, and political involvement.

CHAPTER II

Methods

Participants

This study is part of a larger ongoing study that aims to understand the differential effects of political stress on health outcomes among racially/ethnically diverse undergraduate students from a university in Southeastern Texas. The current study included 107 ($n = 107$) racially/ethnically diverse students between the ages of 19 to 56 years old ($M = 22.64$, $SD = 5.44$). There were 89 female (83.20%) and 18 male (16.80%) participants in the current study. With regard to race/ethnicity, there were 52 White (48.60%), 28 Hispanic (26.20%), 14 Black (13.10%), 7 Asian (6.5%), 1 Caribbean American (.90%), 1 Native American (.90%), and 4 participants who identified as other (3.7%). With regard to political affiliation, there were 53 Democrats (49.50%), 38 Republican (35.50%), 7 Libertarian (6.50%), 1 Green (.90%), 1 Constitution party (.90%), 6 participants who identified with some other political party (5.60%), and 1 participant who did not indicate their affiliation. Within the current sample there were 32 seniors (29.90%), 26 freshmen (24.30%), 25 juniors (23.40%), and 24 sophomores (22.40%).

Materials

Demographics. Participants were asked questions about their age, gender, race/ethnicity, and political orientation (e.g., Republican, Democrat, Independent, etc.).

Political Involvement. Participants' political involvement was assessed using a questionnaire based on a measure developed by French and colleagues (2011, 2014). The questionnaire included five dichotomous questions asking participants to denote if they

engaged in various political activities (i.e., ever attended political meetings/rallies; worked in the political sector; provided monetary support for political entities, causes, or candidates; contacted government officials; held office in a government entity) and one dimensional item on a five-point Likert scale (*Never to Very Often*), regarding levels of interest in politics (French, et al., 2011, 2014). The final item, which sought to measure the individual's level of interest in politics, was controlled for in the resulting analyses to account for potential interest (or lack thereof). Previous analyses of this measure outlined its unidimensional nature that accounted for approximately 45% of the overall variance (French et al., 2011).

Perceived In-Group Discrimination. Participant levels of perceived in-group discrimination (from the political system/government) was measured using a measure of realistic threat adapted from Stephan and colleagues (2002). Realistic threats refer to threats that may challenge the very existence, political/economic power, or the physical/emotional well-being of one's in-group (Stephan et al., 2002). This measure is a 12-item questionnaire on a 10-point Likert Scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 10 = *strongly agree*). Rather than ask participants how much they think their in-group is a political and economic threat, for the purposes of this study, participants were asked to assess how much they believe outgroup members think their in-group is a political and economic threat. This ensured that the measure is collecting the individual's perception of discrimination from the out-group. Some sample items include "My racial/ethnic group dominates American politics more than they should," and "the legal system is more lenient to those from my racial/ethnic group over those from other groups." Literature suggests that this measure yields appropriate and robust levels of reliability ($\alpha \geq .70$)

across racial/ethnic groups (Stephan et al., 2002). Internal consistency for the current sample was .97.

Visual Analogue Scale (VAS). Participants' perceived political stress level was measured using a Visual Analogue Scale (VAS), a 10-cm line along which value anchors are placed (typically from 0-10; Williamson & Hoggart, 2005). Although originally developed to measure perceptions of pain (Williamson & Hoggart, 2005), the literature supports the use of the VAS in measuring participants' level of perceived stress (Lesage, Berjot, and Deschamps, 2012). The current study used the VAS with the following anchors: 0 = *no stress*, 5 = *moderate stress*, and 10 = *worst stress*. The item used to assess levels of political stress stated the following: "Indicate where on the line best represents your current stress level as a result of the current political administration (e.g., their policies and practices, and what you believe these policies and practices mean for the future of the country)."

Brief COPE. Participants' use of active coping strategies was assessed using the Active Coping subscale of the Brief COPE (see Appendix E), a 28-item scale that utilizes a 4-point Likert scaling (1 = *I haven't been doing this at all* to 4 = *I've been doing this a lot*; Carver, 1997). Developmental analyses suggest a 14-factor model including Active Coping, Planning, Positive Reframing, Acceptance, Humor, Religion, Using Emotional Support, Using instrumental Support, Self-Distraction, Denial, Venting, Substance Use, Behavioral Disengagement, and Self-Blame (Carver, 1997). The Active Coping subscale is made up of two items (item 2 and 7) that state: "I concentrate my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in," and "I take action to try to make the situation better" (Carver, 1997). Higher scores on the Active Coping subscale are indicative of

higher use of active coping skills. A previous meta-analysis revealed mixed findings on the reliability of the brief COPE, with the median internal consistency coefficient being .68 and a range of .55 to .91 (Kato, 2015). As a result, interpretation of data from this measure was done cautiously and resulting reliability analyses were conducted to assess the reliability demonstrated by the sample. The Brief COPE demonstrated an acceptable level of reliability for the current study ($\alpha = .84$). In addition, the Active Coping subscale of the Brief COPE demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability with the current sample ($\alpha = .84$).

Political News Intake Questionnaire (PNIQ). The Political News Intake Questionnaire (see Appendix F) was created by the researchers in order to assess the frequency in which participants consume political news. The measure was created by identifying commonplace media platforms that citizens are likely to access throughout their daily lives. Higher scores on this questionnaire are indicative of higher levels of political news consumption through a variety of sources (e.g., newspapers, television, online news sources, etc.). Within the current study, participant levels of political news intake were controlled for in order to account for participants who receive political news at extreme levels (both high and low). Internal consistency for the current sample was .82.

Procedure

Institutional Review Board approval was acquired before recruitment efforts commenced. Participants were recruited through a psychology participant pool. All participants received one hour of research credit for their participation in the current study that counted for extra credit toward their respective courses. Individuals who

wished to participate in the study were first directed to a link to an online survey where participants were provided the study's purpose and procedures, along with information regarding data use, storage, confidentiality, desired sample size, administrator contact information, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Once consent was given, participants were asked to complete a battery of questionnaires that sought to assess perceptions of discrimination, stress, political involvement, and use of active coping strategies. Throughout the survey, participants were able to skip any questions they did not wish to answer.

CHAPTER III

Results

Power and Assumptions Testing

In an analysis of missing data, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 22 (SPSS; IBM Corp, 2016), the current study was found to have 4.70% missing data. A Little's MCAR test indicated that the data was missing at random ($\chi^2 = 1746.95$, $p = .07$). To minimize the impact of missing data on the analyses, individuals who did not complete any of the measures of interest were excluded from analyses. This resulted in five participants being excluded and lowering the initial sample size ($n = 112$) to 107. In addition, the current study used multiple imputation to account for the remainder of the missing data. Namely, multiple imputation replaces missing data with plausible estimates in order to generate a complete data set (Rubin, 1996). Five imputations were completed in order to analyze the current data. A post hoc power analysis was conducted using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). With a sample size of 107 participants, an alpha level of .05 and a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), power was determined to be .79. All subsequent data was analyzed using SPSS version 22 (SPSS; IBM Corp, 2016).

Linear regression assumptions testing of linearity, normality of errors, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were assessed for this study. A Q-Q plot was run to assess normality of errors and linearity for perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, political involvement, and active coping strategies. The resulting plots suggested that the respective factors were linear and normally distributed. Skewness and kurtosis were also assessed to analyze the normality of factors. Perceived in-group discrimination

demonstrated a skewness coefficient of .44 and kurtosis of -.94. Political stress demonstrated a distribution with skewness of -.26 and kurtosis of -1.10. Political involvement demonstrated a distribution with a skewness of .36 and kurtosis of -.82. Lastly, active coping yielded a skewness of -.11 and a kurtosis of -.49. These scores were all within acceptable levels of skewness and kurtosis as absolute values fell below 2.5 (Abbott, 2016). Homoscedasticity was assessed by looking at their respective scatter plots to assess for patterns, for which no patterns were found. Multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each independent variable. All VIF scores fell between 1.01 and 1.10 indicating no violations of multicollinearity, as multicollinearity may be assumed with scores above the value of 10 (Robinson & Schumacker, 2009).

Descriptive Data

Means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), and intercorrelations are presented in Table 1. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the perceived in-group discrimination ($M = 47.62$, $SD = 31.30$), political stress ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 2.86$), political involvement ($M = 1.49$, $SD = 1.28$), and active coping ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 2.18$) variables. Correlation analyses suggested that there was a significant positive association between political stress and political involvement ($r = .25$, $p = .01$). Perceived in-group discrimination was not significantly associated with political involvement ($r = .16$, $p = .10$), political stress ($r = -.04$, $p = .69$) and active coping ($r = .07$, $p = .47$). Further, there was no significant association between political involvement and active coping ($r = .07$, $p = .47$), and political stress and active coping ($r = -.02$, $p = .88$).

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceived In-group Discrimination	-						
2. Political Stress	-.04	-					
3. Political Involvement	~.16	*.25	-				
4. Active Coping	.07	-.02	.07	-			
5. Political Interest	.01	*.22	** .42	-.11	-		
6. Political News Intake	-.04	*.25	< .01	.03	** .31	-	
7. Age	.14	.10	*.23	.12	.02	-.09	-
<i>M</i>	47.62	4.58	1.49	5.62	2.54	20.67	22.64
<i>SD</i>	31.30	2.86	1.28	2.18	.87	6.12	5.44

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ **Hypothesis Testing**

A moderated mediation analysis was conducted using SPSS PROCESS (model 58; Hayes, 2017) in order to assess the relationships between perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, and political involvement while controlling for numerous covariates (e.g., political interest, political news intake, and age). Figure 1 displays the conceptual model of this analysis. As depicted in Figure 1, political stress (mediator variable) was expected to mediate the relationship between perceived in-group discrimination (independent variable) and political involvement (dependent variable). In addition, race (moderator variable) was expected to moderate the relationships between both perceived in-group discrimination and political stress, and political stress and political involvement. The resulting model used a bootstrapping technique that resampled the data 5,000 times in order to generate confidence intervals for the mediation effects.

Confidence intervals suggest significance when they do not include zero. Measures of perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, and political involvement were converted into z-scores in order to produce standardized coefficients.

A test of moderated mediation using PROCESS involves several steps. First, the mediator variable model (see top of Table 2) examined the associations between perceived in-group discrimination (independent variable) and political stress (mediator variable). There was a significant positive association between perceived in-group discrimination and political stress [$\beta = .81$, $SE = .15$, $p < .01$, 95% CI (.53, 1.10)]. Further, the effects of perceived in-group discrimination on political stress were conditional based on racial/ethnic minority status [$\beta = -.49$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI (-.68, -.30); see Figure 2], such that for White participants, higher levels of perceived in-group discrimination was associated with higher levels of political stress [$\beta = .32$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$, 95% CI (.20, .44); see Figure 2], and for racial/ethnic minority participants higher levels of perceived in-group discrimination were associated with lower levels of political stress [$\beta = -.17$, $SE = .08$, $p = .03$, 95% CI (-.31, -.02); see Figure 2].

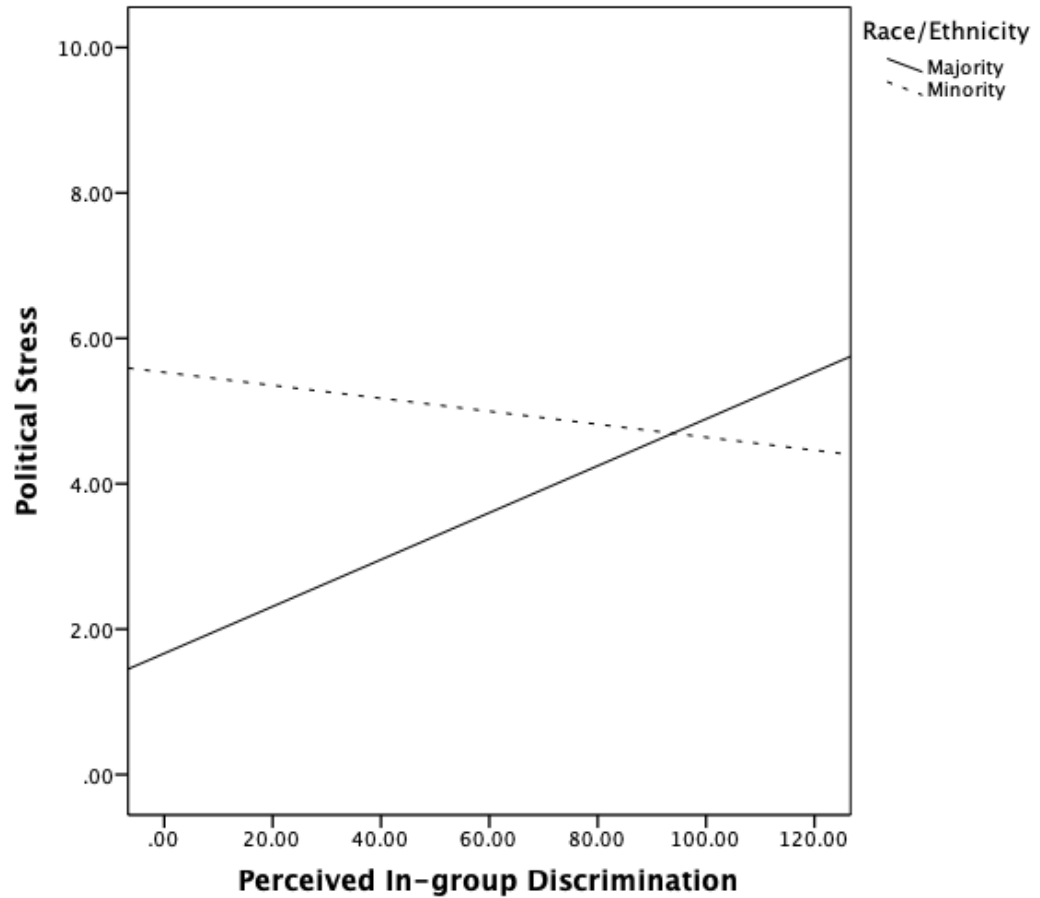


Figure 2. Conditional effects of race on perceived discrimination and political involvement.

Second, the dependent variable model (see bottom of Table 2) examined the associations between perceived in-group discrimination (independent variable), political stress (mediator variable), and political involvement (dependent variable). There was a significant direct effect of perceived in-group discrimination on political involvement [$\beta = .09$, $SE = .04$, $p = .04$, 95% CI ($< .01$, $.08$)]. Further, there was not a significant association between political stress and political involvement [$\beta = -.17$, $SE = .11$, $p = .14$, 95% CI ($-.39$, $.06$)]. However, the effect of political stress on political involvement was conditional based on one's racial/ethnic status [$\beta = .25$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$, 95% CI ($.11$,

.39); see Figure 3], such that higher levels of political stress were associated with higher levels of political involvement for racial/ethnic minority populations [$\beta = .33$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$, 95% CI (.23, .43)], but not White individuals [$\beta = .08$, $SE = .05$, $p = .11$, 95% CI (-.02, .18)]. For racial/ethnic minority populations [$\beta = -.05$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI (-.11, -.01)], but not White individuals [$\beta = .03$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI (-.01, .06)], the indirect effect of perceived in-group discrimination on political involvement through political stress was significant. Further, the difference between conditional indirect effects based on race/ethnicity was significant [Index = -.08, $SE = .03$, 95% CI (-.15 -.02)]. The overall moderated mediation model including covariates, main effects, and interaction effects was significant, $F(7, 613) = 36.53$, $p < .01$, and accounted for 29.43% of the total variance in predicting political involvement.

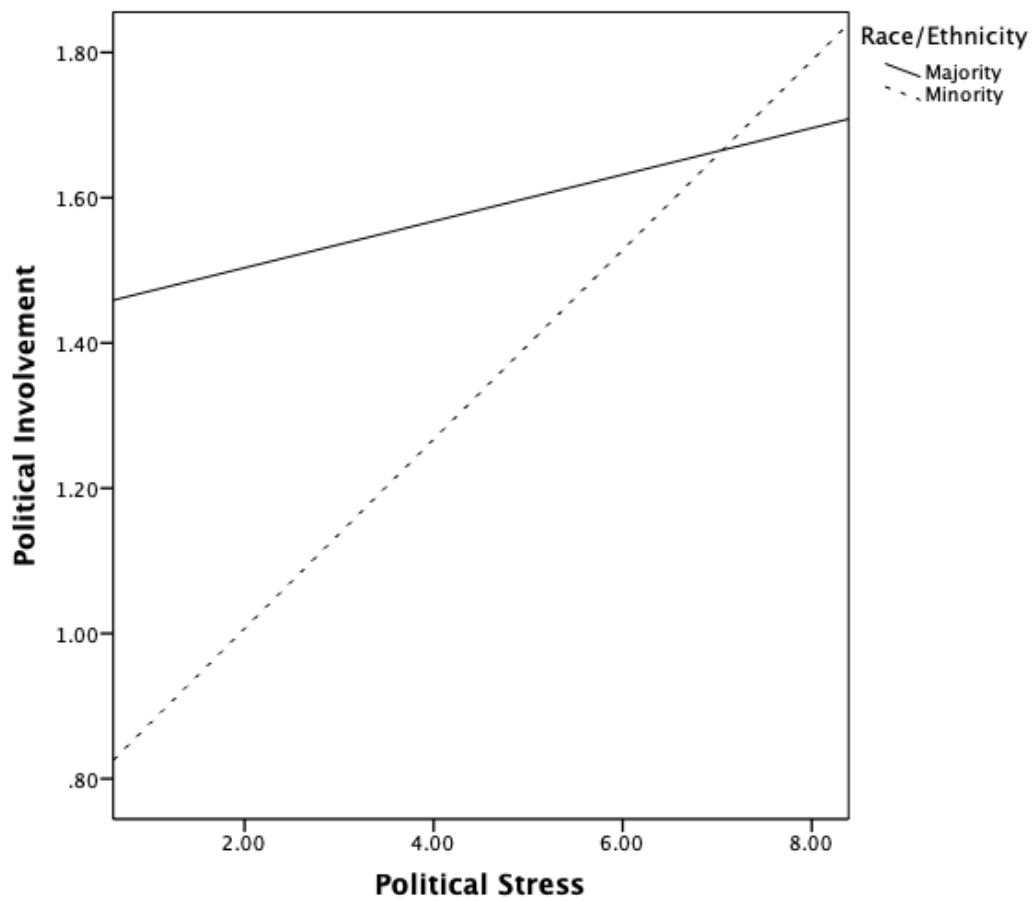


Figure 3. Conditional effects of race on political stress and political involvement.

Table 2

Moderated mediation effects on the associations between perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, political involvement, and race.

Predictor	<i>Mediator variable model</i>				
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Constant	-.94	.15	-6.38	-1.23,	-.65
Age	.08	.04	2.04	<.01,	.15
Political Interest	.13	.04	3.27	.05,	.20
Political News Intake	.19	.04	4.80	.11,	.27
Perceived In-group Discrimination	.81	.15	5.58	.53,	1.10
Race	.52	.10	5.45	.33,	.71
Perceived In-group Discrimination x Race	-.49	.10	-4.97	-.68,	-.30
$R^2 = .18$					
Predictor	<i>Dependent variable model</i>				
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Constant	.30	.14	2.07	.02,	.58
Age	.16	.03	4.68	.09,	.23
Political Interest	.41	.04	11.32	.34,	.48
Political News Intake	-.13	.04	-3.55	-.21,	-.06
Perceived In-group Discrimination	.09	.04	2.01	<.01,	.18
Political Stress	-.17	.11	-1.47	-.39,	-.04
Race	-.22	.09	-2.36	-.40,	.04
Political Stress x Race	.25	.07	3.45	.11,	.39
$R^2 = .29$					

Note. Bolded confidence intervals indicate significance.

With regard to hypothesis 2, which stated that political involvement would be positively and significantly correlated with active coping, a linear regression (see table 3) was conducted with covariates (e.g., overall stress, political news intake, political interest, and age). There was not a significant association between political involvement and active coping ($\beta = .13, p = .24$).

Table 3

Linear regression between political involvement and active coping.

Outcome Variable	β	SE	t	p
Active Coping				
(Constant)	<.01	.10	-.03	.98
Age	.11	.10	1.08	.28
Political News Intake	.10	.11	.98	.33
Political Interest	-.20	.12	-1.76	.08
Political Involvement	.13	.11	1.17	.24
$R^2 = .05$				

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

Given recent transition in the government, and associated increases in hostile attitudes toward racial/ethnic minority populations (Williams & Medlock, 2017), the political climate may be particularly stressful for these individuals. As millennials/emerging adults report the largest amount of stress surrounding the political climate (APA, 2018), the need to assess this relationship in diverse emerging adult populations is essential. Results from the current study demonstrated a significant relationship between perceived in-group discrimination and political involvement, such that higher levels of perceived in-group discrimination were associated with higher levels of political involvement. This is consistent with literature surrounding discrimination and activism in an all African American sample which showed that racialized events (e.g., discrimination) were positively associated with activism (e.g., political involvement), and were moderated by use of active coping strategies, such that higher levels of active coping was associated with higher levels of activism (Szymanski, 2012). This suggests that emerging adults may be motivated to become politically involved as a means of coping with exposure to hostile and discriminatory attitudes commonplace in today's political climate.

Our results revealed that perceived in-group discrimination was associated with political involvement through political stress. However, consistent with a moderated mediation hypothesis the presence of a mediated relationship was supported only for racial/ethnic minority individuals and not majority individuals. This conditional mediation of political stress on the association between perceived in-group discrimination

and political involvement among emerging adult populations based on race/ethnicity is consistent with the notion that racial/ethnic minority populations may be more affected by the current political rhetoric and thus, more motivated to engage the political system in order to assuage distress (see APA 2017a; APA 2017b; APA 2018; Clark et al., 1999; Goosby, Cheadle, & Mitchell, 2018; Paradies et al., 2015; Williams & Medlock, 2017). These findings suggest that political stress might be a mechanism of action for racial/ethnic minority emerging adults to become involved with the political climate when exposed to discriminatory or hostile attitudes and unjust policies.

Of note, the different mediation pathways (the association between perceived in-group discrimination and political stress, and the association between stress and political involvement) were both moderated by race. Regarding the first pathway, for racial/ethnic minority individuals, surprisingly, higher levels of perceived in-group discrimination was associated with lower levels of political stress. This is consistent with the extant literature noting an association between discrimination and stress for racial/ethnic minority populations (Clark et al., 1999; Goosby, Cheadle, & Mitchell, 2018; Paradies et al., 2015); however, unlike the extent literature, which supports a positive association between discrimination and general stress, the results of the current study indicated a negative association. The inconsistency between the current study and previous studies might be due to the type of discrimination (in-group discrimination vs discrimination against the individual) and stress (political stress vs general stress) assessed. Possibly, higher levels of discrimination experienced at the individual level may result in heightened levels of distress including lowered self-esteem and higher levels of depression (Mereish, N'cho, Green, Jernigan, & Helms, 2016; Yip, 2015); however,

heightened levels of discrimination experienced at the group level, which may not be specific to the individual, may result in disengagement from the group or source of stress. Consistent with this premise, research conducted by Aubin, Amiot, and Fontaine-Boyte (2016) suggests that groups with lower levels of power in the sociopolitical climate are more likely to perceive their conditions as stable and report higher levels of collective hopelessness. This perception may lead individuals within their respective social groups to disengage from their social group and may explain the decrease in political stress at higher levels of discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Racial/ethnic minority individuals who have a more prominent and chronic history with discrimination may perceive an inability to improve their group's status in their sociopolitical environment and experience feelings of hopelessness rather than political stress as a result (Aubin, Amiot, & Fontaine-Boyte, 2016; Seligman, 1972; Stein, Gonzalez, & Huq, 2012).

For White individuals, higher levels of perceived in-group discrimination was associated with higher levels of political stress. This is consistent with previous literature surrounding the prototypic response to discrimination and resulting stress (Clark et al., 1999; Goosby, Cheadle, & Mitchell, 2018; Paradies et al., 2015). A potential explanation for these findings may be surrounding White individuals' comparative limited history with experiencing discrimination and group disparagement. Thus, experience of in-group discrimination for these individuals may be less threatening to one's self-esteem and affinity for one's group, yet still produce distress with higher perceived threat and disparagement of one's in-group producing greater levels of stress.

With respect to the second pathway, there was not a significant conditional effect for majority racial/ethnic individuals on the relationship between political stress and

political involvement; however, for racial/ethnic minority individuals, higher levels of political stress were associated with higher levels of political involvement. This is inconsistent with previous literature that suggests a negative association between stress and political involvement (French et al., 2014; French et al., 2017). These authors suggest that those with lower trait stress, and therefore have a higher threshold for taking on stress, will be more likely to be politically involved (French et al., 2014; French et al., 2017) while those with high reported stress may be more inclined to avoid situations that may bring about stress. However, these studies do not take into account the unique experience of the emerging adult racial/ethnic minority population or the salience of discrimination in motivating involvement. The current results suggest that racial/ethnic minority individuals may be motivated to become politically involved from their experiences of psychological distress from political sources. Although the current study initially contended that political involvement would serve as an active coping strategy whereby individuals would become politically engaged to assuage levels of stress, the results of the current study did not provide support for an association between political involvement and active coping. Thus, racial/ethnic minority populations may be more likely to be politically involved not as a means to cope (or perhaps not in the way we conceptualize coping in this study), but for other reasons (e.g., decreasing the status quo and increasing equity).

Implications

Hostile and discriminatory attitudes and policies have been associated with numerous deleterious psychological and physiological outcomes (e.g., mortality rates, heart disease, mental illness; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2015; Leitner et al.,

2016). In addition, the results of the current study purport that experiences of chronic and commonplace discrimination against one's in-group may give rise to use of passive coping strategies in order to accommodate stress among racial/ethnic minority populations (Aubin, Amiot, and Fontaine-Boyte, 2016; Ayers et al., 1996; Clarke, 2006; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2016); however, chronic stress may elicit feelings of hopelessness (Seligman, 1972; Stein, Gonzalez, & Huq, 2012). Although not examined in the current study, feelings of hopelessness may give rise to depression (Horwitz, Berona, Czyz, Yeguez, & King, 2017). Racial/ethnic minority individuals, who may experience feelings of hopelessness (Seligman, 1972; Stein, Gonzalez, & Huq, 2012), may benefit from psychoeducation on depression and interventions surrounding empowerment (e.g., Feminist therapy; Brown, 2018) against a discriminatory system. Namely, feminist therapy seeks to eliminate internalized oppression and empower clients in order to combat external obstacles commonplace in a patriarchal society (Brown, 2018). This process is done through the generation of an egalitarian relationship that allows clients to explore the power dynamics of society at large and act out how this plays out within therapy sessions (Brown, 2018). In particular, this intervention may be helpful in promoting racial/ethnic minority individuals' self-efficacy (i.e., lowering feelings of hopelessness) and motivate them to become politically involved to eliminate social inequity.

The current study expands the knowledge on the effects of the current political climate on American emerging adults and gives particular interest to racial/ethnic minority populations. Future research should expand beyond the scope of the current study in order to understand the differences between the experiences of the majority

group (i.e., White individuals) and racial/ethnic minority groups. Public law and policy can be improved by focusing on equity between social groups and monitoring the rhetoric put out into the public forum to combat the current hostile climate that has shown to be deleterious to health and psychological well-being (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2015; Leitner et al., 2016; Williams & Medlock, 2017). Public policy could benefit racial/ethnic minority populations by increasing accessibility to psychological and health services in order to accommodate individuals currently experiencing the adverse effects of stress and discrimination on health as some populations have been associated with limited use of the health care system (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017). In addition, providing public psychoeducation on the effects of stress on health and discrimination on stress levels would increase awareness of this relationship for racial/ethnic minority individuals and serve to decrease feelings of hopelessness within this population (e.g., Feminist Therapy; Brown, 2018).

Limitations

Although the current study makes important contributions to inform a larger study on political stress in racial/ethnic minority populations, several limitations should be noted. The current study uses a cross-sectional design to assess relations between the variables of interest. As a result, no temporal or directional conclusions can be made about these associations. The current study did not collect a sample that was representative of the racial/ethnic minority population. Future research could benefit from collecting a more representative sample in order to better assess the experiences of racial/ethnic minority population as a whole. In addition, future research would benefit from assessing group differences among racial/ethnic minority groups due to the

heterogeneity of each group's lived experiences surrounding discrimination in the United States. These differences may result in differential levels of stress, political involvement, and coping strategies. The measure of political involvement/interest used in the current study did not yield acceptable levels of internal consistency. This creates concern surrounding the confidence in the ability of the measure to assess participant levels of political involvement. Future research would benefit from establishing a measure that demonstrates a higher level of reliability from samples. In addition, biological levels of stress (i.e., cortisol) were not assessed within the current study. Biological stress levels may be a better indicator of stress as perceptions of stress may be incongruent with the body's physiological response to stressful situations as research suggests mixed results on the covariance between psychological and physiological stress (Hellhammer, Wüst, & Kudielka, 2009). Future research should consider examining physiological markers of stress to assess the body's response to stress brought on by the political climate and how this may differ from the individual's perceptions of stress. In addition, we did not assess psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and hopelessness. Future studies may benefit from assessing these variables as they have been associated with increases in stress (Brown & Suppes, 1998; Burke, Davis, Otte, & Mohr, 2005; Heim & Nemeroff, 1999; McEwen, 2006) and may provide more insight into the pathway between experienced in-group discrimination and political involvement.

Conclusion

The extant literature suggests that political involvement as an active coping skill may be a way that racial/ethnic minority emerging adult populations combat stress resulting from perceived in-group discrimination from the current political climate (Clark

et al., 1999; Goosby, Cheadle, & Mitchell, 2018; Paradies et al., 2015; Szymanski, 2012).

The current study provided partial support for these relationships. Namely, there was support for a moderated mediation relationship among perceived in-group discrimination, political stress, political involvement, and race. Political stress served as a motivator for individuals to engage the political climate; Further, racial/ethnic minority populations become more politically involved as a result of stress from political sources, though heightened levels of perceived in-group discrimination may enable some groups to emotionally disengage and thus report lower levels of stress.

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APPENDIX A Demographics Questionnaire.

Demographic Information

Please provide any/all information below. If you wish to not answer any of the following questions, please specify with an “N/A” (no answer)

Age: _____

Gender:

Male: _____

Female: _____

Race/Ethnicity:

White: _____

Asian: _____

Black: _____

Hispanic, Non-white: _____

Other (Please specify): _____

Political orientation (e.g. Republican, Democrat, Independent, etc.):

APPENDIX B. Political Involvement Measure.

French Political Involvement Measure

Please answer all of the questions provided below. Please answer “Yes” if you have EVER done any of the following. Please answer “No” if you have NEVER done any of the following activities.

Ever attended political meetings or rallies: Yes_____ NO_____

Ever worked in the political sector: Yes_____ NO_____

Provided monetary support for political entity, cause or candidate: Yes_____ NO_____

Contacted government officials: Yes_____ NO_____

Held office in a government entity: Yes_____ NO_____

How often do you engage in political discussion (select one):

Never

Rarely

Somewhat Often

Very Often

APPENDIX C. Measure of Realistic Threats.

Measure of Realistic Threats

Use the scale below to answer each question. How much do you believe **others outside of your racial/ethnic group** agree with each statement about your racial/ethnic group?

1(strongly disagree)----2----3----4----5 (neither)----6----7----8----9----10(strongly agree)

Realistic Threat

1. My racial/ethnic group already hold too many positions of power and responsibility in this country.
2. My racial/ethnic group dominate American politics more than they should.
3. When my racial/ethnic group are in positions of authority, they discriminate against other racial/ethnic groups when making hiring decisions.
4. Too much money is spent on educational programs that benefit my racial/ethnic group.
5. My racial/ethnic group have more economic power than they deserve in this country.
6. My racial/ethnic group receive too much of the money spent on healthcare and childcare.
7. Too much money per student is spent on education of those from my racial/ethnic group.
8. The tax system favors those from my racial/ethnic group.
9. Many companies hire less qualified people from my racial/ethnic group over more

qualified people from other groups.

10. Those from my racial/ethnic group have more political power than they deserve in this country.

11. Public service agencies favor those of my racial/ethnic group over those from other groups.

12. The legal system is more lenient to those from my racial/ethnic group than other groups

APPENDIX D Visual Analogue Scale.

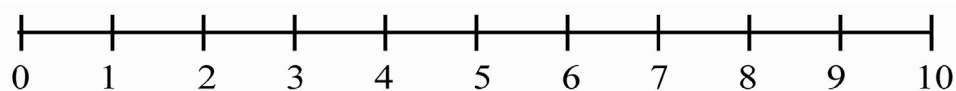
Visual Analogue Scale

Indicate where on the line best represents your overall current stress level.

No Stress

Moderate Stress

Extreme Stress

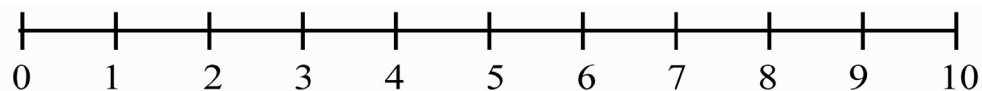


Indicate where on the line best represents your current stress level as a result of the current political administration (e.g., their policies and practices, and what you believe these policies and practices mean for the future of the country).

No Stress

Moderate Stress

Extreme Stress



APPENDIX E Brief COPE.

Brief COPE

These items deal with ways you've been coping with the stress in your life as a result of your experience with stressful events. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. These items ask what you've been doing to cope with this one. Obviously, different people deal with things in different ways, but I'm interested in how you've tried to deal with it. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. I want to know to what extent you've been doing what the item says. How much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can.

1 = I haven't been doing this at all

2 = I've been doing this a little bit

3 = I've been doing this a medium amount

4 = I've been doing this a lot

1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.
2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.
3. I've been saying to myself "this isn't real."
4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.
5. I've been getting emotional support from others.

6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it.
7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.
8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.
9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.
10. I've been getting help and advice from other people.
11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.
12. I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.
13. I've been criticizing myself.
14. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.
15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.
16. I've been giving up the attempt to cope.
17. I've been looking for something good in what is happening.
18. I've been making jokes about it.
19. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.
20. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.
21. I've been expressing my negative feelings.
22. I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.
23. I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.
24. I've been learning to live with it.
25. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.
26. I've been blaming myself for things that happened.

- 27. I've been praying or meditating.
- 28. I've been making fun of the situation.

APPENDIX F Political News Intake Measure.

Political News Intake Questionnaire

For each of the news platforms below, use the scale provided to indicate the amount of time on average you spend accessing political news media/commentary. If you do not spend any time accessing political news and commentary using a specific platform, select none.

	None	Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-5 hours	5-10 hours	10+ hours
Print (newspapers)						
Online news (e.g., NPR, Fox News)						
Television						
Radio						
Blogs						
Word of mouth (family/friends/colleagues)- in person/by phone/by email						

Social media on computer/laptop/netbook/tablet/ phone						
Other internet sources on computer/laptop/netbook/tablet/ phone						
Other (specify)_____						

VITA

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M.A. Sam Houston State University
 Fall 2017 – Spring, 2019
 Master's, Clinical Psychology
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RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant in a Developmental Psychology lab Spring 2018 - Present
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PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Peer Reviewed Professional Presentations :

Cordova, B. A., Abate, A., Babu, J., Varela, J. G., & Salami, T. K. (presented February 2019). Don't put your expectations on me: From stereotypes to prophecy. Workshop presented at the annual Diversity Leadership Conference, Huntsville, TX.

Peer Reviewed Professional Presentations – Posters:

Cordova, B. A., Mead, T., Carter, S. E., Walker, R. L., Flowers, K. C., & Salami, T. K. (presented November 2018). Race-Related Stress, Depressive Symptoms, Cultural World View and Eating Disorder Pathology in African American Women. Poster

presented at the annual conference for the Texas Psychological Association, Frisco, TX.

Research Articles:

Salami, T. K., Carter, S. E., Cordova, B. A., Flowers, K. C., Walker, R. L. (under review at Journal of Black Psychology). The Impact of Race-Related Stress on Eating Disorder Pathology: The Mediating Role of Depression and Moderating Role of Cultural Worldview among African American Women.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest Lecturer Fall 2018
 Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology and Philosophy
 Guest Lecture in Developmental Psychology covering Ethnic Identity Development theories and a broad overview of research done on ethnic identity with some attention on multiethnic individuals.

Guest Lecturer Fall 2018
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 Guest Lecture in Psychological Statistics covering the fundamental theoretical background, formulas, and demonstrative work for the Measures of Dispersion.

Graduate Assistant Fall 2017 - Present
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Guest Lecturer Fall 2017
 Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology and Philosophy
 Guest Lecture in Psychological Statistics covering APA formatting and the structure of research manuscripts.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader – Psychological Statistics Spring 2017
 Sam Houston State University, Academic Success Center
 Responsibilities associated with this position included: formulating lesson plans for meetings, facilitating course material covered in lecture through the use of activities and the formulation of study groups, holding office hours for one-on-one student interactions.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Internship January 2018 - Present
 Sam Houston State University Counseling Center

Internship August 2018 – December 2018
 Michelle Garcia Psy.D., & Associates

CAMPUS & DEPARTMENT SERVICE

Organizations:

Member: Graduate Students of Psychology Organization,
Sam Houston State University

Fall 2018 – Present

Other Service:

Graduate Peer Reviewer under Temilola Salami PhD,
Department of Psychology and Philosophy, Sam Houston State University

Summer 2018

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2018 Graduate Student Member of the American Psychological Association (APA)

2018 Student member of the Texas Psychological Association (TPA)