How race influences perceptions of objectivity and hiring preferences

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Abstract

Objectivity norms can act as a source of mistrust of marginalized voices within organizations. In this paper, we study White evaluators' perceptions of racially marginalized applicants' objectivity and hireability in a field where objectivity is considered imperative: journalism. We predicted that Black journalists will be viewed as less objective and as having more ingroup bias regarding racial issues coverage compared to White journalists. Importantly, we expected these patterns to emerge in opposition to hiring judgments that would, overall, favor Black journalists over White journalists. Meta-analyses of three samples ($N = 1,725$) found that White perceivers rated Black journalists as less objective, yet more hireable, than White journalists. In follow up correlational and experimental analysis we found consistent evidence that perceptions of racial expertise positively impact hiring judgments and mixed evidence of the influence of objectivity on hiring judgments. Overall, these studies illuminate the costs of marginalization in primarily-White workplaces, even when there are apparent hiring advantages, and demonstrate potential barriers to inclusion and accurate racial issues coverage.

Keywords: Objectivity, racial expertise, diversity, organizations, ingroup bias

"Black journalists are hired and told — sometimes explicitly — that we can thrive only if

we don't dare to be our full selves."—Wesley Lowery, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist

Objectivity is a highly valued feature across diverse organizational domains. This is true

amongst researchers and social scientists, for whom objectivity is thought to create rigorous

science (Armstrong, 1983; King et al., 2018; Torrez et al., 2022; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008).

Objectivity is also broadly relevant to a variety of managerial decisions across industries—

including law, consulting, medicine, finance, and technology—where managers increasingly

interpret data and analyses to steer policy and practice (Bennett, 1984; Grant, 2021; Harford,

2021; Kahneman et al., 2021). In journalism, objectivity norms have long been considered a

professional and moral imperative, contributing at once to journalists' legitimacy as truth-tellers

as well as their perceptions of credibility in the eyes of their colleagues and the public (Jacquette,

2010; Tuchman, 1972; Vos, 2012). Importantly, objectivity norms require journalists to be

detached, impartial, and neutral in their search for the truth (Schudson, 2001; Schudson &

Anderson, 2009). Although there are other related constructs that may be associated with

objectivity (e.g., trustworthiness, credibility, persuasiveness to name a few), we choose to focus

on perceptions of *objectivity* in particular given its preeminence in journalism (see Schudson,

2001 for a review).

Objectivity—or the ability to remain detached, impartial, and neutral—is traditionally

understood as a means to achieve valid, reliable, and truthful reporting (Tuchman, 1972).

However, we argue here that in the context of racial issues reporting, journalists with greater

access to this truth (e.g., racially minoritized journalists) will be perceived as less objective.

Racial Identity, Presumed Bias, and Perceptions of Objectivity

Our primary hypothesis is that racially marginalized journalists will be perceived as less objective in their coverage of racial issues relative to White journalists given norms of the profession which require people to report on facts and data in a manner that is detached from perspective, neutral, and impartial. Several lines of research anticipate this implication of racially minoritized journalists' objectivity. We turn first toward the persuasion literature to understand how racial identity may influence perceptions of objectivity. Literature on source effects in persuasion finds that evaluators may assess a communicator's persuasiveness in the context of the communicators' apparent identities (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). For example, when a communicator with a clear pro-business bias advocates a pro-environmental message, counter to expectations based on their identity, they are perceived as less biased and more persuasive (Eagly & Chaiken, 1975; Eagly et al., 1978). The violation of the communicators presumed self-interest serves as a signal of the communicators' trustworthiness. Even in the absence of explicit self-interest signals, Black communicators, in particular, may be perceived as more biased (and their arguments worth greater scrutiny) relative to White communicators (Petty et al., 1999; White & Harkins, 1994), for reasons we discuss in greater detail below. These effects of racial identity on message scrutiny and persuasiveness may also act as a form of aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; 2004), whereby otherwise egalitarian perceivers who desire to maintain a positive image of themselves may scrutinize Black communicators to a greater degree to justify their underlying anti-Black attitudes. All of these pathways can lead to perceptions that Black journalists may be perceived as less objective relative to White journalists, particularly in the context of racial issues communication given a presumption of self- and group-interest which we elaborate on below.

We can also draw on the literature on prejudice and bias confrontation to understand the process through which Black journalists may be perceived as less objective relative to White journalists. Broadly, research on bias confrontation has found that minority group members encounter increased skepticism when confronting bias relative to majority group members (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). For example, a Black communicator claiming experiences of discrimination (relative to other sources of attribution) is more likely to be perceived as a complainer, even when participants are told this attribution of discrimination is correct (Kaiser & Miller, 2001). In addition, Black speakers who make claims of racial bias are evaluated more negatively relative to their White counterparts (Schultz & Maddox, 2013). Black instructors teaching course content related to racial inequity are perceived as more biased compared to White instructors (Littleford & Jones, 2017; Littleford et al., 2010). Moreover, in the context of journalism in particular, recent research finds that readers leave more negative comments on op-eds about race written by Black versus White journalists (Sumner et al., 2017). We contend that this backlash may be driven in part by perceptions that racially marginalized journalists (but not White journalists) possess social ties and life experiences that make them particularly likely to violate the status quo. Several lines of research anticipate this hypothesis, and we detail our argument and the supportive research below.

Living in a country with profound and persistent racial hierarchy (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Salter et al., 2018), racially marginalized journalists have likely been socialized in ways that make racial inequality more salient in their everyday lives and for their communities than the lives of White Americans (Bonam et al., 2019; Nelson et al., 2013; Swim et al., 1998). If White evaluators believe that this socialization process has caused racially marginalized journalists to

systematically favor racial equity and be critical of the status quo, such experiences will likely

hinder perceptions of objectivity. Recent work suggests this is the case. For example, Saguy et

al. (2020) found that groups that are perceived as suffering discrimination are perceived as more

committed to social justice than those who do not suffer discrimination (e.g., Black people

versus White people; Saguy et al., 2020). Due to this presumed socialization process, White

evaluators may see historically racially marginalized journalists' (but not White journalists')

perspectives on racial issues as lacking in objectivity—this is particularly true given that Black

journalists perspectives, informed by these lived experiences, will be particularly likely to violate

the status quo. In predominantly-White workplaces—where the default norms that determine

what perspectives are neutral, accurate, and representative (i.e., the status quo) are based around

dominant members of the racial hierarchy (i.e., White Americans; Ray, 2019)—Black

Americans' perspectives are likely to deviate from the norm. Racially marginalized journalists

may thus be seen as particularly threatening to the status quo which serves White American

interests, and as such, could be seen as less objective (i.e., neutral; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et

al., 2004; Rudman et al., 2012).

Relatedly, objectivity perceptions may also be driven by perceptions that racially

marginalized journalists, but not relatively more racially advantaged journalists, are looking out

for the interests of themselves or their own racial group. The public, as well as editors, may be

concerned that racially marginalized journalists will use their occupational positions to advocate

for other marginalized peoples or position their community favorably in their coverage. This is in

line with past work that finds that Black versus White employees who engage in diversity-

promoting initiatives are perceived as more self-interested (Gardner & Ryan, 2020; Hekman et

al., 2017). Qualitative work has also documented racially minoritized journalists' challenges of

perceived partiality toward members of their racial group in their coverage (Cha & Roberts, 2019). Black people generally have more of a connection to other members of their racial community (Massey, 2006) and the perception of these community ties themselves may shape White evaluators' perceptions of ingroup bias (Wout et al., 2010). Thus, a key driver of perceptions of impartiality, objectivity, and neutrality may be perceptions of how biased or favorable journalists are toward their ingroup in particular. We therefore also expect that racially marginalized journalists will be perceived as more biased toward members of their own racial group.

This argument about threats to the status quo suggests that other racial minorities perceived by White Americans as higher in status or less committed to social justice (and thus less threatening to the status quo), such as Asian Americans (Chao, et al., 2013; Ho & Jackson, 2001; Saguy et al., 2020; Wong et al., 1998; Zou & Cheryan, 2017), may not receive the same scrutiny of their objectivity as Black journalists, a possibility we explore in our studies. Indeed, Saguy and colleagues (2020) found that Asian Americans were perceived as incurring less discrimination, having less of a tradition of fighting injustice, and less committed to social justice overall compared to other discriminated groups. This line of argumentation also suggests that perceptions of Black journalists as less objective compared to their White counterparts are likely not driven by explicit racial antipathy or prejudice. Rather, they are more likely driven by support of the racial status quo, a possibility we also explore. Overall, racially marginalized journalists' identity may be seen as constantly shaping (and distorting) the gathering and interpretation of factual information in opposition to the status quo and in support of their racial group, thus implicating their objectivity.

Racial Identity, Racial Expertise, and Hireability

Thus far, we have argued that, in the context of racial issues reporting, Black journalists will be seen as more biased toward their ingroup and less objective than their White and advantaged counterparts. We expect this to co-occur with judgments that Black journalists are more hireable, even in a role where objectivity is valued. Specifically, we propose that racially marginalized journalists, while perceived as less objective, are also more likely to be subject to more favorable hiring judgments, around perceptions of hireability and starting salary, than White journalists. Much evidence supports this assertion. First, many organizations are claiming to value the experiences of marginalized people. Many Fortune 500 companies have recently made public statements about their intentions to improve the diversity of their workforces (Dowell & Jackson, 2020; Friedman, 2020). These normative changes are likely to increase demand for historically racially marginalized job candidates. Moreover, due to the socialization processes previously mentioned, people from historically marginalized racial groups are often perceived as possessing greater expertise about race and ethnicity than their less historically marginalized counterparts (Abad, 2019; Crosby & Monin, 2013; DeVault, 1995; Littleford & Jones, 2017; Littleford et al., 2010). Indeed, some evidence suggests that members of historically marginalized racial groups actually do possess greater racial expertise than their advantaged counterparts (Abad, 2019; Cha & Roberts, 2019; Du Bois, 1999; Kraus et al., 2017; Mueller, 2020; Nelson et al., 2013). For organizations claiming to value this expertise, such perceptions may make racially marginalized journalists more valuable, particularly for roles pertaining to racial issues coverage.

Recent research suggests the possibility that expectations of racialized knowledge indeed shape occupational trajectories. For example, among Latino/a nonprofit professionals, racial expertise can provide a pathway to professional success (Abad, 2019). In addition, the high

proportion of minority group members in Chief Diversity Officer roles suggests that racial

expertise may lend legitimacy to racially minoritized employees in this role (Corporate

Leadership Council, 2008). Prior work has found that racially minoritized candidates are seen as

better fits for roles that attenuate (versus enhance) inequality (Dupree & Torrez, 2021).

Newsrooms in particular are starting to recognize that racial expertise in the workplace will serve

their diversity goals and allow for a more complete coverage of cultural and racial topics that

newsrooms are increasingly required to cover (Atske et al., 2019). A recent Pew survey found

that out of 12,000 journalists surveyed, 52 percent believe their news organization does not have

enough racial diversity—and that racial identity was the demographic category perceived as

needing the most increases in representation (i.e., relative to gender and age diversity, for

example; Gottfried et al., 2022). Thus, given the increased urgency for diversity, and the

recognition of racially minoritized candidates' racial expertise, racially marginalized candidates'

racial identity may actually provide a credential through which they can gain access to

organizations (Ray, 2019). For our second hypothesis, we propose that, in contexts such as

journalism where racialized knowledge is valued, racially marginalized journalists will be

favored in hiring judgments around perceptions of hireability and starting salary over their White

counterparts.

Based on the above analysis, we explored the possibility that perceived racial expertise

mediates the association between journalist race and White Americans' hiring preferences.

Specifically, we explored whether racially marginalized journalists are perceived as more worthy

of hiring because of their perceived racial expertise, even as they are viewed as less objective

than their more advantaged counterparts.

Figure 1

Proposed theoretical model wherein membership in a historically marginalized racial group decreases perceived objectivity and increases perceived hireability through perceptions of heightened racial expertise.
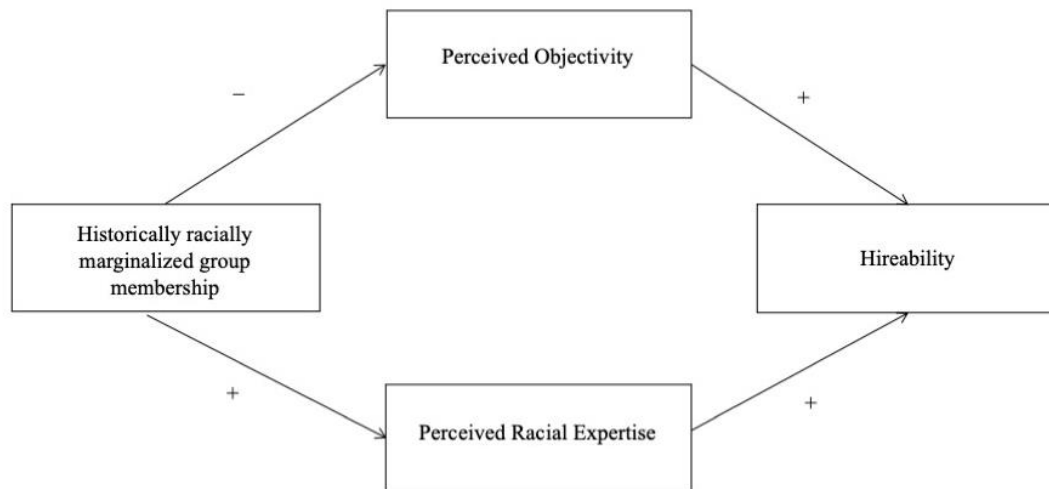
The Present Research

We examined White Americans' perceptions of objectivity and ingroup bias alongside perceptions of racial expertise and hireability for racially minoritized journalists and White journalists. Grounding in the above literature, we made three central predictions. First, we hypothesized that racially minoritized journalists covering racial issues will be viewed as less objective (and more biased toward their ingroup) than White journalists covering racial issues (*Hypothesis 1*). Second, we expected this pattern to emerge in opposition to hiring and racial expertise judgments that will, overall, favor racially minoritized journalists over White journalists and elicit perceptions of their greater racial expertise (*Hypothesis 2*). In follow-up analyses and an experimental study, we tested objectivity and racial expertise as parallel mediators driving the effects of racial group membership on hiring preferences. In that research,

we predicted that, even as community relationships and socialization experiences elicit

perceptions of reduced objectivity and increased ingroup bias, a journalist with higher racial

expertise will be viewed as the most hireable (*Hypothesis 3*).

As a supplemental step, we also considered the effects of several individual difference

and contextual factors. Specifically, we examined the impact of White perceivers' outgroup

prejudice, support for racial hierarchy, candidate racial salience, and coverage topic racialization

on our predicted effects. One possibility is that our expectations about objectivity for

marginalized journalists could be an outgroup prejudice effect where prejudiced observers are

biased against outgroup members more generally, and thus view them as less objective, or low-

prejudice observers may be intentionally skeptical of outgroup members in order to exert greater

control over any unintentional prejudice or appearing prejudiced (i.e., aversive racism; Dovidio

& Gaertner, 2004; Fleming et al., 2005; Petty et al., 1999). We tested this possibility in Study 2

by explicitly examining outgroup prejudice as a potential moderator. However, another

possibility (and our expectation) is that that perceptions of decreased objectivity are not simply a

function of prejudice toward racial outgroups, but are especially likely to emerge in response to

marginalized people who are most likely to disrupt the status quo; as such, perceptions of

objectivity should be driven more by support for the racial status quo (e.g., Ho et al., 2015) and

this pattern of objectivity should be less likely to emerge toward a marginalized group that is

perceived as higher in status and more aligned with the status quo (e.g., Asian Americans; Chao

et al., 2013; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). We tested both of these possibilities in Study 2 as well.

The salience of the journalists' racial issue involvement might also matter, as White

people often express more negative behaviors towards racial minorities who seem more invested

in racial issues (Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009; Thornhill, 2019) and indeed, the activation of racial

issues more broadly (e.g., through resume cues referencing racial coalition) may in itself raise the salience of race (Sommers & Ellsworth, 2009). However, it is also possible that in line with past research (i.e., Petty et al., 1999) these racial salience signals are not necessary to implicate racially minoritized journalists' objectivity. Thus, we examined racial salience as a potential moderator of the association between racial identity and judgments of minoritized journalists' objectivity. Finally, although we live in an inherently racialized society (Bell, 1982; Ray, 2019), some topics—such as police violence— are explicitly racialized. We investigated topic racialization as a potential moderator, examining objectivity judgments in a domain that is explicitly racialized (e.g., racial justice issues; Study 2) or not explicitly racialized (e.g., technology; Study 1). A meta-analysis tested overall effects across three total samples. Across studies, we report how we determined our sample size, data exclusions, as well as our manipulations, and all measures in the study (either in the main text or the *Supplemental Materials).* In all cases, sample size was determined before any data analysis.

Importantly, in this work we choose to sample White participants in the US only. Gatekeepers (especially to high-status roles) are predominantly White, and White evaluators tend to have the most power (Howell & Reese, 1986; Ray, 2019). White Americans are therefore most likely to evaluate applicants and most likely to wield power in these evaluations. This is particularly true in journalism where newsroom employees are predominantly White (Grieco, 2018) and 81 percent of newsroom managers are White (Clark, 2018). Thus, understanding the perspective of White perceivers in particular is key to understanding perceptions of objectivity and hireability in this space.

Study 1

Study 1 determined how White evaluators judge White and historically racially marginalized journalists' objectivity and hireability as it relates to a more or less racialized topic. We used a hiring paradigm experiment in which participants reviewed and evaluated a series of ten resumes from White and racially marginalized candidates (Black and Latinx men and women) for a staff writer position that covered issues related to either race and society or technology. We predicted that White evaluators will rate racially marginalized journalists will as less objective (*Hypothesis 1*), yet more hireable and deserving of higher salaries (*Hypothesis 2*) than White journalists.

Method

Participants

We recruited a sample of White participants for a 10-15 minute online survey from Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants were paid $1.00 and all consented to participate in this research which was approved by the Institutional Review Board. We aimed to recruit 600 participants for a 2 (Candidate Race: Racially Marginalized, White) × 2 (Coverage Topic: Racial Issues, Technology) mixed factorial design. Candidate race was presented within-subjects whereas the job topic was presented between subjects. In order to obtain greater than 99% power to detect an effect size of $R = .21$, the average effect size in social psychology (Richard et al., 2003), we aimed to recruit 200 participants per between-subjects condition, accounting for exclusions. Per our a priori exclusion criterion, we excluded participants from our analyses who did not identify as monoracial White Americans, leaving us with a final sample size of $N = 440$ (265 male; $M_{age} = 35.78$, $SD = 10.62$)[1]. A within-subjects repeated measures ANOVA with 440 participants across two conditions would be sensitive to effects of $\eta_p^2 = .004$, with 80% power

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[1] A chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant difference between exclusions in the racial issues condition ($n = 85$ exclusions) and technology condition ($n = 76$ exclusions), X^2 (1, N = 601) = 0.43, $p = .520$.

(alpha = .05; correlations among repeated measures are described in the *Supplementary Materials*). In this study, we reported all measures, manipulations and exclusions.

Candidate Race and Coverage Topic Manipulations

Participants were told they would evaluate job candidates by reviewing a series of resumes. Participants reviewed ten resumes in total (five White candidates and five racially marginalized candidates of either a Black or Latinx racial/ethnic background) for one of two positions: a staff writer position covering race-relations in the U.S. or a staff writer position covering technology. Racial identity was signaled by racial cues within the resumes themselves (e.g., professional memberships; Kang et al., 2016; Thornhill, 2019) to avoid additional noise associated with using solely names to signal racial identity (Gaddis, 2017). For example, one candidate mentioned that they were awarded the National Association of Black Journalists Summer Fellowship.

The coverage topic of the position was signaled through a job description that participants read before they reviewed the resumes. In the racial issues coverage position, participants were told: "*We're looking for a staff writer to oversee our coverage of gender, race, and justice, as well as the movements and ideologies across the spectrum that inform our current political moment.*" In the technology coverage position, participants were told: "*We're looking for a staff writer to oversee our coverage of ideas, leaders, and trends driving the tech industry, as well as its effect on our politics, our minds, and our culture*" (see *Supplemental Materials* for full text of job descriptions and sample resumes).

To ensure that the manipulation was effective in shaping White evaluators' attention to the candidates' racial identities, we conducted a separate validation study using Prolific Academic (Peer et al., 2017). We exposed participants ($N = 100$) to the candidate names and

professional memberships used across studies. We asked respondents to correctly identify the

names of candidates and their professional affiliations. Participants correctly identified

journalists' names 95% to 100% of the time and their professional membership 83% to 96% of

the time, suggesting that participants perceived vital information pertaining to candidate race and

salience across studies.

Measures

Immediately following each resume, participants evaluated the candidate. To provide

participants with additional context, they were told that, "*Journalists must be objective so that*

personal biases do not undermine the accuracy of their work". Our measures of objectivity and

hiring were adapted from prior research (Cuddy et al., 2011; Kennedy & Pronin, 2008; Rudman

& Glick, 2001) and they were chosen based on their face validity and brevity, allowing

participants to judge all 10 candidates easily.

Perceptions of objectivity. Participants rated how objective ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 0.91$) and

how biased they believed the journalist was ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.35$; reverse-coded) using a scale

from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) which were combined into separate composites for racially

marginalized ($r = .36$) and White ($r = .32$) candidates.

Hireability and salary judgments. Lastly, participants rated how trustworthy, how good

of a fit, how hireable, and how qualified they perceived the candidate to be. Participants

responded using a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A composite of these

items served as our measure of hireability ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.84$). Participants also

recommended a salary for the candidate: "What yearly salary would you recommend that this

applicant receive (in thousands of dollars)?" ($25,000 to $35,000, $M = \$30,676$, $SD = \$2,072$).

Lastly, participants completed several demographic items (see *Supplemental Materials* for descriptive statistics and intercorrelations across studies).

Results

We used a 2 (Candidate Race: Racially Marginalized, White; within-subjects) $\times$ 2 (Coverage Topic: Racial Issues, Technology; between-subjects) repeated measures mixed ANOVA to test main and interactive effects.

Perceptions of objectivity. We predicted that White perceivers would rate Black and Latinx journalists as less objective than White journalists (*Hypothesis 1*). Turning first to our perceived objectivity composite, there was no main effect of Coverage Topic, ($F(1, 438) = 2.07$, $p = .151$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$) nor did the Candidate Race $\times$ Coverage Topic interaction reach significance, ($F(1, 438) = 0.49$, $p = .483$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$). However, a main effect of Candidate Race, $F(1, 438) = 9.78$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .022$, emerged. Supporting Hypothesis 1, White participants viewed racially marginalized candidates as significantly less objective ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.05$) than White candidates ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.00$; see Figure 2).
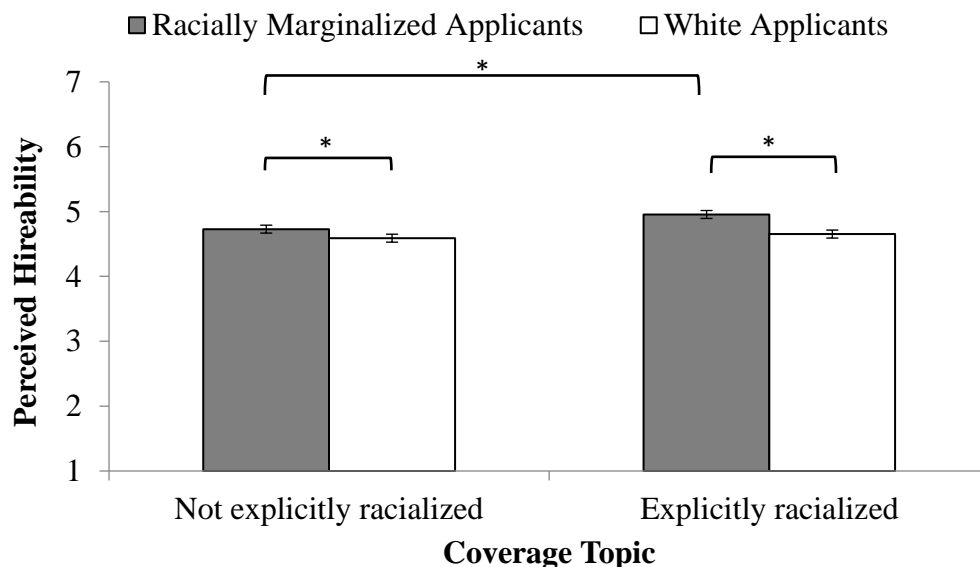
Figure 2. Perceptions of Objectivity in Study 1
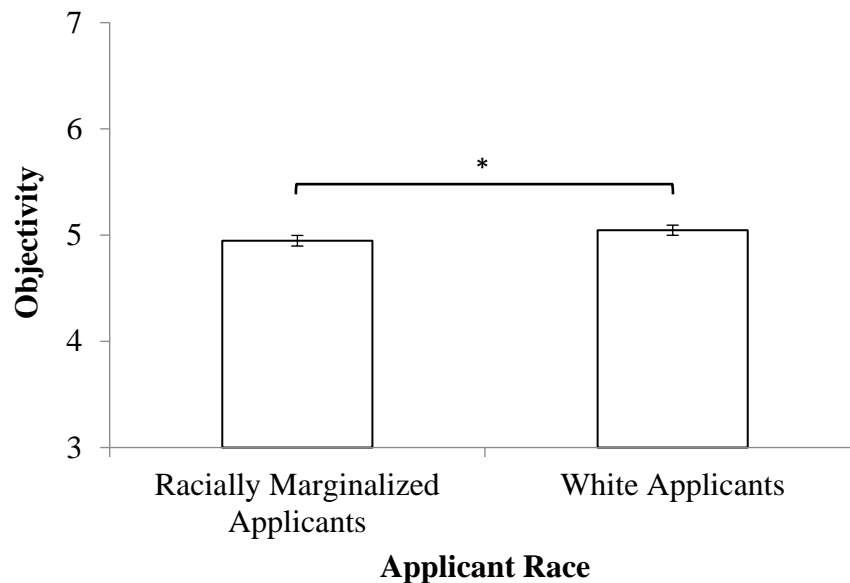
Note. Main effect of candidate race on perceived candidate objectivity. Error bars represent one standard error above and below the mean. *p < .05

Hireability and salary judgments. We also predicted that White perceivers would rate racially marginalized journalists as more hireable and deserving of higher salaries than White journalists (*Hypothesis 2*). There was a significant main effect of Candidate Race on perceived hireability ($F(1, 438) = 45.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .094$; see Figure 3) and salary recommendations, ($F(1, 438 = 58.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .119$). Supporting Hypothesis 2, racially marginalized candidates were perceived as more hireable (M = 4.84, *SD* = 0.91), and offered higher salaries, (*M* = \$30,983, *SD* = \$2,230) than White candidates (hireability: *M* = 4.62, *SD* = 0.91; salary recommendation: *M* = \$30,372, *SD* = \$2,240). In addition, we found no significant effect of Coverage Topic on perceptions of hireability, $F(1, 438) = 3.25$, $p = .072$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$, or salary recommendations, $F(1, 438) = 0.28$, $p = .598$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

These main effects were qualified by a significant Candidate Race × Coverage Topic

interaction predicting perceptions of hireability ($F(1, 438) = 6.09$, $p = .014$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$) and

salary ($F(1, 438) = 8.28$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$). In parallel with external evidence from

newsrooms (Sui et al., 2018), racially marginalized candidates were perceived as more hireable

for the role that was explicitly racialized ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 0.83$) versus the role that was less

explicitly racialized, $F(1, 438) = 6.81$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$ ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.97$; Figure 3). This

was not true for White candidates, $F(1, 438) = 0.54$, $p = .463$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. When breaking down

the simple slopes for salary recommendations, the effect of coverage topic was not significant for

either the White ($F(1, 438) = 0.34$, $p = .560$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$) nor racially marginalized candidates

($F(1, 438) = 2.46$, $p = .118$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$).

Figure 3. *Perceptions of Hireability as a Function of Coverage Topic and Candidate Race in*

Study 1

Note. The interactive effects of coverage topic and candidate race on perceived candidate

hireability. Error bars represent one standard error above and below the mean. *$p < .05$

Discussion

Study 1 provided some initial support for our first two hypotheses. Supporting Hypothesis 1, White perceivers viewed racially marginalized candidates as less objective than White candidates. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, racially marginalized journalists were also perceived as more hireable and deserving of higher salaries than their White counterparts. However, a few outstanding questions remain. Subsequent studies will seek to more thoroughly examine the effect of journalist race on perceptions of ingroup bias and racial expertise judgments. In addition, to examine outgroup prejudice and racial salience as alternative explanations, Study 2 includes multiple racially marginalized outgroups with varying levels of perceived racial salience and status. In addition, we measure and examine outgroup prejudice and support for racial hierarchy as potential moderators. Lastly, to determine whether objectivity judgments impact how journalists are treated, Study 2 analyzes editorial comments generated by participants in response to a hypothetical writing excerpt. This, we hope, reveals the importance of understanding objectivity judgements in context of racially marginalized journalists' daily experiences in the workplace (i.e., interactions with readers), even as they might be preferred for these roles.

Study 2

Studies 2a and 2b used a similar paradigm as in Study 1 with a few important additions to address some of the prior study limitations. We manipulate both racial identity and racial salience across three candidates of varying racial identities (White, Black, Asian), allowing us to rule out outgroup prejudice as an alternative explanation and examine whether the racial salience cues in Study 1 drive these objectivity effects or whether racially minoritized journalists are more broadly penalized for their objectivity. Importantly, we do not expect Asian candidates—

who White perceivers may view as racially marginalized but closer in status to White Americans

(Chao et al., 2013; Saguy et al., 2020)—to receive the same interrogation of their objectivity as

do Black candidates. However, due to their perceived racial expertise, we predict they will likely

be perceived as more hireable than White journalists. We also measure and examine outgroup

prejudice to ensure that objectivity effects are not simply a result of generalized prejudice. Study

2 focuses on an explicitly racialized journalism job used in Study 1, for which racially

minoritized journalists were preferred.

Finally, we measured two other constructs that were central to our hypotheses. First, we

measure perceptions of racial expertise to test whether perceived racial expertise drives increased

hireability preferences for racially marginalized journalists, in line with Hypothesis 3. We also

measured perceptions of journalists' racial ingroup bias to test whether the perception of racially

marginalized journalists' objectivity may align with a presumed motive to favor their racial

ingroup, further supporting Hypothesis 1. In sum, we determine whether Black journalists

(versus White journalists) will be seen as less objective (and higher in racial ingroup bias), but

more hireable due to their presumed racial expertise.

Study 2a

Method

Participants

We recruited a sample of White participants for a 10-15 minute online survey from

Prolific Academic. Participants were paid $2.20 and all consented to participate in this research

which was approved by the Institutional Review Board. We aimed to recruit 600 participants for

a 3 (Candidate Race: White, Asian, Black) × 2 (Salience: Salience Cues, No Salience Cues)

between-subjects design. In order to obtain greater than 99% power to detect an effect size of $R =$

.21, the average effect size in social psychology (Richard et al., 2003), we aimed to recruit 200

participants per candidate race condition, accounting for exclusions. Per our a priori exclusion

criteria, we excluded one participant from our analyses who did not identify as White and 10

participants who failed an attention check we added to exclude participants for careless

responding (e.g., marking "True" in response to "I have never used a computer"). This left us

with a final sample size of $N = 592^2$ (290 male; $M_{age} = 39.08$, $SD = 13.88$) exposed to the White

($n = 187$), Black ($n = 200$), or Asian ($n = 205$) candidates, with ($n = 297$) or without ($n = 295$)

salience cues. Given we primarily examine the main effect of race, an independent samples t-test

would be sensitive to effects of Cohen's $d = 0.28$ with 80% power (alpha = .05, two-tailed). In

this study, we report all measures, manipulations and exclusions either here or in the

Supplementary Materials.

Candidate Race and Salience Manipulations

Participants were told they would evaluate job candidates by reviewing a resume for a

staff writer position for inequality and social justice issues. The position description was similar

to what participants read in Study 1, however, to more narrowly define the scope of coverage to

racial issues, we included race-related article titles under the header "example coverage" (e.g.,

"'We can't let things settle down': George Floyd and Eric Garner's families call for justice at the

DNC"; see *Supplemental Materials* for full text) and removed mention of gender issues

coverage. To signal racial identity, we relied on pictures appended to the resumes. These pictures

were pre-normed to ensure that they were rated similarly on age, attractiveness and

protoypicality of their racial identity (Ma et al., 2015). To manipulate racial salience, we used

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[2] Because participants for Study 1 were recruited via MTurk which does not allow for us to pre-screen for White participants, the number of non-White participants excluded in Study 1 versus Study 2 differs to some extent. Attention check exclusions did not vary considerably by race conditions (exclusions by condition: White: $n = 4$, Black: $n = 4$, Asian: $n = 2$.

resume cues (e.g., professional memberships; Kang et al., 2016); these cues were the same for all

candidates regardless of their racial identity. For example, the candidate in the salience condition

mentored a cohort of Black journalists, served on the Diversity Committee of the Society for

Professional Journalists, and volunteered for the Coalition for Black Lives. In the condition with

no salience cues, these cues were replaced with more neutral cues (e.g., Greater Boston Food

Bank Volunteer).

Measures

Immediately following each resume, participants answered a series of questions to

evaluate their impressions of the candidate. Before making evaluations, participants were given

additional context: "*It is important for this candidate to be objective. To maintain objectivity in*

journalism, writers should present the facts whether or not they like or agree with those facts.

Objective reporting is meant to review issues and events in a neutral and unbiased manner,

regardless of their own opinion or personal beliefs."

Perceptions of objectivity. Participants responded to a 6-item scale of objectivity

developed by the authors (e.g., "This candidate would be objective in their reporting", "This

candidate would be neutral in their reporting"; 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*); $\alpha =$

.89, $M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.23$). All items loaded strongly onto one factor which accounted for 64.12%

of the variance in the outcome (*eigenvalue* = 3.85). We also included a previously validated

measure of source credibility to validate our scale (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Meyer, 1988;

Wölker & Powell, 2021). Participants were asked to rate the candidate on a series of 5-point

bipolar scales (e.g., fair-unfair, unbiased-biased; $\alpha = .87$, $M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.85$).

Perceptions of ingroup bias. We also adapted various validated scales assessing

perceptions of candidate self-interest and ingroup favoritism to measure perceptions of ingroup

bias (Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013: Self and Other-Interest Inventory; Tseng & Fan, 2011: Self-Interest Subscale; Loyd & Amoroso, 2018: Ingroup Favoritism Threat). Seven items (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) assessed to what extent they believed the candidate would favor their racial ingroup (e.g., "As a journalist, this candidate would be keeping an eye out for their racial group's interests", "As a journalist, this candidate would favor members of their racial group"; α = .97, *M* = 3.56, *SD* = 1.61). All items loaded strongly onto one factor which accounted for 82.97% of the variance in the outcome (*eigenvalue* = 5.81).

Hireability and salary judgments. Participants next responded to 11 questions, randomly presented, that assessed participants' hireability, including "How likely is it that you would recommend interviewing this candidate for the job?". These items were adapted from previous research that has assessed perceptions of applicant hireability and belonging (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Walton & Cohen, 2007). All items loaded strongly onto one factor which accounted for 71.71% of the variance in the outcome (*eigenvalue* = 7.89; α = .96, *M* = 5.37, *SD* = 1.64). Participants also recommended salary ("What yearly salary would you recommend that this applicant receive (in thousands of dollars)?"; ($25,000 to $35,000, *M* = $30,708, *SD* = $3,001).

Perceptions of racial expertise. Two scales assessed perceptions of racial expertise. First, we employed a 3-item scale of racial expertise adapted from prior research to this context (Thomas-Hunt & Phillips, 2004) ("How knowledgeable would this candidate be about racial issues?", "How knowledgeable would this candidate be about potential sources to interview?", "How knowledgeable would this candidate be about reaching a diverse set of readers?"; 1 = *not at all knowledgeable*, 7 = *very knowledgeable*). All items loaded strongly onto one factor which accounted for 77.88% of the variance in the outcome (*eigenvalue* = 2.34; α = .86, *M* = 5.22, *SD*

= 1.78). We also used a previously validated scale of generalized expertise in order to validate

the author-adapted scale (Ohanian, 1990). Participants were asked to rate the candidate on a

series of 5-point bipolar scales (e.g., expert-not an expert, experienced-inexperienced,

knowledgeable-unknowledgeable; α = .92, *M* = 3.76, *SD* = 0.83).

Support for hierarchy. We assessed support for hierarchy using Social Dominance

Orientation. Participants completed the 8-item SDO-7 Scale (Ho et al., 2015), responding to

items such as "An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and some to be on the bottom"

and "We should do what we can to equalize conditions between groups (reverse-scored)" (1 =

strongly oppose, 7 = *strongly favor*; α = .89, *M* = 2.43, *SD* = 1.25).

Outgroup prejudice. To assess outgroup prejudice and anti-Black prejudice, participants

responded to a feeling thermometer (Zavala-Rojas, 2014). Participants were presented with a

slider bar (0-100) to rate how cold/unfavorable or warm/favorable they felt toward the following

social groups: Whites/Caucasian-Americans, Blacks/African-Americans, Hispanics/Latin-

Americans, Asians/Asian-Americans. We created an index of anti-Black prejudice by subtracting

participants' ratings for Blacks/African-Americans from their ratings for Whites/Caucasian-

Americans (*M* = 4.09, *SD* = 24.24).

Open-ended feedback: Skepticism coding. As an exploratory step, we also asked

participants to review and provide feedback on a writing excerpt purportedly submitted by the

candidate regarding a contemporary racial issue (racial disparities in student loans; see

Supplemental Materials). Participant were told given the following instructions during the

hypothetical hiring task:

Review it carefully, providing feedback on it as you would an editor of this newspaper.

Please be as thorough and careful as possible; the hiring committee will use these

comments to make their final decision. Feedback could be small (e.g., typos) or more

substantial (e.g., framing, structure, etc.).

Two coders blind to our hypotheses were trained to read the open-ended feedback and

assess the presence of skepticism according to a coding scheme developed by the authors.

Feedback that was explicitly not skeptical was coded as –1 (e.g., "I appreciate how unbiased this

is"). Feedback that was unrelated to skepticism judgments was rated as 0 (e.g., "He is qualified

for this job"). Feedback that was slightly skeptical was coded as 1 (e.g., "Could use more details

and data to support claims"). Feedback that was explicitly skeptical was coded as 2 (e.g., "It

seems to me you have a heavy bias"). Upon coding 20 percent of the data, inter-rater reliability

was sufficient (Kappa = .95) and one coder completed the remainder of the coding ($M = .08$, *SD*

= .76). Lastly, participants completed several demographic items.

Scale convergent and discriminant validity. We examined the validity of our objectivity

and racial expertise items against the more established scales related to credibility and

generalized expertise. Table 1 summarizes the associations between our various variables of

interest. Our objectivity measure showed high convergent validity with the source credibility

scale ($r = .74$) and high discriminant validity with outgroup prejudice ($r = -.17$). Similarly, our

measure of racial expertise showed high convergent validity with a scale of generalized expertise

($r = .71$).

Table 1. *Intercorrelations and Descriptive Statistics of Anti-Black Prejudice, Support for Hierarchy, and Key Outcome Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Objectivity	—	.74*	−.52*	.41*	.41*	.54*	−.17*	−.32*
2. Source Credibility		—	−.39*	.59*	.60*	.70*	−.14*	−.28*
3. Perceptions of Ingroup Bias			—	−.07†	−.07†	−.19*	.23*	.34*
4. Racial expertise				—	.71*	.75*	−.06	−.15*
5. Generalized Expertise					—	.78*	−.03	−.12*
6. Hireability						—	−.10*	−.18*
7. Anti-Black Prejudice							—	.51*
8. Social Dominance Orientation								—
M	4.85	3.76	3.56	5.22	3.76	5.37	4.09	2.43
SD	1.23	0.85	1.61	1.78	0.83	1.64	24.24	1.25
Range	1, 7	1, 5	1, 7	1, 7	1, 5	1.36, 7	−100, 100	1, 7

Note. The measure of anti-Black prejudice was created by subtracting participants' feeling thermometer ratings for Black Americans from their ratings for White Americans. †$p<.10$ *$p<.05$.

Results

Perceptions of objectivity and bias. To test our hypotheses, we used a 3 (Candidate Race: White, Asian, Black) × 2 (Salience: Salience Cues, No Salience Cues) ANOVA. Our first hypothesis holds that White perceivers will rate Black journalists in particular as less objective and more biased toward their racial ingroup than a White or Asian journalist (*Hypothesis 1*), ruling out ingroup favoritism or outgroup bias.

Turning first to perceived objectivity, we found a main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 586) = 7.33$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$, and Candidate Salience, $F(1, 586) = 4.53$, $p = .034$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$. Although not statistically significant, participants rated the Black candidate as less objective (*M* = 4.62, *SD* = 1.37) than the White candidate (*M* = 4.83, *SD* = 1.08; $t(385) = 1.68$, $p = .093$, $d = 0.37$). Ruling out outgroup bias, Black candidates were also seen as significantly less objective than the Asian candidate (*M* = 5.09, *SD* = 1.17; $t(403) = 3.72$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.17$). The candidate with no salience cues was perceived as more objective (*M* = 4.96, *SD* = 1.21) than the one with

salience cues ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.24$). The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not reach significance, $F(2, 586) = 0.28$, $p = .757$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

Turning next to perceptions of ingroup bias, a main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 586) = 38.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .117$, but not Candidate Salience ($F(1, 586) = 0.83$, $p = .363$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$), emerged. In support of Hypothesis 1, and consistent with Study 1, participants rated the Black candidate as significantly more biased ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.55$) than the White candidate ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.52$; $t(385) = 8.23$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.84$). Aligning with our expectations, the Black candidate was also seen as significantly more biased than the Asian candidate ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.46$; $t(403) = 6.72$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.67$). The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not significantly predict perceptions of objectivity, $F(2, 586) = 0.51$, $p = .600$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$.

Hireability and salary. Our second hypothesis is that Black and Asian journalists will be judged as more hireable and deserving of higher salaries than White journalists (*Hypothesis 2*). A main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 582) = 14.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .047$, but not Candidate Salience ($F(1, 582) = 1.46$, $p = .227$, $\eta_p^2 = .003$), emerged to predict perceptions of hireability. In support of Hypothesis 2, participants rated the Black candidate as significantly more hireable ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.15$) than the White candidate ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.23$; $t(385) = 4.65$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.47$). As theorized, the Black candidate was seen as no more hireable than the Asian candidate ($M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.08$; $t(403) = 0.43$, $p = .670$, $d = 0.04$). The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not reach significance, $F(2, 582) = 0.25$, $p = .777$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

Salary recommendations followed a similar pattern. A main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 582) = 8.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .028$, but not Candidate Salience ($F(1, 582) = 1.26$, $p = .262$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$), emerged to predict salary recommendations. Participants recommended a significantly higher salary for the Black candidate ($M = \$31,130$, $SD = \$2,882$) than the White candidate ($M =$

$29,978, SD = $2,874; $t(381)$ = 3.92, p < .001, d = 0.40). Participants did not recommend a

higher salary to the Black candidate than the Asian candidate (M = $30,951, SD = $3,120; $t(402)$

= 0.60, p = .549, d = .06). The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not reach

significance, $F(2, 582)$ = 0.38, p = .683, η_p^2 = .001.

 Perceptions of racial expertise. Turning to perceptions of expertise, we observed a main

effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 586)$ = 34.99, p < .001, η_p^2 = .107, and Candidate Salience, $F(1,$

586) = 5.95, p = .015, η_p^2 = .010. Participants rated the Black candidate as significantly more

expert (M = 5.51, SD = 1.11) than the White candidate (M = 4.67, SD = 1.27; $t(385)$ = 6.99, p <

.001, d = 0.71). Potentially due to perceptions of their similar minoritized experiences, the Asian

candidate was seen as possessing a similar level of racial expertise as the Black candidate (M =

5.44, SD = 0.98; $t(403)$ = 0.66, p = .512, d = 0.07). In addition, the candidate with no racial

salience cues on their resume was perceived as less expert (M = 5.13, SD = 1.18) than the

candidate with the salience cues on their resume (M = 5.32, SD = 1.17). The Candidate Race ×

Candidate Salience interaction did not reach significance, $F(2, 586)$ = 0.51, p = .603, η_p^2 = .002.

 Open-ended feedback: Skepticism coding. Neither a main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2,$

584) = 1.52, p = .221, η_p^2 = .005, nor Candidate Salience, $F(1, 584)$ = 0.27, p = .604, η_p^2 = .000,

emerged to predict skepticism in open-ended feedback. The Candidate Race × Candidate

Salience interaction also did not predict skepticism, ($F(2, 687)$ = 0.40, p = .673, η_p^2 = .001).

 Moderation analyses. Finally, outgroup prejudice did not moderate effects of applicant

race on objectivity (see *Supplemental Materials* for all analyses), providing further evidence that

perceptions of objectivity are not simply driven by racial prejudice. However, we did find a

significant interaction between SDO and race on perceptions of objectivity such that participants

higher in support for racial hierarchy are more likely to rate the Black journalist as less objective

relative to the White and Asian journalists. That we found support for moderation by SDO but not outgroup prejudice suggests, as noted in the introduction, that this effect is more likely driven by support for the racial status quo than general racial antipathy (see *Supplemental Materials for full results*).

Discussion

Overall, Study 2a supported our hypotheses. In accordance with Hypothesis 1, participants viewed a Black candidate as significantly less objective than an Asian candidate and more biased toward their ingroup than White and Asian candidates. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, we found that a Black journalist was perceived as more hireable and deserving of a higher salary than a White journalist, although not more hireable than an Asian journalist. In addition, in line with our Hypothesis 3, participants rated the Black candidate as significantly more racially expert than the White candidate, but not more racially expert than the Asian candidate (a finding that we return to in the General Discussion). Perceptions of the Asian candidate as more objective than a Black candidate, despite perceived as possessing similar expertise, might speak to aforementioned perceptions of Asian candidates as more aligned societally and stereotypically with White Americans (Chao et al., 2013; Dupree et al., 2021). The aim of Study 2b was to replicate Study 2a, including only measures necessary for testing our focal hypotheses. We also tested the simultaneous role of objectivity and racial expertise on hireability judgments in an exploratory mediation analysis at the end of Study 2b.

Study 2b

Method

Participants

We recruited a sample of White participants for a 10-15 minute online survey from Prolific Academic. Participants were paid $2.15 and all consented to participate in this research which was approved by the Institutional Review Board. We aimed to recruit 700 participants for a 3 (Candidate Race: White, Black, Asian) × 2 (Salience: Salience Cues, No Salience Cues) between-subjects design. In order to obtain greater than 99% power to detect an effect size of $R =$ .21, the average effect size in social psychology (Richard et al., 2003), we aimed to recruit 200 participants per candidate race condition, accounting for exclusions. Per our a priori exclusion criteria, we excluded one participant from our analyses who did not identify as White as well as six participants who failed the attention check from Study 2a[3]. This left us with a final sample size of $N = 693$ (396 male; $M_{age} = 38.38$, $SD = 12.33$) exposed to the White ($n = 226$), Black ($n = 238$), or Asian ($n = 229$) candidates, with ($n = 346$) or without ($n = 347$) salience cues. Given we primarily examined the main effect of race, an independent samples t-test would be sensitive to effects of Cohen's $d = 0.24$ with 80% power (alpha = .05, two-tailed). In this study, we reported all measures, manipulations and exclusions either here or in the *Supplementary Materials*.

Candidate Race and Salience Manipulations

Participants viewed the same resumes and position descriptions as in Study 2a.

Measures

Perceptions of objectivity and bias. Participants responded to the same measures of objectivity (α = .84, $M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.22$) and ingroup bias (α = .97, $M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.68$) as in Study 2a.

Hireability and salary judgments. Participants responded to the same measures of hireability (α = .95, $M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.13$) and salary ($M = \$31,064$, $SD = \$2,949$) as in Study 2a.

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[3] Attention check exclusions did not vary considerably by race conditions (exclusions by condition: White: $n = 3$, Black: $n = 1$, Asian: $n = 2$.

Perceptions of racial expertise. Participants responded to the same measure of racial expertise as in Study 2a ($\alpha = .89$, $M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.23$).

Open-ended feedback: Skepticism coding. Two independent coders coded the open-ended feedback using the same coding scheme and coding process as in Study 2a ($M = .05$, $SD = .70$; Kappa = .87).

Lastly, participants completed several demographic items.

Results

We use a 3 (Candidate Race: White, Asian, Black) × 2 (Salience: Salience Cues, No Salience Cues) ANOVA to test our hypotheses.

Perceptions of objectivity and bias. We expected that White perceivers will rate Black journalists as less objective and more biased than White and Asian journalists. As in Study 2a, we found a main effect of Candidate Race ($F(2, 687) = 12.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .035$) and Candidate Salience ($F(1, 687) = 5.78$, $p = .016$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$) predicting perceptions of objectivity. Supporting Hypothesis 1, participants rated the Black candidate as significantly less objective ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.32$) than the White candidate ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.15$; $t(462) = 3.10$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.29$) and the Asian candidate ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.11$; $t(465) = 4.73$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.44$). In addition, the candidate with no cues on their resume was perceived as more objective ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.17$) than the candidate with salience cues on their resume ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.26$). The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not reach significance ($F(2, 687) = 0.38$, $p = .687$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$).

Turning next to perceptions of ingroup bias, a main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 687) = 39.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .102$, but not Candidate Salience ($F(1, 687) = 1.86$, $p = .174$, $\eta_p^2 = .003$), emerged. Participants again rated the Black candidate as significantly more biased ($M = 4.53$, SD

= 1.39) than the White candidate (M = 3.32, SD = 1.70; $t(462)$ = 8.43, p < .001, d = 0.78), and

the Asian candidate (M = 3.53, SD = 1.69; $t(465)$ = 7.02, p < .001, d = 0.65). The Candidate

Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not reach significance, $F(2, 687)$ = 1.99, p = .138, η_p^2

= .006.

  Hireability and salary. We also predicted that White perceivers would rate Black and

Asian journalists as more hireable and deserving of higher salaries than White journalists. A

main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 687)$ = 5.34, p = .005, η_p^2 = .015, but not Candidate Salience

($F(1, 687)$ = 0.49, p = .486, η_p^2 = .001), emerged to predict perceptions of hireability. Supporting

Hypothesis 2, participants rated the Black candidate as significantly more hireable (M = 5.45, SD

= 1.17) than the White candidate (M = 5.16, SD = 1.15; $t(462)$ = 2.76, p = .006, d = 0.26), but not

the Asian candidate (M = 5.46, SD = 1.05; $t(462)$ = 0.10, p =.920, d = 0.01). The Candidate Race

× Candidate Salience interaction did not reach significance, $F(2, 687)$ = 0.51, p = .599, η_p^2 =

.001.

  Salary recommendations were not significant but followed similar mean patterns for

Candidate Race, $F(2, 687)$ = 2.75, p = .065, η_p^2 = .008, and Candidate Salience ($F(1, 687)$ =

1.74, p = .188, η_p^2 = .003). Examining simple comparisons for candidate race we found that

participants recommended a significantly higher salary for the Black candidate (M = $31,387, SD

= $2,982) than the White candidate (M = $30,733, SD = $2,960; $t(458)$ = 2.36, p = .019, d =

0.22), but not the Asian candidate (M = $31,057, SD = $2,879; $t(462)$ = 1.21, p = .225, d = 0.11).

The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not reach significance, $F(2, 683)$ =

0.92, p = .400, η_p^2 = .003.

  Perceptions of racial expertise. Turning to perceptions of expertise, we observed a main

effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 687)$ = 21.03, p < .001, η_p^2 = .058, and Candidate Salience, $F(1,$

687) = 10.61, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$. As with Study 2a, participants rated the Black candidate as significantly more expert ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.11$) than the White candidate ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 1.39$; $t(462) = 5.55$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.52$), but not the Asian candidate ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.08$; $t(465) = 0.25$, $p = .801$, $d = 0.02$). The candidate with no cues on their resume was perceived as less expert ($M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.30$) than the candidate with the salience cues on their resume ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 1.15$). The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not significantly predict perceptions of expertise ($F(2, 687) = 2.49$, $p = .084$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$).

Open-ended feedback: Skepticism coding. A main effect of Candidate Race, $F(2, 683) = 3.55$, $p = .029$, $\eta_p^2 = .010$, and Candidate Salience, $F(1, 683) = 5.21$, $p = .023$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$, emerged to predict skepticism in the open-ended feedback. Participants directed more skepticism toward the Black candidate ($M = 0.15$, $SD = 0.75$) than the White candidate ($M = 0.01$, $SD = 0.68$; $p = t(461) = 2.02$, $p = .044$, $d = 0.19$), and the Asian candidate ($M = -.01$, $SD = 0.66$; $t(462) = 2.38$, $p = .018$, $d = 0.22$). Participants also directed more skepticism toward the candidate with salience cues on their resume ($M = 0.11$, $SD = 0.70$) than the candidate with no salience cues on their resume ($M = -.01$, $SD = 0.69$). The Candidate Race × Candidate Salience interaction did not significantly predict skepticism in the open-ended feedback, ($F(2, 683) = 2.03$, $p = .132$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$).

Exploratory mediation analyses. We explored White evaluators' perceptions of candidates' objectivity and racial expertise as potential mechanisms driving our main effect of racial group membership on hireability. To test these mechanisms, we employed a series of bootstrapping analyses (Hayes, 2013). First, we constructed a mediation model wherein racial expertise and objectivity were the mediators, racial identity was the predictor, and hireability was the outcome variable. This test was exploratory; as such, we coded candidate race such that

Black (coded "1") candidates were evaluated against Asian and White candidates (coded "–1")

based on prior research (Chao et al., 2013; Saguy et al., 2020). We used Hayes' PROCESS

macro (2013; Model 4), drawing 10,000 bootstrap samples (with replacement) to produce 95%

bias-corrected confidence intervals. Results provided initial evidence in support of racial

expertise and objectivity as mediators. In Study 2a, racial expertise and objectivity were

significant predictors of hireability (racial expertise: $\beta = .62$, *SE* $= .03$, 95% CI $= [.56, .67]$;

objectivity: $\beta = .30$, *SE* $= .03$, 95% CI $= [.24, .35]$). In addition, there was positive, significant

indirect effect of candidate race on perceptions of hireability via perceptions of expertise, $\beta =$

$.12$, *SE* $= .03$, 95% CI $= [.06, .17]$ and a negative, significant indirect effect of candidate race on

perceptions of hireability via perceptions of objectivity, $\beta = -.04$, *SE* $= .01$, 95% CI $= [-.07, -$

$.01]$. In Study 2b, racial expertise and objectivity were significant predictors of hireability (racial

expertise: $\beta = .58$, *SE* $= .03$, 95% CI $= [.52, .63]$; objectivity: $\beta = .32$, *SE* $= .03$, 95% CI $= [.26,$

$.37]$). In addition, there was positive, significant indirect effect of candidate race on perceptions

of hireability via perceptions of expertise, $\beta = .08$, *SE* $= .02$, 95% CI $= [.04, .12]$ and a negative,

significant indirect effect of candidate race on perceptions of hireability via perceptions of

objectivity, $\beta = -.05$, *SE* $= .02$, 95% CI $= [-.09, -.03]$. Moreover in both studies, the significant

effect of racial identity on hiring was reduced after inclusion of the mediators (Study 2a: $\beta = .05$,

SE $= .03$, 95% CI $= [-.01, .11]$, $p = .063$; Study 2b: $\beta = .04$, *SE* $= .03$, 95% CI $= [-.01, .09]$, $p =$

$.097$).

　　　　Overall, these analyses reveal that while racially marginalized journalists are perceived as

less objective they are also perceived as more hireable. Notably, these correlational analyses

reveal that this presumed racial expertise may provide a pathway to hireability for racially

marginalized candidates even in a role where objectivity is highly valuable (and indeed, in a role

where we find objectivity concerns suppress hireability preferences for racially marginalized candidates). However, we present these analyses as exploratory and note that these results are by no means definitive, given limitations of a statistical mediation approach in this context and alternative models we did not explore.

Discussion

Supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2, White evaluators rated the Black candidate as significantly less objective and more biased toward their ingroup, as well as more racially expert, and more hireable than White (but not Asian) candidates. Finally, we found initial evidence that perceptions of racial expertise mediated the relationship between racial identity and hireability. We also found evidence that objectivity perceptions may suppress the relationship between racial identity and hiring preferences—a prediction we did not make. In the final study, we more carefully examined the role of journalists' racial expertise and objectivity on hireability through experimental manipulations of prior experiences that make expertise or objectivity higher or lower for a Black job candidate.

<div align="center">

Study 3

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Exploratory mediation analyses revealed initial evidence that perceptions of racial expertise may mediate the relationship between racial identity and hireability. Study 3 determined how White evaluators, particularly those with hiring experience, judge Black journalists' objectivity and hireability in an experiment where aspects of job candidate prior experience affirm or question expertise, ingroup bias, and objectivity. The experiment asked participants with past hiring experience to evaluate a Black journalist who has prior experiences living in a largely Black and Latinx neighborhood or not, as a means to manipulate the expertise around covering news around a neighborhood with similar demographics. As a second condition

we asked the same participants to evaluate the same journalist who is currently living within the

community they are reporting on or not, as a manipulation of an experience that heightens the

capacity for the journalist to report on news in the neighborhood in a way that is objective and

free from ingroup bias.

The study allows us to clarify, with experimental evidence, the experiences that

individuals from minorized racial backgrounds are assumed to have—here operationalized as

relationships with people in a primarily Black and Latinx neighborhood—which contribute to

their lower ratings of objectivity in journalism. The experiment also allowed us to causally test

the mediation path from racial expertise to hireability in Figure 1. Specifically, based on our

model, conditions that increase knowledge of a primarily Black and Latinx neighborhood would

heighten racial expertise and, as our model predicts, judgments of hireability. With this

experiment we were also able to examine interactions between the conditions that shape

expertise and objectivity judgments and more causally gather evidence to test Hypothesis 3.

Method

Participants

We recruited a sample of White participants with hiring experience for a 10-15 minute

online survey from Prolific Academic. Participants were paid $2.50 and all consented to

participate in this research which was approved by the Institutional Review Board. We aimed to

recruit 200 participants for a 2 (Expertise: Low Expertise, High Expertise) × 2 (Objectivity: Low

Objectivity, High Objectivity) within-subjects design in order to obtain greater than 99% power

to detect an effect size of $R = .21$, the average effect size in social psychology (Richard et al.,

2003). All participants identified as monoracial White Americans, leaving us with a final sample

size of $N = 200$ (85 female, 113 male, 2 non-binary; $M_{age} = 42.63$, $SD = 12.07$). A within-

subjects repeated measures ANOVA with 200 participants across two conditions would be

sensitive to effects of $\eta_p^2 = .009$, with 80% power (alpha = .05; correlations among repeated

measures are described in the *Supplementary Materials*). In this study, we reported all measures,

manipulations and exclusions.

Expertise and Objectivity Manipulations

Participants all had prior hiring experience, and as a first step to the experiment we

informed them of the job context for which they would be making candidate judgments.

Participants were told: "*Right now, we would like you to think about hiring a journalist for a*

local news organization based in the South Side Heights area. This position will perform first-

hand information gathering through on-site investigations, reports, interviews, and Q&As with

local residents and officials. South Side Heights is a diverse part of the city of Chicago with the

two largest racial groups being Hispanic (34.9%) and Black (32.8%). The median income of

households in this neighborhood is $45,119 and about 18.9% of families live in poverty."

After reading about the job, participants were introduced to the Black journalist, Chris

Smith, and that they would be making judgments about four different statements that Mr. Smith

would made in his job interview. Participants read: "*You have gone through the resumes and one*

candidate stands out above the rest: Chris Smith has the most experience, strong

recommendations, and gave the best interviews of the applicants. Below you will have four

different versions of Mr. Smith's interview statements that talk about some of his experience and

history." Notably, participants are reminded that Mr. Smith is of equal experience and

qualifications across the versions of the interview statements.

In the last piece of instruction our hiring managers were reminded of principles of

objectivity in journalism and that they were being asked to hire with these goals in mind: "*Your*

task in this study is to evaluate each of these statements separately to determine which version of

Mr. Smith you think would be the best, fairest, most accurate, and most factual, breaking news

reporter for the news organization. Remember that there is no right or wrong answer, but that as

a news organization, accuracy and fairness are essential to good reporting."

Participants were then randomly shown four different versions of Chris Smith's interview

statement varying Smith's level of expertise and presumed objectivity regarding the

neighborhood of South Side Heights (see Table 2 below for full manipulations).

Table 2. Experimental manipulations in Study 3.

	Low Expertise	High Expertise
High Objectivity	As you can probably tell, I am a Black journalist. I was raised in a mostly rural suburb of Missouri, so South Side Heights is new to me for many reasons. That said, though the neighborhood is new to me, different from where I was raised, and I don't know the people there, I am interested in doing my best to cover a neighborhood that is predominantly Black.	As you can probably tell, I am a Black journalist. I was raised in a mostly Black neighborhood in St. Louis, Missouri, so South Side Heights is familiar to me in many ways. Though I don't know the people yet or have relationships in the neighborhood, I am interested in doing my best to cover South Side Heights. I feel like I would know the neighborhood because of its similarities to where I was raised.
Low Objectivity	As you can probably tell, I am a Black journalist. I was raised in a mostly rural suburb of Missouri, so South Side Heights is new to me for many reasons. That said, I now live here in South Side Heights, I know the people here and am quickly making friends. I am interested in using this job to cover stories that can positively affect all the people in my neighborhood.	As you can probably tell, I am a Black journalist. I was born in South Side Heights and I have lived in this neighborhood for almost all of my life. I have known, grown up with, and been friends and family with the people here my entire life. I am interested in using this job to cover stories that can positively affect all the people in my neighborhood.

Measures

Immediately following each statement, participants evaluated the candidate's objectivity,

expertise, hireability and ingroup bias. Because of the repeated nature of the design, all scales

from Study 2 (except for the three-item expertise scale) were reduced to two items using factor

analysis to determine the items that loaded the highest on the scale. The ingroup bias scale was

slightly adapted for the study (e.g., "As a journalist, would this candidate, by and large, be pursuing the interests of the residents of South Side Heights?" 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Perceptions of objectivity. The two-item objectivity scale was combined into a single composite (*M* = 4.53, *SD* = 1.04) and separate composites were created for each statement (inter-item *r*s > .719 for all composites).

Perceptions of expertise. The three-item expertise scale was combined into a single composite (*M* = 4.82, *SD* = 0.94) and separate composites were created for each statement (αs > .717 for all composites).

Perceptions of hireability. The two-item hireability scale was combined into a single composite (*M* = 5.10, *SD* = 0.97) and separate composites were created for each statement (inter-item *r*s > .671 for all composites).

Perceptions of ingroup bias. The two-item ingroup bias scale was combined into a single composite (*M* = 5.28, *SD* = 0.88) and separate composites were created for each statement (inter-item *r*s > .779 for all composites).

Participants were also asked, "If you had to recommend only one of the applicants you reviewed for the position, who would it be?"; the statements they viewed were reproduced for them to select. Lastly, participants completed several demographic items (see *Supplemental Materials* for descriptive statistics and intercorrelations across studies).

Results

We used a 2 (Expertise: Low Expertise, High Expertise) × 2 (Objectivity: Low Objectivity, High Objectivity) repeated measures ANOVA to test main and interactive effects with the prediction that the expertise condition would shape judgments of expertise and hireability whereas the objectivity condition would shape judgments of objectivity and bias. In

all our analyses we expected main effects of expertise and objectivity manipulations on our outcome variables but explored interaction effects for each of the outcome measures.

Perceptions of objectivity. For objectivity judgments, we found a main effect of objectivity, ($F(1, 199) = 21.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .099$) such that the journalist in the high objectivity condition, because they were not currently living and in community with the South Side Heights area, was seen as more objective than the one currently immersed in the community. This finding is consistent with our expectations and helps to clarify the presumed experiences and relationships that covary with minoritized racial group membership, and in turn, influence inferences of objectivity.

Interestingly, the Black journalist with greater expertise, due to living in the same or similar neighborhood to South Side Heights also had lower perceptions of objectivity ($F(1, 199) = 10.93$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .052$). Importantly, these main effects were qualified by an interaction, $F(1, 199) = 42.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .175$. In the interaction, though there was no significant simple effect of objectivity on perceptions of objectivity for candidates signaling lower expertise, $F(1, 199) = 0.19$, $p = .664$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$, the high objectivity and high expertise version of the Black journalist ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.24$) was perceived as the most objective relative to the high objectivity, low expertise candidate ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.37$, $F(1, 199) = 53.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .211$). This latter effect suggests that objectivity is particularly likely to be questioned when their expertise is particularly high, because of experiences in similarly diverse and under resourced neighborhoods.

Perceptions of expertise and ingroup bias. For measures of expertise and ingroup bias We found, respectively, a main effect of expertise, ($F(1, 199) = 234.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .541$) on expertise perceptions and a main effect of objectivity, ($F(1, 199) = 248.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .555$)

on ingroup bias perceptions. An interesting finding to note is that we found both a main effect of expertise on bias perceptions ($F(1, 199) = 114.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .366$) as well as a main effect of objectivity on expertise perceptions ($F(1, 199) = 337.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .629$). This suggests that signaling connection to a particular group (in this case, a neighborhood) likely influences perceptions of knowledge of that group (i.e., expertise and vice versa). No interactions emerged with these outcomes (expertise: $F(1, 199) = 3.39$, $p = .067$, $\eta_p^2 = .017$; ingroup bias: $F(1, 199) = 3.08$, $p = .081$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$).

Perceptions of hireability. For our analysis of hireability, we expected that high expertise would elicit White perceivers judgments of heightened hireability for our Black journalist. We found a main effect of expertise, ($F(1, 199) = 76.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .277$) that aligned with our expectations and confirmed the role of racial expertise in eliciting judgments of enhanced hireability in an experimental design.

Contrary to our model in Figure 1, high, versus low, objectivity actually reduced perceptions of hireability ($F(1, 199) = 85.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .301$), and this effect was further qualified by a significant interaction between expertise and objectivity. in our study. $F(1, 199) = 11.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .053$. White evaluators with hiring experience viewed a Black candidate with expertise as significantly more hireable when they were less objective ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.13$) compared to an expert candidate who was more objective ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.22$, $F(1, 199) = 34.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .147$). There was also a significant simple effect of objectivity on perceptions of hireability for those lower in expertise, $F(1, 199) = 85.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .301$, such that the candidate lower in both expertise and objectivity ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.19$) was rated as more hireable than the one lower in expertise and higher in objectivity ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.25$). In line with these results, a majority of participants (56%) also selected the candidate statements

with higher expertise and low objectivity in the forced choice question, followed by the statement with high expertise/high objectivity, (18%), the statement with low expertise/low objectivity (14%), and the statement with low expertise/high objectivity (9.5%; 2.5% missing).

Though these latter results are unexpected with regard to low objectivity being more hireable than high objectivity, we interpret the findings to mean a few things worthy of future empirical scrutiny: The results could mean that objectivity judgments usually effect hiring through inferences of an applicant's qualifications, and in this study because qualifications are equivalent for Mr. Smith across conditions, we could not observe the effects of objectivity. The results could also mean reflect the dual effects of our objectivity manipulation around journalist job performance. On the one hand, community relationships negatively impact the capacity to be objective as our results suggest. On the other hand, however, community relationships can also be the basis for journalistic interviewing and sourcing and thus provides a pathway to better job performance reflected in the expertise and hiring judgments.

Discussion

Study 3 helped to clarify the relationships between objectivity, ingroup bias, racial expertise, and hiring preferences. Supporting our hypotheses, community relationships reduced perceptions of objectivity and increased perceptions of ingroup bias of a Black journalist while experiences that heightened racial expertise promoted perceptions of that expertise and hireability judgments. Importantly these effects were observed among a sample of White evaluators who had prior hiring experience and for a Black job candidate that was equivalent in qualifications. Though community relationships shaped objectivity judgments they did not impact hiring judgments in the way we anticipated and we hope that future research will continue to examine these patterns.

Internal Meta-Analysis

As is recommended when multiple studies test the same effect (Maner, 2014), internal meta-analyses next tested the overall effects of candidate race on evaluators' perceptions of objectivity, bias, expertise, and hireability (Goh et al., 2016). We include here only the main variables in our theoretical model (see Figure 1) in which we were able to directly compare conceptually similar outcomes from studies with similar designs (Vosgerau et al., 2019)[4]. Accordingly, these meta-analyses included the results of the three studies presented here aggregating 1,725 participants. We note, however, that only one of these studies (Study 2b) was pre-registered ahead of time (https://osf.io/b6pvf).
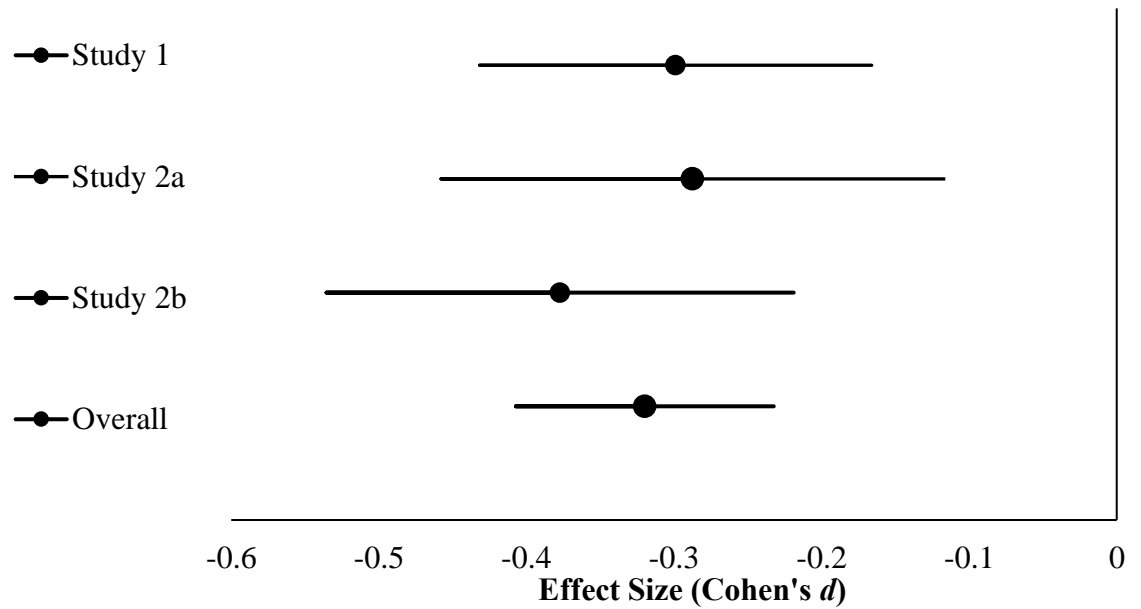
Results

When meta-analyzed across four samples, candidate race significantly predicted evaluations of candidate objectivity, Mean $ES = -.32$, 95% CI = $[-.41, -.23]$, $z = -7.17$, $p < .001$. Also supporting Hypothesis 1, Black (and Latinx, in Study 1) candidates were perceived as less objective compared to White and Asian candidates (Figure 4, Panel A). Candidate race also significantly predicted evaluations of ingroup bias, Mean $ES = .65$, 95% CI = $[.58, .72]$, $z = 17.92$, $p < .001$ (Figure 4, Panel B). Black candidates were perceived as more biased than White and Asian candidates. Supporting Hypothesis 2, candidate race significantly predicted evaluations of candidate expertise , Mean $ES = .62$, 95% CI = $[.50, .74]$, $z = 10.22$, $p < .001$ (Figure 4, Panel C) and hireability, Mean $ES = .48$, 95% CI = $[.39, .47]$, $z = 10.61$, $p < .001$ (Figure 4, Panel D). Black (and Asian) candidates were perceived as more expert and hireable

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[4] Importantly, we include in the Supplement an additional study but do not include it in the meta-analysis because the design, although largely consistent in its findings with our hypotheses, is sufficiently different in design, measures, and stimuli that it does not belong with the rest of the studies presented here (Vosgerau et al., 2019; e.g., exclusion of a White candidate comparison, uneven presentation of salience cues, recruitment of an editor versus a journalist). Though we do not include the study in our meta-analysis we still include the study results and summary in the online supplement for interested readers looking to further extend these results.
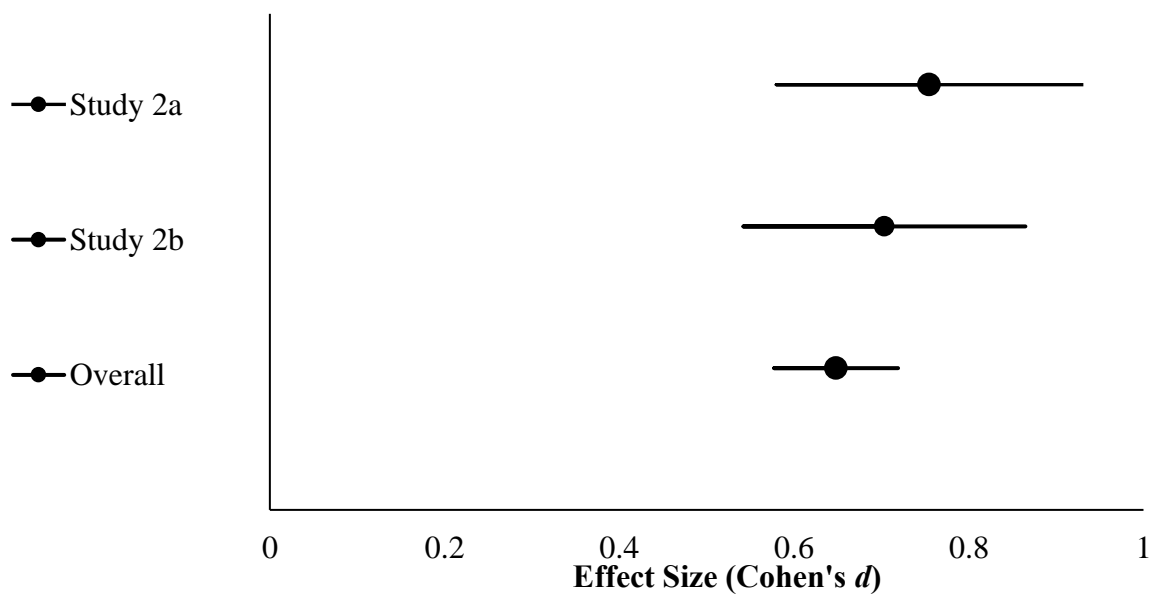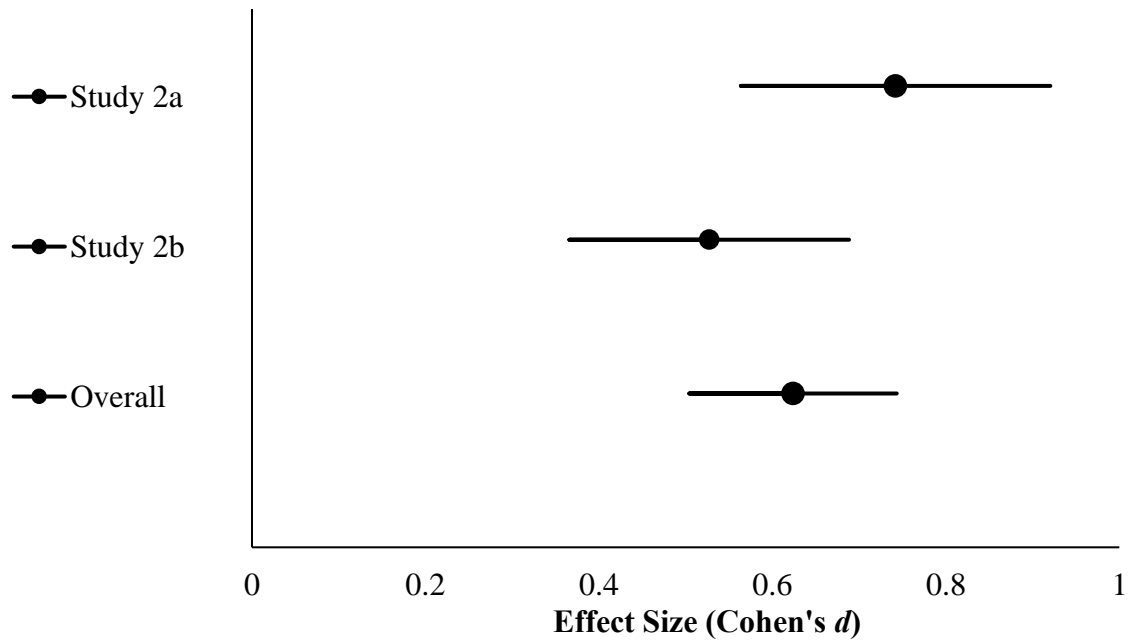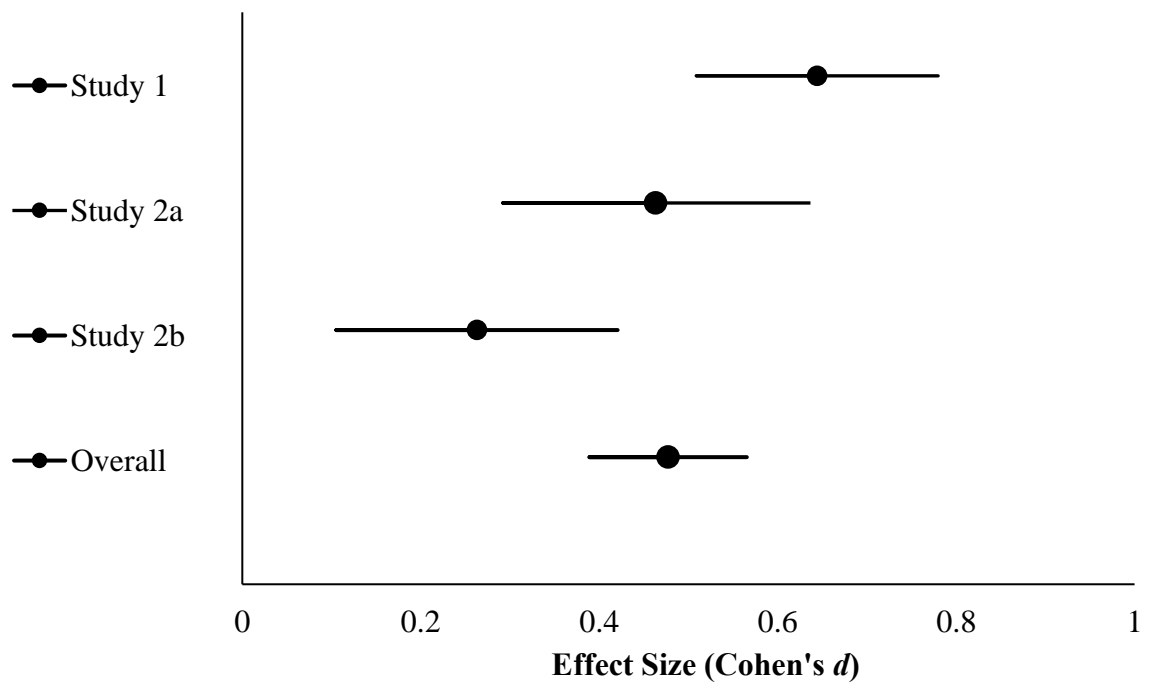
than White journalists (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Meta-analyzed Effects of Candidate Race Predicting Perceived Objectivity (Panel A),

Ingroup Bias (Panel B), Expertise (Panel C), and Hireability (Panel D)

Panel A: Objectivity

Panel B: **Ingroup Bias**

Panel C: Expertise

Effect Size (Cohen's *d*)

Panel D: Hireability

Effect Size (Cohen's *d*)

Note. Results from a meta-analysis of the effect of candidate race on perceptions of objectivity (Panel A), bias (Panel B), expertise (Panel C), and hireability (Panel D). Individual study estimates and overall estimates are labeled on the Y-axis and plotted along the X-axis. Means indicate the standard effect size (Cohen's *D*) and bands indicate 95% confidence intervals surrounding the estimate. Black journalists were rated as less objective and more biased across studies relative to White and Asian journalists, whereas Black and Asian journalists were perceived as more expert and hireable, relative to White journalists.

General Discussion

In the summer of 2020, journalists rushed to cover nationwide protests against police brutality sparked by the extrajudicial murder of George Floyd and editors looked to reporters to cover the events as objectively as possible. This core tenet was on full display when a White editor at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* barred Alexis Johnson, a Black reporter, from covering the protests due to concerns over biased coverage. Her White colleague Joshua Axelrod, however, received no such restrictions. This event and others like it reveal the tension between the pursuit of objectivity that has long been a journalistic tenet and a need for the racialized expertise that journalists of color bring to bear in their reporting. Despite an urgent need for not only diverse faces but diverse stories in American newsrooms, newsrooms may also constrain the success of journalists of color through an unwavering commitment to a fundamental journalistic principle: objectivity.

Our research reveals the realities of this tension. Our findings suggest that White people see racially marginalized journalists as less objective and as having more ingroup bias than their racially advantaged counterparts. However, while this presumed bias may implicate their

objectivity, presumed racial expertise increases perceptions of their hireability, even in a role where objectivity is highly valued. This phenomenon is likely to be particularly relevant in coverage of racialized issues for which racial minorities are more likely to be responsible for coverage (e.g., affirmative action; Sui et al., 2018). An analysis of 2020 cable news coverage revealed that Black journalists covering racial justice issues accounted for approximately 50,325 hours of screen time, whereas White journalists covering such issues accounted for approximately 32,767 hours (Hong et al., 2021). Our findings suggest that, while racial minority journalists may be called upon more often to cover racial issues, due to their racial expertise, they may be perceived as less objective in doing so. White evaluators value racially marginalized employees for their expertise while being simultaneously skeptical of the perspective that expertise might bring.

Importantly, we test scope conditions in this research by including non-Black racial outgroup targets and testing this phenomenon in explicitly racialized and less explicitly racialized topics (e.g., technology in Study 1). Across studies, Black journalists were perceived as less objective and as having more ingroup bias in ways that suggested the results could not be accounted for by simple accounts of outgroup prejudice. Effects were widespread, including in topics that were not explicitly racialized and persisted above and beyond contexts where racial identity was emphasized in resume documents. Finally, exploratory analyses found mixed evidence for one editorial consequence at play. In Study 2b, participant editorial comments to Black journalists were more skeptical—a finding in need of future empirical investigation and inquiry given that even as Black journalists may be seen as more expert, they may not be trusted, and therefore may be less persuasive to White audiences in their coverage of racial issues (Fiske & Dupree, 2014). We also experimentally tested two mechanisms driving objectivity and hiring

judgements (e.g., neighborhood expertise, community relationships) for Black journalists, and found consistent evidence that perceptions of racial expertise drive hiring preferences.

Theoretical Implications and Future Research

This work represents an important contribution to prior research on diversity backlash, which has primarily investigated how members of marginalized racial groups face workplace penalties for diversity-valuing behavior (Gardner & Ryan, 2020; Hekman et al., 2017; Hideg & Wilson, 2020). Critically, this work illuminates the opposing nature of diversity backlash by highlighting the potential costs (e.g., objectivity scrutiny) as well as benefits (i.e., hiring and salary advantages) of being racially minoritized within primarily-White workplaces. Future work can explore whether racially marginalized journalists who are assigned to cover stories that explicitly center racial issues receive more backlash on their work in performance reviews or reader commentary (Sumner et al., 2017). Such outcomes likely influence professional success and feelings of belonging, which could ultimately impact rates of promotion and retention for journalists who are already severely underrepresented in newsrooms (Cha & Roberts, 2019).

This work also systematically examined two mechanisms that influence perceptions of hireability of minoritized journalists: racial expertise—for which we martialed consistent evidence—and ingroup bias—where results were more mixed across studies. This represents a contribution to past work which has typically explored self-interest as a predictor of credibility or persuasiveness (e.g., Petty, Fleming, Priester, & Feinstein, 2001; Gardner et al., 2020; Gilovich & Ross, 2004). Future work may be needed to explore alternative mechanisms at play than the ones we have explored here. For example, it may be that a presumed bias toward not only ones' ingroup but toward a particular perspective or ideology (e.g., progressivism or radicalism), and the consequences of this perspective on the racial status hierarchy, may drive perceptions of

objectivity. Interested readers can turn to our supplement where we document the role of perceived radicalism, finding weak evidence for this possibility. However, future work is necessary to test perceived radicalism, and perceived status threat (e.g., Brown, Rucker, & Richeson, 2002) as carefully and systematically as we have assessed the role of presumed ingroup bias. There is also room to continue to explore the various contexts and signals that influence perceptions of objectivity and bias, differently than the ones we have explored here in our final study (e.g., expertise about a particularly neighborhood and bias toward the community that lives there). A conflicting finding that emerged in this work is the role of objectivity as suppressing hiring preference for a Black candidate in Studies 2a and 2b although the most biased (and least objective) candidate in Study 3 was the most preferred. Future work may need to more carefully disentangle the role of expertise and objectivity to determine the specific relational and socialization perceptions that elicit these objectivity (and hireability) judgments.

Future work could also more explicitly flesh out the type of coverage that encounters more scrutiny and the various contexts in which these same dynamics may occur. For example, racially minoritized journalists covering racial issues focused on progress versus disparities may be perceived as not equally lacking in objectivity. Because progress content is consistent with prevailing narratives of impending racial equality, such content may be perceived as more objective (Kraus et al., 2022). Would coverage of issues not so explicitly racialized (e.g., financial reporting, sports reporting) elicit skepticism of racially minoritized journalists? Would racial identity predict perceptions of objectivity in other countries? How may a woman covering issues around gender disparities or sexual harassment be perceived? We posit that given the pervasive nature of anti-Blackness, and the subversion of marginalized groups broadly, these

dynamics are likely to emerge in various cultural and coverage contexts. However, more work is needed to precisely determine when and why concerns about objectivity and bias surface.

These phenomena might also exist in other occupational domains. For example, in academia racially marginalized members are severely underrepresented and objectivity is a predominant norm. White evaluators may view racially marginalized scholars who study issues related to race as less objective than White scholars (Ray, 2016; Torrez et al., 2022). Future work should examine these same dynamics in this context—and the consequences for publication success and retention of scholars of color who study racialized topics (Roberts et al., 2020). Concerns about objectivity are also central considerations in determining fair and constitutional legal judgments in the courtroom (Bennett, 1984). Such concerns may be particularly salient in race-related legal proceedings (e.g., racial discrimination case; Delgado, 1984) or if the judge presiding over the case is racially marginalized.

Importantly, future work should examine these dynamics from the perspective of those who are most affected: underrepresented racially marginalized employees in occupations where objectivity is valued. It is plausible that racially marginalized employees themselves are aware of these dynamics and therefore may engage in self-presentational strategies in order to make themselves appear more objective and less biased due to their racial identity. For example, racially marginalized candidates might engage in resume Whitening strategies to appear less identified with their race (Kang et al., 2016) and allay concerns about objectivity and bias. These strategies could ultimately impede organizational inclusion goals by constraining racially minoritized employees in their ability to bring their full and authentic selves to the workplace, lest they be perceived as lacking objectivity and therefore, less competent in their work role. It may also be worth exploring whether racially marginalized perceivers themselves hold these

racialized perceptions of objectivity, or whether they view members of marginalized racial groups as more objective communicators on racial issues given their racial expertise.

Lastly, in this work we found that Asian journalists were perceived as similarly expert in racial issues and similarly hireable to Black journalists. Asian journalists were also rated as more objective and less biased than Black journalists. Perceptions of Asian journalists as simultaneously objective and hireable may create a potential barrier for workplace solidarity amongst Asian Americans and Black Americans. Black journalists may feel as though their unique perspective on racial issues are not perceived as similarly valuable or credible. However, perceptions of Asian American journalists as simultaneously racially expert and objective may also indicate that negative stereotypes applied to Asian American candidates as submissive, quiet, and harmonious are at play (Chao et al., 2013). White perceivers may recognize that Asian Americans' racial identity affords them a unique perspective on racial issues, and thus perceive them as racially expert even as these stereotypes constrain their ability to speak openly on these issues (just as Black journalists are seen as constrained by their bias and lack of objectivity).

Practical Implications: The Dangers of White-filtered Journalism

Staunch commitment to objectivity, and the discrediting of Black voices more broadly, has the capacity to distort the reporting of newsworthy events in ways that reproduce the racial status quo (Robinson & Culver, 2019). For example, mainstream media, which tends to be demographically White, tends to report on issues of racial oppression as a historical period that is long gone (Shah & Nah, 2004). Those who reject this predominant norm, most often members of communities acutely affected by racial oppression, are perceived as a threat to traditionally White mainstream media and are thus, not credentialed as legitimate sources (Alamo-Pastrana & Hoynes, 2020; Robinson & Culver, 2019). Thus, White reporters in majority-White newsrooms

seek out White experts to consult on issues related to race, whose perspectives they ultimately

view as most objective (Johnson, 1987). Our results suggest this may within the newsroom as

well, if racially marginalized journalists' objectivity is implicated due to their racial identity,

they may not be viewed as objective reporters of racial issues. This can relegate racial coverage

to narratives that ignore the complexity of racial issues and exclude the perspective of those most

affected by these issues. Simply put, strict adherence to objectivity norms leads to unawareness

of White journalists' own subjectivity and sabotages efforts to create better, more inclusive, and

anti-racist journalism (Budarick, 2022).

However, accuracy and political positioning in coverage of issues of racial inequality is

especially important in the context of social movements occurring in today's political climate,

because potential bias in political coverage has the capacity to sway public opinion and policy.

Previously mentioned mainstream media coverage of racial oppression as a thing of the past

continues to parallel current unawareness of the current vast wealth inequalities that exist in the

United States (Kraus et al., 2019; Kraus et al., 2017). In addition, in a study of Civil Rights

protests in the 1960s, coverage of protests as "riots" tended to increase subsequent support for

more conservative policy, whereas when coverage focused on violence by the state public

opinion shifted in favor of social justice (Wasow, 2020). Further, other work demonstrates that it

is what journalists term Black "riots" and subsequent White-owned property loss, but not White

"riots" and the loss of Black lives, that has historically led to the formation of national

commissions to investigate race-related issues (Bentley-Edwards et al., 2018). The way in which

the news is covered matters for public opinion and political mobilization. Thus, as objectivity

remains a predominant norm in journalism, it has the ability to shape global coverage of racial

issues and how such coverage is executed, with potential consequences for racial minority

journalists attempting to bring their authentic perspectives to these issues.

Conclusion

This work revealed that White evaluators judge racially marginalized journalists as less

objective and more biased, yet also more racially epxert and more hireable, than White

journalists. These conditions ultimately hinder true inclusion in newsrooms and likely contribute

to the skepticism around race-centered journalism. If the supposedly neutral and objective

perspectives of White journalists define widely-circulated perspectives on racial issues, how can

organizations truly become more inclusive? Ultimately, this work highlights the tough situation

imposed on racially marginalized journalists who, because of the knowledge gained through their

lived experiences, are met with skepticism by White evaluators. In this way, objectivity could be

the unintentional guiding, yet gatekeeping, norm that precludes racially marginalized

journalists—whose very lived experiences challenge the status quo—from a workplace free from

skepticism.

Open Practices

Deidentified data and syntax for all studies have been made publicly available via OSF and can be accessed at https://osf.io/m9nd4/?view_only=fcb9e192522741a1ad1c513aeb3d11d0.

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