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Cultural Mistrust And Responses Of Black Canadians To Subtle And Overt Racial Discrimination In Experimental Vignettes

Miea Moon

University of Windsor, mmoon@uwindsor.ca

Cheryl D. Thomas

University of Windsor, cdthomas@uwindsor.ca

Ben C.H. Kuo

University of Windsor, benkuo@uwindsor.ca

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The relationship between cultural mistrust and responses to racial discrimination has received little attention in the empirical research literature. In the current study, the potential moderating role of cultural mistrust on responses to subtle and overt racial discrimination cues was assessed in a sample of 136 Black Canadian adults (73% female). Participants were randomly assigned to read and respond to one of three vignettes describing a job seeking experience in which they were instructed to imagine being interviewed and subsequently rejected for a job by a White employer. The three vignettes included either overt, subtle, or absent (control) racial discrimination cues. Cultural mistrust was found to have direct positive associations with attributions to racial discrimination and other-directed emotional responses (i.e., anger). However, contrary to hypotheses, cultural mistrust did not moderate the effects of overt and subtle racial discrimination cues on attributions, state self-esteem, other-directed emotional responses, or behavioural responses. Participants reported more attributions and behavioural responses to racial discrimination cues when they were overt, but not subtle, compared to when they were absent. In contrast, participants reported lower levels of state self-esteem when racial discrimination cues were subtle, but not overt, compared to when they were absent. The lack of observed moderating effects indicates that cultural mistrust did not facilitate increased accuracy in detecting racial discrimination cues or provide a buffer against the negative effects of racial discrimination among participants in the current study. Based on these findings, it appears that cultural mistrust among Black Canadians reflects a more general versus situation-specific tendency to attribute interpersonal outcomes to racial discrimination and to experience anger toward potential perpetrators.