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Authors

Mosley, Ariel J

Biernat, Monica

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The New Identity Theft: Perceptions of Cultural Appropriation in Intergroup Contexts

Ariel J. Mosley and Monica Biernat
University of Kansas

Cultural appropriation has been described and discussed within academic and everyday discourse, but little research has examined its role in the psychological context of intergroup relations. We sought to examine whether minority and majority group members (i.e., Black and White Americans) would differentially judge instances of cultural exchange as cultural appropriation. Five experiments (3 were preregistered on OSF) using a variety of potential cases of cultural appropriation demonstrated that Black participants were more likely than White participants to view these incidents as appropriation when they involved White perpetrators appropriating Black culture (vs. scenarios of Black perpetrators appropriating White culture), an effect mediated by distinctiveness threat. Black (vs. White) participants were also more likely to perceive White actors who appropriate Black culture as *harmful* and as *intentional*. In Study 4, explicit manipulation of distinctiveness threat eliminated the participant race effect: Perceivers viewed White perpetrators as more appropriate than Black perpetrators. When actors were portrayed as using either an ingroup or outgroup cultural product (Study 5), participants perceived use of an outgroup cultural product as more appropriate. Studies 3–5 were preregistered on OSF. This research illuminates how group-based status interacts with and adds to perpetrator prototypicality to influence perceptions of cultural appropriation, distinguishes perception of appropriation from perception of racism, and points to the importance of distinctiveness threat as a contributor to differential race-based perceptions. Implications of perceiving cultural appropriation for intergroup relations are discussed.

Keywords: cultural appropriation, intergroup perceptions, race, racism

Supplemental materials: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000327.supp>

Cultural appropriation has been a topic of debate for decades, but it recently reemerged as a controversial societal issue after several high-profile instances were highlighted in the media in cases of art, music, literature, and costume (Hampton, 2020; Malik, 2017; Opam, 2018; Proulx, 2018). The word appropriation stems from the Latin word *proprium*, meaning “to make one’s own,” and—in the context of debates about cultural appropriation—implies a type of cultural thievery. Cultural appropriation refers to cases in which a person associated with one group makes use of, imitates, or takes possession of the cultural elements of another group (Rogers, 2006; Shugart, 1997; Ziff & Rao, 1997).


These cultural elements can involve both tangible features as well as intellectual property, such as symbols, genres, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, technologies, or artifacts. This definition is silent, however, on issues of power, domination, and motivation that may come into play when attempting to understand and describe the construct, and to examine its implications.

Although cultural appropriation is often mentioned in critical analyses of media, ethnic studies, art, and communications, there is a lack of empirical research on the psychology of cultural appropriation and its downstream consequences for intergroup relations. The purpose of the current research is to address this gap in empirical literature. Specifically, we examine whether dominant and minority group members—in our studies, White and Black Americans—differentially perceive and construe cultural appropriation and its effects.

Cultural Appropriation

Power relations and social structure among groups within societies may largely determine whether and when cultural appropriation is perceived. Rogers (2006) outlined four general forms of cultural appropriation based on the different historical, social, political, and economic conditions in which they occur: Cultural exchange, transculturation, cultural dominance, and cultural exploitation. *Cultural exchange* occurs when two groups of equal power engage in the reciprocal exchange of cultural products. *Transculturation* occurs when hybrid cultural products are created

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 Ariel J. Mosley and Monica Biernat, Department of Psychology, University of Kansas.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ariel J. Mosley, who is now at the Department of Psychology, Columbia University, 406 Schermerhorn Hall, 1190 Amsterdam Avenue, 5501 New York, NY 10027. E-mail: ajm2320@columbia.edu or arielmosley@ku.edu

from multiple cultures. In contrast, *cultural dominance* occurs when a minority culture uses elements of the dominant culture; in these cases, the dominant culture imposes its cultural elements onto the minority culture. Finally, *cultural exploitation* occurs when members of the dominant group take ownership of elements of a minority culture. Cultural exploitation involves a fundamental power asymmetry between the dominant groups in power and the minority groups from whom resources are extracted. This type of appropriation involves unfair advantage, in that the appropriator has the power and authority to make use of the efforts and products of the “inferior” group (Marx, 1986). In this way, capital for the dominant groups comes at the expense of minority groups, who are deprived of control of the means of production and the profit stemming from the cultural object.

The central feature that unites different forms of cultural appropriation is the act of *taking* of a cultural product that is produced by members of another culture. However, the activities that can be classified as “cultural appropriation” can be diverse. Three broad types of cultural appropriation have been identified, based on the nature of the product being used: object appropriation, content appropriation, and subject appropriation (Young, 2005, 2010). *Object appropriation* occurs when outgroup members take possession of material or tangible objects. Examples may include “objects” such as hairstyles, food, or physical attributes such as skin color (e.g., the use of blackface makeup). The image of the blackface minstrel artist in the early 1800s—White performer wearing dark colored makeup to resemble and perform the caricature of a Black person—is perhaps the most often invoked example of cultural appropriation from history (Harbord, 2015; Scafidi, 2005). This particular example depicts the appropriation of the cultural commodity of “blackness,” reduced to the “object” of dark skin to benefit the perpetrator engaging in the act at the expense of the source community (Lott, 1995).

Acts of cultural appropriation can also manifest in less tangible forms as well. *Content appropriation* refers to the reuse of an idea, motif, or stylistic element, expressed in the work of someone from another culture (Young, 2005, 2010). One example is when musicians perform songs or take on musical styles of another culture. The act of “whitewashing,” as when White actors portray people of color in films (The Emory Wheel, 2015) is also an example of content appropriation. Finally, *subject appropriation* occurs when the representation and experiences of cultures are taken out of context. This type occurs when an outgroup member makes the culture of the lives of the source community the subject of a painting, story, or work of art. An example of this is when Kathryn Stockett, a White American author, was accused of appropriating the narratives of Black female maids in White households in her acclaimed 2009 book, *The Help*. Stockett was criticized for exploiting the experiences of Black women and depicting them in a way that was perceived by some as misinformed and stereotypic (Jones, 2014).

Although the current article does not attempt to distinguish among these types of appropriation, these various examples highlight the range of behaviors that may be characterized (or not) as cultural appropriation. We sample from these different categories of appropriation in creating the stimulus materials for the reported studies. Differences across cases may influence how much group-members perceive, feel threatened by, and are motivated to con-

front actions that involve “them” taking/using “our” objects, products, or practices.

Differential Perceptions of Inequality

Power and status play a role in many intergroup contexts (Rogers, 2006), and our research primarily focuses on forms of cultural appropriation that occur within the domains of unequal power relations: cultural exploitation (majority group taking on minority culture) and cultural dominance (minority group taking on majority culture). These are the forms of cultural appropriation that reflect and reproduce societal inequality and systematic oppression (Shugart, 1997). With acts of cultural exploitation, the connection between the ownership of cultural products and the source community is clear. In contrast, acts of cultural dominance may be less likely to be labeled appropriative because the dominant group set the broader societal norms (Knowles, Lowery, Chow, & Unzueta, 2014). To gain a fuller understanding of how group members categorize different forms of cultural appropriation, it is first important to understand how group members of varied status have diverging perceptions of inequality and race relations.

Dominant and minority group members tend to disagree in their perceptions of societal inequality. A recent Pew Research Center (2017) poll found that 88% of Black Americans say that the country “needs to continue making changes to give Blacks equal rights,” whereas only 53% of White Americans agree with this statement. In the same poll, the majority of Black Americans (84%) report that the biggest problem of discrimination in this country is that “people are not seeing discrimination where it really exists.” In contrast, only 49% of White Americans agree and nearly as many (46%) say the biggest problem is that “people are seeing discrimination where there is none.” In another national sample of Black and White Americans, Norton and Sommers (2011) found that White Americans perceive that White Americans, not Black Americans, are more likely to be the targets of discrimination. These findings suggest that one’s group identity can play an important role in perceptions of race bias. Perceptions of cultural appropriation are similarly intertwined with cultural politics and construed within the domain of intergroup conflict. Therefore, a similar racial divide is likely to emerge in terms of what is considered cultural appropriation and what is considered harmful for group relations.

Our research builds on the idea that social group membership structures the ways in which people respond to acts of social injustice and harmdoing (Inman & Baron, 1996; Miron & Branscombe, 2008; Nelson, Adams, & Salter, 2013). Specifically, we assert that the power relations and social structure create a context in which (a) Black Americans are more likely than White Americans to perceive and label acts as cultural appropriation (*the perceiver group status hypothesis*) and (b) acts in which White actors borrow from Black culture are more likely to be perceived as cultural appropriation than those in which Black actors borrow from White culture (*the perpetrator prototypicality hypothesis*).

The Perceiver Group Status Hypothesis

Several theoretical perspectives contribute to the prediction that Black perceivers will be more likely than White perceivers to “see” cultural appropriation. Social identity theory (Tajfel &

Turner, 1979) highlights the importance of categorization into “us” and “them” and consequent motivation to support and protect the ingroup (e.g., Brewer, 1999). In perceiving intergroup interactions—including potential instances of racism and cultural appropriation—Black and White Americans’ ingroup protective motivations may lead them to use different standards for what qualifies as negative treatment: Black Americans may set a lower threshold for what constitutes racism or appropriation than White Americans (see Carter & Murphy, 2015). For example, in research on lay theories of White racism, minority participants were more likely than White participants to see ambiguous or subtle behaviors (e.g., feelings of discomfort or unfamiliarity) as evidence of racism, although minority and White perceivers agreed about more blatant forms of bias (Sommers & Norton, 2006).

Dominant and minority group members occupy different sociopolitical positions. These divergent social positions facilitate different shared assumptions, cultural politics, and economic contexts, which may holistically contribute to divergent perceptions of cultural appropriation. In addition to status and power relations, perceptions of cultural appropriation may reflect differences in historical knowledge between racial groups (Nelson et al., 2013). Cultural appropriation is tied to a history of imperialism, whereby dominant groups have systematically exerted their influence on minority groups (Buescher & Ono, 1996). For lower-status groups, cultural appropriation can play out the realities of colonization, in which the colonizer exploits and extracts valued resources from the colonized. Members of lower status minority groups may know more about this colonial past and tend to inhabit social environments where racial inequality is salient in collective representation and everyday discourse (Feagin, 1991; Turner, 1999). As a result, they may be more likely to think of racial inequality when considering instances of cultural appropriation. In contrast, high-status dominant group members tend to inhabit social environments where social inequality is not as salient, leaving them less likely to label a scenario as cultural appropriation.

Whether motivated or knowledge-driven, the perceiver group status hypothesis suggests that Black perceivers will be more likely than White perceivers to label acts as cultural appropriation, particularly when it is their culture being appropriated.

The Perpetrator Prototypically Hypothesis

In addition to Black–White *perceiver* differences in the perceptions of cultural appropriation, we have hinted at the idea that the *perpetrator’s race* matters as well. In their research on the circumstances under which people label actions as “prejudice,” Inman and Baron (1996) offered their perpetrator prototypically hypothesis: Perceivers are particularly likely to “see” and label instances of bad outcomes as prejudice (e.g., “A man is turned down . . . as a bass guitarist in a rock band because he wasn’t the right type”) when the perpetrator is *White* and the target is *Black* (p. 730). This is because people tend to rely on prototypes, culturally shared cognitive representations, to make judgments about what constitutes a discriminatory act. People expect that prejudiced acts are performed by high status or majority group actors and are directed at low status/minority group targets. Inman and Baron (1996) found that scenarios depicting White on Black maltreatment were more likely to be described as “prejudiced” or “racist” in open-ended responses than Black on White or intraracial mistreatment.

Both Black and White perceivers showed this pattern, but Black participants (and women) were more likely to see prejudice overall. In other words, Inman and Baron (1996) found two main effects, capturing the perpetrator prototypicality effect and the group status effect in perceptions of prejudice. A more recent study using the Inman and Baron paradigm found an interaction between perceiver and perpetrator race: Only Black perceivers saw more prejudice in prototypical than nonprototypical scenarios; White perceivers did not (Flournoy, Prentice-Dunn, & Klinger, 2002). A history of social inequality of a particular, prototypical type—White discrimination against Blacks—may make it more likely that Black perceivers will see prejudice in such prototypical cases relative to White Americans perceivers and relative to nonprototypical cases.

In our studies of perceptions of cultural appropriation, we similarly expect to find evidence of both a group status effect (greater perception of cultural appropriation by Black than White perceivers), a perpetrator prototypicality effect (greater perception of cultural appropriation when White actors appropriate Black culture than vice versa), and an interaction between these factors (Black perceivers more likely to label acts as cultural appropriation, particularly in the prototypical case).

Threats to Group Distinctiveness

Social identity theory suggests that because people’s collective identities are important contributors to sense of self and self-regard, they are motivated to differentiate these ingroup identities from outgroups to maintain group distinctiveness (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). A similar outgroup provides less opportunity for meaningful social comparisons that distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup, therefore similar outgroups pose a threat to group distinctiveness and to the positive value of a given social identity (Tajfel, 1982). People actively enhance the *metaccontrast*, or the level of distinctiveness of groups from each other, as a meaning seeking device, to clarify and demarcate their groups’ social standing (Branscombe et al., 1999; p. 42).

Because cultural elements and expressions help to define and differentiate group identity, the use of those elements by an outgroup member can lead to increased feelings of threat to the group’s distinctiveness. Threats to group distinctiveness lead group members to try to differentiate themselves, using strategies including self-stereotyping, depersonalization of the self, or outgroup derogation (for a review, see Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004). Although distinctiveness threat is a concern for all groups, minority group members may be more susceptible to this experience (White & Langer, 1999; White, Schmitt, & Langer, 2006). Majority groups tend to anchor comparative contexts as a function of their status and power, whereas minority group members are more likely to frame their group identity and culture in contrast to the majority identity and culture (Allport, 1954; Phinney, 1990). Minority groups may even define their ingroup more in terms of their difference from the outgroup rather than in terms of their within-group similarity (Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt, & Spears, 2001). Additionally, as minority groups are less able to derive value from status, they may be more motivated to derive value from the group’s distinctiveness as a means to protect the group identity (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

Many scholars have also pointed out the irony of the difficulties that minorities face trying to be represented in predominantly White spaces (e.g., in art, literature, music, film), in contrast to the success of White Americans who engage in appropriation and go on to amass social and financial gain from those acts (Scafidi, 2005). Critical race theorists have also argued that cultural appropriation is threatening to minority group members because it can reify and reinforce dominant codes of group-based status, strategically giving dominant narratives ontological primacy at the expense of the experiences of communities and subcultures (Harms & Dickens, 1996). Therefore, Black perceivers may be particularly likely to feel a sense of threat from acts of cultural appropriation.

This theory and research suggest that members of minority groups may be particularly vigilant to appropriation when outgroup members make moves toward similarity with the ingroup. Cultural appropriation can be conceptualized as a type of encroachment; Black Americans should therefore experience distinctiveness threat more than White Americans when exposed to instances of cultural appropriation, particularly when White actors appropriate Black culture. In turn, they should be more likely to label such acts as appropriative and to respond negatively toward them. We examine this mediational hypothesis in Studies 1–3, and we explicitly manipulate distinctiveness threat in Study 4 to examine whether heightening this threat in White perceivers moves their perceptions closer to those of Black Americans.

Related Intergroup Judgments

In addition to perceptions of cultural appropriation, we were also interested in the extent to which perceivers see harm and intent in the actions of those who use aspects of another culture. We expected that labeling an act as “cultural appropriation” would be correlated with viewing the act as intentional and harmful to the source community. Judgments of harm and injustice are influenced by the identity of the perceiver (Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999), and those judged to be appropriating may also be viewed as intentionally

representing or using aspects of an identity without fully understanding or acknowledging their cultural or historical significance (Ziff & Rao, 1997).

Participant race likely matters for these judgments as well. Group members often attempt to explain the negative behavior of ingroup members in ways that favor the ingroup (Doosje & Branscombe, 2003; Norton, Monin, Cooper, & Hogg, 2003), and White perceivers in particular may shift the standard used to judge harmfulness, requiring more evidence to judge the behavior of an ingroup member as harmful (see Miron, Branscombe, & Biernat, 2010). Therefore, we expected that White perceivers would be less likely than Black perceivers to judge scenarios depicting White perpetrators as cultural appropriation, less likely to judge the behavior as harmful, and less likely to judge the perpetrator’s motivations as intentional.

Overview of Studies

We conducted five experiments to test the predictions that (a) Black participants will be more likely than White participants to “see” cultural appropriation (the perceiver group status hypothesis), (b) cultural appropriation perceptions will be more likely when White perpetrators take from Black culture than when Black perpetrators take from White culture (the perpetrator prototype hypothesis), and (c) an interaction effect, such that the prototype effect will be most pronounced among Black perceivers, and the perceiver race difference will be strongest in prototypical appropriation cases (White targets appropriating Black culture).

In the first three studies, Black and White participants are exposed to scenarios adapted from actual news and social media articles that described situations in which an actor appropriates an element of culture that is not representative of their identified racial group. We created eight paired scenarios, attempting to capture the different types of appropriation outlined earlier (object, content, and subject), and sampled different sets of these across Studies 1–3 (see Table 1). Study 1 tests the predicted interaction between participant race and perpetrator race on perceptions of appropriation, harm, and intentionality. Study 2 more clearly iden-

Table 1
Brief Description of Cultural Appropriation Scenarios and Study Numbers in Which They Were Included (Full Text Appears in Online Supplemental Materials)

Scenario label	Description	Studies in which scenario used
1. Movie make-up	A Black actor wearing makeup to play a White person vs. a White actor wearing makeup to play a Black person	1, 3
2. Music	A Black musician getting plastic surgery to have traditionally Eurocentric features to fit in with the music scene vs. a White musician getting plastic surgery to have traditionally Afrocentric features to fit in with the music scene	1, 3
3. Culture parties	A Black fraternity hosting a “Redneck Party” vs. a White fraternity hosting a “Compton Cookout”	1, 3
4. Hairstyle	A Black-owned company selling blonde weave extensions vs a White-owned company selling dreadlocks.	1, 2, 3, 4
5. Movie characters	A Black actor playing a role designed for a White character vs. a White actor playing a role designed for a Black character.	1, 2, 3
6. Literature	A Black writer writing about the subjective experience from the perspective of a White subject vs. a White writer writing about the subjective experience from the perspective of a Black subject	1, 2, 3
7. Art	A Black artist painting a subject of “White culture” vs. a White artist painting a subject of “Black culture”	2, 3
8. Costume	A Black person dressing up to play a White person vs. a White person dressing up to play a Black person	3

tifies distinctiveness threat as a mechanism underlying perceptions of cultural appropriation, and Study 3 replicates these effects using a larger set of scenarios.

In Study 4, we manipulate distinctiveness threat, the mediator of perceptions of appropriation identified in Studies 1–3, and expose participants to one scenario of potential appropriation. We expected that placing participants in a state of distinctiveness threat would reduce or eliminate participant race differences in perceptions of appropriation (a hypothesis we develop more fully in the introduction to Study 4). We also examined perceptions of *racism*. We expected these two judgments to be positively correlated—actions seen as appropriative may also be seen as racist—but we also sought to distinguish these judgments in terms of their patterns of effects and relation to distinctiveness threat.

Finally, in Study 5, we introduce a new scenario of object appropriation and fully cross actor race with the cultural product (a Black or White chef serves Black American or White American cuisine). This allows us to examine whether the Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interaction holds across cultural-relevance of the actions (a general negative view of White actors by Black participants), and/or whether perceivers see more appropriation in an actor use of outgroup compared with ingroup cultural products.

Study 1

Method

Participants. The sample size for this study was determined a priori based on a power analysis using G*Power software. Assuming a medium effect size ($\Delta R^2 = .05$), $\alpha = .05$, and 80% power in a 2×2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) model, a desired sample size of 182 was estimated. Consistent with this recommendation, a total of 182 adults living in the United States were recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Mturk.com), an Internet-based platform that permits members of the general public to complete tasks anonymously in exchange for monetary compensation. We specifically targeted White and Black American participants in our recruitment materials: To verify race, we used an honesty prompt during the demographics section at the end of the study that allowed participants the opportunity to admit whether they did not fit the racial group recruited, reassuring them that they would still be compensated for their participation. Three participants recruited for the Black participant version admitted they were not Black and were excluded from analysis; three from the White participant version were also excluded. We excluded four additional participants from analysis because of suspicion or confusion with the materials and five who failed to follow instructions, resulting in a final analytic sample of 167 participants. These participants ranged in ages from 19 to 68 years ($M = 35.79$, $SD = 12.05$), 51.5% female. The sample included 83 African American participants (49.7%), and 84 White Americans (50.3%). All materials and procedures described below and for subsequent studies were approved by the University of Kansas Institutional Review Board.

Design and procedures. This study adopted a 2 (Race of Participant: White American vs. Black American) \times 2 (Race of Perpetrator: White American vs. Black American) between-subjects design. Participants were asked to consider and evaluate descriptions of six possible cases of cultural appropriation (see Table 1). Our dependent measures consisted of *perceptions of*

appropriation, *perceptions of harm*, and *perceptions of intentionality*.¹ We also assessed *distinctiveness threat* after all scenarios were rated.

Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to examine what people think about different social and cultural situations. They read a standard definition of cultural appropriation: "Cultural appropriation refers to taking on elements of a culture other than one's own. This can involve taking or using intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else's culture without permission." Participants were then asked to evaluate six scenarios, presented in a counterbalanced order. Each of the scenarios—adapted from actual news and social media articles that labeled incidents of cultural appropriation—described a situation in which an actor appropriates an element of culture that is not representative of their identified racial group. These articles were chosen based on web searches of the phrase "cultural appropriation" with the following considerations: the perpetrator race (White vs. Black), the target culture race (White vs. Black), and the cultural object was described as being used out of its respective cultural context. These scenarios introduced the perpetrator race manipulation.

Perpetrator race manipulation. Participants in the *Black perpetrator* condition read six scenarios that described Black/African American actors appropriating elements of White/Euro American culture (e.g., an article about a Black actress who plays the role of a Caucasian American woman in a documentary). Participants in the *White perpetrator* condition read 6 scenarios that were matched as closely as possible in content, information, and word count with the scenarios in the other condition but which described White/Euro American actors appropriating elements of Black/African American culture (e.g., an article about a Caucasian American actress who plays the role of an African American woman in a documentary). These scenarios reflected real life exemplars of cultural appropriation across a number of domains (e.g., literature, music, movies, hairstyle, theatrical makeup, and culture parties), adding to the external validity of our stimuli. A summary of the scenarios appears in Table 1, and the full set of materials is included in the [online supplemental materials](#).

Dependent measures. After reading each scenario, participants indicated their agreement (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*) with items adapted from [Reysen, Landau, and Branscombe \(2012\)](#). To assess *perception of appropriation*, participants completed four items: "This person is appropriating Black/White culture," "This person is copying Black/White culture," "This person is taking from Black/White culture," and "This person is displaying an element of culture that is not their own." Reliability was assessed for each of the scenarios (α s ranged from .76 to .93). To assess *perceived intentionality* of the actor, participants completed two items (e.g., "This person is intending to copy Black/White culture," and "This person is purposefully trying to copy Black culture; α s ranged from .88 to .98). To assess *perceived extent of harm* the action caused to group identity, participants completed five items, such as "This person is exploiting

¹ In this and subsequent studies, we also asked questions assessing motivation to confront the perpetrator described in the scenarios. A description of these items and results are included in the [online supplemental materials](#).

Black/White culture,” and “This person is being offensive to Black/White culture,” (α ranged from .91 to .96).

After judging all six scenarios, participants completed three items assessing *distinctiveness threat* (Schmid, Hewstone, Tausch, Cairns, & Hughes, 2009), threat to the sense of cultural originality and uniqueness: “It is not right that cultures are treated as if they are the same,” “It annoys me when others don’t see important differences between cultures,” and “It annoys me when others see cultural elements as interchangeable” ($\alpha = .82$). Participants also completed demographic questions before being provided more detail about the study.

Results

Perceptions of appropriation. Mean appropriation perceptions by participant race, perpetrator race, and scenario appear in Table 2. Judgments of the six scenarios were submitted to a 2 (Race of participant: Black, White) \times 2 (Race of perpetrator: Black, White) \times 6 (Scenario) mixed-design ANOVA, with scenario as the within-subjects factor. As predicted, the main effects of participant race, $F(1, 163) = 5.04, p = .0261, \eta_p^2 = .030$, perpetrator race, $F(1, 163) = 25.59, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .1357$, and their interaction, $F(1, 163) = 5.19, p = .0240, \eta_p^2 = .032$, were significant. Using an overall index (average perceived appropriation across the six scenarios, $\alpha = .84$), Black participants perceived more appropriation than White participants, and White perpetrators were perceived as more appropriative than Black perpetrators (see Table 2). The significant interaction, depicted in Figure 1, indicated that among participants who read about White perpetrators, Black participants reported greater perceived cultural appropriation than White participants, $F(1, 163) = 9.70, p = .0022, \eta_p^2 = .056$. In contrast, among those who read about Black perpetrators, participant race did not significantly influence perceptions of appropriation, $F(1, 163) = .00, p = .9180$. It was also the case that among Black participants, those who read scenarios about White perpetrators perceived more cultural appropriation than those who read scenarios about Black perpetrators, $F(1, 163) = 27.23, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .131$. The perpetrator race effect was not significant among White participants, $F(1, 163) = 3.82, p = .0523, \eta_p^2 = .023$.

The scenarios also varied in the extent they were seen as appropriative, $F(5, 815) = 33.20, p < .0001$, and the effects of participant and perpetrator race depended on the scenario, three-way interaction $F(5, 815) = 3.17, p = .008$ (see Table 2). Effects of participant race were significant for four of the six scenarios (scenarios 1, 2, 4, and 6, $F_s[1,163] > 4.15, ps < .0433; \eta_p^2 > .024$); effects of perpetrator race were significant for five of the six scenarios (all except scenario 1; $F_s[1,163] > 10.44, ps < .0016; \eta_p^2 > .060$), and the interaction was significant for three of the six scenarios (scenarios 2, 4, and 5; $F_s[1,163] > 5.25, ps < .0231; \eta_p^2 > .031$). Our focus is on overall patterns of perceived appropriation, but we continue to examine individual judgments of these and other scenarios in subsequent studies.

Perceptions of harm. The repeated measures ANOVA for harm perceptions also indicated main effects of participant race, $F(1, 163) = 12.89, p = .0004, \eta_p^2 = .073$, perpetrator race, $F(1, 163) = 26.31, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .139$, and the Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interaction, $F(1, 163) = 11.28, p = .0010, \eta_p^2 = .065$.² Averaging across all six scenarios ($\alpha = .83$), Black partic-

ipants ($M = 3.30, SD = 1.36$) judged scenarios as more harmful than White participants ($M = 2.51, SD = 1.27$), and scenarios depicting White perpetrators ($M = 3.47, SD = 1.25$) were judged more harmful than scenarios depicting Black perpetrators ($M = 2.40, SD = 1.28$). Simple effects tests based on the interaction indicated that among participants who read scenarios about White perpetrators, Black participants ($M = 4.01, SD = 1.01$) reported greater perceptions of harm than White participants ($M = 2.71, SD = 1.16$), $F(1, 163) = 22.89, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .120$, but participant race did not significantly influence perceptions of harm by Black perpetrators (for Black participants, $M = 2.44, SD = 1.22$; for White participants, $M = 2.38, SD = 1.33, F(1, 163) = .03, p = .8665, \eta_p^2 = .0002$). Additionally, among Black participants, those who read scenarios about White perpetrators reported greater harm than those who read scenarios about Black perpetrators, $F(1, 163) = 36.45, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .18$. Among White participants, however, perpetrator race did not significantly influence perceptions of harm, $F(1, 163) = 1.55, p = .2149, \eta_p^2 = .009$.

The scenarios also differed in the extent to which they were perceived as harmful, $F(5, 163) = 58.53, p < .0001$ (see the online supplemental materials); the three-way interaction was not significant, $F(5, 163) = 1.52, p = .1807$. Effects of participant race were significant for five of the six scenarios (all except scenario 3, $F_s[1,163] > 7.71, ps < .0062; \eta_p^2 > .045$); effects of perpetrator race were significant for five of the six scenarios (all except scenario 1; $F_s[1,163] > 3.81, ps < .053; \eta_p^2 > .0227$), and interactions were significant for four of the six scenarios (scenarios 1, 2, 4, and 5; $F_s[1,163] > 7.23, ps < .008; \eta_p^2 > .042$).

Perceptions of intent. A comparable analysis was performed for perceptions of intent. In this case, the main effect of perpetrator race was significant, $F(1, 163) = 19.40, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .106$, but the effects of participant race and the interaction were not, $ps > .13$ (see all means in the online supplemental materials). Scenarios depicting White perpetrators ($M = 4.50, SD = 1.25$) were more likely to be judged as intentional compared with scenarios depicting Black perpetrators ($M = 3.49, SD = 1.56$; average index $\alpha = .77$). The scenarios also differed in the extent to which they were seen as intentional, scenario $F(5, 163) = 23.62, p < .0001$, but the three-way interaction was not significant, $p > .10$. Effects of perpetrator race were significant for five of the six scenarios (all except scenario 1; $F_s[1,163] > 5.80, ps < .018; \eta_p^2 > .034$).³

Distinctiveness threat. Distinctiveness threat was measured once, after participants rated all six scenarios. A Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race ANOVA indicated only a main effect of participant race, $F(1, 163) = 22.36, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .121$; other $F_s < 1, p > .34$. Black participants ($M = 4.54, SD = 1.54$) reported greater distinctiveness threat than White participants ($M = 3.37, SD = 1.50$). Distinctiveness threat was correlated with appropriation perceptions, $r = .43, p < .0001$, and PROCESS macros testing a simple mediation model (see Hayes, 2018, Model 4) indicated significant mediation of the participant race effect on perceived appropriation via distinctiveness threat, indirect effect = .4129, $SE = .118, 95\% CI [.204, .669]$. And although mediation

² Means by condition and scenario for perceived harm and intentionality are included in the online supplemental materials.

³ Perceived appropriation was highly correlated with perceived harm, $r = .83$, and intent, $r = .86, ps < .0001$. This pattern did not vary depending on perpetrator race, participant race, or scenario.

Table 2
Perceptions of Cultural Appropriation by Participant Race, Perpetrator Race, and Scenario, Study 1

Scenario	Scenario <i>M</i>	Participant Race × Perpetrator Race			
		White perpetrator		Black perpetrator	
		White participants	Black participants	White participants	Black participants
1. Make-up	3.88 (1.67)	3.36 (1.56)	4.28 (1.45)	3.65 (1.77)	4.17 (1.76)
2. Music	3.69 (1.89)	3.95 (1.60)	5.08 (1.34)	2.90 (1.78)	2.83 (1.84)
3. Parties	4.29 (1.91)	5.20 (1.56)	4.97 (1.68)	3.72 (1.96)	3.43 (1.79)
4. Hairstyle	3.32 (1.78)	2.92 (1.61)	4.48 (1.30)	2.90 (1.78)	2.83 (1.84)
5. Character	2.96 (1.72)	2.94 (1.50)	4.06 (1.57)	2.57 (1.74)	2.16 (1.41)
6. Literature	3.11 (1.62)	3.15 (1.41)	3.99 (1.36)	2.52 (1.54)	2.80 (1.76)
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.54 (1.38)</i>	<i>3.59 (1.14)</i>	<i>4.48 (0.94)</i>	<i>3.04 (1.50)</i>	<i>3.04 (1.30)</i>

was also supported specifically in the critical White perpetrator condition only, indirect effect = .2507, $SE = .147$, 95% CI [.018, .586], the moderated mediation prediction (that distinctiveness threat would mediate the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction on appropriation) was not supported (index of moderated mediation = .0196), $SE = .159$, 95% CI [−.32, .32].

Discussion

This initial study supported predictions of differential perception of cultural appropriation based on race of participant and race of perpetrator. Consistent with the perpetrator prototype hypothesis, we found that cultural appropriation was more likely to be perceived when White actors appropriated Black culture than when Black actors appropriated White culture, and supporting the perceiver group status hypothesis, White perceivers saw less cultural appropriation overall than Black participants. Also consistent with predictions, the perpetrator race effect was stronger among Black perceivers, and the participant race difference was only significant when the perpetrator was White. In other words, the highest levels of cultural appropriation were perceived when the incidents fit the prototype (White targets perpetrating Black cul-

ture) and when the perceivers were members of the minority or low status group (Black Americans).

We also demonstrated that Black participants (vs. White participants) were more likely to perceive White actors who appropriate Black culture as *harmful*. This discrepancy of perceptions demonstrates that race, and presumably, social status, influences understandings of cultural exchange and its implications. Perceptions of intent did not show this pattern; all participants viewed the behavior of White actors taking from Black culture as more intentional than Black actors taking from White culture. Study 1 also demonstrated higher distinctiveness threat among Black than White perceivers, consistent with the idea that minority group members might be more concerned about distinctiveness. However, this participant race effect emerged regardless of the race of the perpetrator to which participants were exposed. We also found that distinctiveness threat mediated the participant race effect on perceived cultural appropriation, but distinctiveness threat did not account for the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction on these perceptions. Nonetheless, we continued to consider this variable and test for moderated mediation in subsequent studies.

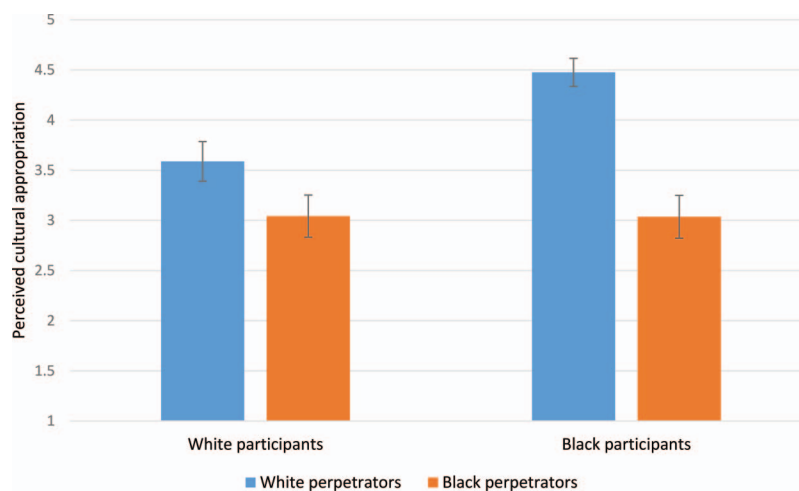


Figure 1. Perpetrator Race × Participant Race interaction on perceptions of cultural appropriation, Study 1.
 Note: Error bars represent standard errors. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

As shown in Table 2, the six appropriation scenarios generated different responses, with culture parties seen as most appropriate (particularly when the perpetrator was White), and movie actors playing cross-race roles as least appropriate. The predicted race difference in perception emerged in the latter case, but not the former. As with racism, acts of appropriation may range in overt-ness (vs. ambiguity), with perceiver race effects more likely in ambiguous cases (Sommers & Norton, 2006). We will return to this issue in the General Discussion.

Study 2

In Study 2, we sought to replicate our effects using a slightly different set of scenarios, and to examine whether distinctiveness threat is particularly high among Black participants exposed to White actors who use aspects of Black culture, and whether distinctiveness threat serves as a viable mediator of perceptions of cultural appropriation. Our goal was to use a diverse array of scenarios across studies, yet maintain some consistency as well. In Study 2, participants evaluated three of the scenarios from Study 1 (hair, literature, characters in movies), in addition to a new scenario of subject appropriation derived from a recent incident reported in the media (a Black artist painting a White subject vs. a White artist painting a Black subject).

Method

Participants and design. As in Study 1, we sought a sample of 182 based on the power analysis. Ultimately, we recruited a total of 200 adults living in the United States via MTurk, specifically targeting White and Black American participants. Exclusions included 10 participants (all in the Black participant version) because of failing the race honesty check, three who expressed suspicion or confusion with the materials, and 10 who failed attention checks (included for the first time in Study 2), resulting in a final analytic sample of 177 participants. These participants ranged in age from 18 to 67 years ($M = 33.17$, $SD = 10.76$), 56.32% female. In the final sample, 46.9% of participants were African American ($N = 83$), and 53.1% were White ($N = 94$). In this and subsequent studies, we verified that respondents had not participated in prior studies to ensure sample independence.

Design, procedures, and measures. This study adopted the same 2 (Race of Participant: White American vs. Black American) \times 2 (Race of Perpetrator: White American vs. Black American) between-subjects design as in Study 1. In this case, participants were asked to consider and evaluate descriptions of four, rather than six, possible cases of cultural appropriation (see Table 1). The procedures and manipulations were the same as in Study 1.

Participants completed the same dependent measures as in Study 1: perceptions of appropriation (α s ranged from .74 to .90), perceptions of harm (α s ranged from .92 to .96), and perceptions of intent (α s ranged from .74 to .97). After judging all scenarios, participants completed three items assessing distinctiveness threat as described in Study 1 ($\alpha = .79$).⁴

Results

Perceptions of appropriation. Table 3 displays means and standard deviations on the appropriation index for each of the four

scenarios, by Participant and Perpetrator race. The Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race \times Scenario mixed design ANOVA, with judgments of the four scenarios entered as repeated measures, replicated the Study 1 main effects of participant race, $F(1, 172) = 28.52$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .142$, perpetrator race, $F(1, 172) = 24.46$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .125$, and the interaction, $F(1, 172) = 7.94$, $p = .0054$, $\eta_p^2 = .044$. Using the average perceived appropriation across scenarios ($\alpha = .82$), Black participants ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.35$) perceived more appropriation than White participants, ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.32$), and White perpetrators ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.40$) were judged more appropriate than Black perpetrators ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.29$). The interaction was driven by the fact that Black participants were more likely than White participants to perceive appropriation in scenarios depicting White perpetrators (see bottom row of Table 3, $F(1, 172) = 30.57$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .151$), but this participant race effect was not significant in the case of Black perpetrators, $F(1, 172) = 3.49$, $p = .0635$, ($\eta_p^2 = .0199$). Additionally, Black participants saw greater appropriation in the actions of White than Black perpetrators, $F(1, 172) = 28.84$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .1436$, whereas White participants did not, $F(1, 172) = 2.37$, $p = .1254$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$.

The four scenarios again differed in the extent to which they were perceived to be appropriative, $F(3, 516) = 7.33$, $p < .0001$, and the three-way interaction was significant as well, $F(3, 516) = 3.28$, $p = .0208$. Separate analyses of each scenario revealed that the main effects were significant in all four cases, $ps < .0055$, and the interaction was significant for scenarios five and seven (movies and art), all $ps < .0059$.

Perceptions of harm. For harm and intent, we averaged across the four scenarios and computed 2 \times 2 ANOVAs (means by scenario appear in the online supplemental materials). Harm perceptions ($\alpha = .86$) produced significant effects of participant race, $F(1, 172) = 14.38$, $p = .0002$, $\eta_p^2 = .077$, perpetrator race, $F(1, 172) = 31.64$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .155$, and their interaction $F(1, 172) = 8.70$, $p = .0036$, $\eta_p^2 = .048$. Black participants ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.41$) saw more harm than White participants ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.34$) when the perpetrator was White, $F(1, 172) = 20.87$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .108$, but not when the perpetrator was Black ($M_{Black Ps} = 2.26$, $SD = 1.16$, $M_{White Ps} = 2.09$, $SD = 1.21$), $F(1, 172) = .39$, $p = .5338$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$. White perpetrators were seen as more harmful than Black perpetrators by Black participants, $F(1, 172) = 35.17$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .169$, but not by White participants, $F(1, 172) = 3.75$, $p = .0545$, $\eta_p^2 = .021$.

Perceptions of intent. Intentionality perceptions ($\alpha = .77$) produced the same patterns: Main effects of participant race, $F(1, 172) = 16.91$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .0895$, perpetrator race, $F(1, 172) = 23.59$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .121$, and their interaction, $F(1, 172) = 8.66$, $p = .0037$, $\eta_p^2 = .048$. Black participants ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.31$) saw higher intent in White perpetrators than did

⁴ Additionally, participants were asked to think about cultural appropriation in general, and were asked to rate "how much do you think the X of your ethnic group is by harmed by cultural appropriation?" X was replaced with the following characteristics: *authenticity*, *cultural value*, *traditions/customs*, *uniqueness*, *originality*, *image*, *prestige*, and *status*. Responses to these eight items (answered on 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much so*) were highly intercorrelated ($\alpha = .97$) and so were combined into a single index. Results using this index were very similar to those using the scenario-specific measures and are therefore only reported in the online supplemental materials.

Table 3
Perceptions of Cultural Appropriation by Participant Race, Perpetrator Race, and Scenario, Study 2

Scenario	Scenario <i>M</i>	Participant Race × Perpetrator Race			
		White perpetrator		Black perpetrator	
		White participants	Black participants	White participants	Black participants
4. Hairstyle	3.44 (1.85)	3.16 (1.49)	5.02 (1.54)	2.29 (1.49)	3.59 (1.64)
5. Character	3.34 (1.98)	2.93 (1.82)	5.01 (1.82)	2.69 (1.81)	2.91 (1.57)
6. Literature	3.13 (1.61)	3.11 (1.46)	3.98 (1.51)	2.62 (1.63)	2.99 (1.54)
7. Art	2.94 (1.65)	2.62 (1.54)	3.96 (1.82)	2.62 (1.46)	2.63 (1.41)
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.22 (1.43)</i>	<i>2.95 (1.22)</i>	<i>4.49 (1.14)</i>	<i>2.55 (1.36)</i>	<i>3.03 (1.14)</i>

White participants ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.28$), $F(1, 172) = 22.86$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .117$, but participant race did not influence perceptions of Black perpetrators ($M_{Black\ Ps} = 2.90$, $SD = 1.17$, $M_{White\ Ps} = 2.66$, $SD = 1.48$), $F(1, 172) = .75$, $p = .3877$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$. The perpetrator race effect was also significant among Black participants, $F(1, 172) = 29.10$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .145$, but not White participants, $F(1, 172) = 1.92$, $p = .1678$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$.⁵

Distinctiveness threat. As in Study 1, a Participant Race × Perpetrator Race ANOVA on distinctiveness threat indicated a significant main effect of participant race, $F(1, 173) = 8.51$, $p = .0040$, $\eta_p^2 = .047$, but also a main effect of perpetrator race, $F(1, 173) = 5.06$, $p = .0258$, $\eta_p^2 = .028$, and the interaction, $F(1, 173) = 6.78$, $p = .0100$, $\eta_p^2 = .038$. As predicted, Black participants ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.95$), felt more distinctiveness threat than White participants ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.52$), following exposure to White perpetrator scenarios, $F(1, 173) = 14.07$, $p = .0002$, $\eta_p^2 = .075$, but not following exposure to Black perpetrator scenarios ($M_{Black\ Ps} = 3.86$, $SD = 1.37$, $M_{White\ Ps} = 3.79$, $SD = 1.60$), $F(1, 173) = .05$, $p = .8169$, $\eta_p^2 = .0003$. White perpetrators elicited more distinctiveness threat than Black perpetrators in Black participants $F(1, 173) = 11.32$, $p = .0009$, $\eta_p^2 = .061$, but not White participants, $F(1, 173) = .07$, $p = .7984$, $\eta_p^2 = .0004$.

Moderated-mediation through distinctiveness threat. We next tested the moderated mediation model depicted in Figure 2A to examine whether the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction on perceptions of cultural appropriation was mediated by distinctiveness threat. We conducted a moderated mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro for SAS (Hayes, 2013, Model 8) with 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrap resamples. We regressed perceptions of cultural appropriation (the average perceived appropriation across the four scenarios) on participant race (Coded 0 = White Participants, 1 = Black Participants), perpetrator race (Coded 0 = White Perpetrator, 1 = Black Perpetrator), and their interaction, with distinctiveness threat as the mediator. Perpetrator race was included as a moderator variable of the *a* path (i.e., participant race to distinctiveness threat) and the *c* path (i.e., participant race to perceptions of cultural appropriation).

The index of moderated mediation was significant, effect = $-.24$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI $[-.48, -.04]$. The conditional indirect effect of participant race on appropriation, via distinctiveness threat, was not significant when the perpetrators were Black, indirect effect = $.015$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI $[-.110, .177]$, but was significant when the perpetrators were White, indirect effect = $.26$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI $[.083, .476]$. Figure 2 also depicts simple mediation of the participant

race effect on appropriation via distinctiveness threat in the White perpetrator condition (Figure 2B) and the Black perpetrator condition (Figure 2C). Only in the White perpetrator condition, Black participants (compared with White participants) showed greater distinctiveness threat, which in turn predicted perceptions of cultural appropriation. In a comparable model with perpetrator race as the predictor and participant race as the moderator, the conditional indirect effect of perpetrator race on appropriation, via distinctiveness threat, was significant when participants were Black, indirect effect = $-.23$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI $[-.396, -.080]$, but not when participants were White, indirect effect = $.017$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI $[-.143, .170]$.

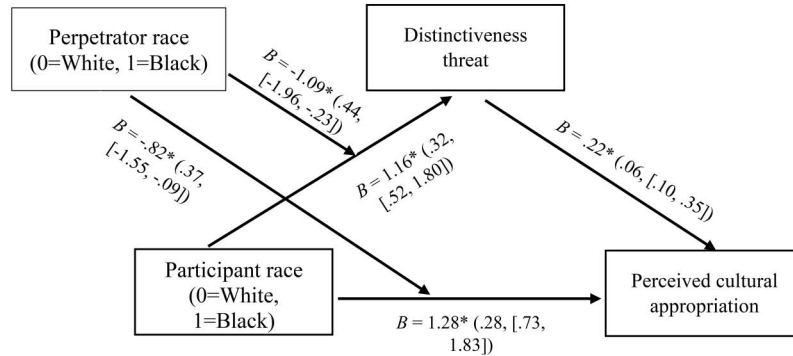
Discussion

In Study 2, we replicated the finding that perpetrator race and participant race interactively affected perceptions of appropriation: Black participants saw more cultural appropriation than White participants, but this was only the case when a White perpetrator appropriated from Black culture. Additionally, White perpetrators' actions were more likely to be seen as appropriation than Black perpetrators' actions, but only by Black participants. The same general patterns were found for perceived harm and perceived intent.

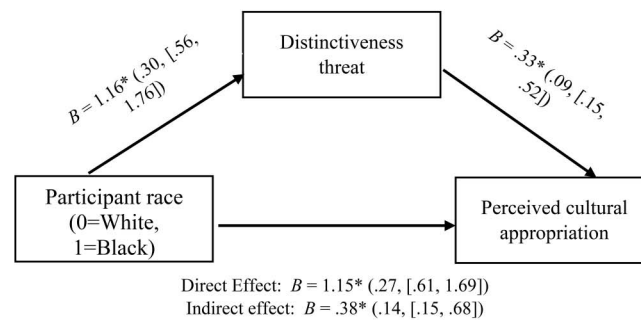
In this study, distinctiveness threat was also higher for Black than White participants, but only after exposure to scenarios depicting White appropriation of Black culture. Indeed, distinctiveness threat mediated the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction on perceptions of cultural appropriation, providing support for the prediction that minority group members are more apt to perceive instances when dominant group actors usurp minority culture as cultural appropriation via the experience of distinctiveness threat. We are uncertain why Study 1 found higher distinctiveness threat in Black than White participants, regardless of perpetrator race. The studies differed in number of scenarios presented (four vs. six), and Study 2 did not include three of the Study 1 scenarios that received higher appropriation ratings overall (see Table 2), but we recognize that this does not provide a satisfactory account. We continue to examine our hypotheses in Study 3, which includes the full set of scenarios described in Table 1.

⁵ As in Study 1, perceived appropriation was highly correlated with perceived harm, $r = .81$, and perceived intentionality, $r = .90$. This pattern did not vary across perpetrator or participant race or by scenario.

A. Overall moderated mediation model



B. Simple mediation model, White perpetrator condition



C. Simple mediation model, Black perpetrator condition

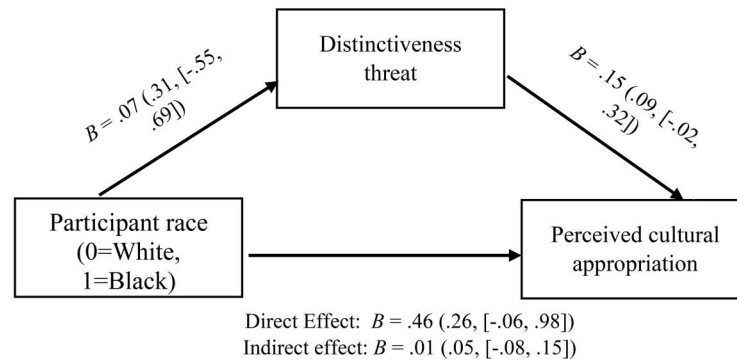


Figure 2. Moderated mediation model: Distinctiveness threat mediates the participant race by perpetrator race interaction on perceived cultural appropriation, Study 2 (*SEs* and [95% *CI*s] in parentheses). (A) Overall moderated mediation model. (B) Simple mediation model, White perpetrator condition. (C) Simple mediation model, Black perpetrator condition. * $p < .05$.

Study 3

Method

This study adopted the same 2 (Race of Participant: White American vs. Black American) \times 2 (Race of Perpetrator: White American vs. Black American) between-subjects design. In this study, participants judged all eight scenarios (described in Table 1). Our dependent measures and mediator (distinctiveness threat) were the same as in the previous studies.⁶

⁶ The hypotheses and materials for this study were preregistered at the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/vzh2u/?view_only=0022e76dd7b2472ca784c629d2e8ed2f). One prediction (prediction #2) was not tested in this study because we were unable to categorize scenarios *a priori* as “ambiguous” versus “overt” cases of cultural appropriation. We discuss this issue in the General Discussion. Additional dependent measures were included in this study (e.g., racial attitudes and stereotyping) to assess possible downstream consequences of exposure to cultural appropriation. These data will be reported in a separate manuscript.

Participants. The G*Power-estimated sample size for this study was identical to the previous studies (182). Nonetheless, we sought a substantially larger sample of 365 Black and White adults living in the United States, recruited via Mturk.⁷ Exclusions included eight participants recruited for the Black participant version who admitted they were not Black, 16 participants because of suspicion or confusion with the materials, and 15 for failing attention checks, resulting in a final analytic sample of 326 participants. These participants ranged in ages from 19 to 74 years ($M = 34.20$, $SD = 10.82$), 167 men and 159 women. Of these, 159 were African American (48.77%), and 167 were White (51.23%).

Procedure. As in Studies 1 and 2, participants were randomly assigned to read scenarios depicting Black actors appropriating White culture or White actors appropriating Black culture. Participants considered all eight scenarios described in Table 1, presented in a randomized order.

After reading each scenario, participants completed the same dependent measures as in Studies 1 and 2: Perceptions of appropriation (α s ranged from .81 to .92), perceptions of harm (α s ranged from .91 to .96), and perceptions of intent (α s ranged from .93 to .97). Distinctiveness threat was assessed at the end of the study ($\alpha = .79$).⁸

Because of our focus on perceived appropriation and distinctiveness threat (and for the sake of reduced length), we do not report results for perceptions of harm and intent. These measures produced results very similar to those reported in the prior studies. Full details on these analyses are provided in the [online supplemental materials](#).

Results

Perceptions of appropriation. Cultural appropriation perceptions for each of the eight scenarios, by participant and perpetrator race, appear in Table 4. We submitted these means to a Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race \times Scenario mixed design ANOVA, with judgments of the eight scenarios as repeated measures. Replicating Study 1 and 2, main effects of participant race, $F(1, 322) = 37.56$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .105$, perpetrator race, $F(1, 322) = 92.64$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .223$, and their interaction, $F(1, 322) = 4.98$, $p = .0264$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$, were significant. In this case, all four simple effects were also significant: Black participants ($M = 4.69$, $SD = .89$) saw more appropriation than White participants ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.25$) in the White perpetrator condition, $F(1, 322) = 34.13$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .096$, and to a lesser extent in the Black perpetrator condition ($M_{Black} = 3.27$, $SD = 1.11$, $M_{White} = 2.81$, $SD = 1.25$), $F(1, 322) = 7.78$, $p = .0056$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$. Furthermore, Black participants saw more appropriation in the actions of White than Black perpetrators, $F(1, 322) = 68.66$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .176$, and White participants did the same, though to a weaker extent, $F(1, 322) = 28.00$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .080$.

The main effect of scenario was also significant, $F(7, 2254) = 66.34$, $p < .0001$. The eight scenarios produced a range of appropriation perceptions, with culture parties seen as the most appropriate overall and the art scenario as the least. The three-way interaction among scenario, participant race, and perpetrator race was not significant, $F(7, 2254) = 1.00$, $p = .4326$. Participant race effects held in all scenarios ($ps < .013$) except culture parties, where Black and White participants saw similarly (high) levels of appropriation ($p = .7142$). Perpetrator race effects were significant

for all eight scenarios ($ps < .0001$), and the interaction was significant for four of the eight individual scenarios (hairstyle, art, literature, and costume).⁹

Distinctiveness threat. The Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race ANOVA again indicated significant main effects of Participant Race $F(1, 322) = 18.84$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .055$, Perpetrator Race, $F(1, 322) = 7.21$, $p = .0076$, ($\eta_p^2 = .022$), and the interaction, $F(1, 322) = 14.39$, $p = .0002$, $\eta_p^2 = .043$. Black participants ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.30$) experienced higher distinctiveness threat than White participants ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.48$) in the White perpetrator condition, $F(1, 322) = 32.31$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .091$, but not in the Black perpetrator condition ($M_{Black} = 4.06$, $SD = 1.40$, $M_{White} = 3.98$, $SD = 1.18$), $F(1, 322) = .15$, $p = .6956$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. Black participants also reported greater distinctiveness threat after reading the scenarios about White than Black perpetrators, $F(1, 322) = 20.50$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, but White participants did not differentially express distinctiveness threat based on perpetrator race, $F(1, 322) = .63$, $p = .4288$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$.

Moderated-mediation through distinctiveness threat. We tested the same moderated mediation model as reported in Study 2; results are summarized in Figure 3. The index of moderated mediation was significant, effect = $-.303$, $SE = .099$, 95% CI [$-.518, -.128$]. The conditional indirect effect of participant race on appropriation, via distinctiveness threat was not significant when the perpetrators were Black, indirect effect = $.022$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI [$-.091, .131$], but was significant when the perpetrators were White, indirect effect = $.325$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [$.180, .498$]. Simple mediation results appear in Figure 3 for the White perpetrator condition (Figure 3B) and the Black perpetrator condition (Figure 3C). Only in the White perpetrator condition, Black participants (compared with White participants) showed greater distinctiveness threat, which in turn predicted perceptions of cultural appropriation. In the related model with perpetrator race as the predictor and participant race as the moderator, the conditional indirect effect of perpetrator race on appropriation, via distinctiveness threat, was significant when participants were Black, indirect effect = $-.26$, $SE = .076$, 95% CI [$-.422, -.125$], but not when participants were White, indirect effect = $.044$, $SE = .057$, 95% CI [$-.066, .158$].

Discussion

Using a larger set of scenarios, we again replicated the patterns reported in Studies 1 and 2: Black participants were more likely to see appropriation than White participants, particularly when the perpetrators were White. Although the eight scenarios varied in the extent to which they were perceived as appropriate, the overall

⁷ We had originally considered including an additional manipulation in this study but ultimately decided against it but still targeted the larger N . With this larger sample size, we explored the possibility of participant gender effects on all dependent measures. Although Perpetrator Race \times Gender interactions were significant for some scenarios (women tended to be more likely than men to label White perpetrators appropriate), gender did not moderate the Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interactions.

⁸ We also measured distinctiveness threat after each scenario, but because the same pattern of effects emerged for both measures of distinctiveness threat we report only the overall index here.

⁹ As in the prior studies, perceived appropriation was strongly correlated with perceived harm, $r = .95$, and perceived intent, $r = .88$, $ps < .0001$, in all conditions.

Table 4
Perceptions of Cultural Appropriation by Participant Race, Perpetrator Race, and Scenario, Study 3

Scenario	Scenario <i>M</i>	Participant Race × Perpetrator Race			
		White perpetrator		Black perpetrator	
		White participants	Black participants	White participants	Black participants
1. Makeup	3.93 (1.66)	3.76 (1.74)	4.80 (1.50)	3.22 (1.54)	4.03 (1.47)
2. Music	3.85 (1.82)	4.16 (1.75)	5.22 (1.42)	2.72 (1.55)	3.41 (1.54)
3. Parties	4.37 (1.99)	5.04 (1.78)	5.33 (1.69)	3.67 (1.90)	3.51 (1.93)
4. Hairstyle	3.13 (1.65)	2.89 (1.49)	4.51 (1.35)	2.20 (1.31)	3.03 (1.54)
5. Characters	3.10 (1.80)	3.57 (1.76)	4.43 (1.52)	1.90 (1.21)	2.64 (1.58)
6. Literature	3.09 (1.63)	2.95 (1.62)	4.17 (1.46)	2.43 (1.33)	2.90 (1.58)
7. Art	3.01 (1.60)	3.01 (1.59)	4.10 (1.42)	2.37 (1.45)	2.64 (1.38)
8. Costume	4.26 (1.85)	4.14 (1.99)	4.95 (1.58)	3.95 (1.87)	4.03 (1.77)
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.59 (1.28)</i>	<i>3.69 (1.25)</i>	<i>4.69 (0.89)</i>	<i>2.81 (1.04)</i>	<i>3.27 (1.11)</i>

pattern was consistent with predictions, and the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction was not moderated by scenario. As reported fully in the [online supplemental materials](#), we also generally replicated effects on perceptions of harm and intent. Study 3 also replicated Study 2's findings that distinctiveness threat was highest among Black participants exposed to White perpetrators, and that distinctiveness threat mediated the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction on perceptions of cultural appropriation.

Study 4

In Study 4, we explicitly manipulate distinctiveness threat to better assess its causal impact on judgments of cultural appropriation. We anticipated a three-way interaction such that under high distinctiveness threat conditions, the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction would be eliminated. Black participants generally feel high distinctiveness threat in the White perpetrator condition; heightening White participants' feelings of distinctiveness threat should prompt them to perceive appropriation in the same manner as Black participants. The distinctiveness threat manipulation was also expected to have a larger effect on appropriation perceptions of White than Black participants.

Study 4 had two additional goals. One was to use a cleaner design in which participants are presented with only one potential act of cultural appropriation. We selected the "hairstyle" scenario from our prior studies, because it reliably produced the Participant Race × Perpetrator Race interaction on appropriation perceptions. Second, we hoped to distinguish perceptions of *appropriation* from perceptions of *racism*. Although these two judgments are likely to be positively related (actions seen as appropriative may also be seen as racist), we expect them to be distinguishable in both the extent to which the label applies (mean level differences), and their sensitivity to the distinctiveness threat manipulation (only judgments of appropriation should be sensitive to the manipulation, as White participants are unlikely to respond with claims of racism when distinctiveness threat is heightened).

Method

Participants. The sample size for this study was determined based on a power analysis using G*Power. Assuming a medium

effect size ($\Delta R^2 = .05$), $\alpha = .05$, and 80% power in a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVA model, the estimate was 425. We oversampled by 50 participants to account for possible exclusions, and recruited 475 adults living in the United States via MTurk. Exclusions included 21 recruited for the Black participant version who admitted they were not Black, 17 recruited for the White participant version were not White, and eight who requested to have their data removed after an additional "integrity check,"¹⁰ resulting in a final analytic sample of 429 participants. These participants ranged in age from 19 to 72 years ($M = 34.77$, $SD = 9.67$), 57.1% male, 42.7% female, and .4% identified as "Other." The sample included 222 African American participants (51.7%), and 207 White Americans (48.3%).¹¹

Design and procedures. This study adopted a 2 (Race of Participant: White American vs. Black American) × 2 (Race of Target: White American vs. Black American) × 2 (Distinctiveness Threat: High Threat vs. Low Threat) between-subjects design. Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to examine what people think about different social and cultural situations. They were first asked to read an article "that summarizes findings from a recent report," which served as the distinctiveness threat manipulation (see details below). They then evaluated one case of potential cultural appropriation by a Black or White perpetrator. As in the prior studies, our dependent measures consisted of perceptions of appropriation, harm, and intentionality, as well as perceptions of racism.

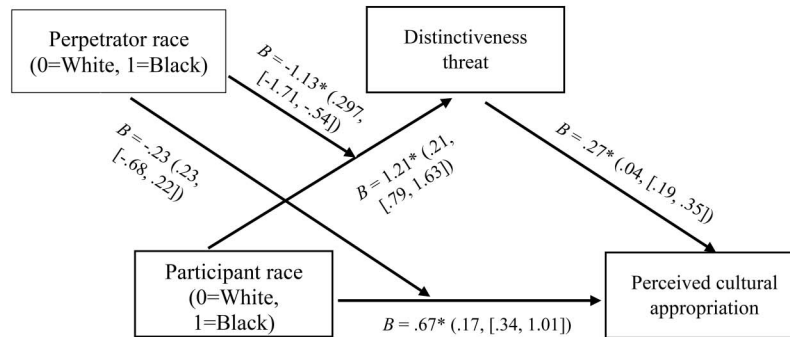
Distinctiveness threat manipulation. The article used to manipulate distinctiveness threat was adapted from previous research (Wohl, Giguère, Branscombe, & McVicar, 2011) and appears in

¹⁰ New to this study, we explained to participants that the data were important to us and that we cared about data integrity. We then asked whether, in light of this, they felt their data should be used (participants were reassured of compensation regardless of their answer). This check overlapped with and superseded attention checks as a criterion for elimination.

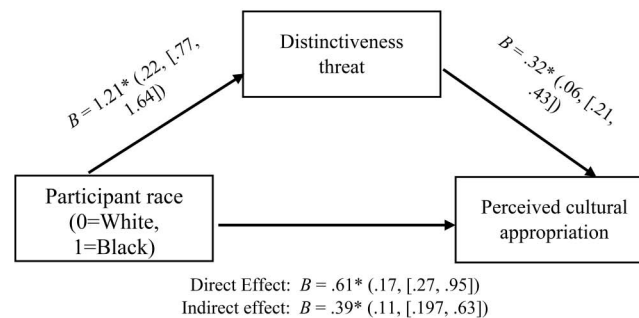
¹¹ The hypotheses and materials for this study were preregistered at the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/dkx62/?view_only=55c3e83d71a5455ea2a64d126065c7a0).

¹² We ran an additional study using a very similar manipulation, but the information in the article was tailored to participant race (e.g. Black participants read that "research concludes that many distinctive aspects of

A. Overall moderated mediation model



B. Simple mediation model, White perpetrator condition



C. Simple mediation model, Black perpetrator condition

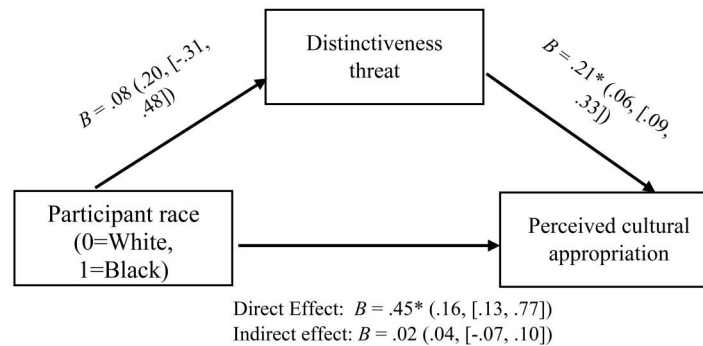


Figure 3. Moderated mediation model: Distinctiveness threat mediates the participant race by perpetrator race interaction on perceived cultural appropriation, Study 3 (SEs and [95% CIs] in parentheses). (A) Overall moderated mediation model. (B) Simple mediation model, White perpetrator condition. (C) Simple mediation model, Black perpetrator condition.

full in the [online supplemental materials](#). In the *distinctiveness threat condition*, participants read an article titled “The disappearing color line in America,” which claimed that owing to “current cultural changes, racial and ethnic color lines are blurring, making cultures less unique and distinctive. In subsequent generations, racial and ethnic groups in America will become culturally indistinguishable from one another.”¹² In the *control condition*, participants read an article titled “The geography and climate in America.” Participants were randomly assigned to the threat or control condition.

Perpetrator race manipulation. As in prior studies, participants were asked to consider a potential case of cultural appropriation

Black-American culture are under threat;” White participants read that “research concludes that many distinctive aspects of White-American culture are under threat”). However, the manipulation check (a measure of felt distinctiveness threat) failed, and therefore we felt it could not be included in this article. Nonetheless, findings were very similar to the included study; perceived appropriation and perceived racism findings from this excluded study are reported in the [online supplemental materials](#).

ation by a White or Black perpetrator, though in this study they considered only one scenario, which was adapted from the “hairstyle” scenario used in Studies 1–3. We selected this scenario because it had been used in all prior studies, because it was ambiguous, based on the mean perceived appropriation across the three studies, and because it consistently produced the Participant Race \times Perpetrator race interaction in perceptions of appropriation. Participants in the *Black perpetrator* condition read an article about a Black American owned beauty company that sold “synthetic pin-straight blonde weaves, a hairstyle typically associated with White women.” Participants in the *White perpetrator* condition read an article about a White American owned beauty company that sold “synthetic dreadlock extensions, a hairstyle typically associated with Black women.” All other information was identical across conditions except for the photo used and the name of the beauty company (see the [online supplemental materials](#))

Dependent measures. As in the prior studies, participants completed measures of cultural appropriation ($\alpha = .93$), perceived intentionality ($\alpha = .91$), and perceived extent of harm ($\alpha = .86$), and perceived racism ($\alpha = .90$), using similar items adapted to this scenario (see the [online supplemental materials](#)).

To assess *perceptions of racism*, participants completed two items, “To what extent do you think that the company in the article that you just read was racist to another group?” (1 = *Not at all racist* to 7 = *Very racist*) and “To what extent do you think that the company in the article that you just read was discriminatory to another group (1 = *Not at all discriminatory* to 7 = *Very discriminatory*)” ($\alpha = .90$).

As a manipulation check for distinctiveness threat, participants completed a four-item measure of distinctiveness threat (the same three items as in prior studies, in addition to the item, “It frustrates me when people see cultural elements as indistinguishable”; see the [online supplemental materials](#), $\alpha = .89$). To be certain that participants perceived the cultural product (hair extensions) as relevant to Black/White culture as intended, they also answered two questions: “To what extent was the hairstyle you read about associated with Black culture?” and “. . . White culture?” (1 = *Not at all* to 7 = *Very much*). Participants also completed a series of filler items to disguise the nature of the study (e.g., “To what extent did you like this business,”) and answered demographic questions.

Our main prediction was a three-way statistical interaction on perceptions of appropriation, such that (a) under no threat (control), we replicate the tendency for Black participants to be more likely than White participants to label the scenarios as “appropriation,” when the perpetrator is White, but that (b) when distinctiveness threat is salient, White participants will perceive more appropriation in the White perpetrator’s actions, thereby responding similarly to Black participants (i.e., no Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interaction in the threat condition, and a Distinctiveness Threat \times Perpetrator Race interaction only, or more strongly, among White participants). We also predicted that perceptions of appropriation would be distinct from perceptions of racism, such that (a) the scenario would be judged more appropriate than racist and (b) judgments of how racist the actions described in the scenario were would NOT reflect a three-way interaction.

Results

Manipulation checks. To examine whether the distinctiveness threat manipulation increased reported distinctiveness threat, the index was submitted to a Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race \times Distinctiveness Threat ANOVA. Distinctiveness threat was higher in the threat ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.39$) than control condition ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.58$), $F(1, 421) = 8.61$, $p = .0035$, $\eta_p^2 = .020$. Additionally, Black participants ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.39$) reported higher distinctiveness threat than White participants ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.59$), $F(1, 421) = 9.20$, $p = .0026$, $\eta_p^2 = .021$. The interaction was not significant ($p = .5409$), nor were any other effects.

The manipulation check on whether participants actually perceived the hairstyle product as relevant to Black/White culture (perceived relevance to Black minus White culture) was also submitted to a three-way ANOVA. The predicted main effect of perpetrator race was significant, $F(1, 421) = 222.87$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .346$. The product being sold by the White perpetrator (dreadlock extensions; $M = 2.67$, $SD = 2.69$) was judged as more relevant to Black culture than the product being sold by the Black perpetrator (pin-straight blonde weaves; $M = -1.39$, $SD = 3.09$). This effect was moderated by participant race, $F(1, 421) = 13.73$, $p = .0002$, ($\eta_p^2 = .032$). The cultural relevance was perceived as intended by both Black participants ($M_{White Perp} = 2.46$, $SD_{White Perp} = 2.45$; $M_{Black Perp} = -.62$, $SD_{Black Perp} = 3.04$) and White participants ($M_{White Perp} = 2.88$, $SD_{White Perp} = 2.90$; $M_{Black Perp} = -2.25$, $SD_{Black Perp} = 2.91$), simple effect $ps < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 > .13$, but Black participants were less likely than White participants to see the blonde weaves as relevant to White culture, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Nonetheless, all participants saw dreadlocks as significantly more relevant to Black than White culture and blonde weaves as more relevant to White than Black culture, $ps < .031$.

Perceived appropriation. The perceived appropriation index was submitted to a Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race \times Distinctiveness Threat ANOVA. The main effect of perpetrator race was significant, $F(1, 421) = 10.48$, $p = .0013$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$, as was the predicted three-way interaction, $F(1, 421) = 5.23$, $p = .0227$, $\eta_p^2 = .012$ (all other effects, $ps > .21$). As can be seen in the top panel of [Figure 4](#), the no threat condition generally replicated the findings from Studies 1–3: The Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interaction was significant, $F(1, 421) = 5.77$, $p = .0167$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$, and simple effects tests indicated that White perpetrators were judged more appropriate than Black perpetrators by Black participants, $F(1, 421) = 8.90$, $p = .0030$, $\eta_p^2 = .021$, though not by White participants, $F(1, 421) = .20$, $p = .6543$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. Black participants were more likely than White participants to view the White perpetrator as appropriate, but this simple effect was not significant, $F(1, 421) = 2.38$, $p = .1240$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$; nor was the participant race difference in the Black perpetrator condition, $F(1, 421) = 3.47$, $p = .0631$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$.

In the high distinctiveness threat condition (bottom panel of [Figure 4](#)), the Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interaction was not significant, $F(1, 421) = .71$, $p = .3992$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$, though the main effect of perpetrator race was, $F(1, 421) = 7.89$, $p = .0052$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$: White perpetrators ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.37$) were judged more appropriate than Black perpetrators, ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.81$).

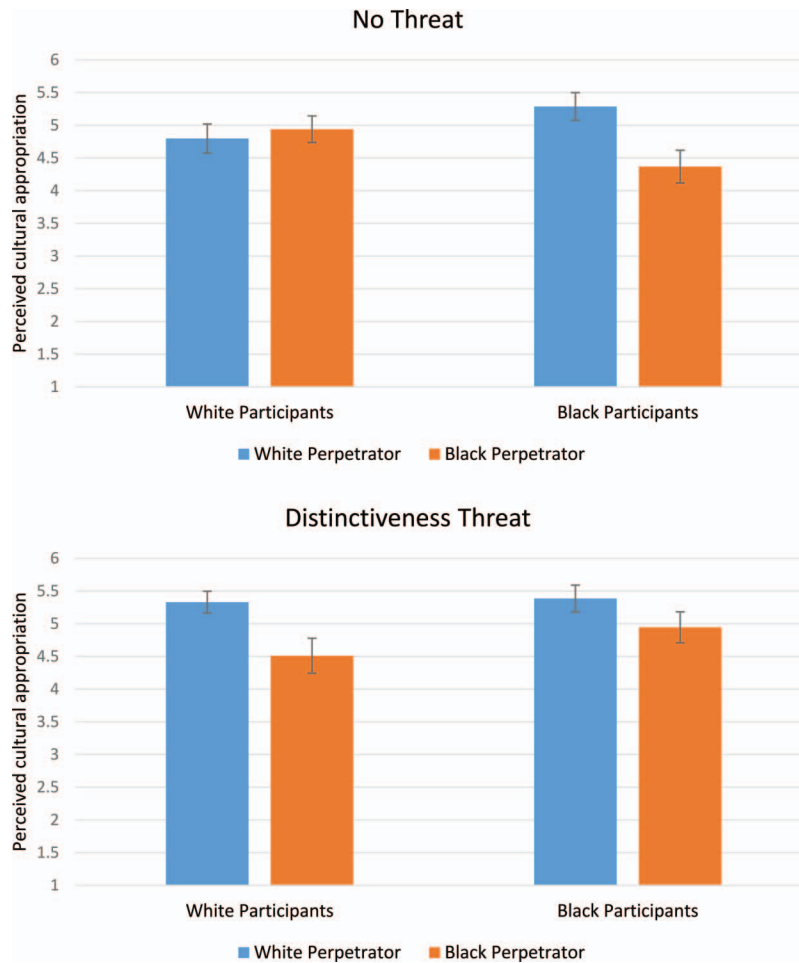


Figure 4. Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race \times Distinctiveness Threat interaction on perceived cultural appropriation, Study 4 (top panel = no threat, bottom panel = distinctiveness threat). See the online article for the color version of this figure.

Comparing across the two panels of Figure 4, threat did not increase the perceived appropriation of *ingroup* perpetrators, $F(1, 421) = 3.57, p = .0594, \eta_p^2 = .008$, but White participants perceived the *White* perpetrator as more appropriative in the threat than control condition, $F(1, 421) = 2.80, p = .0947, \eta_p^2 = .007$ (other threat v. control comparisons, $ps > .18$). Furthermore, the Threat \times Perpetrator Race interaction was significant among White participants, $F(1, 421) = 4.51, p = .0344, \eta_p^2 = .011$ (main effects were not, $ps > .13$), but the interaction was not significant among Black participants, $F(1, 421) = 2.20, p = .2748, \eta_p^2 = .003$; only the main effect of perpetrator race remained, $F(1, 421) = 9.67, p = .0020, \eta_p^2 = .023$ (distinctiveness main effect $p > .12$).

Perceived racism. In this study, we sought to verify that perceptions of cultural appropriation are distinguishable from perceptions of racism. We submitted judgments of the extent to which the scenario was racist to the same Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race \times Distinctiveness Threat ANOVA. The only significant results were main effects of participant race, $F(1, 421) = 25.07, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .056$, and perpetrator race, $F(1, 421) = 4.45, p = .0355, \eta_p^2 = .011$ (all other $ps > .09$). Black participants ($M = 3.83, SD = 2.15$) perceived more racism than White participants

($M = 2.85, SD = 1.99$), and White perpetrator behavior was judged more racist ($M = 3.56, SD = 2.04$) than Black perpetrator behavior ($M = 3.16, SD = 2.19$). These main effects are consistent with prior research on perceptions of racism, but the lack of interactions, including any effects of distinctiveness threat, differentiates racism from appropriation perceptions. Racism perceptions were also lower overall than appropriation perceptions, $t(428) = 9.14, p < .0001$, and this was the case for every condition of the study ($ps < .0070$), with one exception: Among White participants in the distinctiveness threat condition, exposed to the White perpetrator, the difference was not significant, $p = .0832$. Racism was correlated with appropriation perceptions ($r = .43$), but this relationship was weaker than appropriation correlations with perceptions of intent ($r = .76$) and harm ($r = .61$).

Discussion

Study 4 included a manipulation of distinctiveness threat, the mediator of appropriation perceptions identified in Studies 1–3. Consistent with predictions, distinctiveness threat eliminated the participant race difference in perceptions of White perpetrator

appropriation. In Studies 2 and 3, we found that Black participants *experienced more distinctiveness threat* when exposed to instances of White appropriation of Black culture, and judged that behavior to be highly appropriative. In the present study, *placing White participants in a state of distinctiveness threat* led them to that same (high) perception of White perpetrator cultural appropriation (but did not further boost Black participants' perceptions of White perpetrators). Black participants were generally unaffected by the distinctiveness threat manipulation (no main effect or interaction with perpetrator race), and instead retained a perception of the actions of the White perpetrator as more appropriative than the actions of the Black perpetrator. In short, the manipulation of distinctiveness threat had a stronger impact on the appropriation perceptions of White participants, prompting them to a judgment pattern similar to that of Black participants.

As reported in the [online supplemental materials](#), harm perceptions produced a very similar pattern to appropriation perceptions, but distinctiveness threat had no impact on perceptions of intent. Although harm and intent remained strongly correlated with perceptions of appropriation, the differing responsiveness to the distinctiveness manipulation points to divergence as well. More importantly, Study 4 indicated that perceptions of *racism* are distinct from perceptions of cultural appropriation. Participants were more likely to label the scenario as appropriative than racist overall, and racism perceptions were unaffected by the distinctiveness threat manipulation. We continue to examine perceptions of racism in Study 5.

Study 5

In all of the prior studies, perpetrator race was confounded with the cultural connection of the product/item being used: Target perpetrators were always depicted using an outgroup cultural product. Study 5 fully crosses the perpetrator race and the racial affiliation of the cultural product being used, with the goal of assessing and distinguishing judgments of targets using ingroup cultural products. To do this, we used a different scenario that we believed would be open to interpretation as appropriation: Black or White restaurant chefs serving cuisine tied to Black or White culture. Considerable debate has been generated in the popular media over whether and when outgroup cultural cuisine in restaurant menus might be seen as appropriative (see, e.g., [Fantozzi, 2019](#)). We expected to replicate the participant race and perpetrator race main effects, as well as the Participant Race \times Perpetrator race interaction in perceptions of appropriation, but particularly when the perpetrator was using an outgroup cultural product (as in prior studies). We also expected that all perceivers would judge use of an outgroup product as more appropriative than use of an ingroup cultural product.¹³ We again assessed perceptions of racism, expecting these to be lower overall and distinct from perceptions of appropriation.

Method

Participants. The power analysis for this $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-subjects design was identical to that of Study 4; the desired sample size was 425. However, we aimed to double that number, based on a recent blog post on “powering your interaction” ([Giner-Sorolla, 2018](#)), which suggest that power estimators may underestimate

needed sample size when predicted interactions involve “knock-outs” rather than reversals of established patterns. Our MTurk recruitment of adults living in the United States generated 946 responses. An additional 81 cases were deleted because these were from duplicate IP addresses (only the earliest responses were maintained in these cases¹⁴). We additionally dropped 20 participants for identifying neither as Black nor White, 26 in the Black participant condition who admitted they were not Black, five who originally identified as White but admitted they were not, and 18 who indicated their data should be pulled following the integrity check described in Study 4. This resulted in a final analytic sample of 796 participants. These participants ranged in ages from 18 to 71 years ($M = 35.24$, $SD = 10.56$), 57.79% male, 42% female, and .26% identified as “Other” (19 participants did not answer the gender question). The sample included 402 African American participants (50.5%), and 394 White Americans (49.5%).

Design and procedures. This study adopted a 2 (Race of Participant: White American vs. Black American) \times 2 (Race of Target: White American vs. Black American) \times 2 (Type of Cuisine: White American cuisine vs. Black American cuisine) between-subjects design. Participants were asked to read about a new restaurant, and told they would later be asked to evaluate the menu (see the [online supplemental materials](#) for full materials).

The photos in the restaurant review and the menu introduced the target race and target cuisine manipulations. The restaurant review discussed the details of a “trendy new restaurant,” as well as information about the chef. The menu featured photos of cuisine that reflected either White American or Black American culture, based on food items used in prior research ([Henderson, 2007](#); [James, 2004](#); [Oyserman, Fryberg, & Yoder, 2007](#)), and verified in a pilot test (see the [online supplemental materials](#)) and via a manipulation check (see below). White cuisine included items such as kale salad, grilled salmon, and banana toast; Black cuisine included items such as fried chicken and waffles, fried chitlins, and black-eyed peas. Chef names (Nick vs. Jamal) and photos were used to manipulate race; these photos were selected from stock images available on the Internet and were pretested to be similar in attractiveness. Participants were randomly assigned to read about a White American or Black American chef whose restaurant featured White American or Black American food.

Dependent measures. To assess *perceptions of appropriation*, participants completed four items adapted from the prior studies: “This chef is advertising cultural foods on his menu that are not associated with his racial identity,” “This chef is copying a cultural product (e.g. style of food) that is not associated with his racial identity,” “This chef is taking from another culture/racial group that is not their own,” and “This chef is displaying an element of another culture/racial group that is not their own” ($\alpha = .95$). Measures and results regarding perceived harm and intent are reported in the [online supplemental materials](#).

Perceived racism items were “To what extent do you think that the chef in the article/menu that you just read was racist to another group in his behavior?” and “To what extent do you think that the

¹³ The hypotheses and materials for this study were preregistered at the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/q2fna/?view_only=a5a082ed01fe414182d640ad9f4a8b2c).

¹⁴ The data collection was done in two waves, making duplicate IP addresses a unique problem in this study.

chef in the article/menu that you just read was discriminatory to another group in his behavior?" ($\alpha = .93$). Participants also completed the same manipulation check described in Study 4 (perceptions of the cuisine's connection to Black/White culture), a series of filler items to disguise the nature of the study (e.g., "To what extent did you like this menu/business?"), and demographic questions.

Results

Manipulation check. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which the restaurant cuisine represented Black/White culture. The difference score (Black minus White culture) was submitted to a 2 (Race of participant: Black, White) \times 2 (Race of Chef: Black, White) \times 2 (Cuisine: Black, White) ANOVA. The cuisine was perceived as intended, $F(1, 774) = 481.40, p < .0001; \eta_p^2 = .384$. Black cuisine ($M = 2.45, SD = 2.67$) was judged more relevant to Black culture than White cuisine ($M = -1.41, SD = 2.41$). This effect was moderated by participant race, such that White participants were particularly likely to see White cuisine as reflecting White culture ($M = -2.16, SD = 2.17$), relative to Black participants ($M = -.66, SD = 2.39, p < .0001$). Black and White participants did not differ in their perception that Black food reflected Black culture ($M_{BlackPs} = 2.26, SD = 2.67, M_{WhitePs} = 2.65, SD = 2.67, p = .1335$). Among both Black and White participants, Black cuisine was perceived as significantly more relevant to Black than White culture, and White cuisine was perceived as significantly more relevant to White than Black culture, $ps < .0002$. Additionally the chef race main effect was significant, $F(1, 774) = 8.91, p = .0029; \eta_p^2 = .011$. The Black chef ($M = .84, SD = 2.93$) was judged to reflect Black culture more than the White chef ($M = .28, SD = 3.42$).

Perceptions of appropriation. Mean appropriation perceptions by participant race, chef race, and cuisine appear in Table 5. In the 2 (Race of participant: Black, White) \times 2 (Race of Chef: Black, White) \times 2 (Cuisine: Black, White) ANOVA, the predicted main effects were significant: Participant race, $F(1, 788) = 70.42, p = .0001; \eta_p^2 = .082$, and perpetrator race, $F(1, 788) = 20.45, p < .0001; \eta_p^2 = .025$. The main effect of cuisine was also significant, $F(1, 788) = 11.74, p = .0006, \eta_p^2 = .015$.

We had predicted a three-way interaction,¹⁵ but this was not significant, $F(1, 788) = 1.50, p = .221; \eta_p^2 = .002$. Instead, the Chef Race \times Cuisine interaction, $F(1, 788) = 74.21, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .086$, indicated that collapsing across participant race, the White chef was perceived as more appropriative when he served Black American cuisine ($M = 4.94, SD = 1.55$) than White American cuisine ($M = 3.39, SD = 1.90, F(1, 788) = 70.15, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .082$, and the Black chef was perceived as more appropriative when he served White American cuisine ($M = 3.91, SD = 1.96$) than Black American cuisine ($M = 3.23, SD = 1.99, F(1, 788) = 13.93, p = .0002, \eta_p^2 = .017$). When the menu featured Black American cuisine, the White chef was judged more appropriative than the Black chef, $F(1, 788) = 88.46, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .101$. To a lesser extent, when the menu featured White American cuisine, the Black chef elicited greater perceptions of cultural appropriation than the White chef, $F(1, 788) = 8.17, p = .0044, \eta_p^2 = .010$. The other interactions were not significant, Participant Race \times Chef Race $F(1, 788) = 0.01, p = .9187$, Participant Race \times Cuisine $F(1, 788) = 0.00, p = .9733$.

These appropriation findings suggest that there is a tendency for Black participants to see more appropriation overall than White participants. At the same time, all perceivers were *sensitive to the cultural product*, perceiving use of an *outgroup* cultural product as more appropriative than use of an *ingroup* cultural product, though especially when the product (the food/menu) was associated with Black culture.

Based on our preregistration, we analyzed these data in one additional way. Focusing only on the conditions that replicate our earlier studies (Black perpetrator using a White cultural product, White perpetrator using a Black cultural product), we found significant main effects of participant race, $F(1, 395) = 27.98, p = .0001, \eta_p^2 = .066$, and perpetrator race, $F(1, 395) = 34.41, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .080$. But the interaction observed in the prior studies was not significant, $F < 1$. With this restaurant scenario, Black and White perceivers were equally likely to see White users of Black culture as more appropriative than Black users of White culture. When focusing only on the conditions new to this study (in which chefs served ingroup cuisine), only the main effect of participant race was significant, $F(1, 393) = 42.69, p < .0085, \eta_p^2 = .098$; other F s $< 1, ps > .45$. Again, this suggests a general tendency for Black participants to perceive more appropriation than White participants (the perceiver group status effect), and emergence of the perpetrator prototype effect only when outgroup culture was being used.

Perceptions of racism. The restaurant/menu depictions were generally *not* labeled as racist, with the overall mean well below the scale midpoint ($M = 2.71, SD = 2.07$). In the ANOVA, only the main effect of participant race was significant, $F(1, 779) = 183.65, p < .0001; \eta_p^2 = .191$: Black participants ($M = 3.61, SD = 2.14$) perceived more racism overall than White participants ($M = 1.80, SD = 1.52$). All other effects were nonsignificant, all F s $< 1.75, ps > .18$.

These data again distinguish perceptions of appropriation from perceptions of racism: As in Study 4, participants were more likely to view the depictions as appropriative than racist, $t(786) = 18.64, p < .0001$, an effect that held in every condition for both Black and White participants. Additionally, correlations with appropriation were weaker for racism perceptions ($r = .63$) compared with perceptions of harm ($r = .74$) and intent ($r = .80$).

Discussion

In Study 5, we used a fully crossed design, in which Black and White perceivers judged Black or White chefs who served Black or White cuisine. We supported two of our three preregistered hypotheses: Black participants overall were more likely than White participants to perceive cultural appropriation (the perceiver group status effect), and White perpetrators were viewed as more appropriative than Black perpetrators (the perpetrator prototypicality effect).

We had also anticipated a three-way interaction, such that the Participant Race \times Perpetrator race interaction observed in the prior studies would only be evident in the case of outgroup cuisine

¹⁵ Our preregistration did not explicitly mention the three-way interaction, but it was implied (the interaction between participant race and chef race was expected when outgroup, not ingroup culture was being appropriated).

Table 5
Perceived Appropriation and Racism by Participant Race, Chef Race, and Cuisine, Study 5

Dependent variable	Cuisine	White chef		Black chef	
		White participants	Black participants	White participants	Black participants
Perceived appropriation	White cuisine	2.77 (1.72)	4.01 (1.87)	3.46 (1.94)	4.36 (1.88)
	Black cuisine	4.46 (1.77)	5.37 (1.17)	2.65 (1.77)	3.85 (2.03)
Perceived racism	White cuisine	1.68 (1.41)	3.37 (2.13)	1.81 (1.73)	3.73 (2.24)
	Black cuisine	1.88 (1.41)	3.73 (1.96)	1.82 (1.50)	3.58 (2.24)

use, and not in the case of ingroup cuisine use. This three-way interaction was not significant, and the two-way interaction did not emerge in either the ingroup or outgroup cuisine use conditions. Nonetheless, ingroup versus outgroup cuisine use were distinguishable: It was only in the outgroup cuisine use conditions—those that mirror our prior studies—that the perpetrator prototypicality effect emerged. Black and White participants agreed that a White chef serving Black cuisine was more appropriative than a Black chef serving White cuisine.

Furthermore, the Chef Race \times Cuisine interaction indicated cross-race agreement that use and production of an outgroup cultural product is more appropriative than use of an ingroup product. The restaurant scenario portrays a type of object appropriation (Young, 2005, 2010), and perceivers may be particularly likely to associate cultural foods and dishes with the source community (i.e., the appropriation may be more overt). This ease of association may have prompted cross-race agreement in perceptions. Nonetheless, it was the case that the highest level of perceived cultural appropriation was by Black perceivers judging the actions of the White chef serving Black cuisine ($M = 5.37$), a pattern that replicates all prior studies. Study 5 also demonstrates that while Black participants were more likely overall to “see” appropriation (the participant race main effect), they did not show evidence of a general anti-White bias.

Perceptions of harm and intent produced judgment patterns very similar to those for appropriation (see the [online supplemental materials](#)). As in Study 4, it was perceptions of racism that deviated most from other judgments: Racism perceptions were generally low overall, less highly correlated with the other measures, and influenced only by participant race, with Black participants seeing more racism in the restaurant scenario than White participants.

General Discussion

The goal of the present research was to bring attention to cultural appropriation as a psychological phenomenon deserving of empirical investigation. Combining theoretical perspectives on racism and social identity, our research is the first to empirically demonstrate how dominant and minority groups often differentially perceive cultural appropriation. We confirmed predictions based on the *prototype account*—that White use of Black culture is more likely to be perceived as appropriation than Black use of White culture, and the *perceiver group status account*—that Black perceivers are more likely to “see” appropriation than White perceivers. Across four studies, we also found evidence of an interaction between perpetrator and participant race: Black perceivers saw more appropriation than White perceivers in the pro-

totypical case of White actors using elements of Black culture. In Study 5, Black perceivers saw more appropriation overall, but both racial groups saw more appropriation in outgroup than ingroup cultural product use. In all cases, perceived cultural appropriation was highest when Black participants read about a White actor taking from Black culture.

In two of the three studies in which it was tested (Studies 2 and 3), the Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interaction was mediated by threats to group distinctiveness: To the extent that Black participants felt a threat of loss of culture in response to the scenarios, they perceived White use of Black culture as appropriation. In an additional study (Study 1), the participant race effect on perceived appropriation (but not the interaction) was also mediated by distinctiveness threat. By manipulating distinctiveness threat in Study 4, we found that high threat eliminated the race difference in perceptions, moving White participants to the same appropriation perceptions as Black participants. We suggest that Black perceivers generally feel a heightened concern about loss of culture when exposed to possible examples of cultural appropriation. When White perceivers are brought to this heightened concern as well, their perceptions mirror those of Black perceivers. Studies 4 and 5 also indicated that perceptions of appropriation are distinct from, though correlated with, perceptions of racism.

Our predictions regarding the prototype and perceiver group status accounts, along with our focus on distinctiveness threat as a mediator, were based in recognition of status and power differences between Black and White Americans in U.S. society. We suggest that because of their relative standing and experience, Black participants are particularly attuned to appropriation, the use of Black cultural products by White actors is seen as particularly problematic, and exposure to appropriation activates distinctiveness threat. But we recognize that the current studies did not explicitly manipulate status or power to address their causal roles. Such an approach (perhaps using a minimal group paradigm) awaits further investigation.

Harm and Intent

Across all of our studies, judgments of harm and intent generally followed the judgment patterns for perceived appropriation, replicating the participant race and perpetrator main effects, and mostly replicating the Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interactions documented for perceived cultural appropriation (though intent perceptions were affected by main effects only in Studies 1, 3, and 4). In a recent paper, Simon, Moss, and O’Brien (2019) found that in making attributions to discrimination following manipulations of actor harm and intent, Black participants were influenced by intent and harm, and White participants only by intent (unless

explicitly prompted to take the victim's perspective). Our findings also suggest that both racial groups were attuned to intent (interactions with participant race failed to emerge in some studies), but that racial groups differed in their attunement to harm (Black participants saw greater harm in appropriation by White actors).

In all five studies, perceived appropriation was also strongly correlated with perceptions of harm and intent. These strong associations could suggest that harm and intent are *aspects of* the appropriation construct. In analyses not reported here, fully combining the appropriation, harm, and intent items produced results very similar to those for the appropriation items alone. However, we believe there is value in separating these constructs both empirically and theoretically, as is done in the study of discrimination (e.g., Simon et al., 2019) and morality (e.g., Cushman, 2015), among other areas. We suspect that harm and intent may be key correlates of what makes an action seem appropriate, but the present designs do not allow us to determine whether perceiving harm and intent lead to perceiving appropriation, or whether seeing an act as appropriate leads to heightened presumed harm and intent (e.g., see Rogers et al., 2019). The strong associations found in the present studies could also be a methodological artifact, based on measuring harm and intent in close proximity to the appropriation indicators. Future research would benefit from separately measuring perceived harm, intent, and appropriation, and from manipulating harm and perpetrator intent in a high-powered design to examine their causal impact on appraisals of cultural appropriation. More generally, understanding the confluence of factors, in addition to harm and intent, that matter for perceiving cultural appropriation is an important research goal.

We also suspect that the "harm" experienced by Black relative to White participants may be unique in that it derives, in part, from the knowledge that they themselves face stigmatization for their engagement with or use of their own group's cultural products. Cultural exploitation introduces a double standard, whereby the appropriated cultural object becomes acceptable and even valuable when in the hands of the majority group, but is a source of stigma and historical inferiority when sourced with the minority group. To see one's cultural products paired with outgroup members who are extolled for it may be particularly harmful and threatening to the Black community. Future research should examine the extent to which cultural appropriation by majority group members increases the value of the source community's cultural products, and the impact of this heightened valuation on Black Americans' perceptions of appropriation, harm, and intent.

Variation in Cultural Appropriation Perceptions Across Scenarios

The scenarios in the present research were selected to reflect the diversity of forms cultural appropriation may take. It seems clear that some features of these scenarios increased the likelihood that they were judged as cultural appropriation. First and foremost, cases of "cultural domination" as identified by Rogers (2006), in which Black actors took on aspects of White culture, were generally not seen as appropriation, by either Black or White perceivers (across all five studies, means for the Black actor were above the scale midpoint in only eight of 42 cases). This may be because

cultural dominance implies a lack of choice about whether to engage in appropriation or not (Rogers, 2006). A notable exception was the hairstyle scenario used in Study 4, in which both White and Black perceivers saw relatively high appropriation in the actions of the Black-owned company selling blonde weave extensions. Black participants also saw the Black chef serving "White" cuisine (Study 5) and the Black actor donning White makeup (Studies 1 and 3) as relatively highly appropriate.

This may reflect perceivers' sense that the label "cultural appropriation" applies to the extent that benefits accrue to the appropriators (Scafidi, 2005). Whether or not the benefits are tangible (e.g., financial) or symbolic (e.g., cultural capital) could also influence perceptions, as could the form of appropriation (e.g., content, subject, object appropriation; Young, 2005). Acts involving object appropriation, where there is a physical object being taken outside the source community (e.g., hairstyle, food) may be more likely to be categorized as cultural appropriation than subject appropriation (e.g., the depiction of an outgroup character in a work of art or fiction). An appropriated physical object may be more plainly *owned* by the source community than an appropriated representation.

Across studies, we also found that for White perpetrators, culture parties (e.g., the "Compton cookout") were seen as more appropriate than the other cases, particularly those featuring subject appropriation (production of art or literature). Culture parties may be overt or clear-cut cases of appropriation. Indeed, the "Compton Cookout" scenario was judged equally highly appropriate by Black and White perceivers (with means near 5.0 on a 7-point scale), in both studies in which it was used (Studies 1 and 3). However, every other scenario involving White perpetrators using Black cultural products was judged more appropriate by Black than White perceivers. Even in Study 5, when both Black and White perceivers judged a chef's use of an outgroup cultural product as appropriate, Black participants were particularly likely to use the appropriation label to describe the White chef serving "Black" cuisine.

From the literature on perceiving *racism*, we know that White perceivers are less vigilant to subtle and institutional forms of racism (Nelson et al., 2013; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007), tend to focus on more blatant forms (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997; Sommers & Norton, 2006), and have less practice at recognizing racism (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). In the same way, White perceivers may be less likely to identify ambiguous scenarios as instances of cultural appropriation. Of course, what is perceived as overt versus ambiguous appropriation may change over time and may be highly contingent on the local social norms surrounding group-based oppression (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002). Examining perceptions of a large variety of scenarios over time will be important for a deeper understanding of cultural appropriation and the cultural forces that contribute to its perception.

Other Factors Affecting Perceptions of Cultural Appropriation

The present research focused on distinctiveness threat as an important factor in understanding perceptions of cultural appropriation: Black participants were consistently more likely than White participants to experience distinctiveness threat following expo-

sure to the scenarios. In Studies 2 and 3, distinctiveness threat was heightened in Black perceivers after reading scenarios in which White actors engaged with Black cultural products. Distinctiveness threat mediated participant race effects or Participant Race \times Perpetrator Race interactions on appropriation perceptions in all three studies in which mediation was tested, and a manipulation of distinctiveness threat eliminated participant race differences in appropriation perceptions.

However, we recognize that distinctiveness threat is not the whole story; other factors undoubtedly affect perceptions of cultural appropriation and may contribute to race differences in perceptions. For example, the degree to which perceivers are highly identified with their racial groups may be a critical factor, making people's cognitive reactions to such events more group-based (Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Past research suggests that the perception of racism is negatively correlated with racial identification in White Americans but positively correlated with racial identification in Black Americans (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Crocker, Luhtanen, Broadnax, & Blaine, 1999; O'Brien et al., 2009; Operario & Fiske, 2001). The same pattern may hold true for perceptions of cultural appropriation, with race differences in perceptions intensified among those high in in-group racial identification.

In addition to identity-protective motivations, historical knowledge about racism and social injustice may drive participant race differences in perceptions of cultural appropriation. Nelson et al. (2013) found that White participants who performed poorly on a test of historical knowledge of racism were least likely to identify incidents of racism. To the extent that White respondents have greater knowledge about historical oppression, their perceptions of appropriation may move closer to those of Black respondents.

Appropriation Is Distinct From Racism

The present research extends research on perceptions of racism (Inman & Baron, 1996) by documenting that the perpetrator prototypicality effect based on cultural stereotypes of historically normative oppressors and victims (e.g., "White on Black" discrimination) applies to perceptions of cultural appropriation. Our work also builds on contemporary theories of racism, which suggest that oppression emerges in both subtle and blatant forms (Gaertner, 1973; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; McConahay, 1986). Cultural appropriation may also fall on a continuum, from ambiguous cases to more overt forms, with racial division in perception strongest when the situation is ambiguous.

Also like racism, the harm of cultural appropriation stems from a system of White supremacy and hegemonic dominance (Jones, 2000). Racism is defined as "a system in which individuals or institutions intentionally or unintentionally exercise power against a racial group defined as inferior" (Jones, 1972). Acts of both racism and appropriation by dominant group members may serve to express negative attitudes and maintain systems of inequality. In Studies 4 and 5, we found that perceptions of appropriation and racism were positively correlated. Nonetheless, the construct of cultural appropriation is distinct from the construct of racism, as evidenced in their differentiated findings across the two studies.

The hairstyle and restaurant scenarios were seen as more appropriate than racist overall, and racism perceptions were not affected by the distinctiveness threat manipulation in Study 4, or by any factors other than participant race in Study 5.

In addition to the empirical distinctions in these studies, cultural appropriation may be distinct from racism in its impact on intergroup relations. Cultural appropriation extends beyond individual acts of discrimination or microaggressions to a symbolic impact on members of the group being appropriated, as it reduces the collective historical and cultural significance of the particular cultural element being appropriated. Cultural appropriation can be likened to commodification; the object is something that can be owned, and thus the labor, culture, and identity of the source community is exploited (Ono & Buescher, 2001; Whitt, 1995). Some acts of cultural appropriation may be classified as racist, as in the examples of Blackface and culture parties, but this may not be true of other acts, as in the examples of cuisine and literature. In addition, appropriation and racism may threaten different components of group identity. Racism generally threatens the value and esteem of the target group identity (Branscombe et al., 1999), whereas appropriation may be particularly threatening to group distinctiveness.

Is Use of an Outgroup Cultural Product Always Appropriative?

Not all uses of outgroup cultural products are categorized as cultural appropriation, as can be seen by perusing mean judgments across the varied scenarios in our five studies. Although not investigated here, there may be cases in which such actions are even seen as respectful, authentic, and celebratory. Of course, assigning these alternative labels—especially in cases where dominant group members use a cultural product from a minority group—may serve a group-protective function: "Theft" can be transmuted to "appreciation." Highlighting cultural appreciation or celebration may allow White Americans to maintain a sense of morality by downplaying the harm that is involved in taking from another culture (Adams, Tormala, & O'Brien, 2006; Lowery, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Unzueta & Lowery, 2008).

But how and when is the use of an outgroup cultural product likely to be seen as truly authentic and respectful? Authenticity has been conceptualized as a "fit" between one's identity and the environment, where fit incorporates cognitive, motivational, and interpersonal fluency (Schmader & Sedikides, 2018). The extent to which the actor is psychologically invested with the source community may reduce judgments of cultural appropriation and increase judgments of cultural appreciation. Members of one racial group can become psychologically invested in another group by having meaningful relationships with, feeling a sense of personal relevance to, and caring about the perspectives, experiences, and welfare of those group members (Tropp & Barlow, 2018). Actors who are psychologically invested in a source community, who engage with outgroup cultural products to bring awareness to the experiences of the source community, and who are perceived as allies to the source community may be more likely to elicit judgments of authentic cultural appreciation and respect.

Extending Academic Discourse on Cultural Appropriation and Social Identity Theory

The present research extends discourse on cultural appropriation by identifying factors that contribute to its perception. Our findings regarding perceiver and actor race differences in perceptions of appropriation suggest that perceptions of cultural appropriation are rooted in historical patterns of cultural exploitation, whereby there is an unfair power advantage for the dominant group to use its authority and status to extract resources from minority groups (Marx, 1986; Rogers, 2006). These findings corroborate past theoretical work on cultural appropriation, which suggests that for minority groups, cultural appropriation can play out the realities of past historical injustice (Buescher & Ono, 1996). We also extend research on social identity theory by highlighting the importance of distinctiveness motivations for a new type of intergroup judgment. Cultural appropriation may make group boundaries appear more permeable to group members, especially minority group members, thus taking away positive identity dimensions associated with the ingroup. Cultural appropriation may increase other social identity threats, including threats to group morality (Branscombe et al., 1999), perhaps especially for majority group members when exposed to evidence of their own group's appropriation of minority culture. The phenomenon of cultural appropriation provides another lens through which researchers can examine how social identity is experienced and negotiated.

Other Research Questions

The present research examined Black and White perceivers' views of appropriation of Black and White culture. Future research should examine cultural appropriation as it relates to other racial identities as well as to identities of religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, and disability. Groups with different historical experiences of oppression may have different perceptions of cultural appropriation, with different implications. In the United States, the history of slavery and Jim Crow laws have facilitated a unique experience of being Black in America (DuBoisDuBois, 1903; Sears & Savalei, 2006). As a result, Black Americans may be more perceptive to instances of cultural appropriation than other minority group members. For other minority groups that have experienced existential threat (e.g., racial genocide and cultural persecution), cultural appropriation may be especially problematic. For example, the appropriation of Native American religious practices and artifacts is highly contentious given the group's indigenous status and history of racial annihilation (Taylor, 1997).

Zou and Cheryan's (2017) model of racial positioning proposes two dimensions, perceived inferiority and perceived foreignness (deviation from the "American" prototype), along which racial groups are perceived. Black and Native Americans are stereotyped as inferior but not foreign; Latinos are stereotyped as both inferior and foreign, Asian Americans as superior but foreign, and White Americans as superior but not foreign. These dimensions may contribute in interesting ways to groups' perceptions of cultural appropriation. Racial groups that are viewed as foreign may not experience distinctiveness threat (or perceive appropriation) when outgroup members use their cultural products, but perhaps only when they are also stereotyped as superior (e.g., Asian Americans) rather than inferior (e.g., Latinos). For groups such as Asian

Americans, appropriation may function as acknowledgment, and lead group members to experience a sense of being seen and understood by the dominant community (Swann & Read, 1981). Additionally, as we have shown in the present research, group members stereotyped as high in superiority and low in foreignness (i.e., White Americans) also experience less threat and have less negative reactions to use of ingroup cultural products. In these cases, however, a sense of "being seen" is unlikely to follow, as the group reflects the dominant framework. This brings us back to the importance of group status in the cultural appropriation framework: Appropriation and distinctiveness threat are most likely to be perceived and experienced by cultural groups positioned and stereotyped as inferior. Direct tests of this prediction await further research.

Summary and Conclusion

The five studies reported document differences between Black and White perceivers in their construal of acts of cultural exploitation (White actors using elements of Black culture). Our findings are consistent with theoretical approaches to racism and social identity but extend the reach of these perspectives to a new domain of intergroup dynamics. Strengths of our work include the focus on perceptions of members of marginalized communities as distinct from the perceptions of the mainstream (White) population and our use of ecologically valid materials (stimuli adapted from real world events and online discussions), coupled with more rigorous matching of materials in Studies 4 and 5. Findings may be limited by the set of stimuli we used; additional work is needed to document distinct contributors to perceptions of appropriation, and to examine when groups view the appropriation of culture in similar versus different ways.

Social discourse surrounding the concept of cultural appropriation has been fraught with tension (Malik, 2017; Opam, 2018; Proulx, 2018; Qin, 2018). An important contribution that social scientists can make is understanding the perception and consequences of cultural appropriation, as well as the identity-relevant threats it may generate in minority and majority group members. This understanding may illuminate ways to reduce the occurrence of appropriation and replace it with respectful intercultural exchange that improves intergroup relations in a diverse multicultural environment.

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