



LGBTQ+ people of color's experiences of community bias and discrimination, identity integration, and well-being



Daniel Nguyen, Cynthia Willis-Esqueda
Department of Psychology, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

BACKGROUND

- Race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexuality are all important aspects of the self, and all have consequences for well-being.
- LGBTQ+ people face discrimination against their gender and sexual identities from the broader society
- LGBTQ+ people of color (POC) also face discrimination against their gender and sexual identities specifically from their racial community, as well as racial discrimination from the broader society and within the LGBTQ+ community
- Little research exists that focuses on:
 - Differences in experiences between LGBTQ+ POC and Whites
 - The intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality, requiring the consideration of trans identity
 - The impact of bias and discrimination on the capacity to reconcile disparate identities into an integrated whole

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) Are there differences in well-being between LGBTQ+ Whites and people of color?
- 2) Does race impact the process of coming to terms with sexual and/or gender identity?
- 3) What unique experiences of community bias and discrimination do LGBTQ+ people of color face?
- 4) Does race impact the extent to which separate social identities can be integrated?

Race	People of color	Whites
Mean	25.95	20.29
SD	3.76	6.52
		$p < 0.01$

Figure 1: Mean ethnic attachment between Whites and POC

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- Participants recruited through university LGBTQ+ centers, LGBTQ+ organizations, social media, listservs, and personal contacts
- Recruitment materials provided link to Qualtrics survey
- End of the survey provided information for open-ended interview
- Survey measures:
 - Well-being (Kessler 6, Kessler et al., 2010)
 - Racial/ethnic identity development and commitment (MEIM-R, Phinney & Ong, 2007)
 - Sexual identity exploration and commitment (MoSIEC, Worthington, Navarro, Savoy, & Hampton, 2008)
 - Gender identity (Gender Identity Scale, Ho & Mussap, 2019)
 - Psychological connection to LGBTQ+ community (LGBT community scale, Lin & Israel, 2012)
 - LGBTQ+ people of color perceived microaggressions (LGBT POC microaggressions scale, Balsam, Molina, Beadnell, Simoni, & Walters, 2011)
- Applied thematic analysis to interview data ($n=21$; M age= 24.95; race: non-Hispanic White=7, Hispanic White=5, Black=3, Asian/PI=3, Multiracial=3; gender: cis female=7, cis male=2, trans female=1, trans male=1, non-binary=2, other=1, mixed=7; sexuality: gay=4, bisexual=4, pansexual=1, queer=5, mixed=7)
- *Survey data is still being collected

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW RESULTS

Overarching qualitative themes:

- 1) *Different racialized experiences*: While participants of color described experiences of racial bias broadly and within the LGBTQ+ community, Whites mostly characterized their racial identity as unimportant, but also a source of privilege.
- 2) *Formative experiences and the development of identity*: Both LGBTQ+ Whites and POC struggle with issues of identity, but race plays a role in coming to terms with being LGBTQ+ for POC and less so for Whites.
- 3) *Community bias*: Discrimination against LGBTQ+ people was experienced by those of all races, but POC were more likely to discuss biases specific to their racial community.
- 4) *Integration of identity*: Because race is important for POC, the integration of race with LGBTQ+ identity may be more difficult.

“I don’t pay much attention to my gender identity. But there have been times in the past where I get to thinking about that one a lot. It wouldn’t be any [more significant] because I don’t feel like I have the space to express it in the culture that I’m with,” (P251, 015).

“If I were to compare sexuality and race, I’m starting to see [them] as more equal, but because outwardly, I am Asian, and I present as Asian, that holds slightly more importance to me because that’s what people see first,” (P510, 016).

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Type of discrimination	People of color $n=14$	Whites $n=7$
General racial bias	57.1%	0%
LGBTQ+ racial bias	42.9%	0%
General gender bias	14.3%	42.9%
LGBTQ+ gender bias	28.6%	7.1%
Racial community gender bias	35.7%	0%
General sexual bias	28.6%	28.6%
LGBTQ+ sexual bias	21.4%	7.1%
Racial community sexual bias	78.6%	0%

Figure 2: Percentage of participants discussing types of discrimination between people of color and Whites

CONCLUSIONS

- Racial bias is a unique struggle for LGBTQ+ POC
- Racial identity is only salient in social situations for non-Whites
- In cultures unaccepting of LGBTQ+ identity, coming to terms with one’s sexual and/or gender requires distancing from one’s racial community, making identity integration more difficult
- Finding community with LGBTQ+ POC is a protective factor for well-being for POC

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- References available upon request: dnguyen63@huskers.unl.edu
- Dr. Cynthia Willis-Esqueda
- Kendra Quiroz
- UNL McNair Scholars Program



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

