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Being Counted to Feel that You Count:
The Effects of Racial Classifications on Self-Perceptions

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts in
Psychological and Brain Sciences

by

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Rammy Moses Salem

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ABSTRACT

Being Counted to Feel that You Count: The Effects of Racial Classifications on Self-Perceptions

by

Rammy Moses Salem

Membership in a racial or ethnic minority group may increase the likelihood of being inappropriately classified or being denied the opportunity to accurately self-categorize. As a result, racial/ethnic minorities may feel less valued as members of the culture that denies these possibilities. This research explored whether giving racial/ethnic minorities the opportunity to self-categorize with their preferred racial/ethnic group affects minorities' emotions, feelings of inclusion as US Americans, and personal judgments about their social rank in relation to others. I predicted that being recognized as, and being able to choose, a preferred racial/ethnic identity provides both optimal identity distinctiveness and inclusion in the superordinate American group, and thus the most positive emotions, feelings of inclusion, and judgments of social rank.

Being Counted to Feel that You Count: The Effects of Racial Classifications on Self-Perceptions

In 2018, the United States Census Bureau announced that it will not adopt proposals made under the Obama administration that would have collected demographic information on race or ethnicity through a single question that included “Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin” and “Middle Eastern or North African” as co-equal categories with other races and ethnicities. Instead, current U.S. federal guidelines first enacted by the Office of Management and Budget in 1997 are expected to remain. These guidelines divide race into: White; Black or African American; Asian; American Indian and Alaska Native; and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Office of Management and Budget, 1997). Furthermore, federal standards consider Hispanic or Latino origin as an ethnic identity that is completely independent of race—a decision that has been criticized by the American Anthropological Association (AAA, 1997). This discretionary consideration of race and Hispanic origin as two separate constructs sends a message that one cannot simply identify as Hispanic or Latino, but must also select among a set of racial categories with which he or she may not identify. Census research captures this incongruity through their finding that almost 97% of the approximately 19 million people who selected “Some other race” in 2010 were of Hispanic or Latino origins, making it the third largest racial group in America (Humes et al., 2011).

Although the reasons behind these groupings have historical and legal foundations, Census questions and countless other requests for race/ethnicity clearly limit many Americans from expressing their preferred group memberships. Thus, membership in a racial minority group may increase the likelihood of being inappropriately classified, being denied

the opportunity to accurately self-categorize, and as a result, feeling less valued as a member of the culture that denies these possibilities.

Social Identity

Social psychological research provides theoretical frameworks to predict the adverse effects that these limited classifications could have on people's psychological well-being. For example, according to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a positive sense of self depends on categorization into positively distinctive ingroups. This theory proposes that people derive social identities that originate from groups with which they are affiliated. Additionally, social identity theory proposes that individuals seek positively distinct identities. In other words, people want social identities that are unique and that allow them to self-enhance. Self-categorization theory adds the contribution that people can categorize themselves at different levels of identification (Turner, 1999). When these self-categorizations occur, people self-stereotype according to their groups and depersonalize themselves to the extent that it blurs the boundary between the group and the self (Turner, 1999).

Among young people, having a strong ethnic identity has been shown to be positively related to self-esteem, self-efficacy, and prosocial attitudes (Smith et al., 1999). Furthermore, optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991) posits that individuals will most strongly identify with social groups that exist at the equilibrium between inclusiveness and differentiation, and that identification with such groups confers important psychological benefits. In the political realm, for example, 18-21-year-old supporters of political parties that were in the minority in terms of size and support showed the greatest commitment to the parties and viewed those parties as more representative of themselves (Abrams, 1994).

Furthermore, Leonardelli and Loyd (2016) demonstrated that perceptions of optimal distinctiveness mediated the relationship between group size and intragroup trust such that greater perceptions of optimal distinctiveness predicted greater membership trust.

Social Identity Threat

Research on social identity threat has shown negative psychological outcomes for individuals who are unable to adequately self-categorize (Branscombe, et al., 1999). A threatened social identity has been shown to have negative consequences on self-esteem (Smurda, et al., 2006), feelings of inclusion (Stout & Dasgupta, 2011), emotions (Flores & Huo, 2012), and health (Major & Schmader, 2018).

Identity denial, or the lack of recognition as a member of a group to which one belongs, is another type of social identity threat that can be subtle or blatant (Huynh, 2013). Such experiences of identity denial can lead to an assertion of unrecognized identity (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). In addition, social misclassification, which can include either being misclassified by others into a category one does not desire, or not having the opportunity to self-categorize as desired, can lead to psychological distress, low identification and less loyalty to the assigned group (Ellemers et al., 2002; Barreto & Ellemers, 2002). For instance, racially/ethnically misclassified American Indians reported greater psychological distress (including suicide ideations and attempts) than their correctly classified counterparts (Campbell & Troyer, 2007).

I recruited and randomly assigned self-identified Hispanic or Latino participants into one of four conditions in which they see (1) only the five racial categorizations recognized by the U.S. Census; (2) the five Census racial categorizations plus the option to select “Other” to write in their preferred racial/ethnic identity; (3) the five Census racial categorizations plus

“Hispanic or Latino” as an additional category; (4) the expanded categorizations from the third condition plus the text entry option of “Other.” These conditions were expected to differ psychologically as a function of identity choice and recognition, with the fourth condition providing the highest levels of both. Subsequently, I measured emotions, feelings of inclusion as Americans, and social comparison in relation to others.

Among the four experimental conditions, I hypothesized that participants whose racial/ethnic identities are recognized will report increased positive emotions, feelings of inclusion as Americans, and positive feelings about themselves in relation to others. Similarly, I predicted that participants who are given the greatest amount of choice in expressing their preferred racial/ethnic identity will report increased positive emotions, feelings of inclusion, and rank themselves in a more favorable light relative to others. I expected these effects to be additive such that participants who experience both identity recognition and unconstrained identity choice will report greater levels of our dependent variables than those whose identities are not recognized and constrained in their identity choice.

To examine the potential moderating effect of identity centrality, I also measured participants’ Hispanic or Latino identity centrality with the expectation that the positive effects of Hispanic or Latino identity recognition and choice will be more pronounced for highly identified Hispanic or Latino individuals, whereas I predicted little to no effect of identity recognition and choice for those low in Hispanic or Latino identification. Conversely, I expected an interaction such that no identity recognition and constrained choice will result in the most negative emotions, lowest feelings of inclusion, and lowest

social comparison judgments for highly identified Hispanic or Latino individuals, while low Hispanic or Latino identity centrality individuals would not be affected.

Furthermore, I measured participants' White identity centrality in order to control for the effects of participants' identification with the White racial/ethnic identity when analyzing the effects of Hispanic or Latino identity centrality. By doing so, I was able to draw more nuanced conclusions of the effects of our manipulations by ruling out effects of White identity centrality that could confound our results. Theoretically, in order to effectively neglect a target individual's social identity, it is important to know whether there are alternative psychologically satisfying identities with which to identify. For example, based on our predictions of negative effects of no identity recognition and constrained choice for highly identified Hispanic or Latino individuals, being also high in White identity centrality may mitigate the anticipated negative effects.

Compared to choosing from among racial classifications that may be perceived as inaccurate, I predicted that choosing a racial/ethnic category that is co-equal with other categories will provide an optimally distinctive outcome that balances identity distinctiveness with inclusiveness within the broader American fabric. Alternatively, it may be the case that highlighting racial/ethnic differences could lead to potential negative downstream effects, such as stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), which could outweigh any positive outcomes.

Method

Participants

294 self-identified Hispanic or Latino participants in the United States were recruited to participate in this study through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) using CloudResearch's

panel options in its MTurk Toolkit to screen for race/ethnicity and location. Out of those, 91 participants were excluded based on incorrect responses to any of four attention check questions embedded in the online survey. Three of these attention check questions were worded similarly to Marjanovic et al., (2014), e.g., “In response to this question, please choose somewhat agree.” A fourth simply asked participants to choose or select 8 on a 1-10 Likert scale. Thus, the final sample size upon which analyses are based is 203 (125 women and 78 men).

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 68 years ($M = 30.93$; $SD = 8.61$). The MTurk Toolkit determines demographic characteristics by asking MTurk workers non-leading demographic questions at several random timepoints and uses the consistency of these responses to determine participants’ demographic attributes. Participants located in the United States who identified only as *Hispanic/Latino* were given the opportunity to take the main survey. Approval ratings for these participants in previous MTurk human intelligence tasks (HITs) were between 90-100%, and participants completed no more than 5,000 previous HITs on MTurk. Since an estimated 1,000 workers on MTurk account for 21% of all HITs (Litman, 2017), the top 2% of most active MTurk workers, who account for approximately 34% of HITs, were restricted from participating.

All participants except 1 indicated that they were U.S. citizens, and 21 reported that they were born outside of the United States. For 157 participants, English was their first language. For 37 participants, English was not their first language, but they learned it before the age of 7, and 9 participants learned English after the age of 7.

This sample size was determined through an *a priori* power analysis conducted with G*Power software based on the effect size ($\eta^2 = .5$) found in Study 1 of Flores and Huo

(2012), which tested the effect of national origin identity/neglect on affective responses. Our sample size exceeded the estimated sample size required to detect the large effect size found by Flores and Huo (2012) at the standard .05 alpha error probability with 80% power. This sample size was preregistered in the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/4m26g>). Participants were compensated \$1.50. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the University of California, Santa Barbara Human Subjects Committee.

Design

The study had a 2 (constrained identity choice vs. unconstrained identity choice) x 2 (identity recognition vs. no identity recognition) x continuous (racial/ethnic identity centrality) between-subjects design.

Procedure

Once directed to the main study, participants completed an anonymous online survey, and first completed demographic questions of age, gender, state of residence, and race/ethnicity. The assessment of race/ethnicity was used to instantiate the manipulations.

Manipulation of identity choice and identity recognition. Participants were randomly assigned to racial/ethnic category conditions representing the crossed factors of two identity choice conditions (constrained vs. unconstrained) and two identity recognition conditions (no recognition vs. recognition). In the first condition, which operationalizes constrained identity choice and no recognition, the question on race/ethnicity consisted of five racial categorizations: (1) White, (2) Black or African American, (3) Asian, (4) American Indian and Alaska Native, and (5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.¹ In the second

¹ These five racial categorizations were selected because they correspond to the five racial categorizations recognized by the U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

condition, which operationalizes unconstrained identity choice and no recognition, participants were given the additional option to select “Other” and write in their preferred racial/ethnic identity. The third condition, operationalizing constrained identity choice and recognition, contained an expanded set racial/ethnic options that included “Middle Eastern or North African” and “Hispanic or Latino,” which encompassed participants’ previously selected racial/ethnic identities. The fourth condition, operationalizing unconstrained identity choice and recognition, contained the same expanded set of racial/ethnic categories plus the additional option to select “Other” to enter a preferred racial/ethnic identity, which is analogous to the second condition.

Emotions. Participants reported their current emotions based on responses to 12 randomly presented emotion items that were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *extremely* (5). Four emotion composites were created, each comprised of three distinct emotion items: angry (irritated, annoyed, angry; $\alpha = .87$), sad (depressed, upset, sad; $\alpha = .85$), happy (satisfied, content, happy; $\alpha = .88$), and proud (grateful, respected, proud; $\alpha = .81$).

Social comparison. Social comparison was assessed using the Social Comparison Scale, an 11-item instrument measuring personal judgments of competence, social rank, confidence, and other qualities in relation to others (Allan & Gilbert, 1995; $\alpha = .92$). Using a semantic differential methodology (Osgood et al., 1957), each item was presented with two contrasting properties anchored at either end of a 10-point Likert scale (all items in Appendix A). For example, participants were prompted to complete the sentence, “In relation to others, I feel...” by choosing between the dimensions of *Inferior* (1) to *Superior* (10). Factor loadings revealed a three-factor structure of social rank (e.g., weaker-stronger; $\alpha = .816$), social

acceptance (e.g., left out-accepted; $\alpha = .784$), and social attractiveness (e.g., unlikeable-more likeable; $\alpha = .889$), therefore, each factor was analyzed separately.

Identification with Americans. Identification with Americans was measured by adapting the identification with groups instrument developed by Roccas et al., (2008). This 16-item instrument divides group identification across four dimensions of importance ($\alpha = .888$), commitment ($\alpha = .854$), superiority ($\alpha = .853$), and deference ($\alpha = .854$; all items in Appendix B). These items were adapted to reflect the reference group as *Americans* (overall $\alpha = .95$). An example of an importance item, conceptualized as how important the group is to a person's self-definition, was, "Being an American is an important part of my identity." A sample item for the commitment subscale, which is thought of as the desire to benefit the group, was, "I like to help Americans." The superiority subscale, interpreted as the extent to which one's ingroup is perceived as superior than other groups, includes items such as, "Other groups can learn a lot from us Americans." The deference subscale, which entails deference to group symbols, includes items such as, "All Americans should respect the customs, the institutions, and the leaders of America." Each subscale was separately analyzed. Participants responded to these items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

Racial identity centrality. I measured both Hispanic or Latino and White identity centrality separately using 8 items adapted from the Centrality subscale of Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity Centrality Scale (Sellers et al., 1997). Participants were first presented with items referencing their Hispanic or Latino identities ($\alpha = .90$), such as "Overall, being Hispanic or Latino has very little to do with how I feel about myself." Then participants completed the same 8 items referencing the centrality of the White identity to

their self-concepts ($\alpha = .85$), e.g., “Being White is an important reflection of who I am.” The Hispanic or Latino identity centrality instrument was always presented first followed by the White identity centrality instrument (all items in Appendix C). Items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

Manipulation checks. To assess the effectiveness of the manipulation, I asked participants to indicate the extent to which they felt that they were able to report their race/ethnicity accurately, using a 3-point Likert scale ranging from *No – not at all* (1) to *Yes – completely* (3). Subsequently, participants given the opportunity to write in a preferred race/ethnicity with which they identify using the question, “If you had the choice to identify your race/ethnicity in another category that was not listed, how would you identify?”

Political ideology. I also measured political ideology on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *Very liberal* (1) to *Very conservative* (7). This item also included options to choose being unsure/not political, and to write in a political ideology outside of the conservative-liberal spectrum.

English language usage and fluency. Participants indicated the point at which they learned English. They selected among three options: “English is my first language;” “English is not my first language, but I learned it before the age of 7;” and “English is not my first language, and I learned it after the age of 7.” Additionally, I dichotomously asked participants whether they primarily speak English at home.

Finally, participants were thanked, debriefed, and compensated.

Results

Analytic approach. I performed moderated multiple regression analyses on all dependent variables to test the hypotheses that the effects of identity recognition and identity choice on

each dependent variable would be moderated by Hispanic or Latino identity centrality, controlling for the main effect of White identity centrality. Identity recognition, identity choice, and identity centrality were entered on Step 1, the three two-way interactions were entered on Step 2, and the three-way interaction was entered on Step 3. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Measured Variables*

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Happiness	3.08	1.00	—												
2. Anger	1.50	.77	-.39**	—											
3. Pride	2.89	1.03	.71**	-.19**	—										
4. Sadness	1.55	.84	-.49**	.74**	-.23**	—									
5. Social rank	5.88	1.76	.39**	-.25**	.40**	-.27**	—								
6. Social acceptance	5.40	1.89	.54**	-.29**	.47**	-.40**	.69**	—							
7. Social attractiveness	6.16	2.00	.45**	-.21**	.39**	-.31**	.76**	.76**	—						
8. Group commitment	4.91	1.25	.31**	-.21**	.33**	-.18	.23**	.26**	.28**	—					
9. Group superiority	3.70	1.27	.24**	-.16*	.30**	-.13	.23**	.33**	.32**	.75**	—				
10. Group importance	4.37	1.46	.26**	-.20**	.26**	-.16*	.19**	.23**	.21**	.85**	.78**	—			
11. Group deference	3.27	1.35	.23**	-.14	.28**	-.13	.24**	.37**	.33**	.62**	.83**	.69**	—		
12. Hispanic/Latino identity centrality	4.80	1.19	.11	.05	.08	.01	.07	.08	.03	.06	-.02	.08	.06	—	
13. White identity centrality	3.11	1.21	.03	-.01	.086	.01	.06	.16*	.13	.29**	.42**	.39**	.44**	-.019	—

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

Manipulation check. To assess whether individuals in the constrained identity choice and no identity recognition condition felt that their preferred racial/ethnic identity was not represented, I measured the extent to which participants felt that they could report their race/ethnicity accurately. Among those in the constrained identity choice and no identity recognition condition, 45.3% reported feeling that they reported their race/ethnicity accurately, while 28.3% reported that they did not report their race/ethnicity accurately. This compares to 60% of participants in the recognized identity and unconstrained identity choice condition reporting that they could report their race/ethnicity accurately, with 4% reporting their inability to accurately report their race/ethnicity (see Table 2).

Table 2

Frequencies (Percentages) of Ability to Report Race/Ethnicity Accurately by Condition

	Yes - completely	Somewhat	No – not at all
Identity Recognition + Unconstrained Identity Choice (<i>n</i> = 50)	30 (60%)	18 (36%)	2 (4%)
Identity Recognition + Constrained Identity Choice (<i>n</i> = 51)	31 (60.8%)	20 (39.2%)	0 (0%)
No Identity Recognition + Unconstrained Identity Choice (<i>n</i> = 49)	17 (34.7%)	22 (44.9%)	10 (20.4%)
No Identity Recognition + Constrained Identity Choice (<i>n</i> = 53)	24 (45.3%)	14 (26.4%)	15 (28.3%)
Total (<i>N</i> = 203)	102	74	27

The chi-squared test for goodness of fit indicated that across all four conditions, the proportions of participants' yes (50.25%), somewhat (36.45%), and no (13.30%) responses to whether they felt that they reported their race/ethnicity accurately were statistically different,

$\chi^2 = 28.09$ (6), $p < .001$. I conducted post hoc analyses to investigate the proportions of each response type by condition using Bonferroni corrections to reduce the Type I error rate (Beasley & Schumacker, 1995; MacDonald & Gardner, 2000). Using this procedure, I found that a significantly greater proportion of participants indicated their inability to accurately report their race/ethnicity in the constrained identity choice and no identity recognition condition (28.3%, $z = 3.74$, $p < .001$), and a significantly lower proportion of participants indicated their inability to accurately report their race/ethnicity in the constrained identity choice and identity recognition condition (0%, $z = -3.23$, $p = .001$).

A multinomial logistic regression was conducted to determine if identity recognition and identity choice were significant predictors of participants' likelihood to indicate that they were able to accurately report their race/ethnicity. The likelihood-ratio tests revealed that participants were more likely to indicate that they were able to accurately report their race/ethnicity when their Hispanic or Latino identities were recognized than when their identities were not recognized, $\chi^2 = 27.14$ (2), $p < .001$. However, participants were not more likely to indicate that they were able to accurately report their race/ethnicity when given an unconstrained choice in reporting their race/ethnicity than when their choice was constrained, $\chi^2 = 1.30$ (2), $p = .52$. This finding could be expected given that participants whose preferred racial/ethnic identity was Hispanic or Latino felt sufficiently able to report their race/ethnicities when this racial/ethnic category was available (identity recognition conditions) regardless of whether or not they were given an opportunity to write in another racial/ethnic identity. Indeed, the percentage of participants indicating their ability to accurately report their race/ethnicity in the identity recognition and unconstrained identity choice condition (60%) was virtually equivalent to the percentage in the identity recognition

and constrained identity choice condition (60.8%). These findings suggest that the identity recognition manipulation was successful in influencing participants' perceptions of their ability to accurately report their race/ethnicity.

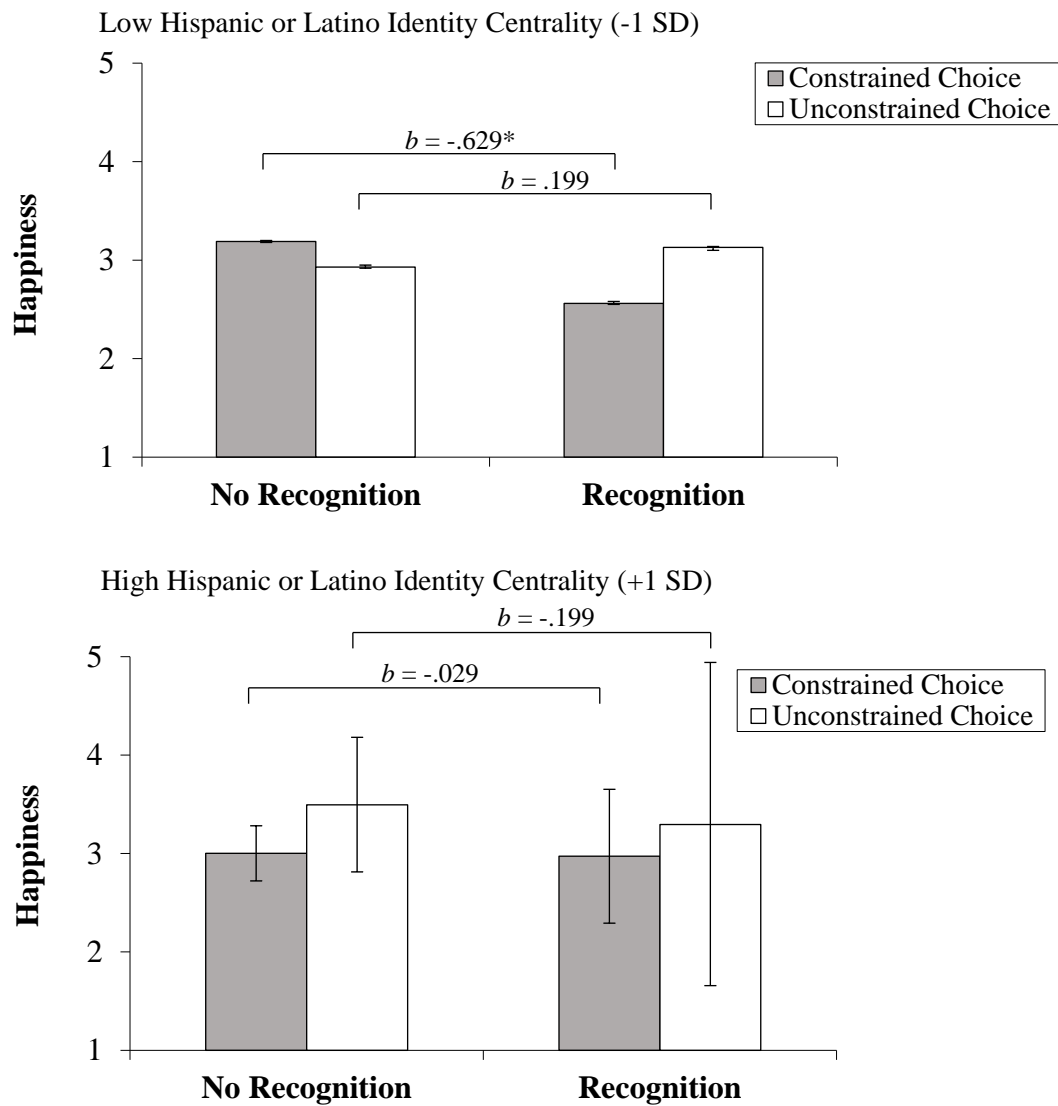
Happiness. A 2 (constrained vs. unconstrained identity choice) x 2 (identity recognition vs. no identity recognition) x continuous (Hispanic or Latino identity centrality) moderated regression analysis (controlling for the main effect of White identity centrality) on happiness revealed a main effect of identity choice ($b = .277, p = .048$). Individuals reported greater happiness when they had the opportunity to write in their preferred race or ethnicity. When "Hispanic or Latino" was not listed among the racial/ethnic categories, but participants were able to write in a racial/ethnic identity of their choice, 15 of the 49 participants in this condition identified as Hispanic (12), Latina (2), or Chicano (1). I found no main effects for identity recognition ($b = -.181, p = .196$), Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = .096, p = .104$), or White identity centrality ($b = .038, p = .518$). Together, these predictors explained 4.1% of the variance in happiness $F(4, 198) = 2.106, p = .081$. The three two-way interaction terms entered at Step 2 (identity choice x identity recognition; identity choice x Hispanic or Latino identity centrality; and identity recognition x Latin identity centrality) were not significant. These interaction terms explained an additional 1% of the variance in happiness, $F(3, 195) = .704, p = .550$. However, the three-way interaction entered at Step 3 of these three variables was marginally significant ($b = -.420, p = .076$). The three-way interaction term ($b = -.42$) explained an additional 1.5% of the variance in happiness, $F(1, 194) = 3.179, p = .076$.

To explore the trends of this marginally significant three-way interaction, I used Hayes' (2018) PROCESS model 3 to conduct an analysis of the simple two-way interactions

between identity recognition and identity choice on happiness at one standard deviation above the mean (5.99) and below the mean (3.61) of Hispanic or Latino identity centrality. As shown in Figure 1, there was a negative association between identity recognition and constrained identity choice on happiness for participants low in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = -.629, p = .026$). Contrary to my hypothesis that participants low in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality would not be affected by the identity recognition or identity choice manipulation, participants low in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality who had their Hispanic or Latino identities recognized and were constrained in their identity choice scored significantly lower on happiness than those who did not have their identities recognized and were constrained in their identity choice. In addition, the two-way interaction between identity choice and Hispanic or Latino identity centrality was marginally significant ($b = .317, p = .066$). Participants who were given the opportunity to write in their preferred race or ethnicity reported greater happiness than those who did not have this opportunity. However, the two-way interaction between identity recognition and Hispanic or Latino identity centrality was not significant ($b = .252, p = .138$). Consistent with my hypotheses, participants felt happier when their identity choice was unconstrained, but contrary to my hypothesis, having the Hispanic or Latino identity recognized did not lead to increases in participants' happiness, and Hispanic or Latino identity centrality did not moderate these effects.

Figure 1

Simple two-way interactions of identity recognition and identity choice on happiness at one standard deviation above and below the mean of Hispanic or Latino identity centrality



Note. Unstandardized beta coefficients are shown. Error bars represent standard errors.

* $p < .05$.

Anger. A 2 x 2 x continuous moderated regression analysis on anger controlling for White identity centrality revealed a main effect of identity recognition ($b = -.218, p = .047$), such that having the Hispanic or Latino identity recognized predicted lower feelings of anger.

I found no main effects of identity choice ($b = -.044, p = .685$), Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = .031, p = .497$), or White identity centrality ($b = .002, p = .971$). These predictors explained 2.3% of the variance in anger, $F(4, 198) = 1.173, p = .324$. The two-way interactions and the three-way interaction were not significant. Consistent with my hypotheses, participants felt angrier when their identity was recognized, but contrary to my hypothesis, having the unconstrained identity choice did not lead to increases in participants' happiness, and Hispanic or Latino identity centrality did not moderate these effects.

Pride. I investigated whether identity centrality moderated the effects of identity choice and identity recognition on sadness, controlling for White identity centrality. Regression analysis revealed a main effect of identity recognition ($b = -.307, p = .033$) showing that contrary to my hypothesis, participants whose Hispanic or Latino identities were recognized reported less pride. I found no main effects of identity choice ($b = .206, p = .150$), Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = .071, p = .241$), or White identity centrality ($b = .084, p = .157$). Together, these predictors explained 4.6% of the variance in pride, $F(4, 198) = 2.377, p = .053$. Two-way interactions and the three-way interaction were not significant.

Sadness. I also conducted a 2 x 2 x continuous regression analysis on sadness, which revealed no significant main effects and no significant interactions.

Social comparison. I investigated whether, controlling for White identity centrality, Hispanic or Latino identity centrality moderated the relationship of identity recognition and identity choice on personal judgments of social rank, social acceptance, and social attractiveness in relation to others. Regression analyses revealed no main effects of identity recognition ($b = -.046, p = .854$), identity choice ($b = .147, b = .553$), Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = .099, p = .345$), or White identity centrality ($b = .086, p = .407$) on

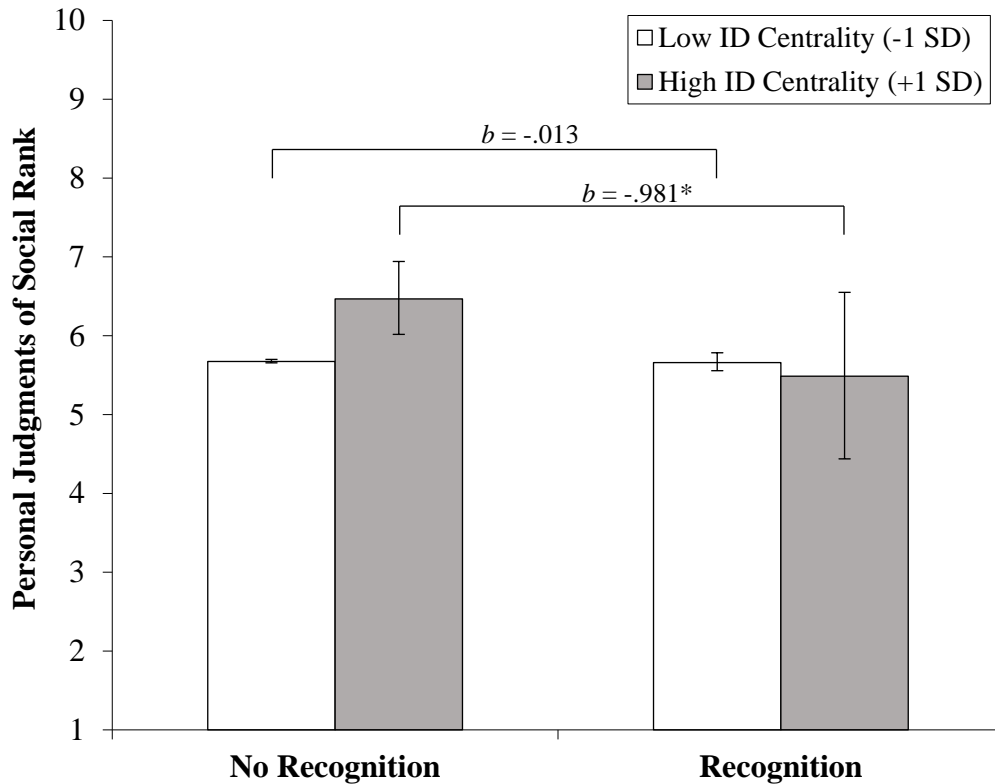
social rank. These predictors explained .9% of the variance in social rank, $F(4, 198) = .474, p = .755$. However, at Step 2, the two-way interactions of identity recognition x identity choice ($b = .915, p = .066$), and identity recognition by Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = -.408, p = .054$) on social rank were marginally significant. The two-way interactions explained an additional 3.6% of the variance in social rank at Step 2, $F(3, 195) = 2.433, p = .066$.

To explore these interactions, I used Hayes' (2018) PROCESS model 2 to obtain the simple slope of identity recognition on social rank at levels of constrained and unconstrained identity choice. However, this analysis did not yield significant associations between identity recognition and social rank for individuals who were constrained ($b = .392, p = .269$) or unconstrained ($b = -.523, p = .129$) in their racial/ethnic identity choices.

I also plotted the simple slope of identity recognition on social rank at one standard deviation above the mean (5.99) and below the mean (3.61) of Hispanic or Latino identity centrality. As shown in Figure 2, there was a significant association between identity recognition and personal judgments of social rank for participants high in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = -.981, p = .022$), but no significant association for participants who scored low in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = -.013, p = .976$). For participants high in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality, when their Hispanic or Latino identity was recognized, they tended to judge themselves as lower ranked socially. However, for participants low in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality, there was no link between identity recognition and social rank. In other words, identity recognition appears to be associated with social rank only for people whose Hispanic or Latino identity is central to their self-concepts.

Figure 2

Association between identity recognition and personal judgments of social rank for participants high and low on Hispanic or Latino identity centrality



Note. Unstandardized beta coefficients are shown. Error bars represent standard errors.

* $p < .05$.

Regression analyses were also conducted to test whether the effects of identity recognition and identity choice on social attractiveness and social acceptance were moderated by Hispanic or Latino identity centrality (controlling for White identity centrality). These analyses revealed main effects of identity recognition and White identity centrality on social attractiveness, such that those whose Hispanic or Latino identities were recognized rated themselves lower on social attractiveness ($b = -.695, p = .013$), but those whose White identities were more central to their sense of self tended to judge themselves

higher on social attractiveness ($b = .239, p = .038$). These predictors explained 5.3% of the variance in social attractiveness, $F(4, 198) = 2.793, p = .027$. For social acceptance, there was also a main effect of White identity centrality such that the more central participants' White identities were to their self-definitions, the more they judged themselves to be socially accepted ($b = .267, p = .015$). Together, these predictors explained 4.8% of the variance in perceptions of social acceptance, $F(4, 198) = 2.473, p = .046$. Two-way and three-way interactions were not significant.

Identification with Americans. A 2 (identity recognition) x 2 (identity choice) x continuous (Hispanic or Latino identity centrality) regression analysis was also conducted on the extent to which participants identified with Americans, controlling for the main effect of White identity centrality. Regression analysis revealed a main effect of White identity centrality on deference to the group's symbols ($b = .489, p < .001$) and importance of the group to one's identity ($b = .474, p < .001$), such that the more central the White identity was to the Hispanic or Latino participants, the higher they deferred to group symbols, and the more important being an American was to their self-concepts. For the deference to group composite, the predictors explained 19.7% of the variance, $F(4, 198) = 12.17, p < .001$. For the importance of group composite, these predictors explained 16.4% of the variance, $F(4, 198) = 9.718, p < .001$. Two-way and three-way interactions were not significant.

White identity centrality also had a significant main effect on commitment to Americans ($b = .305, p < .001$), suggesting that the higher participants scored on White identity centrality, the greater their commitment to Americans. Together, these predictors explained 9.9% of the variance in commitment to Americans, $F(4, 198) = 5.412, p < .001$. In addition, the interaction at Step 2 of identity choice x Hispanic or Latino identity centrality was

significant ($b = -.284, p = .045$). The interaction terms at Step 2 explained an additional 9.6% of the variance in commitment to Americans, $F(3, 195) = 2.118, p < .001$.

To explore this interaction, I used Hayes' (2018) PROCESS model 2 to obtain the simple slope of identity choice on commitment to Americans at one standard deviation above the mean (5.99) and below the mean (3.61) of Hispanic or Latino identity centrality. However, this probe did not yield significant associations between identity choice and commitment to Americans for individuals high in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = -.423, p = .233$) and low in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = .254, p = .39$).

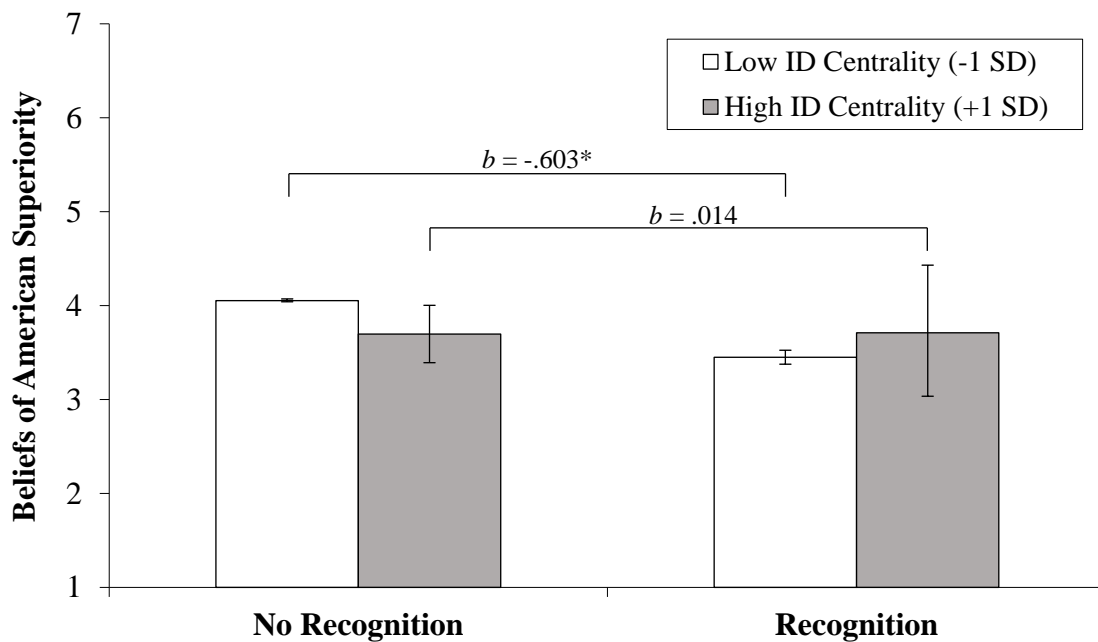
For beliefs about American group superiority, White identity centrality had a significant main effect ($b = .453, p < .001$), and identity recognition had a marginal effect ($b = -.315, p = .054$). However, there were no significant main effects for identity choice ($b = -.083, p = .611$) or Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = -.011, p = .873$). Together, these predictors explained 19.6% of the variance in beliefs about American group superiority, $F(4, 198) = 12.053, p < .001$. The higher Hispanic or Latino participants were in White identity centrality, the more they viewed Americans to be superior or better than other groups. Furthermore, participants who had their Hispanic or Latino identities recognized tended to have lesser beliefs about American group superiority.

The interaction between identity recognition and Hispanic or Latino identity centrality on beliefs about American superiority was marginally significant ($b = .260, p = .063$). To explore this interaction, I used Hayes' (2018) PROCESS model 2 to plot the simple slope of identity recognition on beliefs about American superiority at one standard deviation above the mean (5.99) and below the mean (3.61) of Hispanic or Latino identity centrality. As shown in Figure 3, there was a significant negative association between identity recognition

and beliefs about American group superiority at low levels of Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = -.603, p = .032$), but no significant association for participants high in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality ($b = .014, p = .962$). The two-way interactions at Step 2 explained an additional 1.5% of the variance, $F(3,195) = 1.199, p = .311$. For participants who scored low on Hispanic or Latino identity centrality, the recognition of their Hispanic or Latino identity was associated with decreased levels of American group superiority beliefs. In other words, identity recognition appeared to be associated with lesser beliefs about American group superiority, but only for participants who were low in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality.

Figure 3

Association between identity recognition and American group superiority beliefs for participants high and low on Hispanic or Latino identity centrality



Note. Unstandardized beta coefficients are shown. Error bars represent standard errors.

* $p < .05$.

Discussion

The present research sought to investigate the effects of being unable to choose a preferred racial/ethnic identity. Focusing on Hispanic or Latino participants, I attempted to accomplish this identity manipulation through the display or removal of a preferred racial/ethnic identity (identity recognition), and varying the flexibility participants had in choosing a preferred race/ethnicity (identity choice). I hypothesized that those whose preferred racial/ethnic identities were recognized and who had the most flexibility in claiming a preferred racial/ethnic identity would experience the most positive outcomes, specifically as it relates to emotions, person judgments about oneself in relation to others, and identification with Americans. I also predicted that this effect would be moderated by individual differences in Hispanic or Latino identity centrality.

Although results were mixed, some findings generally supported this main hypothesis in that individuals were happier when they had the opportunity to write in their preferred race or ethnicity. Additionally, identity centrality did affect the relationship between the choice/recognition manipulation and a number of the outcome variables. People whose Hispanic or Latino identities were not central were less happy when their Hispanic or Latino identities were recognized, suggesting a possible individually-directed social identity threat (Ellemers et al., 2002). Furthermore, those whose identities were not recognized reported greater levels of anger, but contrary to expectations, also reported less pride. This finding lends credence to the alternative hypothesis and possibly counteracting effect that affiliation with a minority or disadvantaged group confers negative outcomes over and above the potential benefits of having one's identity recognized.

Further evidence was found that associated having the minority Hispanic or Latino race/ethnicity recognized with lower judgments of personal rank for people who had high Hispanic or Latino identity centrality. Additionally, participants who had their Hispanic or Latino identities recognized rated themselves lower on social attractiveness, while those whose White identities were more central to their self-concepts rated themselves higher on both social attractiveness and social acceptance. Having a highly central White identity also predicted identification with Americans in terms of greater commitment, giving the American identity higher importance as it relates to one's self-image, believing that Americans as a group are superior, and being more deferential to American group symbols and leaders. These findings support previous research that have demonstrated people's implicit beliefs that equate being an American with being White (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2010). For people highly identified as Hispanic or Latino, perhaps their experiences as members of a marginalized group overwhelms any effect of the manipulation, rendering social comparisons subject to life histories and group memberships, regardless of whether or not that group identity is recognized or can be claimed.

Limitations. Several limitations may have affected the findings presented here. First, regarding the sample size, a power analysis was conducted based on an extremely large effect size of $\eta^2 = .5$. In the study that produced this effect size, the manipulation involved asking participants to imagine a brief vignette in which their national origin identities are mistaken, after which they reported their affect (Flores & Huo, 2012). Since the manipulation used in my study is much more subtle, the 0.5 effect size was an overestimate, causing my study to be underpowered. However, taking a more conservative approach, I reasoned that my effects and my more subtle manipulation would not be nearly as strong, so I conducted a

power analysis for the sample size needed to detect moderately sized effects. Assuming a moderate effect of 13% of the variance instead of 50%, I still have a sufficient sample size. However, post hoc power analysis for the highest order interaction found that given the R^2 value of .015 from the marginally significant three-way interaction, the current sample size of 203 provided only 41% power to detect a significant effect. To find a significant three-way interaction effect at this effect size, I would need at least 526 participants. Now that I have a better idea of the effect size to expect, I can adjust my sample size accordingly.

Another cause for concern in this study involves the number of participants who were excluded. Although many exclusions undoubtedly filtered inattentive respondents, recent research has alluded to the downsides of including attention check questions. For one, the attention check questions are thought by some to induce the Hawthorne effect, which may lead to an alteration of responses due to the fear of being watched (Clifford & Jerit, 2015). Thus, I may have been overly liberal with my distribution of attention check questions without considering any negative repercussions the inclusions of these questions may entail.

Future directions. Research on the topic of self-categorizations is rife with opportunity. Future studies can examine the possible effects of racial/ethnic specificity. For instance, what are the effects of giving a person of Irish descent to identify as Irish rather than simply as White? Furthermore, does an optimally distinct racial/ethnic identity differ between groups? For some, an optimally distinct identity may exist at the level of nationality, while for others, this preferred identity may consist of a transnational grouping, or may be contained within a smaller social network, such as that of a tribe.

Thus far, I have focused on the effect of racial/ethnic categorizations on a person's self-perceptions. However, these categorizations may also have far-reaching consequences in

interactions with others. Further light can be shed on the potential effects of social perceptions that may arise from self-identifying with an identity that may not be perceived as accurate by observers. When judging whether a target person should be considered as an ingroup member, social identity theory holds that ingroup overexclusion may occur in order to protect one's ingroup from outsiders that could threaten the positive distinctiveness of the ingroup, and in turn, of one's social identity (Leyens & Yzerbyt, 1992).

Conclusion. Race and ethnicity are widely collected demographic categories across the sciences. Gaining a deeper understanding of the psychological effects of racial categorizations will enable researchers to make more nuanced conclusions by accounting for these potential effects in their analyses. Through the thousands of surveys administered over the course of one's life, self-categorizations by racial/ethnic groups are constantly reinforced. For those who may not neatly fit into the circumscribed categories presented to them, the effects on both their self- and social perceptions could affect their own psychological well-being and the quality of the relationships they have with others. Recognizing the largely unexplored psychological impacts of these variables can provide valuable insight into improving intergroup relations.

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Appendix A

Social Comparison Scale

Please select a number that best describes the way in which you see yourself in comparison to others.

In relation to others, I feel:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Inferior											Superior
Incompetent											Competent
Unlikeable											Likeable
Left out											Accepted
Different											Same
Untalented											More talented
Weaker											Stronger
Unconfident											More confident
Undesirable											More desirable
Unattractive											More attractive
An outsider											An insider

Appendix B

Identification with Groups Instrument

Please answer the following questions by choosing the option on the provided scales that best reflects what you think. These questions refer to *Americans*.

1. I feel strongly affiliated with Americans.
2. Other groups can learn a lot from us Americans.
3. Being an American is an important part of my identity.
4. In times of trouble, the only way to know what to do is to rely on America's leaders.
5. I am glad to contribute to America.
6. Compared to other groups, we Americans are particularly good.
7. It is important to me that I view myself as an American.
8. All Americans should respect the customs, the institutions, and the leaders of America.
9. I am strongly committed to America.
10. Relative to other groups, we Americans are a very moral group.
11. It is important to me that others see me as an American.
12. It is disloyal to criticize Americans.
13. I like to help Americans.
14. Americans are better than other groups in all respects.
15. When I talk about Americans, I usually say “we” rather than “they.”
16. There is usually a good reason for every rule and regulation that America's leaders propose.

Appendix C

Hispanic or Latino Identity Centrality and White Identity Centrality

Hispanic or Latino Identity Centrality

1. Overall, being Hispanic or Latino has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
2. In general, being Hispanic or Latino is an important part of my self-image.
3. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Hispanic or Latino people.
4. Being Hispanic or Latino is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to Hispanic or Latino people.
6. I have a strong attachment to other Hispanic or Latino people.
7. Being Hispanic or Latino is an important reflection of who I am.
8. Being Hispanic or Latino is not a major factor in my social relationships.

White Identity Centrality

1. Overall, being White has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
2. In general, being White is an important part of my self-image.
3. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other White people.
4. Being White is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to White people.
6. I have a strong attachment to other White people.
7. Being White is an important reflection of who I am.
8. Being White is not a major factor in my social relationships.