

Perceived Racism in Sexual Minority Communities
and Sociopolitical Engagement
Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Racial/Ethnic Minorities
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ABSTRACT

Sociopolitical involvement has been previously shown to be associated with experiences of discrimination. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) racial/ethnic minorities have faced multiple levels of discrimination from the mainstream community, racial/ethnic minority communities, and LGB communities. However, not many studies have investigated the association between intersectional forms of discrimination and sociopolitical involvement. The present study examines differences in perceptions of racism in the LGB community, sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic communities, and sociopolitical involvement in LGB communities among LGB racial/ethnic minorities (N = 203, MAge = 27.25). The sample included 107 (52.7%) men and 96 (47.3%) women; 41 (20.2%) lesbians, 89 (43.8%) gay men, and 73 (36.0%) bisexuals; 47 (23.2%) African Americans, 50 (24.6%) Asian Americans, 64 (31.5%) Latinos/as, and 42 (20.7%) from another race/ethnicity or mixed race. This study also looks at the association between perceptions of racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic communities and/or LGB communities. Asian American participants reported perceiving higher levels of racism in the LGB community than Latino/a participants. No other differences in perceptions of racism in the LGB community were found between sexual orientation or by racial/ethnic group. No differences between racial/ethnic group or sexual orientations were found in sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic or LGB communities. When controlling for sexual orientation, gender, and race/ethnicity, perceptions of racism in the LGB community predicted sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic and LGB communities. By exploring correlates of

discrimination from an intersectional perspective, this study provides a better understanding of the experiences of LGB racial/ethnic minorities.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

Despite increasing attention in the scholarly community of predictors of sociopolitical involvement among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people (LGB) and separately of racial/ethnic minorities (e.g., Szymanski & Lewis, 2015; Szymanski, 2012; Friedman & Leaper, 2010), less attention has been paid to predictors of sociopolitical involvement among LGB individuals who are also members of racial/ethnic minorities. Previous studies have indicated that experiences of racist and heterosexist discrimination are related to sociopolitical involvement with racial/ethnic issues and with LGB issues (e.g., Szymanski & Lewis, 2015; Szymanski, 2012; DeBlaere et al., 2014; Friedman & Leaper, 2010). LGB racial/ethnic minorities face racism not just in mainstream communities, but also within the LGB community, which often marginalizes, erases, and/or fetishizes LGB racial/ethnic minorities (Bowleg, 2013; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Teunis, 2007; Ward, 2008). Studies with LGB racial/ethnic minorities have indicated that discomfort in the LGB community due to one's race is related to sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities (Harris, Battle, Pastrana, & Daniels, 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Battle & Harris, 2013). However, these studies only use a one-item measure of discomfort and do not explicitly mention racism in the LGB community as the reason behind this discomfort. Therefore, the current study uses a more detailed measure of perceptions of racism in the LGB community (Sarno et al., 2015) to examine the connection between perceived racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities among LGB racial/ethnic minorities. Additionally, I explore differences between racial/ethnic groups and sexual orientation

groups in levels of perceived racism in the LGB community, levels of sociopolitical involvement in the LGB community, and levels of sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic communities. In this section, I review the literature on sociopolitical involvement with relation to experiences of discrimination, particularly with regards to LGB racial/ethnic minorities. I also discuss the racism and marginalization that many LGB racial/ethnic minorities experience in the LGB community.

Connections Between Sociopolitical Involvement and Experiences of Discrimination

Although sociopolitical involvement can take many different forms, Battle and Harris (2013) broadly define sociopolitical involvement as including participation in “social and cultural events, particularly those that address community issues and concerns, as well as social volunteerism and activism” (p. 142). Many studies have found a connection between experiences of discrimination and sociopolitical involvement for a variety of populations (e.g., Szymanski & Lewis, 2015; Szymanski, 2012; DeBlaere et al., 2014; Friedman & Leaper, 2010), perhaps because sociopolitical involvement can be a means of coping with stress related to discrimination (DeBlaere et al., 2014). Rather than being passive recipients of oppression, individuals who belong to marginalized groups can, and engage with, these systems of oppression through sociopolitical involvement. For example, higher levels of experiences of racism were correlated with activism in two samples of African American adults (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015; Szymanski, 2012). Additionally, Mattis and colleagues (2004) found that, among 151 African American men, daily experiences of racism predicted the likelihood of membership in political and/or social justice organizations. The sexual orientation of participants were not provided in these studies. However, different studies with LGBT

racial/ethnic minorities show a similar pattern. For example, among a sample of 134 sexual minority women, experiences of racism were correlated with collective action related to racial/ethnic issues (DeBlaere et al., 2014).

The connection between experiences of discrimination and sociopolitical involvement can also be seen in predominantly White LGBT samples. For example, a qualitative study of 15 predominately White sexual minority women indicated that these women coped with heterosexist discrimination through activism (Pendragon, 2010). Although they did not measure actual sociopolitical involvement behaviors, Friedman and Leaper (2010) found that among a sample of 88 sexual minority women (60% White), experiences with heterosexist discrimination and gendered heterosexism were correlated with commitment to LGBQ collective action. Swank and Fahs (2013) examined specific sociopolitical behaviors related to LGBT issues, including voting, signing petitions, letter-writing, attending demonstrations, and participating in civil disobedience. These researchers found that, among a sample of 285 gay and lesbian adults (79% White), participation in voting and signing petitions for LGBT issues were positively correlated with experiences of economic discrimination and hate crimes based on one's sexual minority status (Swank & Fahs, 2013).

Multiple Marginalization of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Many of the studies cited above focus on only one identity category: race/ethnicity or sexual orientation (see DeBlaere et al., 2014 for exception). However, people do not experience these identities in isolation, and LGB racial/ethnic minorities must contend with the forces of heterosexism and racism (see Crenshaw, 1989). Additionally, the experiences of LGB racial/ethnic minorities in particular are important

to study because LGB racial/ethnic minorities face racism in the larger society as well as in the LGB community, and heterosexism in the larger society as well as in their racial/ethnic communities. In relation to racism in the LGB community, several researchers note that LGB racial/ethnic minorities view the mainstream LGB community as portraying the LGB identity as a White identity (Bowleg, 2013; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Teunis, 2007; Ward, 2008). For example, in Ward's (2008) investigation of the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center, "a political and social service organization that had a national reputation for multiculturalism, a growing presence of people of color in leadership, and more than 50 percent people of color on staff" (p. 565), Ward still found that the Center was seen by local queer racial/ethnic minorities as a White organization. Both Logie and Rwigema (2014) and Teunis (2007) point out the lack of representation of LGB racial/ethnic minorities in both mainstream and LGB-oriented media, which contributes to the perception that being a sexual minority is equivalent with being White. Teunis (2007) suggests that the mainstream LGB community uses its close connection to Whiteness in order to project "an image of normalcy" (p. 268), which can aid in giving credibility to movements for military inclusion and marriage equality. However, Teunis (2007) argues that these movements "do not address the primary concerns of those within the gay community who are non-white, or poor, or young" (p. 264). In this manner, the mainstream LGB community makes its racial/ethnic minority members invisible. In addition to experiencing racism at the organizational level, LGB racial/ethnic minorities experience racism in their personal lives as well, as many LGB racial/ethnic minorities are rejected or objectified by other LGB people due to racist stereotypes of sexual behavior (Teunis, 2007; Wilson et al., 2009). For example, Wilson and colleagues (2009)

found that gay Black men tend to be stereotyped as aggressive and hypermasculine, while gay Asian men tend to be stereotyped as sexually reserved and effeminate. In their focus groups of lesbian, bisexual, and queer racial/ethnic minority women, Logie and Rwigema (2014) found that these women received the message from White LGB individuals that LGB racial/ethnic minorities must give up or compromise their racial/ethnic identities in order to be accepted as LGB. These experiences of racism within the LGB community add another layer of marginalization to LGB racial/ethnic minorities who face racism from the mainstream, heterosexual world.

Revisiting Sociopolitical Involvement: Experiences of LGB Racial/Ethnic Minorities

As outlined above, experiences of racism are related to sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic communities (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015; Szymanski, 2012; Mattis et al., 2004; DeBlaere et al., 2014), and experiences of heterosexism are related to sociopolitical involvement in LGB communities (Pendragon, 2010; Friedman & Leaper, 2010; Swank & Fahs, 2013). LGB racial/ethnic minorities experience both types of discrimination. Therefore, it is plausible that they demonstrate sociopolitical involvement in both racial/ethnic and LGB communities. For example, DeBlaere and colleagues (2014) measured reports of experiences of racism, sexism, and heterosexism among LGB racial/ethnic minority women, as well as involvement in collective action related to race/ethnicity issues, feminist issues, and LGB issues. Experiences of discrimination in each area were often correlated with sociopolitical involvement with regards to multiple issues. For example, experiences of racism were correlated with sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic issues, feminist issues, and sexual minority issues. Additionally, perceived sexism was correlated with feminist collective action, but

perceived heterosexism was not significantly correlated with any form of sociopolitical involvement. DeBlaere and colleagues' (2014) study demonstrates how intersecting identities and experiences of discrimination can be related to a variety of types of sociopolitical involvement.

Other studies of sociopolitical involvement of LGBT racial/ethnic minorities focus on levels of comfort within the LGBT community (Harris, Battle, Pastrana, & Daniels, 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Battle & Harris, 2013). The authors of these studies define comfort in racial communities in terms of the question, "how often have you felt uncomfortable in your LGBT community because of your race or ethnicity?" (Battle & Harris, 2013, p. 149). Although this question does not explicitly ask about racism in the LGBT community, it does ask about the marginalization that many LGBT racial/ethnic minorities feel in LGBT communities that often occur as a result of racism. Among a sample of 664 Black LGBT women, greater levels of comfort within the LGBT community were related to lower levels of LGBT and racial/ethnic sociopolitical involvement (Harris & Battle, 2013). Additionally, among a sample of 379 Latina sexual minority women, Battle and Harris (2013) found a negative correlation between comfort in LGBT communities and sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic issues. However, they found no relation between comfort in LGBT communities and LGBT sociopolitical involvement within this sample. Harris and Battle (2013) explained these results in terms of these women using sociopolitical involvement as a coping mechanism for minority-based stress within the LGBT community.

The Current Study

Sociopolitical involvement has been shown to help various marginalized groups cope with experiences of marginalization, and it also reflects individual's agency to engage with systems of oppression (e.g. DeBlaere et al., 2014). Therefore, it seems plausible that sociopolitical involvement in LGB and/or racial/ethnic communities would help LGB racial/ethnic minorities to cope with minority stress. Although some studies (Harris, Battle, Pastrana, & Daniels, 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Battle & Harris, 2013) have explored variables that may motivate LGB racial/ethnic minorities to engage sociopolitically, they only briefly investigated the marginalization of LGB racial/ethnic minorities within the LGB community. These studies only used one item to assess feelings of discomfort in the LGB community due to racial/ethnic identity, and this item did not explicitly mention racism as the cause of this discomfort. Therefore, in the present study I investigate how perceived racism in the LGB community—as measured by a more explicit, in-depth 4-item measure recently published (Sarno et al., 2015)—relates to sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities among a sample of LGB racial/ethnic minorities. Additionally, I explore differences between groups on these variables since this is a relatively new area of study. In other words, the current study focuses on the following research questions: (1) Among LGB racial/ethnic minorities, are there differences between racial/ethnic groups or sexual orientation groups in terms of levels of perceived racism in the LGB community and levels of sociopolitical engagement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities? (2) What is the association between perceived racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical engagement in LGB and racial/ethnic social issues among LGB racial/ethnic minorities?

The first research question has an exploratory aim. I cannot make any hypotheses about differences among LGB racial/ethnic minorities regarding levels of perceived racism in the LGB community due to the relative novel focus on measurement of this construct, and recent publication of the measure I used to assess perceived racism in the LGB community (Sarno et al., 2015). I also cannot make any hypotheses regarding within-group differences among LGB racial/ethnic minorities regarding levels of sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities. Previous research suggests that African Americans tend to have relatively higher levels of sociopolitical engagement compared to other racial/ethnic minorities and that Asian Americans tend to have relatively lower levels of sociopolitical engagement compared to other groups (Verba et al., 1995 Xu, 2002). However, it is unknown whether LGB racial/ethnic minorities will exhibit the same pattern of behaviors as racial/ethnic minority groups sampled in these previous studies. Researchers that have studied sociopolitical involvement among LGB people have tended to examine sociopolitical involvement with respect to variables such as outness and experiences with discrimination, rather than comparisons among sexual minority groups (e.g., Swank & Fahs, 2013; Harris et al., 2015). Therefore, I do not have any data to base any hypotheses about differences in levels of sociopolitical involvement among lesbian, gay, bisexual male, and bisexual female racial/ethnic minorities.

For the second question, I hypothesize that perceived racism in the LGB community will predict higher levels of sociopolitical engagement in LGB and racial/ethnic social issues among LGB racial/ethnic minorities. The hypothesized association between racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical engagement among

LGB racial/ethnic minorities is based on studies that indicate that experiences of marginalization within the LGBT community are related to sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic and LGB communities (Battle & Harris, 2013; Harris & Battle, 2013; Harris et al., 2015). The current study extends this line of research to include an explicit measure of perceptions of racism within the LGB community and to examine differences in perceptions of racism in the LGB community between racial/ethnic groups and sexual orientation groups. Since many LGB racial/ethnic minorities feel marginalized within the LGB community (Teunis, 2007; Wilson et al., 2009; Logie & Rwigema, 2014), many LGB racial/ethnic minorities may cope with this marginalization through sociopolitical involvement in both LGB and racial/ethnic communities (Harris et al., 2015.)

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Procedure

This study consists of secondary data analysis based on data collected from a larger study on mental health among LGB racial/ethnic minorities. The study was conducted through an online survey on Qualtrics. Participants accessed the survey by clicking on the link provided in the recruitment emails sent through listservs. The recruitment email was sent to U.S.-based professional listservs in the areas of counseling psychology; cultural, diversity, and ethnic minority psychology; a national Latino/a professional association; listservs serving graduate students in general and graduate students of color and sexual minorities. This questionnaire included the following measures: demographic characteristics; scales on sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities; Heterosexist Harassment, Rejection, and Discrimination Scale (HHRDS; Szymanski, 2006); HHRDS adapted to experiences of racial/ethnic-based discrimination; Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992); MEIM adapted to LGB identity; Brief Symptom Inventory subscales for anxiety and depression (Derogatis, 1983); and Conflict in Allegiances scale (CIA; Sarno et al., 2015). However, the analyses for my thesis focus on the following: demographic characteristics, perceived racism in the LGB community, and sociopolitical engagement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities. After completing the survey, participants had the option of providing their email addresses to be submitted to a raffle for one of three \$100 cash prizes.

Participants

Adults of at least 18 years of age who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) racial/ethnic minorities were recruited for participation in the study. To confirm that participants identify as both LGB and racial/ethnic minorities, the first two questions on the survey asked participants to select their sexual orientation and racial/ethnic group. Participants who indicated that their sexual orientation was straight and who reported being White were not allowed to continue on to the survey and were told that they are not eligible for the study.

After removing cases of participants who did not proceed past the first few questions (missing more than 90% of the survey), the final number of participants was 203. The sample consisted of 107 (52.7%) men and 96 (47.3%) women, with an average age of 27.25 years ($SD = 7.9$). Forty-one respondents (20.2%) identified as lesbian, 89 respondents (43.8%) identified as gay, and 73 respondents (36.0%) identified as bisexual. On a 1 to 7 scale of outness about sexual orientation, with 1 indicating that nobody knew about their sexual orientation, and 7 indicating that everybody knew about their sexual orientation, participants scored an average of 4.41 ($SD = 1.62$). In terms of racial/ethnic group, 47 respondents (23.2%) identified as African American, 50 respondents (24.6%) identified as Asian American, 64 respondents (31.5%) identified as Hispanic/Latino, and 42 respondents (20.7%) identified as another race/ethnicity or mixed race. One hundred forty-three respondents (70.4%) reported currently being students, and 152 respondents (74.9%) reported being employed. Educational levels ranged from a high school degree or GED to an advanced degree (e.g., M.A., Ph.D.), with the largest percentage (87; 42.9%) of respondents reporting having an advanced degree. On the MacArthur Subjective Social Status Scale, participants ranged through all levels of social class, but

most participants (125; 61.6%) reported being middle to upper class. Ninety-one (44.8%) respondents reported that they only spoke English, while 112 respondents (55.2%) reported being multilingual. In terms of generational status, the largest group (61; 30%) consisted of participants who were born in the U.S., but had parents who were born in another country. Additionally, on a scale from (0) *no noticeable accent* to (10) *highly noticeable accent*, participants were asked to rate in 1 item their response to the prompt: “How much do you think others think that you have an accent when speaking English?” The average response was 2.24 ($SD = 1.94$).

Instrumentation

Demographic Characteristics: At the beginning of the survey, participants answered a variety of questions about their demographic characteristics. The first two questions asked participants to identify their sexual orientation and their racial/ethnic group. This helped to ensure that only LGB racial/ethnic minority participants completed the survey. Additionally, participants were asked about their age, gender, educational status, generational status, languages spoken, zip code, social class, employment status, United States residency status, and level of outness about their sexual orientation.

Perceived Racism in the LGB Community. The Perceived Racism scale developed by Sarno and colleagues (2015) assesses participants’ perceptions of the amount of racism present within the LGB community. This measure has 4 self-report items that ask about the participants’ experiences and feelings of racism within the LGB community, such as “I am angry at the way the LGB community treats members of my cultural group.” Participants rated items on a 7-point scale, which ranges from “disagree strongly” to “agree strongly,” such that higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived racism

within the LGB community. Sarno and colleagues (2015) found a coefficient alpha of .74 within their sample of 124 LGB racial/ethnic minority participants and 124 LGB White participants. In the present study, this scale presented strong internal consistency; Cronbach's alpha was .77.

Sociopolitical Engagement. Sociopolitical involvement in the LGB and racial/ethnic communities was measured using an adaptation of Battle and Harris's (2013) LGBT Sociopolitical Involvement measure and Racial/Ethnic Sociopolitical Involvement measure. In their study with 379 adult bisexual and lesbian Latinas, Battle and Harris (2013) reported internal reliabilities of .75 for the LGBT Sociopolitical Involvement measure and .83 for the Racial/Ethnic Sociopolitical Involvement measure. These scales were adapted in order to focus on specific types of active sociopolitical engagement (e.g., attending meeting for LGB groups or organizations) instead of more general sociopolitical awareness (e.g., reading about LGB issues). Items for the racial/ethnic sociopolitical involvement scale are identical to those in the LGB sociopolitical involvement scale, except that "LGB community" is replaced with "racial/ethnic community." Each sociopolitical involvement scale has 6 items that assess frequency of sociopolitical involvement on an 8-point scale from "never" to "every day," with higher scores indicating higher levels of sociopolitical involvement. In the current sample, the LGB Sociopolitical Involvement scale has an internal reliability of .84, and the Racial/Ethnic Sociopolitical Involvement scale has an internal reliability of .85.

Analytic Plan

Pearson bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to explore associations among study variables. For hypothesis 1, I ran three 4 x 4 between-subjects ANOVAs

comparing whether LGB racial/ethnic minorities differ in their levels of perceived racism in the LGB community, sociopolitical involvement in the LGB community, and sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic communities. For hypothesis 2, I ran two hierarchical multiple regressions with sociopolitical engagement in the LGB and racial/ethnic communities as outcome variables.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

I analyzed missing data patterns and found that there was some missing data, which appeared to be missing at random (MAR; Schafer, 1999). I had complete demographic data; however, there were between 7.4% and 7.9% missing data in other study variables. Thus, to reduce error and to account for missingness, I used a regression-based multiple imputation procedure whereby a pooled dataset was averaged from 20 datasets with imputed values that were derived from 200 iterations. I used this imputed dataset to analyze the study's data. Preliminary analyses explored the distribution of each continuous variable in the study and all study measures met assumptions of normality (Osborne & Waters, 2002).

Bivariate correlations were conducted among several variables (see Table 1). Bivariate correlations for the measure of perceived racism in the LGB community show that this variable is positively correlated with sociopolitical engagement in the LGB community ($r = .20, p < .05$), sociopolitical engagement in racial/ethnic communities ($r = .32, p < .01$), level of education ($r = .20, p < .05$), and outness as LGB ($r = .20, p < .05$). Additionally, sociopolitical engagement in the LGB community was positively correlated with higher socioeconomic status ($r = .14, p < .05$), outness as LGB ($r = .30, p < .05$), perceived racism in the LGB community ($r = .20, p < .05$), and sociopolitical engagement in racial/ethnic communities. Finally, sociopolitical engagement in racial/ethnic communities was positively correlated with perceived racism in the LGB community ($r = .32, p < .05$).

Three 4 x 4 between-subjects ANOVAs were conducted with sexual orientation (gay males, bisexual males, bisexual females and lesbians) and racial/ethnic minority group status (Latino/a, African American, Asian American, Other) in order to explore differences in perceived racism in the LGB community, sociopolitical involvement in the LGB community, and sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic communities. When examining differences in perceived racism in the LGB community, the 4 x 4 ANOVA yielded significant results [$F(15, 171) = 1.71, p = .05$]. Specifically, there was a significant main effect of race/ethnicity on levels of perceived racism in the LGB community [$F(3, 171) = 3.09, p < .05$]. Tukey post-hoc analyses found that Asian American participants ($M = 4.52, SE = .23$) reported higher levels of perceived racism in the LGB community than Latino/a participants ($M = 3.49, SE = .25$). No other significant differences were found between racial/ethnic groups. The main effect of sexual orientation and the interaction between sexual orientation and racial/ethnic group were both nonsignificant. The other two 4 x 4 ANOVAs failed to find any significant differences between sexual identity and/or racial/ethnic groups on both sociopolitical involvement in the LGB community [$F(15, 184) = 1.01, p > .05$] and in racial/ethnic communities [$F(15, 179) = 1.39, p > .05$].

Hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted with sociopolitical engagement in the LGB community as the outcome variable (see Table 2). Sexual orientation (divided by gender) and race/ethnicity were included in the first step of the regression as controls. Perceived racism in the LGB community was included in the second step. The final model shows that perceived racism in the LGB community significantly predicted sociopolitical involvement in the LGB community ($R^2_{Adjusted} = .01, R^2_{Change} = .03, p <$

.05), such that, when controlling for sexual orientation and race higher levels of perceived racism in the LGB community predicted higher levels of engagement in LGB social issues in this sample ($\beta = .18, p < .05$). For exploratory purposes, I tested several different interactions between perceived racism in the LGB community and gender/sexual orientation/race/ethnicity in predicting socio-political engagement in LGB community. None of these interactions were significant, suggesting that the associations presented above did not appear to be moderated by gender/sexual orientation/race/ethnicity (Step 3).

A second hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted in two steps with sociopolitical engagement in racial/ethnic communities as the outcome variable (see Table 3). Sexual orientation (divided by gender) and race/ethnicity were again included in the first step of the regression as controls. Perceived racism in the LGB community was added in the second step. The final model shows that perceived racism in the LGB community significantly predicted sociopolitical engagement in racial/ethnic social issues ($R^2_{Adjusted} = .17, R^2_{Change} = .20, p < .05$). In particular, when controlling for sexual orientation and race, higher levels of perceived racism in the LGB community predicted higher levels of engagement in racial/ethnic communities in this sample ($\beta = .38, p < .05$). For exploratory purposes, I tested several different interactions between perceived racism in the LGB community and gender/sexual orientation/race/ethnicity in predicting socio-political engagement in racial/ethnic community. None of these interactions were significant, suggesting that the associations presented above did not appear to be moderated by gender/sexual orientation/race/ethnicity (Step 3).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

I had not made any specific hypotheses regarding differences in levels of perceived racism in the LGB community due to the small amount of research related to this topic and the recent publication of the measure utilized to assess this construct. I found that LGB Asian American participants reported higher levels of perceived racism in the LGB community than LGB Latino/a participants. Although LGB Latino/a participants may feel marginalized within the LGB community, it is plausible that LGB Asian Americans feel even greater levels of marginalization based on a sense of invisibility and fetishization (Sung et al., 2015). One limitation to keep in mind is that because I did not have enough power, I was not able to disentangle if this effect is driven by a particular subgroup of Asian American LGBs within the sample (e.g., lesbians who identify as Asian Americans vs. bisexual men who identify as Asian American). However, this finding appears consistent with several studies that have noted that LGB Asian Americans point out the absence of openly LGB Asian American role models, which may contribute to sense of invisibility and perception of racism within the LGB community (Bridges et al., 2013; Sung et al., 2015). Additionally, racial stereotypes of Asian Americans may play a role in this sense of invisibility. Participants in a study with sexual minority Asian American women reported how stereotypes of Asian Americans as passive lead to invisibility in general, such that “just being Asian, you’re not really noticed” (Alimahomed, 2010, p. 159). Further studies comparing the experiences of LGB racial/ethnic minority groups to each other must be conducted in order to better understand the experiences of each group.

Additionally, due to the small amount of research related to sociopolitical involvement of LGB racial/ethnic minorities, I had not made any specific hypotheses regarding differences among racial/ethnic and/or sexual identity groups in sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic and/or LGB communities. However, previous research has indicated that African Americans tend to have higher levels of sociopolitical engagement than other racial/ethnic minorities (Verba et al., 1995) and that Asian Americans tend to have the lowest levels of sociopolitical engagement of all racial/ethnic groups (Xu, 2002). Despite these differences in groups noted in the literature, no such differences were observed in this sample. This may reflect different patterns of sociopolitical involvement among LGB racial/ethnic minorities, compared to predominantly heterosexual racial/ethnic minority groups. Experiences of marginalization related to multiple aspects of one's identities may lead LGB individuals of various racial/ethnic minority groups to engage in levels of sociopolitical involvement that are perhaps higher when compared to individuals who do not have to contend with multiple forms of marginalization. However, it is also possible that this pattern only reflects the characteristics of the current sample (e.g., individuals who are more inclined to social and political participation were more likely to complete our survey), and caution must be made when attempting to generalize this pattern to all LGB racial/ethnic minorities. Just as there were no differences between race/ethnicity on the measures of sociopolitical involvement, there were no differences between sexual orientation groups. Unfortunately, there is limited literature on examining differences among sexual orientation subgroups in sociopolitical involvement with which we can compare our findings. Existing studies have tended to focus on other indicators of

within-group differences, such as levels of outness or experiences with heterosexism (e.g., Swank & Fahs, 2013; Harris et al., 2015).

As hypothesized, perceived racism in the LGB community predicted sociopolitical engagement in both the LGB community and racial/ethnic communities, after controlling for sexual orientation, gender, and race/ethnicity. These results correspond with other studies that have indicated that discomfort in the LGB community due to one's race is related to sociopolitical involvement among LGB racial/ethnic minorities (Harris et al., 2015; Harris & Battle, 2013; Battle & Harris, 2013). These results suggest that this discomfort in the LGB community cited in other studies may reflect perceptions of racism in the LGB community. Although the current study cannot show a causal or directional relation between perceived racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities, it is possible that LGB racial/ethnic minorities cope with the racism that they face in the LGB community through sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities. LGB racial/ethnic minorities who report high levels of racism in the LGB community may react to this racism by further engaging in antiracist efforts as well as making changes within the LGB community. These results also correspond with the finding that experiences of racism in general are associated with higher levels of collective action about racial/ethnic issues and about sexual minority issues among LGB racial/ethnic minority women (DeBlaere et al., 2014). These results reflect the multiple, intersecting forms of marginalization that LGB racial/ethnic minorities face and how LGB racial/ethnic minorities cope with these intersecting forms of marginalization. Rather than solely focus on LGB sociopolitical involvement or racial/ethnic sociopolitical

involvement, LGB racial/ethnic minorities who reported higher levels of racism in the LGB community also reported being involved in both LGB and racial/ethnic issues.

Limitations

There are limitations to consider when interpreting the findings from the present study. Since many study participants were recruited through emails to listservs targeted to professionals, the sample consisted of a large percentage of people with graduate or professional degrees. Although 42.9% of the sample reported having an advanced degree, about 10.3% of the United States population aged 25 or older has a graduate or professional degree (Ogunwole, Drewery, Jr., & Rios-Vargas, 2012). Therefore, the current study is not generalizable to all LGB racial/ethnic minorities, but focuses on the experiences of LGB racial/ethnic minorities with higher educational levels and socioeconomic statuses. Secondly, cell sizes in the 4 x 4 ANOVAs were relatively small, reducing the statistical power of these tests. In order to retain some power, racial/ethnic groups with relatively small levels of participation, such as Native American and multiracial participants, were combined into the “Other racial/ethnic group” category. Also, due to a lack of sufficient statistical power, analyses that combined racial/ethnic *and* sexual orientation group (e.g. gay Latino men, bisexual Asian Americans) were not conducted. Future studies on LGB racial/ethnic minorities should include more participants in order to increase cell sizes and allow for analysis by both racial/ethnic and sexual orientation group concurrently. Finally, due to the cross sectional design of this study, the causal direction between variables cannot be determined. It is possible that perceptions of racism in the LGB community lead to sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities, or that sociopolitical involvement in LGB and

racial/ethnic communities makes racism in the LGB community more salient to individuals. It is also possible that the relation between perceived racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities is bidirectional and that other variables are involved. In order to further understand the relation between perceived racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical involvement in LGB and racial/ethnic communities, researchers should study potential moderating variables and use longitudinal study designs.

Conclusion

The present study adds to the literature on sociopolitical involvement among LGB racial/ethnic minorities by investigating how perceived racism within the LGB community predicts sociopolitical involvement in both LGB and racial/ethnic communities. Additionally, intragroup differences among LGB racial/ethnic minorities were assessed in perceived racism in the LGB community, sociopolitical involvement in the LGB community, and sociopolitical involvement in racial/ethnic communities. Specifically, we found that LGB Asian Americans in our sample reported higher levels of perceived racism in the LGB community than LGB Latinos/as in our sample. However, we found no differences between racial/ethnic groups or sexual minority groups on sociopolitical involvement in LGB or racial/ethnic communities. We also found that perceptions of racism in the LGB community predict sociopolitical involvement in both LGB and racial/ethnic communities, after controlling for gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Due to the heterogeneity of LGB racial/ethnic minorities, further research on intragroup similarities and differences must be conducted in order to provide a fuller picture of the experiences of LGB racial/ethnic minorities. Additionally, the

directional relationships between perceptions of racism in the LGB community and sociopolitical involvement should be investigated in future studies. With a better understanding of the experiences of LGB racial/ethnic minorities, LGB-focused organizations and racial/ethnic group-focused organizations can better adapt to the needs of LGB racial/ethnic minorities.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES

TABLES

Table 1. Correlations Among Study Variables (N=203)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Age	--																					
2. Lesbian	-.02	--																				
3. Gay Male	.26**	-.44**	--																			
4. Bisexual	-.25**	-.38**	-.66**	--																		
5. Male	.19**	-.48**	.80**	-.42**	--																	
6. Bi Men	-.11	-.16*	-.28**	.42**	.29**	--																
7. Bi Women	-.20**	-.31**	-.54**	.81**	-.64**	-.19**	--															
8. African Am	-.05	-.01	-.06	.07	-.11	-.09	.14*	--														
9. Asian Am	-.13	.22**	-.14	-.05	-.05	.06	-.09	-.31**	--													
10. Latino	.02	-.16*	.23**	-.11	.22**	.05	-.15*	-.37**	-.39**	--												
11. Other Race	.17*	-.04	-.06	.10	-.08	-.03	.13	-.28**	-.29**	-.35**	--											
12. Student	-.39**	.00	-.19**	.19**	-.07	.16*	.10	-.00	.12	-.02	-.10	--										
13. Employed	.13	.06	-.01	-.04	-.07	-.06	-.00	-.00	-.09	.07	.01	-.35**	--									
14. U.S. Citizen	.05	.02	-.11	.09	-.15*	-.03	.11	.15*	-.30**	.09	.06	-.16*	.23**	--								
15. Education	.50**	-.01	.16*	-.16*	.15*	-.03	-.16*	.02	-.04	-.01	.03	-.27**	.21**	.02	--							
16. Gen. Status	.08	-.08	-.02	.09	-.06	-.07	.14*	.32**	-.43**	-.12	.26**	-.11	.13	.35**	.07	--						
17. English-only ¹	.03	.04	.02	-.06	-.12	-.25**	.10	.35**	-.10	-.29**	.08	-.05	.06	.25**	.04	.42**	--					
18. SES	-.19**	.06	-.14*	.10	-.09	.02	.09	-.03	.20**	-.16*	.00	.02	-.17*	-.11	-.17*	-.04	-.03	--				
19. Outness	.28**	.00	.38**	-.39**	.28**	-.10	-.36**	-.11	-.09	.14*	.05	-.17*	.13	.14*	.25**	.10	.04	-.02	--			
20. LGB Engage ²	.03	.01	-.03	.03	.01	.07	-.02	-.00	.06	-.10	.06	-.02	-.03	.06	-.05	.00	-.09	.14*	.30**	--		
21. R/E Engage. ³	-.00	-.02	-.14*	.16*	-.15*	.01	.17*	.15*	-.07	-.04	-.04	.02	.05	.01	.00	.09	-.12	.03	.04	.57**	--	
22. LGB Racism ⁴	.07	-.03	.10	-.08	.16*	.07	-.13	.03	.12	-.21**	.08	-.10	.09	-.01	.20*	-.03	-.90	-.02	.20**	.20*	.32**	--

¹0 = Multilingual, 1 = English-Only; ²LGB Engage = Sociopolitical Engagement in the LGB Community; ³R/E Engage = Sociopolitical Engagement in the Racial/Ethnic Community; ⁴LGB Racism = Perceived Racism in the LGB Community

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

Table 2. Perceived Racism in the LGB Community Predicting Sociopolitical Engagement in LGB Issues ($N = 203$)

		R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	Df
Step 1: Lesbian ¹	.03	.02	.02	.65	180
Bisexual Men ¹	.07				
Bisexual Women ¹	.00				
African American ²	.07				
Asian American ²	.12				
Other Race/Ethnicity ²	.11				
Step 2: Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.18*	.05*	.03*	5.50*	179
Step 3: Lesbian ¹ x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.12	.11	.05	1.79	173
Bisexual Men ¹ x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.02				
Bisexual Women ¹ x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.11				
African American ² x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.06				
Asian American ² x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	-.07				
Other Race/Ethnicity ² x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	-.23				

Note: ¹Reference group is gay male; ²Reference group is Latina/os;

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

Table 3. Perceived Racism in the LGB Community Predicting Sociopolitical Engagement in Racial/Ethnic Issues ($N = 203$)

		R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	Df
Step 1: Lesbian ¹	.10	.07	.07	2.20	180
Bisexual Men ¹	.09				
Bisexual Women ¹	.23				
African American ²	.08				
Asian American ²	-.07				
Other Race/Ethnicity ²	-.10				
Step 2: Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.38**	.20**	.13**	29.50**	179
Step 3: Lesbian ¹ x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.08	.24	.04	1.73	173
Bisexual Men ¹ x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.14				
Bisexual Women ¹ x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.17				
African American ² x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	.10				
Asian American ² x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	-.09				
Other Race/Ethnicity ² x Perceived Racism in the LGB Community	-.03				

Note: ¹Reference group is gay male; ²Reference group is Latina/os;

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